



MINUTES

Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning

Thursday, September 20, 2018 (10:00am – 11:30am)

McLennan Library Building, room MS-12

Present: Peter Barry, Chris Buddle, Marc Delesclegs (for Jean-Paul Remillieux), Adam Finkelstein, Annette Majnemer, Miranda Hickman, Svetlana Komarova, Lisa Starr, Nancy St-Pierre (Secretary), Christelle Tessono, Carole Urbain, Laura Winer (Chair)

Regrets: Robin Beech, Angela Campbell, Jessica Head, Zi Huang, Sujata Madan, Douglas Mc Nabney, Laurent Mydlarski, Vrinda Narain, Jean-Paul Remillieux

Guest: Alexander Liepins, Skills Development Officer, TLS

1. Administrative

- *Welcome & introductions:* Laura Winer, the Chair, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the academic year, and invited all to introduce themselves.
- *Adoption of the agenda:* the agenda was adopted as circulated.
- *Membership for 2018-2019:* the membership was distributed for information purposes.
- *Approval of the minutes, February 20, 2018:* the minutes were approved as circulated.
- Business arising: no business arising was identified.

2. Action

a. Annual report of activities 2017-2018 – for approval

Members approved the annual report of activities and were advised that it would be presented to APC at its meeting of 25 October 2018.

3. Discussion

a. SKILLS21 initiative (Guest: Alexander Liepins, TLS)

Alex Liepins joined the meeting and introduced the SKILLS21 program. SKILLS21 is a workshop-based skills development program for undergraduate students. Its aim is to provide opportunities for developing 21st century skills, values and attitudes. Workshops are centered around five themes: citizenship, collaboration, discovery, leadership, and well-being. The co-curricular record (CCR) is being used to recognize student participation in individual workshops, and those students who complete five workshops in one stream are recognized with an additional note in their co-curricular record. For detailed information on the workshops available and the developing partners, members are invited to consult the [SKILLS21](#) website.

Members were advised that for academic year 2017-2018, a total of 600 students registered for SKILLS21 workshops. As of September 20th, 900 students were registered. It was noted that there is an increased registration from Science, Arts, and Medicine students. Students are also

more aware of the CCR and they have signaled that the recognition of their participation is very important to them

In response to Miranda Hickman's question, Alex explained that SKILLS21 is being launched in three phases:

- 1) Phase 1 - workshop-based: launched in 2017, the program initially consisted of 50 workshops
- 2) Phase 2 - reflection: also launched in 2017, this aspect introduced a reflection piece to allow students to reflect on what they've learned
- 3) Phase 3 – knowledge creation: is the long-term trajectory of the program and should be launched shortly.

Based on student and partner feedback, the streams themselves have evolved over the past year. It was felt that they needed to be more distinct, so the descriptive language was revised. This has allowed the Steering Committee to curate the workshops in a more intentional way. The program is still incorporating new workshops and is working towards layering; for example, Engineering will be launching a 10-week series very shortly.

In response to a question from Laura Winer, Alex noted that online offerings have been requested by students. Students have also asked for sessions on hard skills such as MS tools, photoshop, etc. The Program Committee is looking at how we can best support this need. Discussion ensued on whether McGill would be able to take advantage of the Bibliothèque Nationale and its digital archives. Alex and Carole Urbain will follow-up and report back.

In response to a question from Christelle Tessono, Alex clarified that advertising of the program has been done through the SSMU listserv, Discover McGill, What's New @ McGill as well as other avenues. If members have suggestions or questions they are encouraged to contact Alex directly at skills21@mcgill.ca.

b. Learning environments (Adam Finkelstein, TLS)

- Physical: [learning space improvements](#)
- Ecosystem: [learning technologies](#)
- Instructor support: [calendar of events](#)

Adam Finkelstein spoke about the diverse learning environments at McGill that Teaching and Learning Services aims to promote and support. These goals were developed to ensure tools and support aligned with the needs identified by instructors and students:

- i. Design and support diverse learning environments to enhance teaching and learning;
- ii. Evaluate and select affordances to support teaching and learning in diverse learning environments;
- iii. Support effective use of available affordances by instructors, staff, students to enhance teaching and learning in diverse learning environments.

While the links provided above connect to more information about each particular learning environment, Adam provided additional information. Highlights are below:

- Physical: Under the stewardship of TLS, classrooms and teaching labs have been subject to upgrades both in terms of physical layouts and technological equipment. Since 2006, over \$25M has been spent in classroom renovations, and ~\$18M has been spent in teaching lab renovations (since 2010). This has affected over 350 classrooms and 12 major labs. It should be noted that two Working Groups

composed of representatives from all faculties, service units and students, work together to prioritize renovations requests and allocate funding recommends. Finally, learning spaces are now a (visible) strategic priority at the senior administration level.

- Ecosystem: The ecosystem map which focuses on educational technologies that support teaching and learning, has been updated. The map showcases tools that instructors/students tend to use, and identifies those that are centrally supported. One tool that Adam focused on is Crowdmark, a digital assessment tool. While currently in restricted use, we anticipate a University-wide rollout and are working with the Exam Office to address the implications of widespread digital assessments.

Some discussion ensued on the some of the implications such as cost and availability of student laptops – not all students have or bring to classes so instructors must have loaners on-site. Benefits of the tool are that grading is faster with more feedback provided to students, which allows the instructors to re-allocate their TAs to other teaching-related tasks.

- instructor support – calendar of events: members were encouraged to consult the calendar of events to identify workshops or sessions that might be of interest to their colleagues.

c. 50th Anniversary of teaching & learning centre at McGill (Laura Winer, TLS)

TLS recently discovered that there has been a teaching support unit at McGill since 1969, and TLS is looking at ways to mark the occasion, be it an event or branding. The following suggestions came out of the brainstorm activity:

- commemorate the event with a workshop
- visual image could be a tree:
 - the tree represents TLS
 - branch is faculty
 - leaves are students
- possible tag lines: planting the seeds; growing the pedagogy; still growing after 50 years; teaching teachers how to teach
- blog or website could be used to publish a different story about teaching/innovations; from 50 years of teaching; teaching stories
- creating a coffee-table type book to capture stories of teaching over the years and across disciplines; Carole suggested that Yves Lapointe, the new Archivist would be the contact.

Laura thanked everyone for their suggestions; the topic will be returned to the agenda when it has progressed further.

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