Task Force on Teaching and Learning: 
Recommendations to the VP, Academic 
January 31, 2010 (Revised) 

I. Introduction 

In June 2008, as part of the University's commitment to advance its strategic goals in the area of teaching and learning and in response to the LIDC’s external review, the Associate VP, Academic established a Task Force on Teaching and Learning (TFTL). The Task Force was charged with making recommendations aimed at supporting quality teaching and learning at SFU. Early in the committee’s process, it became apparent that its scope needed to encompass many institutional dimensions related to teaching and learning. 

In Fall 2008 the Task Force gathered information about teaching and learning, by reviewing a large set of existing SFU and other documents (including the LIDC external review and SCUTL’s report on student course evaluations) and by surveying or interviewing more than 300 members of the SFU community. In an interim report published in January 2009, the Task Force outlined the main issues that arose from the information gathering processes and sought feedback about those issues in four participatory community events. During these events, volunteers for four working groups were solicited, to examine more closely the issues that had emerged as most important. Namely these issues related to (1) teaching evaluation and rewards, (2) the coordination of teaching support, (3) student learning, and (4) community and policy. After receiving the university community’s feedback on a set of draft recommendations and an initial summary to the VPA, the TFTL’s final report and accompanying FAQ are complete. This revised document outlines final recommendations for consideration by the VP, Academic. 

II. Identified Issues, Proposed Solutions and Recommendations 

Teaching and learning are complex activities that require integrated support at many levels. The recommendations presented here are broad, and although presented individually, many issues overlap. If accepted, they will require refinement and elaboration during the process of implementation. 

1. Vision, Principles and Directions 

Issues and Proposed Solutions: The SFU community would benefit from a more explicit statement of principles that guide teaching and learning processes. SFU does not have an articulated statement of its vision and principles for teaching and learning that is related to an academic plan. This makes it difficult to identify strategic directions, to organize support in effective ways, and to work towards a shared vision. 

In response to this need, the Task Force drafted an initial set of principles (below) to consider for implementation at the institutional level, recognizing that outcomes may assume different forms in different disciplines. 

Recommendation #1: Establish and communicate a vision statement and principles to provide direction and common purpose around teaching and learning at SFU. 

The vision statement and principles below are in accord with principles in the 2010 - 2013 academic planning vision that prescribe that SFU should (1) enable students to define and reach their goals, (2) deliver high quality teaching, learning and research, (3) employ innovative approaches, and (4) create an intellectually stimulating and culturally vibrant environment. Though a sub-recommendation on institutional standards is made below, details of this vision still require definition. Subsequent sections of this document may help prepare the way, along with consultation with the university community.
**Draft Vision and Principles**

Simon Fraser University creates, values, and supports diverse, meaningful learning experiences. Teaching and learning are central to our culture and practice. We support, develop, and reward effective teaching and learning.

1. Teaching and research are central to the University's mission; both are valued and rewarded as important scholarly activities.
2. Teaching and learning are visible, celebrated and showcased.
3. Our students have access to rich learning experiences and benefit from the relations among research, teaching, and learning.
4. We engage in inquiry about teaching, and support pedagogical innovation to enhance our practices and student learning.
5. Our teaching is continually evaluated to promote and ensure the highest quality of teaching and learning.

1.1. **Ensure that appropriate learning and teaching-related standards are articulated institutionally and in all units.**

   This necessitates involvement by Faculties, departments, instructors and other stakeholders. To recognize and value teaching and learning requires a clear definition and criteria to determine its level of “success”. The University is foremost a “learning enterprise” and just as it sets quality standards for research activities, it should do so for the process and outcomes of teaching and student learning within the operation of program and courses, and at the student recruitment and public relations level.

