General Faculties Council
TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes

Meeting 69
October 19, 2021, 2:00 p.m.   By Zoom platform

Voting Members
Leslie Reid, Co-Chair
Amy Warren, Academic Co-Chair
Fabiola Aparicio-Ting
Wendy Benoit
Barbara Brown
Tracey Clancy
Heather Ganshorn – arrived during Item 1
Diane Gereluk – arrived during Item 4, left during Item 6
Yani Jazayeri – left during Item 5
Fabian Neuhaus – arrived during Item 3
Hieu Ngo
Evaristus Oshionebo
Alex Paquette
Renzo Pereyra
Leighton Wilks
Jason Wiens

Regrets
Susan Barker
William Bridel
Jennifer Markides
Trevor Poffenroth
Mary-Jo Romaniuk
Melanee Thomas

Guests
Andrew Estefan, Co-Chair, USRI Working Group – present for Item 4
Robin Arseneault, Teaching & Learn Project Coordinator, Taylor Institute – present for Item 4
Jacqueline Lambert, Institutional Analyst, Office of Institutional Analysis – present for Item 4

Non-Voting Members
Michelle Drefs
Natasha Kenny
Barb McCutcheon
Brenda McDermott
D'Arcy Norman
Justine Wheeler

Secretary
Cherie Tutt

Scribe
Elizabeth Sjogren

The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded

That the Agenda for the October 19, 2021 Teaching and Learning Committee meeting be approved.

Carried

2. Remarks of the Co-Chair and Academic Co-Chair

The Co-Chair observed that the Fall 2021 semester is almost at its midpoint, and that this is a busy time for instructors and students. Members were encouraged to be mindful of mental health and wellbeing, and to take care of others and themselves.

The Academic Co-Chair expressed hope that members had enjoyed a restful Thanksgiving weekend.

3. Approval of the September 21 and October 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee meetings held on September 21 and October 8, 2021 be approved.

Carried

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4. Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) Working Group Recommendation Report (follow up from October 8, 2021 special meeting)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Leslie Reid, Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning), and Andrew Estefan presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters reported that revisions to the USRI Working Group's report were made in response to feedback received at the Committee's October 8, 2021 special meeting, and these revisions are highlighted in yellow. Members were thanked for that feedback and encouraged to continue the conversation.
- Discussion included:
  - The learning experience goes beyond the classroom, but the USRI is course-specific and so other avenues to gather student feedback, such as regarding their program as a whole, are needed. In the absence of other avenues, students who wish to be heard will put non-course-related feedback into the USRI.
  - It is valuable for students to reflect upon their relationships and interactions between themselves and their instructors and their peers. It is important for students to analyse their experiences to understand why they are satisfied or unsatisfied, and to take responsibility for their learning.
  - It is good that it is being proposed to enhance equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in a revised USRI system, but this will be difficult to implement
  - Rather than simple ratings of instruction, it is important to have conversations. It is being suggested to steer the USRI away from instructor assessment and move to a modern model of formative feedback and that invites students to describe the experiences they've had, including barriers to success and what has engaged them.

- o It is desirable to build a culture of constructively giving and receiving feedback

- o The principles of the USRI should clearly set out that a goal is for instructors to contemplate and learn from the feedback, as part of their teaching journey and lifelong learning

- o Flexibility in the USRI feedback system is desirable, and being able to survey students mid-semester would be useful for both instructors and students

- o It is important to consider context and factors that may limit a student's feedback

- o Teaching Assistants would like to receive feedback on their teaching too, and Teaching Assistants would like to have an opportunity to give feedback on the instructors they work with

- o In response to a suggestion that the USRI data could be aggregated, such as to identify trends, the presenter noted that the USRI Working Group focussed on the questions that should be asked of students about their learning experiences and reiterated that any formal use of the data is not part of the USRI Working Group's work or recommendations

- o The Faculty Association member of the Committee again expressed the Faculty Association's concern about the Committee discussing this report while matters relating to the USRI are still under grievance, and the member reported that objection will be raised at the November 4 General Faculties Council meeting

- The presenters reported that consultation will continue in the coming weeks, and a revised report will hopefully come to the Committee's December 14, 2021 meeting

5. **COVID-19 Updates (Round Table)**

The Academic Co-Chair presented this item.

Highlights:

- The Committee was given an opportunity to talk about matters relating to COVID-19 and teaching and learning, and discussion included:

  - o Students are tired of the online learning environment, and this is reflected in participation in classes and events

  - o While the flexibility is seen as positive, there has been some confusion about the format for midterm exams, for example that an in-person course can have an exam in D2L, and information about this must be clearly communicated to students

  - o With 92% of the population fully vaccinated, the University's campuses are beginning to open back up. Effort must be made to ensure that members of the University community feel safe and able to engage in a range of campus activities.

  - o Simple adjustments to aid student learning can be made, such as providing collaborative table spaces and drop-down spaces and allowing students to informally use classroom spaces when they are not in use

  - o Positive occurrences during the pandemic that should be continued include instructors and students thinking compassionately about one another, the willingness and ability to adapt to disruption, and providing services in a flexible manner

- o The use of technology during the pandemic allowed for some flexibility and accommodation of students. Lessons have been learned about online teaching and learning, and, given that demand for online courses is expected to continue, these experiences should be talked about.

- o The learning experience extends beyond class time, including events, resources and services, and this should be considered

- o Tuition increases will soon be a topic of conversation again, and it is necessary to communicate about the efforts that are being made to improve teaching practices and the student experience

- o Some students are struggling with mental health at this time, and some supports (on campus and in the larger community) are overtaxed. Students in crisis need immediate support.

6. **Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning Report**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Natasha Kenny, Senior Director of the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning (TI), presented this item.

Highlights:

- The competitions for the 2022 Teaching and Learning Grants and Teaching Scholars programs are open, and applications will be accepted until January 17. These programs now have additional funding for a stream in Open Educational Resources (OER).

- The TI's Resource Library now has a self-directed four-part learning module on blended learning

- The Program for Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) 2021 wrap-up Celebration of Achievement is being held on October 21

- The theme for the 2022 Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching is 'Moving Forward in a Good Way: Nurturing the Spirit of Learning in Postsecondary Education'. The TI is working with the Office of Indigenous Engagement to plan this.

7. **Graduate Students' Association Report**

Alex Paquette, Graduate Students' Association (GSA) representative on the Committee, presented this item.

Highlights:

- This week is Academic Integrity Week, and, among other activities, the GSA is participating in an Instagram Live event with Dr. Sarah Eaton from the Werklund School of Education

- The GSA is seeking more graduate students to participate in Thesis Talks Thursday, and suggestions of graduate students are welcomed

- The GSA's annual Academic Horror Stories event is on October 28

- A session of the GSA's Voices on the Margins Speaker Series, entitled Homophobia in the Hallways, is on November 17

8. **Students' Union Report**

Renzo Pereyra, Students' Union (SU) representative on the Committee, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The nominations deadline for the Fall 2021 SU Teaching Excellence Awards program is Friday, October 22

- The SU Undergraduate Research Symposium will be held virtually from November 22-25, and an in-person awards ceremony will be held at the end of November

- As part of Academic Integrity Week, the SU will provide participant prizes for an online knowledge game, and will be hosting an information booth in MacEwan Hall regarding contract cheating

- The SU is taking applications from students who wish to join the SU's OER Working Group

9. **Other Business**

There was no other business.

10. **Adjournment**

Moved/Seconded
That the Teaching and Learning Committee adjourn the October 19, 2021 meeting.
Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Cherie Tutt
Meeting Secretary