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## MINUTES

Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning

Tuesday, February 29, 2021 (10:00pm – 11:30am)

Remotely through Zoom

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**Present:** Peter Barry, Chris Buddle, María Sierra Córdoba Serrano, Darshan Daryanani, Adam Finkelstein, Nathan Hall, Rosalie Jukier, Roni Khazaka, Sujata Madan, Annette Majnemer, Douglas McNabney, Caroline Riches, Nancy St-Pierre (Secretary), Adrienne Tessier, Carole Urbain, Laura Winer (Chair), Glenn Zabowski

**Guests:** Julia Cady, SSMU Mental Health Commissioner  
Mo Courtney, SSMU Mental Health Advocacy Coordinator

**Regrets:** Angela Campbell, Miranda Hickman, Svetlana Komarova, Jean-Paul Remillieux

### 1. *Administrative:*

- a) *Adoption of the agenda:* the agenda was adopted as circulated
- b) *Approval of the minutes, September 22, 2020:*
  - Douglas MacNabney clarified the School of Music's points in bullet 2:
    - Some elements of practices can be effectively maintained online such as exams and auditions – they have been moved online for the 2021 academic year
  - Rosalie Jukier, who sent regrets for the September meeting, added the following points for the Faculty of Law:
    - Challenges: everyone worked hard to move to remote teaching
    - Successes: developed and participated in many workshops facilitated by TLS; the RLA initiative has been a huge help
    - Laura thanked Rosalie for the RLA feedback and noted that overall, the initiative has been received positively.
  - Revised minutes were approved by STL
- c) *Business arising:*
  - No business arising was identified

### 2. *Discussion*

- a) *SSMU Academic Wellness proposal (Julie Caddy and Mo Courtney, SSMU)* (copy of presentation was forwarded to STL following the meeting)

Laura welcomed Julia Caddy and Mo Courtney to the meeting. Julia advised that the proposal was developed with the collaboration of the SSMU Advocacy Coordinator, SUS Mental Health, various members of the SSMU mental health roundtable, and with support of the SSMU legislative council. While the proposal was originally developed as an addenda to course outlines, its reach was expanded in order to address the creation of environments in which students can be well and thrive. SSMU took an upstream approach to wellbeing and were guided by the MHCC's postsecondary standards. The proposal is grounded on the academic aspect of McGill's stated mission, and was guided by the following four questions:

- Do our current practices reflect best practices?
- What is our goal in providing a McGill education?
- Are students able to realize their academic potential?
- Are instructors able to utilize their own full potential?

Chris thanked Julia and Mo and encouraged members to send specific questions or comments directly to them. Of note is that some of the points raised in the proposal will be integrated into the revised University Student Assessment Policy.

*b) Update on in-person teaching and Fall 21 planning (Chris Buddle, Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Programs))*

Chris updated the members of STL on current planning for Fall 21, and noted that a discussion on planning had taken place at that morning's Academic Leadership Forum (ALF). Of particular note:

- Implementation of Tier 2 activities: these activities have already been planned;
- In-person study hubs: flex spaces for in-person study hubs have already been planned. A communication about university-wide flex spaces should be issued shortly;
- Remote delivery of courses will be the primary mode of delivery for Summer 21;
- There remains a number of unknown variables such as vaccines and Covid capacity, however public health directives are unlikely to be known very far in advance of the Summer term;
- Enrolment Services is being consulted regarding classroom scheduling, but given the unknowns, it is challenging.

Discussion ensued with the following being highlights:

- Chris confirmed that a template for communicating Fall plans to students should be sent to the Faculties within days;
- Asked whether student advisors should plan to be on-campus, several Faculties expressed that the current system of online appointments is working smoothly. Pete noted that Science is planning a student survey to gauge what services students would like in-person versus online;
- Nathan asked if this might change what has traditionally been considered "student facing". Chris responded that while the way "student-facing" is viewed is changing, he does not want to make assumptions about in-person demand for services. Since a number of activities cannot adequately be replicated online, Faculties are asked to be flexible in responding to service needs. If a position requires an on-Campus presence, then staff should be encouraged to do so. If not, remote work is still a viable option.
- In regards to Fall planning, Chris noted that a survey template is being developed to ask instructors which online components they wish to maintain. While it may be logistically impossible to consult all instructors, departments may be in a position to respond to overall statements. The goal is to have as much flexibility as possible, with the ability to backtrack to remote if needed;
- It was noted that decisions about Fall in-person courses should be made sooner rather than later as this will affect leases and student visas. Clarity will also be needed in regards to admissions. International students are deciding whether to attend (or not), or to defer the 2021-2022 year, and some applicants may make the decision based on an expectation of physical presence;
- It was further noted that while students may indicate that remote lectures are preferred, they are craving opportunities for peer interaction;
- Chris reiterated that the goal is to have as many in-person activities as possible for Fall 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30am.