

General Faculties Council
TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes

April 16, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

AD 167 (Governors Boardroom)/Zoom

Voting Members

Wendy Benoit, Co-Chair
Barbara Brown, Academic Co-Chair
Sandra Amin
Fabiola Aparicio-Ting*
Mark Bauer
William Bridel*
Dianne Gereluk
Kathleen James
Fabian Neuhaus
Hieu Ngo*
Scott Radford

Regrets

Rebecca Archer
Tracey Clancy
Sarah Eaton
Dawn Johnston
Barb McCutcheon
Jennifer Markides
Geoffrey Messier
Kirsten Nepriily
Evaristus Oshionebo
Trevor Poffenroth

Guests

Jessie Dinh, incoming Students' Union Vice-President (Academic)
Ken Lane, Director - IT Solutions & Service Delivery – attended for Trevor Poffenroth
Caroline O'Shea*, Project Associate, Student and Enrolment Services – present for Item 5

**Attended virtually*

Non-Voting Members

Michelle Drefs
Natasha Kenny
Vui Kien Liao*
D'Arcy Norman
Mary-Jo Romaniuk*
Verity Turpin – left during Item 6
Justine Wheeler* – left during Item 6

Secretary

Courtney McVie

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 April 16, 2024 Teaching and Learning Committee meeting be approved.

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

The Co-Chair included the following in her remarks:

- The Committee was thanked for engaging in open and clear dialogue about agenda items and for sharing perspectives in an inclusive way
- The Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching will be held April 24-26, 2024, with the theme of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and belonging in postsecondary education, and participation was encouraged

The Academic Co-Chair included the following in her remarks:

- Sandra Amin, outgoing Students' Union (SU) Vice-President (Academic), was acknowledged on this occasion of her last Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) meeting, and Jessie Dinh, incoming SU Vice-President (Academic) and observer of the meeting, was welcomed.
- The term of Kirsten Neprily, outgoing Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Vice-President (Academic), as the GSA representative on the TLC is ending and Alexandria Poppendorf, incoming GSA Vice-President (Academic), will be the new GSA representative

3. Approval of the March 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting held on March 12, 2024 be approved.

Carried**4. Recommendation of Revisions to the TLC Terms of Reference**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. The University Secretary presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter reported that the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the General Faculties Council (GFC) standing committees are reviewed every three years, that three revisions to the TLC TOR are being recommended to reflect that the TLC reviews and provides feedback on curriculum review reports, that the TLC occasionally conducts some appointment work, and that the TLC currently has no responsibilities under the University's Enterprise Risk Management program, and that this

proposal will be presented to the GFC Executive Committee for approval

- There were no comments or questions

Moved/Seconded

That the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) recommend that the General Faculties Council Executive Committee approve the revisions to the TLC Terms of Reference, in the form provided to the Committee.

Carried**5. M1 (Supporting Documentation) Academic Regulation Review**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Verity Turpin presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponent reported that the M1 working group has appreciated the extensive engagement and feedback on the regulation to date and then provided an overview of the revisions currently being proposed, noting that the essence of the M1 regulation is not changing (course instructors can ask for documentation; students decide what documentation to provide, and course instructors decide if they will accept it), and that effort is being made to achieve clarity in the wording and to support the University community in operationalising the regulation
- Discussion included:
 - The use of the word ‘verification’ rather than ‘documentation’ is potentially problematic, as an instructor may interpret that they should be confirming the authenticity of the material provided by the student. There is no intent that instructors should be verifying the material provided and this should not be implied. An instructor should be considering the legitimacy of the reason for the absence and not the legitimacy of the material.
 - The list of examples of supporting verification adds a lot of words to the regulation, but does not remove the problem of guessing and interpretation as the list includes “other documentation that relates to their situation.” Also, there is no indication if one type of verification carries more weight than another (e.g. whether a formal accident or illness report lands differently than a wedding invitation or account of family vacation), and it is unclear how “personal statement” and “student declaration of absence” differ.
 - Some students may disclose more personal information than is needed
 - Instructors should be compelled to accept valid reasons for absences, and instructors should be provided clear indication of what reasons must be accepted, but students should understand that an instructor does not have to grant all requests. Normally, students should be managing their time to complete course work and assessments as scheduled. An instructor may need to set a boundary for what alternate arrangements are possible to be offered, in order to be fair to the rest of the students in the course and to meet operational limitations.
 - The M1 regulation should provide clarity around documentation, and if necessary be read in tandem with regulations E (Course Information) and G (Academic Assessments and Examinations) for appropriate course context, but the M1 regulation does not replace the relationship between an instructor and a student and the importance of communication

