McGill

MINUTES
Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning
Tuesday, September 12, 2023 (11-12:30pm)
McLennan Library, room MS-74

Present: Manuel Balán, Farhan Bhanji, Andrea Creech, Cassandra Dodds (for Tina Piper), Adam Finkelstein, Kenyon Gannon, Roni Khazaka, Jordan Koch, Charlene Lewis-Sutherland, Tabitha Sparks, Nancy St-Pierre (Secretary), Laura Winer (Chair)

Regrets: Chris Buddle, Jenn Riley, Robin Beech, Didem Dagdeviren, Sujata Madan, Tina Piper, Jennifer Ronholm, Tamara Western

Guests: Margo Echenberg, Carolyn Samuel

1. Administrative
   a. *Land acknowledgement*
   b. *Welcome and introductions*: Laura welcomed everyone to this first meeting of the academic year and invited all to introduce themselves. Laura added that as a subcommittee reporting to APC, STL has an important role in the review and approval of communications and policies focused on teaching and learning across the University.
   c. *Adoption of the agenda*: the agenda was adopted as circulated.
   d. *Approval of the minutes, June 13, 2023*: as many members in attendance are new this year, the minutes will be sent by email for e-vote.
   Business arising: STL recommendations on the use of AI in teaching and learning have been submitted to APC for discussion and approval at its meeting of September 28, 2023. If APC approves the recommendations, they will then be forwarded to Senate for discussion. The University is expected to continue exploring AI in the coming year, however what form that will take is yet to be determined.

2. Action:
   a. *STL annual report of activities for 2022-2023*: as many members in attendance are new this year, the annual report will be sent by email for e-vote. It will then be forwarded to APC for inclusion in its annual report to Senate.

3. Discussion
   a. *Update on PASL* (Margo Echenberg, Carolyn Samuel): an update on recent PASL activities was provided, and members will be forwarded a copy of the slides. Carolyn announced that there will be an ½ day event on assessment in December and that further information will be provided as it becomes available. The event will be

structured in such a way as to allow a strategies exchange session for the participants similar to that held during the 2018 Symposium. Nancy will provide members with artefacts from that event.

Roni suggested that having a case study or two demonstrating how instructors have modified their assessments to account for the new PASL might be useful.

It was further noted that members should communicate with Carolyn should they know of any instructors that have done interesting things with their assessments as TLS has created a databank of examples.

Farhan asked if PASL has delved deeply enough into assessments that are conducted outside the classrooms, such as those that are performance-based? Manuel responded that PASL is an umbrella policy that can be adapted by each Faculty. Laura added that each Faculty should develop local guidelines, and that they can contact members of the PASL Advisory Group for support.

b. *Policy on End-of-Course Evaluations* (Laura Winer): the Policy will undergo a review this academic year, and members are asked to review it to identify areas that we would like to see changed and to better inform the revisions. For example, there are a number of misconceptions about the questionnaires, and we hope to address these in the new Policy.

Concurrently, a working group on the evaluation of teaching, led by Associate Provost (Equity and Academic Policies) Angela Campbell, has been revived. The goal is to move towards a more holistic way of evaluating teaching. Discussions are currently centered on the potential role of peers in evaluating teaching. Another area for discussion is if peer evaluation should be formative or summative.

It is important to note that both groups should undertake their work with an equity lens to ensure that potential biases are mitigated.

Manuel noted that the current policy does not address how tenure and promotion committees for example, should treat the results. It may be a good idea to have something explicit stated in the revision.

Action: Members are encouraged to bring forward areas for discussion at an upcoming meeting.

c. *Round table:* members proceeded with an exchange of information detailing the top issues addressing teaching and learning in their faculties.

- A number of Faculty representatives noted that student well-being was top of mind. In particular, Music, Medicine, Education, and Law mentioned that the competitive nature of their programs likely exacerbate student well-being.

- ChatGPT was also mentioned by several faculty representatives. Tabitha noted that the TL KB does not address comprehensives or dissertations. Manuel added that resources are sparse, and guidelines are complex.
- Engineering: Mid-terms/distance between students, in particular,
  - If you have different versions of the same exam, do you need distance between the students?
  - There seems to be an inconsistency between trusting students at home but not in the classroom.
- Medicine: The government has mandated increases in enrolment in health professions, however retention of instructors is difficult. The barrier is not at the classroom level in terms of enrolment but finding experienced instructors. Often when people leave the clinical environment, they don't want to go back to teaching.
- Education: Jordon noted that instructors have started to review their large assessment schedules to ensure that they are somewhat staggered in order to reduce stress on students.
- Arts: Aside from ChatGPT, the other issue is the lack of consistency on how accommodations that are not legally mandated are handled. These are generally up to the instructor to provide and there is no clear policy or guideline. Arts is working on principles for what an instructor should think about when about non-traditional accommodations are requested. Three principles have been identified:
  - Does not compromise the quality of teaching and assessment
  - Works towards fairness/equitable treatment of all students
  - Manageable in terms of instructor workload in the provision of accommodations.
- SCS: As there is a very large number of part-time instructors, communications can be challenging. This includes promoting professional development or training opportunities and policy implementation.
- AP (Equity and Academic Policies): Many Faculties and departments are increasing the diversity of their instructional staff. What is being done to support these underrepresented/minoritized faculty in each unit? Are there any plans accompanying this diversification to ensure the retention of these new community members? (Comments were submitted by email following the meeting.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15pm.