



Minutes

44th meeting of the Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning (STL) of the Academic Policy Committee

Tuesday, 17 September 2013, 10:00am – 12:00pm

James Administration Building, room 301

Present: Jeremie Abitbol, Nicole Allard, James Archibald, Lawrence Chen, Andre Costopoulos, Richard Donovan, Ollivier Dyens (Chair), Jaye Ellis, Haley Hatch-Dinel, Ian Henderson, Svetlana Komarova, Lucyna Lach, Jana Luker, Ronald Morris, Laura Nilson, Sharon Roy, Yvonne Steinert, Nancy St-Pierre (Secretary), Carole Urbain, Laura Winer

Regrets: Murray Humphries, Sara Laimon, Sujata Madan, John Silvius

Guest: Adam Finkelstein, Teaching and Learning Services

1. Welcome and introduction of members

Professor Dyens, the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), welcomed the members to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. He noted that that Subcommittee mandate is to consider operational and strategic issues related to teaching and learning at the University level with recommendations being forwarded to the Academic Policy Committee (APC). In order to use the time more effectively, the Subcommittee would be moving certain items to a consent agenda; in other words, items on the consent agenda would be adopted 'en masse' unless a request for discussion is made by a committee member

2. Adoption of the agenda

Item 7) Teaching preparation checklist would be moved to the top of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted as circulated.

3. Approval of the minutes of 21 May 2013

The minutes were approved as circulated.

4. STL's annual report of activities 2012-2013

The Secretary noted that the Working Groups listed on page 4 of the report will be providing updates to the Subcommittee during the 2013-2014 academic year.

The Chair announced that his office will be providing funds (\$15k) to the Undergraduate Outcomes Working Group. Dean Aitken, the chair of the Working Group, has been advised and anticipates recalling the Working Group shortly.

The STL annual report was approved as circulated. The Secretary will forward the report to APC for its approval at an upcoming meeting.

5. Teaching preparation checklist (*Guest: Adam Finkelstein, Teaching and Learning Services*)

Based on the success of the IT and Library Checklists, Teaching and Learning Services developed a teaching preparation checklist. The intent is to provide a guide which provides information on the steps to consider as well as relevant deadlines that instructors should be aware of when planning their courses. The checklist begins one year before the anticipated start of the course and runs through to the end of the term. It should be noted that the checklist is somewhat generic; it is hoped that Faculties will take the tool and adapt it to their internal needs and timelines.

Discussion ensued with feedback being provided. Two issues in particular were discussed at some length:

- **Communication:** members discussed the best way to communicate this tool to instructors. Several suggestions were made including heavy promotion using the Focus on Teaching (FoT) bulletin and Faculty homepages. As well, it was suggested that Chairs be encouraged to make professors aware of the checklist when they communicate about teaching assignments.
- **Depth of content/length of document:** members were concerned that the checklist could be overwhelming to junior Faculty. Several suggestions for shortening the document were made including using accordions, or splitting the information into three tiers: basic, intermediate and in-depth versions. The only caveat would be the need to ensure that University-wide compliance regulations are included and highlighted in some way.

On behalf of the STL, the Chair thanked Mr. Finkelstein for developing this important work. It should be noted that STL has approved the teaching checklist in principle and unless there are substantive changes, the document does not need to be returned to STL for further review.

6. Brainstorming of future topics

STL members brainstormed topics they would like to focus on during this academic year. The topics included:

- **MOOCs & benefits to student learning on campus:** Laura Winer provided a quick update on the progress of the MOOCs courses being prepared, with the first one scheduled to launch in January 2014. She added that a call for research proposals focused on various aspects of the benefits of online learning should be disseminated by October 1st. MOOCs update will be added to future agendas as a standing item. Further, a presentation on MOOCs will be scheduled for an upcoming meeting.
- **Student-teacher relationship:** The changing nature of the student-teacher relationship was discussed.
- **Initiative to improve advising at both the undergraduate and graduate levels:** Some discussion ensued on the differences experienced with professional schools. Members were advised that the Inquiry Network has conducted a survey on undergraduate research and Marcy Slapcoff who is leading this initiative will be invited to present the results.
- **Graduate supervision**
- **21st Century Library:** Recent changes to both the Medicine and Education libraries have prompted changes to student study habits and some students are finding it difficult to access resources. It was suggested that the Dean of Libraries be invited to speak to her vision of the Library of the 21st Century.

