



## Minutes

35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning (STL)

of the Academic Policy Committee

Tuesday, 6 December 2011, 10:00am – 12:00pm

McLennan Library building, room MS-74

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**Present:** Tom Acker, Jaye Ellis, Alfred Jaeger, Sara Laimon (Faculty of Music delegate), Morton Mendelson (Chair), Meyer Nahon, Sharon Roy (CIO delegate), Doreen Starke-Meyerring, Yvonne Steinert, Cynthia Weston (Acting Secretary)

**Regrets:** Nicole Allard, Andre Costopoulos, Jane Everett, Ian Henderson, Maggie Kilgour, Svetlana Komarova, Jana Luker Carole Urbain

**Guests:** Annie Ma, Mariela Tovar, Marcy Slapcoff

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted as proposed.

**2. Approval of the minutes of 20 September 2011**

The minutes were approved as circulated.

**3. Business arising**

There was no business arising

**4. New Directions for assessing student learning (guests: Annie Ma, SSMU; Mariela Tovar, TLS)**

Student Senator Annie Ma presented student concerns regarding assessment as represented in the questions raised at Senate. The concerns focus on student desire to have lecture recordings more widely used as a tool for student review, and more extensive and rapid feedback before high stakes assessments such as midterms; clickers are one way of receiving such feedback, but use of clickers declines dramatically after first year.

The Director of TLS contextualized the issue in a presentation entitled “*Renewal of assessment practices*”. Students concerns are one of a confluence of factors that suggest this is an opportune time for McGill to reconsider assessment practices. Included in this discussion was a recent U21 paper regarding recent work done at the University of New South Wales in Australia: *An institutional approach to effective and efficient assessment practices*.

The discussion surrounding formative feedback included the following: that revisiting assessment practices means revisiting pedagogical practices such as building in peer feedback with criteria; that increased formative assessment might mean an increased time commitment for professors which is problematic given reduced TA hours; that faculty members must be rewarded if they are to seriously consider redesigning teaching and assessment.

Regarding the use of clickers as one mechanism for formative feedback, it was suggested that professors in second year courses be targeted so that use of clickers for formative feedback would continue from first to second year.

**Action item:** Based on the discussion an Assessment Working Group has been struck. This working group will be chaired by Dr. Mariela Tovar, of TLS. Other members will include Sharon Roy, Director of CCS, Annie Ma, SSMU student senator, and Adam Finkelstein of TLS. It was recommended that other members be recruited for the working group including professors from the Inquiry Network as well as the Faculties of Science, Engineering and Arts. The group will likely carry out an audit of existing assessment practices at McGill, perhaps focusing on 1<sup>st</sup> year classes. The plan will be brought back to STL in October 2012.

**5. *The Nexus project (guest: Marcy Slapcoff, TLS)***

Marcy Slapcoff of TLS presented an overview of the goals and accomplishments of the Nexus project and a report from the Inquiry Network. The recent Joint Board Senate meeting focused on undergraduate research and concluded with a recommendation that exposure to research should be a hallmark of a McGill UG experience.

**Action item:** This presentation should be taken to departments and faculties. It is recommended that faculty champions be part of these presentations and that they demonstrate their own work and successes with integrating research into undergraduate course work. Further, junior faculty would be a good target group to start with.

**6. *Unit updates***

Postponed to the next meeting.

**7. *Other business***

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.