2. **Communication and Community**

   **Issues and Proposed Solutions:** Respondents to the Task Force’s surveys and interviews frequently mentioned that a sense of community around teaching and learning occurs only in pockets at SFU rather than more broadly across the University. There also appears to be limited awareness among both instructors and their support providers of successful teaching and learning initiatives and the existence of support for teaching and learning in areas other than those with which they are directly associated. SFU could more fully showcase, share and celebrate excellent teaching and learning experiences. There is not a communication channel to reach all teaching and learning stakeholders and there are some challenges with recognizing that many roles (instructors, students and staff) are integral in discussions and decision-making about teaching and learning. Lastly, some SFU community members have encountered institutional obstacles and ad hoc practices that impede and discourage their efforts to be good teachers.

   SFU has many teaching and learning successes, services and forms of support at its three campuses. Recognizing, celebrating and communicating our assets enables the university community to benefit from in-house expertise and to develop a stronger culture around teaching and learning. Although cultural change takes time and is dependent on institutional changes in multiple areas, an initiative aimed at improving communication could begin to foster a stronger university community around teaching and learning.

   **Recommendation #2:** Develop and implement a phased institutional plan to raise awareness of the broad range of SFU teaching and learning successes, services and support for teaching and learning and to ensure that they are recognized, used, and celebrated in all three campuses in an appropriate manner.
3. Expectations about the Learning Experience

**Issues and Proposed Solutions:** It would be beneficial to make expectations about learning clearer, particularly at the institutional level. Respondents who provided feedback to the Task Force reported several challenges. The most frequent were:

- Absence of clearly-stated expectations for learning or learning processes.
- Inadequate encouragement and opportunity for instructors to experiment with new teaching practices, to learn about successful practices, and to engage in interdisciplinary activities.
- Inconsistencies across programs in opportunities for students to benefit from the relationships between teaching, learning, and research.
- Inadequate formal recognition of experiential learning as an appropriate way to meet degree requirements.
- Inadequate formal recognition of learning that extends beyond the classroom (co-op, field school, etc.)
- Inadequate emphasis on aspects of the VPA’s vision and proposed outcomes pertaining to the value of “a wide variety of learning experiences that develop long-term skills in learning”, the value of research strengths, and the revitalization of curriculum.

The recent SFU academic vision emphasizes the value of ethical, responsible and informed citizenship, and definition of program outcomes by academic units. To aid this process, identifying expectations around learning and the valued qualities of all SFU graduates would be helpful. This would entail a range of interconnected learning expectations from general, high-level institutional, to discipline-specific program-level.

**Recommendation #3:** Expand student-centered approaches to teaching within a process of ongoing improvement.

The following sub-recommendations should be regarded as a starting point.

3.1 Identify and promote a set of attributes that every SFU graduate should possess or be able to demonstrate.

Building upon the 2006 Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents guidelines regarding University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations, the Task Force envisions an ideal set of attributes that all students (undergraduate and graduate), completing a degree at SFU would acquire by graduation. Specific criteria would pertain to: (1) depth and breadth of knowledge, (2) knowledge of methodologies, (3) application of knowledge, (4) communication skills, (5) awareness of limits of knowledge, and (6) autonomy and professional capacity. Additional attributes would be established for specific disciplines and for completing graduate degrees.

3.2 Ensure a student-centered focus in the curriculum (1) by identifying learning expectations across all levels of the curriculum (in class and out of class) with consideration of the more general SFU graduate attributes, (2) by ensuring that the curriculum is well structured from the perspective of developing learning and (3) by providing clearly stated information about expectations and responsibilities of instructors and students in syllabi for all courses.

Details of this recommendation suggest (1) identifying program learning expectations well in advance of course registration, (2) ensuring that appropriate policies and practices pertaining to curriculum review are in place, (3) developing processes that provide instructors with opportunities to learning new instructional strategies, and (4) developing strategies to encourage the exploration of new learning experiences and ways for students to advance through their program of study. This student-centered focus would also include clear learning goals for graduate students within their disciplines.
3.3 Determine mechanisms to develop, recognize, and integrate more research, experiential, and international learning opportunities into the formal curriculum and recognize these with integral academic credit.

