



MINUTES

Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning

Tuesday, November 19, 2019 (1:00pm – 2:30pm)

McLennan Library Building, room MS-74

Present: Peter Barry, Chris Buddle, Adam Finkelstein, Jeremy Garneau, Jessica Head, Svetlana Komarova, Sujata Madan, Annette Majnemer, Douglas McNabney, Henrique Mecabo, Laurent Mydlarski, Jean-Paul Remillieux, Caroline Riches, Kira Smith, Nancy St-Pierre (Secretary), Carole Urbain, Laura Winer (Chair)

Regrets: Angela Campbell, Miranda Hickman, Vrinda Narain

Guest: Liette Lapointe, Associate Professor, and Vice-Dean of Programs, Desautels Faculty of Management
Leigh Korey, Academic Associate, Teaching and Learning Services
Philippa Parks, Weston Fellow

1. Administrative

- The chair welcomed Philippa Parks, the 2019 Weston Fellow
- *Adoption of the agenda:* while the content of the agenda was adopted as circulated, the order was adjusted to accommodate varying schedules. The notes however are presented following the original order. The revised agenda was adopted.
- *Approval of the minutes, September 24, 2019:* the minutes were approved as circulated.
- *Business arising:* no business arising was identified.

1. Action

- a. *Revised guidelines for teaching awards (STL2019-11-05)*
 - i. Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching
 - ii. Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Learning

The Secretary walked the members through the proposed revisions, and noted that they serve primarily to respond to questions that arose during the 2019 cycle.

Douglas McNabney proposed and Jean-Paul Remillieux seconded the proposed revisions; adopted by STL. **Action:** the proposed revisions will be forwarded to APC for approval at their next meeting.

2. Discussion

- a. *Proposed grader policy in the Desautels Faculty of Management (guests: Liette Lapointe, Associate Professor, and Vice-Dean of Programs, Desautels Faculty of Management; Leigh Korey, Academic Associate, Teaching and Learning Services)*

Developed in close collaboration with the Management Undergraduate Student Society, the grader policy was drafted to respond to concerns identified in hiring and to ensure confidentiality of exams and grades. Recently approved at the Faculty Council, the guidelines

were put into use this Fall. The policy is included in the Faculty's instructor handbook, and reminders are sent at the start of each semester to ensure that all are informed.

The policy outlines the responsibilities of both instructors and graders, in particular that instructors must disclose potential conflicts of interest, and have the grader(s) sign a confidentiality agreement. Graders must also agree to not share exams or grades, or take the exams off-site. Instructors whose graders do not adhere to the policy could see their grader budget cut or withdrawn altogether.

One outstanding issue is the anonymizing of exams. While the Faculty reviewed the process used by the Faculty of Law, no strategy has been implemented. Leigh added that no instructors in the Faculty currently use an exam tool such as Crowdmark, but that they are being encouraged to do so. At the moment, anonymity is being maintained by traditional strategies such as students writing their name or ID numbers on the back of their exams.

The effectiveness of the policy will be examined at the end of this academic year. Liette will advise STL if substantive changes are brought to the policy at that time.

b. Updates

- i. Peer observation in classrooms (Laura Winer & Kira Smith, Teaching and Learning Services)*

Guiding questions:

- a. Do we want only summative or formative evaluations, or both as required?
- b. Who would be considered as appropriate evaluators? What are the qualifications needed for the summative and/or formative aspects? What training or formal guidelines would be recommended?
- c. New question added: What goals do we want the evaluation process to serve?

Members discussed the issue of formative versus summative feedback, and agreed that formative would be more useful to instructors at the moment. There was also agreement that articulating the goals of the program would be important to ensure appropriate tools and observer training can be designed.

Laura added that this was a popular topic at the recent POD conference. Institutions considering a peer observation initiative are asking similar questions to those noted above, but adapting the process to their context. As mentioned at the last meeting, UBC has a program that is quite well developed and could be used as a good source of information.

Based on the benchmarking already done, Kira noted that a particular challenge will be defining good teaching, and ensuring that the definition matches what the university sees as good teaching.

Annette noted that there is an interest in the Basic Sciences & professions programs in Medicine. Additionally, this could be framed as support for newer faculty. Participating instructors should choose the level of detail they wish to include in their teaching portfolios. Further, the work of the evaluators should also be rewarded in their dossiers.

Action: TLS will research training or support available to evaluators/feedback coaches, and return to STL with a proposal based on formative feedback and exchange. The pilot will be

open to instructors and doctoral students. For the moment, there was consensus to hold off on drafting a brief for the PVPA's attention.

ii. *University Student Assessment Policy (Chris Buddle, Dean of Students)*

Chris provided an update on the work of the Assessment Policy Working Group: Enrolment Services has provided data on methods of evaluation, and a deep dive analysis has begun focusing on data from Science and Arts. This data should help the Working Group understand assessment across the university which will help inform the revisions. **Action:** a summary of this initial analysis will be provided to STL.

The Working Group will be meeting with various faculties in order to understand practices. In addition, consultations will be held with the Office of Students with Disabilities, Medicine, Graduate Studies, faculty, administrators and student groups.

c. *Data analytics (Adam Finkelstein, Teaching and Learning Services)*

Adam presented a quick overview of data analytics and how this data, currently available through myCourses and Minerva, can be used.

Four categories of data analytics have been identified:

- Descriptive: what is happening at McGill
- Diagnostic: why is it happening?
- Predictive: what's likely to happen?
- Prescriptive: what do I need to do?

It was noted that an operational definition of what data analytics means to us along with principles of use will need to be developed. **Action:** the PPT presentation is appended to the minutes for more detailed information.

There are however both legal and ethical questions that need to be answered, such as: what analytics should we be gathering and reporting on; who should have access? In addition, the scope will need to be defined, along with the goals.

Chris noted that aggregate information could be useful, however data at both the student and instructor level will need to be carefully navigated. **Action:** TLS is to inquire if analytics are used at other institutions and how.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.