



MINUTES

Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning

Tuesday, April 28, 2020 (10:30am – 12:00pm)

Remotely through Zoom

Present: Peter Barry, Robyn Beech, Chris Buddle, Adam Finkelstein, Jessica Head, Rosalie Jukier, Svetlana Komarova, Sujata Madan, Annette Majnemer, Douglas McNabney, Jean-Paul Remillieux, Nancy St-Pierre (Secretary), Carole Urbain, Laura Winer (Chair)

Regrets: Angela Campbell, Jeremy Garneau, Henrique Macabo, Caroline Riches, Kira Smith

1. Administrative

- Adoption of the agenda: the agenda was adopted as distributed.
- *Approval of the minutes, November 19, 2019:* the minutes were approved as circulated.
- *Business arising:*
 - Teaching awards: in consultation with the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic), the deadline to submit nominations for both the Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching and the Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Learning have been pushed back to July 15, 2020. Faculty Deans have been advised of the change.
 - Data analytics activity which was scheduled to take place at this meeting has been postponed to the Fall
 - Desautels Faculty of Management revised grader policy: discussion of the revised policy has been postponed to the fall.
 - Peer observation of classroom teaching: activities on this initiative have been paused for the moment; updates will be provided when available
 - University Student Assessment Policy: given the current circumstances, it was decided to pause the work of the Working Group; however, it will be re-launched in the Fall. This delay however will have an impact on when the new policy is presented to Senate (originally slated for Spring 2021).

2. Remote Delivery Task Force (RDTF) (Chris Buddle)

Chris introduced the mandate of the RDTF along with its structure to the members. The RDTF works within the current governance structure but in a more focused way. The goals of the task force are to ensure instructors have the support they need for remote teaching, and to build up existing supports. This includes identifying Faculty Leads who are more knowledgeable about their Faculty's needs, and who will work in collaboration with TLS. Administrative support is being provided by the Provost's Office. This central coordination will help ensure that faculty subgroups are connected to the overall process of enhancing remote teaching at McGill.

The RDTF will identify certainly courses which may be subjected to enhanced design, content or technology, and which courses might need to be bulked up for remote delivery. Members are asked to send questions to their Faculty Leads as this will help deepen the understanding of global issues as well as local concerns. Instructors who feel that their course should be

considered for enhancement should contact their Faculty Lead. The RDTF is scheduled to run until December, however the mandate can be extended should the need arise. Instructors, for their part, will be encouraged to start working on their course outlines now and not wait until August.

While a decision on the delivery method for Fall 2020 courses has not yet been made, the Academic Planning Committee is planning for full remote teaching. It was judged easier to plan for remote delivery and switch back to on-campus delivery than the other way around. One thing the university would like to avoid is having to switch the mode of course delivery mid-term. Should the Fall term start remotely, it will end remotely. This may be a case of remote delivery for most courses with exceptions for programs that require face-to-face interactions such as internships, and clinical work for graduate students. A decision should be communicated in the upcoming weeks.

Adjustments will need to be made for Immunocompromised and foreign students who are unable to come onto campus. However, there is some concern about creating inequities should we subscribe to multiple modalities of course delivery.

The Quebec Government has asked that research be reopened when possible. The Emergency Operations Centre is developing protocols so that research activities can resume with social distancing guidelines in place. There will likely be some level of in-person activity on campus but what that will look like is still to be determined.

McGill is working in coordination with our U15 partners; note that no Canadian universities have made any announcements regarding the Fall 2020 term.

Highlights of the discussion that followed Chris' comment are below:

- Given that timetabling and classroom allocation have always been challenging, there was discussion about whether scheduling could be redone removing the constraint of classroom availability. However, this would mean that students may have course conflicts. As well, in the case of any delivery mode pivots, it would be very difficult to adjust appropriately.
- Chris noted that even with a return to on-campus teaching, occupancy will likely be lower which will change the constraints around classroom scheduling. Chris added that infrastructure planning is ongoing, and while the University is moving quickly in some directions, there needs to be more strategic thought given to potential space use and the technology around remote delivery.
- Pete stressed the need for a decision regarding the mode of delivery sooner rather than later as this will have implications for on-campus residences, permits and visas...
- Adam noted that at present, McGill does not have the facilities for hybrid learning. This would require room redesign on a larger scale, and strategic thinking about which affordances we would want to have.
- Jean-Paul added that Continuing Studies had tried hybrid learning in the past but stopped it as they did not have the needed technology and online students felt like 2nd class citizens.
- Rosalie noted that policies and guidelines surrounding remote teaching should be reviewed and/or enhanced. Law is currently setting up a pedagogy group and is coming upon policy/guidelines questions. Two examples of this are course recordings and course conflicts. Law's policy prohibits conflicts, but if courses are delivered remotely, students may want to register for conflicting courses.

- Chris expressed some concerns about creating policies that might become redundant very quickly, and suggested that guidelines that could be adapted as needed might be the preferred strategy.
- Annette agreed, and noted that guidelines would allow the flexibility needed for each program to think through what is best for their students and programs. She also pointed out that access to simulations and clinical experiences can not be put off in the long-term without affecting a graduating cohort.
- Chris asked Faculties to identify pinch points unique to them, which will also help identify pinch points that are global. As each Faculty develops its own learning community, please advise Chris and Laura if critical issues arise.
- Laura noted that one challenge the RDTF is facing is the legal framework within which we can operate, such as privacy issues. We need to understand the legal context and where we have flexibility.
- Chris noted that there is tremendous pressure from instructors who want to get back on campus to teach. Adam reiterated that while this could potentially take place in certain classrooms, we do not have the infrastructure or the capability (security, technology, custodial staff..) to do this. If instructors want to teach from their offices, there are still implications for security and technology and support that would need to be addressed.
- Laura added that Faculty Leads should also review the rationale instructors provide to teach on campus. If it is a technology issue perhaps alternatives could be provided.
- Carole advised that in response to COVID-19, the Library has recently signed an agreement with HathiTrust Digital Library, providing the possibility of accessing millions of items from McGill's print collection through new HathiTrust emergency service. All McGill students, faculty, and staff now have online access to over two million books from McGill University Library's print collection. The Emergency Temporary Access Service (ETAS) includes in-copyright material. Search the HathiTrust Digital Library by logging in with your McGill credentials. [Learn more](#). If access to additional materials is required, contact your Liaison Librarian to request digitization.
- Annette noted that the working group of health professions is developing principles and criteria for clinical skills/simulations, and that she would share it when complete.
- Chris advised that at this time, there is no plan to reduce tuition. While remote teaching is different, continuity and quality remain high. Lowering fees might devalue the education. Annette noted that consideration might be given to adding a "pandemic fee"; alternatively, this could be used for donor support of students or pedagogical costs for going remote.

Chris thanked everyone for their contributions, patience and thoughts.

3. Update on remote teaching during Winter 2020 term

As time was running out, this item was not discussed. However, members were advised that an additional meeting may be called before the summer break should the need arise.

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