The recently proposed academic vision recognizes the important interplay among research, teaching and learning, and emphasizes the value of a variety of learning experiences. This recommendation encourages SFU to explore the feasibility of integrating peer-mentored learning opportunities and an explicit research requirement across undergraduate degree programs (in addition to existing honors programs). The sub-recommendation would enable SFU to investigate: (1) the value of a competitive-admission undergraduate research program with the objective of producing a sustainable and internationally recognized undergraduate research training environment, (2) processes that allow a unit to designate a percentage or number of experiential (E) or international (I) opportunities toward minimum degree completion requirements and, (3) mechanisms for quality assurance and regular review of E or I opportunities. Recognizing that graduate students are teachers, researchers, and students, attention would be placed on the development and interrelation of these multiple roles.

3.4 Support the piloting of alternative approaches to interdisciplinary, theme-based, and peer-supported learning opportunities, such as peer-group learning, clustered curriculum groupings across departments on topical issues, team-teaching approaches, first year experiences, mentoring of undergraduates by graduate students, and semester cohort groups.

Activities related to this sub-recommendation include (1) raising the profile of existing projects, (2) creating new opportunities for students and faculty members to engage in interdisciplinary research and teaching, (3) explore sustainable, supplemental instruction for courses having historically difficult content (e.g. opportunities for ‘no-instructor present’ group learning), (4) advertise existing successes in interdisciplinary teaching, and facilitate new initiatives, and (5) regularly, and critically review all extra-curricular programming (e.g. work study). If this sub-recommendation were implemented, it would help “expose students to different perspectives and complex, real world issues throughout their program” as articulated in the academic vision.

3.5 Review existing curricula and learning opportunities to identify, expand, develop, and celebrate those features that facilitate student engagement, constructive feedback, early investment in learning, and effective mentoring.

In accordance with this sub-recommendation, many features of the extant teaching and learning environment such as experiential learning opportunities (e.g., Co-operative education, Peer Educators Program, LEAD program), foundational academic preparation courses, and technological and e-learning pedagogies, should be made more visible and further incorporated in the curriculum. Furthermore, these features should be celebrated and promoted and regularly reviewed, adapted, and refined to facilitate student engagement and sustainable mentoring platforms.

3.6 Evaluate programs, courses, and instructors regularly, systematically, and appropriately for learning effectiveness.

This would be undertaken by all academic units at the program and course levels.

4. Recognizing, Evaluating and Rewarding Teaching

Issues and Proposed Solutions: Respondents to the Task Force’s surveys and interviews opined that teaching is undervalued. Key institutional level concerns that were expressed include:

- Teaching excellence and expertise were insufficiently recognized, rewarded, celebrated, and communicated. Until changes are made in these areas, available teaching supports will not be used to their full potential.
- Currently, SFU makes limited use of teaching expertise and successful support models that already exist within individual departments.
Effective teaching is a complex endeavor that involves skills in planning, motivation, observation and analysis, assessment, persistence, diplomacy, management, and creating engaging lessons out of “content.” Some experienced and novice teachers have little or no exposure to the fundamentals of teaching and learning as a profession. Being a content expert is necessary but not necessarily sufficient to providing excellent teaching. These faculty members would have appreciated the availability of a program offered at SFU, general and discipline-specific fundamentals, institutional and departmental support, and a positive community in which to participate.

Specific departmental level concerns about the recognition, evaluation, and reward for teaching included:

- The pursuit of excellence in teaching is not reflected in policy decisions, or when it is, practice is inconsistent with policy.
- There is inadequate or inconsistent recognition or compensation for course or program development, team-teaching or program coordination; publishing in teaching is not considered to be “research” for purposes of promotion or salary.
- Inadequate recognition and reward for teaching reduces the incentive to devote significant effort to teaching.
- Teaching is not evaluated in an adequate manner.
- Experimentation and innovation in teaching may result in lower teaching evaluations; this is particularly of concern in units where student evaluations are the main or only measure of teaching success.
- Methods used to evaluate teaching, plan workloads, determine promotion and tenure, and support teaching require more attention.
- Better support and more opportunities for development need to be made available to instructors who are not tenure-track professors (e.g., teaching faculty members, sessional instructors, TAs and TMs).
- To improve teaching and learning at SFU, top-level administrators must make a commitment to make it a priority, and to take appropriate actions to support instructors and students.

