Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning (SCUTL)
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, September 8, 2021
2:30 – 4:00 pm
Zoom

Attendees: Kathleen Burke (Beedie) – arrived at 2:37pm, Susan Clements-Vivian (FCAT), Diana Cukierman (FAS) - arrived at 2:37pm, Nanda Dimitrov (CEE), Elizabeth Elle (Chair), Sheri Fabian (CEE), Scott Harrison (FENV), Sarah Johnson (FS), Kristiina Kumpulainen (EDUC) – left at 3:48pm, Mark Lechner (FHS) – arrived at 2:40pm, Tracey Mason-Innes (SS), Judit Nagy (undergraduate), Mike Stanger (IT)

Absent: I-Chant Chiang (CEE), Tim Loblaw (CEE), John Stockie (FS), Amanda Watson (FASS)

Recorder: Erin Babingao

1. Approval of agenda & previous minutes (June 2021)
The agenda and minutes were approved. The committee welcomed new members: FCAT faculty representative, Susan Clements-Vivian, and undergraduate representative, Judit Nagy. New designates included Nanda Dimitrov, Senior Director of the Centre of Educational Excellence (CEE), in place of I-Chant Chiang, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Tim Loblaw, Director or Learning and Teaching Technology, both of CEE. Tracey Mason-Innes, Executive Director of Student Affairs, is now attending rather than delegating to another (previously held by Muriel Klemetski, Director of Work Integrated Learning).

2. Chair’s report and updates
Elizabeth is currently working on several projects including being tasked with heading the university vaccine declaration as well as many teaching projects that are moving forward this academic year. The undergraduate Educational Goals consultations were ready to roll out this past summer but the President advised to postpone due to pandemic exhaustion. The consultation results will then be reviewed by this committee and sent to Senate for adoption. In addition, the new Student Experience Framework will soon be rolled out by Elizabeth and Rummana Hemani Khan, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Student Services & International. There are three pillars, Guiding the student journey, Quality of the learning experience, and Supporting the whole student. SCUTL members are advocates for these initiatives.

3. Updates to the Terms of Reference
The Terms of Reference (ToR) with proposed changes was emailed to the group prior to the meeting for their approval and feedback. The size of the committee is staying the same. Nanda as the CEE Senior Director will replace two of her very able Directors in CEE, as the Senior Director position had not yet

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been filled when the last ToR was updated, and adding another undergraduate plus student alternates was proposed, which is the SCUS model. There were thoughts on how faculty reps are elected into SCUTL. They are currently elected by Senate though the deans put names forward to Senate beforehand. Should it be made official that their Faculties elect them instead? Regardless the duties of the faculty reps will not change. Though it may be challenging to operationalize adding more student and faculty reps from across campuses and disciplines, it is valuable to include the student experience in this work. Most students are unaware SCUTL exists and are under the impression that Senate is not accessible. It is important to note that since students who volunteer to be in university committees or working groups only represent a small portion of the student body, SCUTL should reach out to the rest of the student body who are less engaged as appropriate. SCUTL should also consider ways to spread the word about open student positions. There was a discussion about opening SCUTL meetings for any students to drop-in. Though SCUTL meetings have not been run publicly since moving to zoom, it would be a good opportunity to have observers and if a topic arises where student feedback is needed, we can advertise and have them attend. (note: ToR do indicate meetings are public)

MOTION by Elizabeth: Moved to change our ToR including committee membership. The motion was seconded by Sheri Fabian and passed without dissent.

4. Request for feedback: Changes to the Excellence in Teaching award
The Teaching Awards subcommittee includes Elizabeth, Kathleen Burke, Diana Cukierman, and Mark Lechner. They have met six times over the spring and summer 2021 semesters. They created a document for consultation in regards to the Excellence in Teaching Award, which was emailed to the group prior to the meeting. The subcommittee asked SCUTL for feedback on redefining the term “excellence” and the award structure. The document lists award suggestions from the whole committee last academic year and from the subcommittee.

There was a conversation about the term “EDI” in the first point of the definition attributes and its negative connotations: Teachings that centre the learning experience transparently engage their students in their own learning, use diverse pedagogies, and embrace the principles of EDI. Many perceive EDI as if they are forced to help someone who is in need. “Inclusive” should be added before “pedagogies” and the last part about EDI removed so that it captures a broader spectrum of candidates and we do not miss anyone that should be included just because of one term. “Inclusive teaching” or “culturally relevant pedagogies” are alternatives as they induce EDI and promote decolonizing, Universal Design for Learning, and other approaches. Adding educational leadership as an attribute was discussed as it is typically the intermediate step to an international teaching award, such as the 3M Teaching Award winners, who are known to be game-changers in their field. The subcommittee focused more on teaching excellence as it’s difficult to define educational leadership but perhaps can add it as an extra award or criterion. We have time to build more aspirational aspects into the teaching landscape. Because the process of changing policies is lengthy and rigorous having to go through Senate and the Board of Governors, we may not add the attributes into the policy (but have them as a procedure) to allow a more agile response if edits are wanted in the future.

The specialized awards we have listed would also be considered “procedure” if we move ahead with changes. Integrating research in teaching was suggested as teaching informing research or research informing teaching, but may be disciplinary, research on teaching, or publications on teaching. Adding innovation and leadership awards would make the awards more aspirational. One downfall of using
“leadership” in a proposed early career award is that person may not have had those leadership opportunities yet so we do not want to counter that award. The subcommittee will discuss incorporating “research”, educational leadership, and more definitions. The committee can email further feedback to Elizabeth. Next steps include a separate procedures document which will be drafted based on today’s feedback, Elizabeth will consult with SFU leadership and Counsel, for advice on how to move forward with policy revision and implementation.

5. Return to campus: emerging issues?
There were no comments on return to campus. It is likely too early in the semester for any issues to arise.

6. Future meeting planning
The committee discussed their meeting location preferences for the rest of the semester. Most agreed we should not hold hybrid meetings since they are confusing and difficult to run. Many agreed Zoom is currently the best way to meet as some faculty are based in Surrey, though it would be great to see everyone in person. Depending on the state of the pandemic later in the fall or next spring, a working lunch meeting can be planned so the committee can meet in-person at least once.

Since there are no formal agenda calls in SCUTL, Elizabeth encouraged members to contribute to the monthly agendas throughout the semester. There was a suggestion to discuss mastery grading at a future meeting. Elizabeth will reach out to Tom Nault, University Registrar and Executive Director of Student Enrollment, to better understand the landscape around SFU’s grading systems (for instance we currently have competency-based grading). Overall committee goals were discussed and will be reviewed further at a future meeting.

7. AOB/roundtable
No time permitted for AOB.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50pm.

ACTION ITEMS

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<tr>
<th>Action Description</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Update the membership list on the SCUTL Senate web site.</td>
<td>E. Babingao</td>
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<td>Teaching awards subcommittee to meet</td>
<td>K. Burke</td>
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<td></td>
<td>D. Cukierman</td>
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<td>E. Elle</td>
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<td>M. Lechner</td>
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<td>Reach out to Tom Nault regarding grading scale and transcripts.</td>
<td>E. Elle</td>
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<td>Edit the ToR based on the committee’s suggestions. Email it to the group before</td>
<td>E. Elle</td>
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<td>bringing to SCAR, and then to Senate.</td>
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Next meeting:
Wednesday, October 13, 2021
2:30pm-4pm
Zoom