- *Communication with Faculty*: Developing an efficient communication strategy is a University-side issue and is a difficulty topic to tackle. It was suggested that Public Relations be invited to provide some advice.
- *Subcommittee on Radical Speculation*: A subcommittee to be chaired by Andre Costopoulos was formed to reflect and propose outside the box ideas. This means nothing is off the table including class structure, course hours, face-to-face time, etc. Svetlana Komarova did point out that it would be more difficult for professional schools to innovate in this way as we need to ensure that employability skills are developed as we look to innovate.
- *Innovation Award for Teaching*
- *Teaching awards for TAs*: How to recognize outstanding TAs will be discussed.
- *Different ways for submitting proposals for our awards*: online submission versus pdf format.

7. Teaching awards – revised guidelines

- a) Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching
- b) Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Learning

Laura Winer provided quick updates on the recommended revisions to the guidelines. As no additional changes were suggested, the Secretary will forward the documents to APC for approval at an upcoming meeting.

8. Updates in educational technology tools (*document #STL2013-09-07 was distributed at the meeting*)

8.1 Updates to myCourses: The *myCourses* platform was upgraded during the summer and a summary listing the major changes was provided to members. Members were also advised that training was provided to instructors and instructional videos are available on the IT Knowledge Base.

8.2 Pilot with web-based clickers in one Engineering course: A pilot with 47 students is currently underway with preliminary results being positive; students appreciate being able to use their own devices.

There was some discussion on the various platforms that instructors are using as it can be difficult for students to familiarize themselves with each platform. Although ideally the instructor's preference should be respected, we may wish to provide some templates within *myCourses* to ensure that there is some consistency in placement of icons, for example.

8.3 New Tier II classroom AV support model: An update was provided on the de-centralization of AV support. Those Faculties with service level agreements in place are reporting much faster response times as an IT support person is usually close by. Sharon Roy indicated that she could provide ticket numbers at the October meeting.

9. Unit updates

9.1 Dean of Students: Andre Costopoulos confirmed that his Office is moving ahead with the Ask an Advisor initiative by establishing a central entry-point for advising at McGill. This would mean that the first point-of-contact would be an expert on the advising landscape who could then refer students to the right advising expert.

Dean Costopoulos added that the second advising initiative his Office is pursuing is the Advising Hub. The Hub is intended to be a virtual space where advisors could discuss/exchange information and keep up-to-date on what is happening across the University landscape.

9.2 Student Services: Jana Luker advised that her Office will be working with Mental Health Services and Counselling Services, as well as other community partners, to review service delivery for campus mental health services. It is anticipated that STL will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on any recommendations developed from the review. Jana Luker also noted that a new unit (Campus Life & Engagement) (CLE) has been established merging First Year Office and the Leadership Development Office to examine and support student engagement.

9.3 Library: Carole Urbain provided a quick report on the changes to the delivery of Library services, specifically at the Life Sciences and Education Libraries. Due to the higher than anticipated uptake of the retirement package (26 staff) the Library has had to review its service model. As book loans have declined dramatically over the past several years in both of the above-mentioned Libraries it was decided to move the collections and reclaim the space for student common areas. Carole Urbain did confirm that the Libraries are continuing to provide 1st level support in their new locations.

Both the representatives from Medicine (Yvonne Steinert) and Education (Ron Morris) expressed grave concerns regarding the decision to move the collections and would be very interested in having a longer discussion on this topic.

Action: The Dean of Libraries should be invited to the conversation and to speak to her vision of the Library of the 21st Century.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.