The findings of the Task Force echo the 2008 Senate Committee on University Teaching & Learning’s (SCUTL) report, which describes issues with teaching evaluations. Although comprehensive SFU data are lacking, it is apparent that the results of student course evaluations are the primary measure of teaching effectiveness at SFU. Program curricular reviews could provide additional evidence, but customarily, these reviews focus on course content and learning outcomes and not on teaching effectiveness within the program. The following recommendations are aimed at reinforcing the value attached to teaching at SFU.

**Recommendation #4: Increase awareness of policy provisions that address the importance accorded to teaching and learning, promote a consistent interpretation of policy provisions, and implement further initiatives that value the teaching mission of the University.**

4.1 **Tenure and Promotion Committees (TPCs) should evaluate teaching in a manner consistent with University policy.**

TPCs are mandated by negotiated policies to ensure that: “At a minimum, satisfactory performance in both teaching effectiveness and scholarly effectiveness must be demonstrated. Less than satisfactory performance in either will not meet the expectations of the University” (A11.05). Faculty members must be assessed in three categories of performance: teaching, research, and service. Evaluation criteria and standards should be documented by departments, clearly communicated to faculty members, and consistently applied. Separate evaluations of teaching, research, and service are required for each individual. Merit awards should be based on appropriate weightings of these components of workload. Generally, demonstrably good teaching should be rewarded on par with demonstrably good research. For promotion and tenure, faculty members and other instructors should be required to provide substantial evidence of instructional competency.
4.2 A coherent system to evaluate teaching and learning effectiveness should be developed.

In addition to developing and offering new course and instructor evaluation forms, and providing related support for instructors and departments (e.g. guides, peers, consultation), a more comprehensive approach with multiple inputs is needed to evaluate teaching and learning effectiveness.

4.3 Each unit must fulfill its obligations regarding the definition of a normal teaching workload and the equitable assignment of teaching responsibilities.

A negotiated Faculty Workload Policy (A30.03) defines a normal teaching workload as four regular courses or their equivalent. A range of activities is set out in the Policy from which equivalent teaching loads may be defined. Each unit is responsible for establishing specific equivalencies among these activities, subject to Faculty-level guidelines where these have been established, and with reference, where and when appropriate, to the norms of particular disciplines. It is the Chair’s/Director’s/Coordinator’s responsibility to promote equity within units. Similarly, it is the Dean’s responsibility to ensure fairness across departments/schools/programs. Finally, the Vice-President, Academic will initiate periodic workload reviews from a university-wide perspective, taking into account unique disciplinary requirements.

4.4 Recognize teaching activities through the online CV system.

Definitions and examples of all categories of SFU’s Online CV system should be elaborated and posted online. For each of the following categories, additional criteria may include: (1) Courses: other, e.g. summer schools, course innovation, instructional skills workshop; (2) Student training: (a) undergraduate student supervision (e.g. directed studies courses, summer NSERC students, honors theses/projects) and (b) other student training, e.g. competitions, internships; and (3) Professional development: Reflections on teaching development. Furthermore, two new categories are proposed: (1) Significant contributions to teaching and (2) Publications and materials related to teaching: (a) Publications and materials related to teaching: Journal articles, monographs, conference and workshop publications; (b) Textbooks, curriculum, and lecture notes, (c) Other, e.g. creation of software, exhibits, devices, models, and (d) Talks, e.g. at conferences and workshops.

4.5 Teaching and learning excellence and innovation, whether demonstrated by an individual or program, should be publicly recognized with awards, special recognitions and incentives.

