



General Faculties Council  
**TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**  
Approved Minutes

February 14, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

Zoom

***Voting Members***

Leslie Reid, Co-Chair  
Barbara Brown, Academic Co-Chair  
Fabiola Aparicio-Ting – left after Item 5  
Rebecca Archer  
Wendy Benoit  
William Bridel  
Tracey Clancy  
Heather Ganshorn  
Shaziah Jinnah Morsette  
Jennifer Markides – arrived during Item 5  
Dawn Johnston  
Fabian Neuhaus – arrived during Item 4, left during Item 5  
Hieu Ngo  
Evaristus Oshionebo  
James Steele

***Non-Voting Members***

Natasha Kenny  
Brenda McDermott  
D'Arcy Norman  
Trevor Poffenroth – arrived/left during Item 4  
Mary-Jo Romaniuk  
Verity Turpin  
Justine Wheeler

***Secretary***

Courtney McVie

***Scribe***

Elizabeth Sjogren

***Regrets***

Michelle Drefs  
Dianne Gereluk  
Yani Jazayeri  
Barb McCutcheon  
Leighton Wilks

***Guests***

Jessica Snow, Manager - Digital Experience, Communications/Office of Advancement – for Item 4

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The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Agenda for the February 14, 2023 Teaching and Learning Committee meeting be approved.

**Carried**

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

The Co-Chair reported that the General Faculties Council (GFC) approved the new Inclusive Excellence in Teaching and Learning award at its February 9, 2023 meeting. The GFC expressed its thanks to the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) and the group that prepared the proposal. It was highlighted that the terms of reference for all the awards in the University of Calgary Teaching Awards program will be reviewed next year.

The Academic Co-Chair expressed that a meeting held in January to discuss the University's hybrid learning spaces was engaging. It was shared that a report on this subject will be brought to the TLC for discussion at its March meeting.

## **3. Approval of the January 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

### **Moved/Seconded**

That the Minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting held on January 17, 2023 be approved.

**Carried**

## **4. Academic Course Content in the UCalgary Web Environment**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Jessica Snow presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter gave a presentation on academic course content in the University's web environment, including that:
  - An investigation of the University's online course listings has been conducted, including user testing, student surveys and focus groups and interviews
  - The University's UNITIS contacts directory will be decommissioned this year, and there is consideration being given to if and how academic course information should be displayed in the Drupal web system
  - The investigation determined that:
    - Students must navigate too many sources of information to find the information they need
    - Multiple platforms display similar information. Too much near-duplicate content can lead to inaccuracies and confusion, as the high volume of content is difficult to update and maintain.
    - Students indicate that their preferred platforms for finding course and program information are the Schedule Builder, Academic Calendar, Course Listings, Google search engine, Degree Guide, Faculty websites, and Explore Programs
    - Students indicate that the important information for enrolment decisions

includes: course title/description/date/time, course availability and waitlist information, course outlines, course learning outcomes, deadlines, and assessments, and instructor information

- The registration process is not friendly to neurodivergent people
- Access to course outlines would be beneficial for students and staff
  - It was found that 92% of students surveyed said that accessing course outlines before enrolment would be beneficial, and the reasons for wanting to review course outlines include: identifying scheduling conflicts of major assessments, reviewing types of assessments (e.g., individual vs. group work), and understanding course learning outcomes
  - Staff said that reasons for wanting to review course outlines include: supporting students with accommodations, and providing transfer students and alumni with course information
- Recommendations include:
  - Use the University's new Academic Catalogue (launching in 2023) to provide course outlines instead of building a new system or procuring a third-party platform for this
  - Explore how to improve the student experience in the University's web environment by consolidating content and systems and collaborating with teams on content standards
- Discussion included that:
  - It is not reasonable to expect that instructors will have course outlines ready at the time of course registration, which can be 6-12 months ahead, for reasons including that sometimes the course instructor is not known until shortly before a course starts
  - Making previous course outlines available is possible, but could be misleading to students as some course components (e.g. assessment formats, assessment timing/deadlines, required readings) may change
  - Perhaps the Academic Catalogue could include course descriptions that set out the learning objectives and other consistent detailed information about each course. This would support course registration decisions as it is more information than currently in the University Calendar but would not be as potentially misleading as previous course outlines.
  - Consolidating course information will positively impact the student experience
  - Information in the Academic Catalogue will also be useful for units, such as Libraries and Cultural Resources, which could use the course information to develop tools and resources for students
  - There needs to be clarity about making changes to a course outline, including when this can be done by an instructor, what can be changed, and who needs to be notified