- It was suggested that the M1 regulation be more strongly linked to related regulations of the Calendar
- The alternate arrangements described in regulation G1.2 (In-Course Assessments and Absences) should take into account that a student is to have received 30% of their grade by the withdrawal deadline
- Consistency of language between regulations M, E, and G is desirable. For example, the proposed M1 regulation uses the word “exemption” but regulation G uses the words “alternate arrangement”, and it was suggested that M1 be made consistent with the other regulations. It was noted that the word “exemption” could also be misinterpreted as meaning that a student does not have to do an assessment, and this may not be the case.
- It was suggested that the M1 regulation could read “This can be for” rather than “This may be for... a prolonged absence...”
- Guidelines can be helpful in interpreting regulations. It was reported that a website to help instructors and students understand the Calendar regulations is being developed.
- Fairness to both students and instructors is needed
- The proposed M1 text only refers to ‘extenuating circumstances’ in relation to final examinations and not in reference to in-course assessments, and it was suggested that adding the wording “extenuating circumstances” to this section be considered for consistency
- The proposed M1 text clearly states that an instructor cannot request medical documentation, but it should be made clearer that a personal statement or student declaration of absence can be used in all situations, including illness. It was suggested that “medical documentation” be defined, and that the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) office be consulted regarding student disclosure to an instructor regarding illness.
- A student with a full courseload may be communicating with several instructors about their absence, possibly while still dealing with the issue/event itself, and may be receiving different responses and alternate arrangements from each instructor
- A student may find it difficult to communicate with an instructor, and so having clear information in the course outline about alternate arrangements or a few options for communicating with the instructor would be helpful
- The regulations or associated guidelines should support instructors and students navigating the processes around missed assessments, including being explicit on what steps instructors and students are each responsible for, and what paths of next steps there are if an instructor and student do not agree on a decision made. The proposed M1 language requires further edits to improve clarity and support instructors and students in understanding supporting documentation.
- In response to a question, it was reported that the working group conducted a scan of the U15 practices relating to supporting documentation, and it was determined that institutions are handling this differently

6. Teaching and Learning Updates and Emerging Issues Roundtable

The Committee was given an opportunity to discuss matters currently impacting teaching and learning, and topics mentioned included financial constraints, space planning, summer workshop programs, strategic planning, experience surveys, the 2024 Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching, supporting neurodivergent students, software and cloud storage, teaching development, Open Educational Resources (OERs), pathway and bridging programs, and the potential to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) in administrative and other processes.

It was reported that Continuing Education offers the free course *Essential Microsoft Office Skills for the Workplace* which members may be interested to take.

7. Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning Report

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

Highlights:

- The TI's Spring events include:
 - An Educational Leadership and Mentorship course will be offered May 27-30, 2024 as part of the Certificate in University Teaching and Learning for academic staff. Participants use their learnings in the course to help other academic staff members to strengthen their teaching and learning practices, so there are ripple effects of this program.
 - An Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) in Teaching and Learning course for academic staff will be offered May 7-June 7, 2024. Completion of the course earns the participant a TI University Teaching and Learning EDIA badge.
- The Undergraduate Research Summer Studentships program is seeing its highest year ever, with an increase in applications and more total funding awarded

8. Graduate Students' Association Report

There was no report.

9. Students' Union Report

Sandra Amin, SU member of the committee, thanked the Committee for being welcoming and for engaging in important and valuable conversations.

10. Approved Revisions to the 2024-2025 GFC and GFC Standing Committees Meeting Schedule and the 2025-2026 Meeting Schedule

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda for information only.

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Adjournment

Moved/Seconded

That the Teaching and Learning Committee adjourn the April 16, 2024 meeting.

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Courtney McVie
University Secretary