A broader range of teaching awards should be offered that target different stages of an academic career (early, mid, late) and different instructor groups (faculty members, sessional instructors, TAs, TMs). Additional ways should be sought to reward and celebrate quality teaching (e.g., reduced service, one-time monetary awards, funds transferred to a faculty member’s grant account to support pedagogy or research enhancement, extra TA/TM help).

4.6 Teaching, learning, and scholarship should be respected and celebrated across the University.

The University should foster a culture that values both learning and scholarship within and among all its departments. Research on teaching should be acknowledged as a scholarly endeavour. Recognizing and celebrating teaching excellence should increase the value placed on it in SFU’s culture, and increase awareness of successful practices.

4.7 The importance of teaching and learning should be emphasized by example.

All faculty administrators should be seen as advocates of teaching and learning and model its value by engaging in teaching (e.g., team teaching, guest lecturer, graduate supervision).
4.8 Teaching as a profession should continue to be supported.

SFU should provide sufficient support and professional development to ensure that new and continuing teachers possess the knowledge and skills necessary to teach effectively. More needs to be done to encourage departments and units across campus to articulate their intentions and goals with respect to teaching within their academic plans.

5. A Teaching and Learning Support System

For academic units and instructors to foster learning in an effective manner, they need a well-integrated, responsive and dedicated support system. Currently, individuals and units with varying priorities and approaches are providing limited support to instructors throughout the university. Existing committees (i.e. SCUTL, LTCC, IDG) have limited functions, representation and linkages. Although central and local support for teaching is available, many community members who responded to the Task Force’s information gathering provided feedback that we should offer more extensive and better-organized support.

Issues and Proposed Solutions:

- Instructors have few opportunities for support such as one-on-one consultation with peers, peer mentors, or peer networks; there is little mentoring.
- Many faculty members do not participate in centralized teaching and learning-related activities provided by the current LIDC, such as working groups intended to address faculty members’ needs; the implication being that these activities are not perceived to be meaningful to individual needs or interests.
- There appears to be a discrepancy in teaching and learning support between what administrators and support providers believe is being offered and what instructors perceive is available reflecting not only a lack of communication, but a lack of agreement about what constitutes meaningful and relevant support.
- Communication and collaboration between the Faculties and the current LIDC, other support units, learning and instructional specialists, the Institute for the Study of Teaching and Learning in the Disciplines could be significantly improved. Educational and support staff may be at risk of becoming isolated, less engaged and less informed.
- In some cases, existing linkages across support units require better planning and coordination.
- The ongoing implementation of a desirable diverse curriculum and variety of learning experiences and teaching approaches will require additional teaching support.
- More discipline-based, and locally offered support and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues about teaching would be beneficial.
- It is important to ensure that sufficient well-functioning equipment, tools, resources, as well as appropriate physical spaces and access to technological innovations, are available to support teaching.

Although some support components and processes exist, SFU would benefit from a coordinated and extensive teaching and learning support system that encompasses instructors, staff and students’ experiences in the planning, design and implementation of support initiatives.

**Recommendation #5:** Establish a new, highly-integrated, coordinated and extensive teaching and learning support system that fosters the exchange of ideas and promotion of teaching between teachers within and between programs, between teaching support staff from different venues in the university, and between teachers and teaching support staff.

A new support system would include, but not be limited to specific elements identified in the sub-recommendations below and would achieve the following goals:

- Promote initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning at SFU, seeking funding when needed.
- Encourage collaboration between teachers and teaching support staff.
• Foster the integration of discipline-based and centralized support for teaching and learning in the context of existing institutional structures by: (1) coordinating and integrating the instructional support services that are working well, (2) determining which instructional support services to retain in their present form, to discontinue, or to build upon and refine, and (3) determining what additional forms of instructional support are required.
• Determine how best to accommodate change in student populations, budgetary constraints, pedagogy, digital media, and institutional initiatives.
• Improve the instructional/learning processes and environment at SFU (e.g., spaces, tools, equipment).
• Ensure that curricula are appropriately revised and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

The main purpose of the proposed teaching and learning support system is to facilitate a communication network focused on teaching and learning. Through formalized roles, processes and structures that bring together academic and operational units, the new system would improve coordination among different support units, formalize communication channels, foster collaboration, support teaching and learning at all campuses, and establish a process for determining support priorities. In addition, it would increase the visibility of support, enable referral, and ensure a point-of-presence.

