

General Faculties Council
TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes

Meeting 55
November 21, 2019, 2:00 p.m.

A167

Voting Members

Leslie Reid, Co-Chair
Jessica Ayala
Wendy Benoit
Catherine Burwell – arrived during Item 5
Tracey Clancy
Kevin Dang
Diane Gereluk
Christie Hurrell
Nickie Nikolaou – arrived during Item 2
David Paskevich
Elena Rangelova

Regrets

Mohamed Abdelsamie
Fabiola Aparicio-Ting
Kent Hecker
Dawn Johnston, Academic Co-Chair
Kim Lenters
Fabian Neuhaus
Scott Radford
Mary-Jo Romaniuk

Guests

Robin Arseneault, Teaching and Learning Project Coordinator, Taylor Institute – present for Items 4 and 5
Melissa Boyce, Academic Co-ordinator, Mental Health Strategy – present for Item 6
Andrew Estefan, Co-Chair, USRI Working Group – present for Item 4

Non-Voting Members

Susan Barker
Geoff Crowe
Kent Donlevy
Patti Dyjur
Natasha Kenny – arrived during Item 2
Melanie King Rosario

Secretary

Susan Belcher

Scribe

Elizabeth Sjogren

The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded

That the Agenda for the November 21, 2019 Teaching and Learning Committee meeting be approved.

Carried

2. Remarks of the Co-Chair

The Co-Chair included the following in her remarks:

- The University is experiencing a difficult budgeting period, when some decisions may impact our colleagues and our work, and members are reminded to practice self-care
- The University's first three Educational Leaders in Residence (ELR) have been announced: Jessica Ayala, Social Work (online and blended learning), Sarah Eaton, Education (academic integrity), and Tara Beattie, Graduate Studies (graduate supervision and mentorship). The appointment of an ELR with expertise in Indigenous pedagogies is being considered.

3. Approval of the October 24, 2019 Minutes

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting held on October 24, 2019 be approved.

Carried

4. Recommended Changes to the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) Report and Survey

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

Highlights:

- The Committee received an update on the work of its USRI Working Group, which was established by the Committee on November 22, 2018, and learned that recommendations for three immediate changes to the report and survey are being brought forward at this time
- The Committee discussed:
 - The recommendation to remove Question 1 (the rating of overall quality of instruction) from the survey, and it was suggested that consideration be given to placing this question at the end rather than removing it entirely
 - That Question 1 is considered to be a risky question, as it is a very general question and because responses can be influenced by bias and other factors
 - That specific and targeted questions, like Question 2 (the rating of the effectiveness of the course outline), are easier for students to understand and can provide helpful feedback to instructors
 - That the survey data is complex, and should not be used to judge or compare instructors
 - That units need guidance on how to appropriately and effectively interpret and use the USRI data
 - That the survey data could be complemented by a teaching dossier

- In response to questions:
 - It was emphasised that the Faculty surveys that accompany the USRI are not being reviewed by the Committee's USRI Working Group
 - The difference between mean and mode and why the working group has determined that mode is a preferred measure for the USRI data were explained
 - It was reported that USRI-related resource materials will be developed and education sessions will be offered for units, instructors, and students
- The Committee learned that the recommended changes will be presented to the General Faculties Council (GFC) Executive Committee on November 27, 2019, for recommendation, and then it is expected that the changes will be presented to the GFC on December 12, 2019, for approval. The working group will continue its work, and it is expected that further recommendations for changes to the USRI survey, report and processes will come forward in the future.

5. 2017 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Unit Action Plans and 2019 Progress Updates

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Leslie Reid and Robin Arseneault presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided an overview of the NSSE and how the 2017 NSSE data was handled, and how the units' resulting action plans were developed
- The Committee discussed:
 - The timing of the NSSE, and it was suggested that if the survey were executed earlier, more students (such as those in Education) might be able to participate
 - That the University's NSSE and curriculum review processes, including the units' NSSE action plans, are highly regarded by other institutions
 - That the NSSE provides valuable information on students' engagement, but that it is also important to gather information on instructors' experiences and so a Faculty Survey of Engagement (FSE) instrument for the University is in development
- In response to questions:
 - It was explained that the NSSE administering organization sends a link to the survey to eligible students. It was clarified that some fourth-year students may not receive the survey if they have not completed enough credits to be considered to be in their final year, and that some Faculties do not participate in the NSSE.
 - It was confirmed that it is acceptable for units to encourage students to participate in the NSSE, but that students cannot be required to do so
- The Committee was reminded that the NSSE will next be delivered to first and final year undergraduate students in 2020, and it was reported that a communication plan will be developed and shared with the Committee

6. Mental Health Strategy Teaching and Learning Sub-group

Melissa Boyce presented this item.

Highlights:

- The Committee was reminded that the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee is one of six subcommittees established by the Campus Mental Health Strategy's Implementation Advisory Committee. The Committee received a presentation on the initiatives of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee, including the mental health course outline statement and D2L resources, the Mental Health and Wellbeing workshop series, the Embedded Certificate in Mental Wellbeing and Resilience, and a monthly blog.
- The Committee discussed:
 - The Embedded Certificate in Mental Wellbeing and Resilience, and in particular the WELL 300 course, and that the certificate should be promoted to students
 - That students and faculty are asked to participate in a number of surveys, and so consideration should be given as to when and how the proposed needs and strengths assessment will be conducted

7. Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning (TI) Report

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Natasha Kenny, Senior Director of the TI, presented this item.

Highlights:

- Sixty-four applications to the University Teaching and Learning Grants program were received, which is the highest number of applications to this program to date. Six adjudication committees will be meeting during December, and then the recipients will be announced near the end of January.
- Proposals for the 2020 Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching are due December 11, 2019. The theme is Mentorship in Higher Education, and the conference will take place May 3-5, 2020.
- The deadline to apply for the Winter cohort of the Academic Staff Certificate in University Teaching and Learning is December 10, 2019
- The resources available on the TI website are widely accessed and downloaded, and the TI welcomes the open sharing and adaptation of these resources

8. Students' Union Report

Kevin Dang, Students' Union (SU) representative to the Committee, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) was thanked for attending the Students' Legislative Council meeting to speak with students about the NSSE, USRI, and experiential learning

- The SU's Undergraduate Research Symposium will be held November 26-28, 2019, and members of the campus community are encouraged to attend
- Applications for the Quality Money grants are due on November 29, 2019
- The Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) is gathering in Edmonton this week, with work-integrated-learning as one of the topics for discussion

9. Graduate Students' Association Report

There was no report.

10. Identification of Take-aways

The Co-Chair identified the following take-aways from the meeting:

- After approval by the GFC, colleagues should be made aware of the changes to the USRI report and survey
- Colleagues should be encouraged to review their unit's NSSE action plan, and should be reminded that the 2020 NSSE is coming and that it is acceptable to encourage students to take the survey seriously and to participate
- Any deadlines communicated to the Committee, such as the deadline to apply to the Academic Staff Certificate in University Teaching and Learning or to submit proposals for the 2020 Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching, should be shared with colleagues
- The initiatives of the Mental Health Strategy Teaching and Learning Subcommittee should be shared

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Adjournment

The November 21, 2019 Teaching and Learning Committee meeting was adjourned by consensus.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

Susan Belcher
University Secretary