## **5. Review of Course Outlines: Content, Regulations and Support Resources**

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

**Highlights:**

- The TLC heard that a review of the current course outline requirements and support materials has begun, and it will be determined if actions need to be taken to update the University's course outline regulations and support materials. The TLC was informed that several issues relating to course outlines have recently emerged, including:
  - Required course readings are to be listed in a course outline
  - A definition of 'required' in relation to course textbooks, readings, and resources is needed
  - Current information regarding required technology for courses is needed
  - Dates and deadlines for assessments in a course are to be included in a course outline
  - Students need information on course component modalities
  - Information about the use of AI-generated text in coursework is needed
- Discussion included:
  - The required links to campus mental health resources, including information about anxiety, and the Student Ombuds office are important. Perhaps the messaging in the course outlines could be enhanced to describe the services available.
  - A balance needs to be struck between having the course outline be contractual but easily digestible
  - Instructors need guidance on how to acquire and/or describe technology
  - A broad conversation about the purpose of the course outline is needed, including whether it is a contract
  - Some units have templates for their unit's course outlines, while other units allow for creativity and for the instructor to use the course outline as a meaningful part of communication about a course. A risk in having non-templated course outlines is that an instructor may inadvertently violate course outline regulations.
  - Knowing an instructor's approach to teaching and assessment is valuable to students when considering registration in a course, and this could be communicated through the course outline and/or Academic Catalogue. Information about whether a course will have group projects, term papers, etc. can impact student decisions. Details such as the dates of assessments are not needed as early.
  - Courses that are taught by sessional instructors, that do not have an instructor assigned, or that have an instructor change shortly before the start of classes will not have course outlines that can be published early
  - Teaching Assistants are often not assigned early, and this can impact the ability to finalise a course outline
  - An enhanced statement regarding equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility is needed in the required course outline information

**6. Teaching and Learning Round Table Discussion**

The TLC was given an opportunity to discuss matters currently impacting teaching and learning, and

discussed that:

- Covid-19 and other illnesses continue to have impact. Instructors are sometimes unable to deliver their teaching when ill, and in some cases it is not possible for a colleague to step in. There is no formal limit to how many lectures can be given via Zoom and/or recorded, but virtual delivery should be used in exceptional circumstances and not as a convenience.
- Ongoing conversations about delivery modality, particularly with respect to the learning experience and access to technology, are needed. Some undergraduate and graduate students thrive in an asynchronous learning environment, but others do not. Conversations about when asynchronous delivery is appropriate are needed.
- Podcasts became increasingly used during the pandemic, but a recent student survey indicated student dissatisfaction with this format
- A student-centred learning environment is good, but conversations are needed about the expectations surrounding instructors. Students will be absent or will request extensions or deferrals due to illness and other reasons, but some reasons for this can appear to be less reasonable. Boundaries are needed, as tremendous work goes into rescheduling and creating new assessments. It was observed that the Taylor Institute has resources available, such as on helping students cope with anxiety in the classroom.
- The University is seeing a significant rise in the number of deferred exams, mostly due to illness, but in some cases students need to be assisted in thinking through if deferring an exam is in their best interest. Some students need to learn how to manage their workload and to make fully informed decisions about the impact of deferring.
- Clear instructions are needed for the process a student is to follow if they need to request an extension for an assignment or deferral of an exam, as some students do not request an extension or deferral because they do not understand the process or what will happen next. Also, there should be alternate formal ways to request a deferral beyond the current written form, such as submitting an oral request.
- Some students ask for extensions to deadlines but other students (i.e., those who are less assertive) do not, and there can be perception of unfairness

#### **7. Course Feedback Implementation Working Group (CFIWG) Update**

The Co-Chairs reported that the CFIWG has met three times, and has been discussing its workplan and the target timeline for bringing recommendations forward. The CFIWG will continue to meet, and may have some points of discussion, such as a possible new name for the course-end survey and themes for the core institutional questions, to bring to the TLC for discussion at its April meeting.

#### **8. Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning Report**

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

Highlights:

- The 2023 Teaching and Learning Grants competition is currently being adjudicated and the results will be released by March 1

- There were 146 presentation proposals submitted for the 2023 Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching, and registration is now open. There will be some registration grants available this year.
- The TI has developed several resources relating to artificial intelligence in the postsecondary environment, including about artificial intelligence (AI) apps and ChatGPT. The TI will continue to develop additional resources, and in June a course design session will focus on AI and assessment.

### **9. Graduate Students' Association Report**

James Steele, Graduate Students' Association (GSA) member of the committee, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The deadline for nominations for the 2022-2023 GSA Awards is February 24, 2023. There are awards for teaching and supervision, and nominations are encouraged.

### **10. Students' Union Report**

Shaziah Jinnah Morsette, Students' Union (SU) member of the committee, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The deadline for nominations for the Winter 2023 SU Teaching Excellence Awards is February 24, 2023, and students are encouraged to nominate their professors and teaching assistants
- A workshop will be held in March to increase student understanding of quality assurance and the curriculum reviews system and process
- The SU and Sarah Adams, Libraries and Cultural Resources, continue to jointly present about Open Educational Resources (OER) and the feasibility of OER solutions. There will be a communication sent to Associate Deans Teaching and Learning following an upcoming presentation.

### **11. Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **12. Adjournment**

The February 14, 2023 Teaching and Learning Committee meeting was adjourned by consensus.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.