Proposed New Components

5.1 Create a University Council on Teaching and Learning.

As implied above, part of the reason that such issues have not been sufficiently addressed is the lack of (1) representation from departments and Faculties to bring forward important teaching and learning support concerns at the institutional level, and (2) a forum for discussion and planning among departments, Faculties and support units. The Task Force proposes the establishment of a University Council on Teaching and Learning (UCTL) in which each Faculty would be represented by a University Teaching Fellow (UTF).

The purpose of the University Council on Teaching and Learning is to address the existing gap in communications, collaboration and planning of teaching and learning support between academic and operational units. As a communication channel and working group, members of the Council would bring forward needs and issues related to teaching and learning for review and consideration. The Council would work in concert with the University Teaching and Learning Support Unit and others, where applicable. Members would collaborate to plan, develop, and review institutional initiatives that support the academic purpose and vision of the University in relation to teaching and learning. It would be advisory to the VP Academic. The group will engage primarily in operational matters and will bring forward ideas and issues (e.g. related to policy) to Senate for review and approval, where appropriate. The Council would be chaired by the VP Academic and be comprised of the University Teaching Fellows, the heads of teaching support units, an undergraduate and a graduate student representative, and two Senior Administrators.

5.2 Create a Group of University Teaching Fellows.

Selected from highly recognized and accomplished teachers in each of the eight Faculties, University Teaching Fellows (UTFs) are positions that recognize excellent teachers and offers them an opportunity to take a leadership role and to share their expertise. UTFs would assume responsibility for improving the quality of learning and teaching in their Faculties and for mediating the allocation of support for learning and teaching on an ongoing basis. All tenure-track and teaching faculty members would be eligible for these positions, which might constitute special Associate Deanships. The group of UTFs would, as appropriate, meet separately from other members of the Council to work on specific issues such as policies.

5.3 Create a network of Program Teaching Mentors.

Program Teaching Mentors (PTM) are also positions that recognize excellent teachers and offers them an opportunity to take a leadership role and to share their expertise within their departments. A network of
PTMs would serve as an extension of the University Teaching Fellows component of the Council, reaching into all programs at SFU. It would include one PTM from each major Department, School, Program, or set of Programs. Core responsibilities would include meeting regularly with the UTF in their Faculties and with the teachers and administrators in their programs to gain and convey information relevant to the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning in their units. The PTMs would provide discipline-specific, localized support — a frequently expressed need of respondents. This position would be proffered to individuals renowned for excellence in teaching who have served, at least informally as teaching mentors in their academic units. Specific responsibilities and compensation would require further discussion with stakeholders.

Proposed Changes to Existing Units and Processes

5.4 Create a Coordinated University Teaching and Learning Support Unit.

A new University Teaching and Learning Support Unit would replace the LIDC. The new unit would be mandated and have the resources necessary to support and coordinate the initiatives of the Council and the needs of individual instructors in departments, as identified by University Teaching Fellows and Program Teaching Mentors. Responsibilities would include ongoing, long-term support for learning and teaching, as well as time-limited, project-based support. The unit would include a number of full time continuing staff and possibly a few faculty members who would be appointed for specific terms and have expertise and experience with innovative approaches to teaching.

5.5 Establish stronger links between administrators and staff within the teaching and learning support system and between members of the support unit and the University Teaching Fellows.

In the new teaching and learning support system two existing administrative groups, the Learning Technologies Coordinating Committee (LTCC) and Instructional Development Group (IDG) would be refocused. The LTCC would be broadened to include all heads of teaching support units and from the three campuses, become a “Learning and Teaching Coordinating Committee”. To recognize the importance of staff communications and collaboration, and to provide a forum for educational and support staff from major support units, the Task Force proposes formalizing the IDG as part of the teaching and learning support system for staff “on the ground” to communicate and collaborate on matters related to teaching and learning support. The IDG will report to the LTCC and will operationalize initiatives from the LTCC.

5.6 Incorporate the Institute for the Study of Teaching and Learning in the Disciplines into the teaching and learning support system.

The overall purpose of the Institute is to inspire, support, and enhance collaborative, faculty member-led inquiry into all aspects of teaching and learning at SFU. Its principle activity is to support teaching inquiry projects and processes, conducted by individuals or groups of faculty members, including the assessment of the effectiveness of new approaches and methods. Although the Institute has a specific focus, it could work closely with the University Teaching Fellows and collaborate with support units as part of the overall teaching and learning support system. It also could help sustain the benefits of the Undergraduate Curriculum Initiative through ongoing inquiry into the effectiveness of W, Q and B courses.

5.7 Provide formal mechanisms for Faculty-based W coordinators to connect to a community of colleagues and other learning and instructional specialists.

Currently, there is considerable expertise to support W courses distributed within the SFU community pertaining. Feedback from the Task Force’s information-gathering phase suggested the need to bring faculty members together who support a writing-intensive learning approach. Increased collaboration could increase the visibility of W coordinators, connect them to a community of colleagues and instructional specialists, and provide a regular forum to participate in ongoing refinement of W courses.
5.8 Re-examine the role and purpose of the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning (SCUTL) in light of the overall teaching and learning support system.

The Council is envisioned to be an active working group that will plan and engage in operational matters and liaise with members of their constituencies. This type of operational work is not part of a Senate Committee’s responsibilities. However, the roles and relationships between SCUTL and Council require further examination for synergies. Some redefinition of purpose may be needed, as historically, SCUTL has had challenges with any empowerment.

**Proposed Priorities**

Respondents in the information gathering phase and to the draft recommendations suggested specific issues to be addressed were revealed through recent public forums on the draft recommendations and through the initial information gathering phase. It is envisioned that the proposed system would provide a means for stakeholder groups (Faculties, departments, support units, and students) to bring forward ideas and concerns related to teaching and learning support. The Council would be a forum for members of these stakeholder groups to work together toward viable solutions for the stakeholder groups and the institution as a whole. In addition to issues brought forward through the proposed system, it is proposed that the following be priorities for the Teaching and Learning Support System to examine: (1) the student population and their changing demographics, expectations and needs in relation to teaching and learning; and (2) the support needs of specific instructor groups (e.g., sessional instructors, TAs, TMs), including international Teaching Assistants.

**III. Proposed Priorities and Timeline**

The recommendations in this report constitute the first step of an ongoing process that will transparently discuss, refine, elaborate, and implement the recommendations in a phased manner. To support the VP Academic’s academic plan for 2010 - 2013, suggested immediate priorities include:

1. **Promoting a Culture of Teaching and Learning**

Specifically, launch initiatives that are aimed at promoting a culture in which teaching and learning are more salient and accorded greater value and are in keeping with University policy and priorities. Increased attention and involvement by university community members are needed for institutional change to occur. Thus, implementation of recommendations #1 (vision and principles) and #2 (communication and community) should be accorded the highest priorities in order to build on existing momentum from the Task Force and the Academic Planning process.

2. **Developing a New Teaching and Learning Support System**

Begin the process of developing a new teaching and learning support system. This process would entail:

(1) Establishing formal processes and mechanisms to organize communication, collaboration and decision-making among existing teaching support services, and, where necessary, creating new roles (immediate).

(2) Refining the terms of reference of University Teaching Fellows and selecting a representative from each Faculty to participate on the University Council on Teaching and Learning (immediate).

Convening the University Council on Teaching and Learning and charging it, as a first priority, with overseeing the creation of the new Teaching and Learning Support Unit. This will require identifying functions, roles, positions and monitoring the related HR process to establish the new unit (an evolved version of the LIDC) with a director by September 2010.