Teaching Evaluation, Rewards, Expectations & Obligations

Results from the information gathering activities of the SFU Task Force on Teaching and Learning suggest that the expectations regarding teaching for instructors remain unarticulated, that one quantitative measure reflecting student satisfaction with instructors frequently remains the sole means of evaluating teaching, and that teaching-related activities are less rewarded than research. Developing and instituting clear expectations, evaluations and rewards for excellent teaching is integral to improving teaching and learning at SFU. This committee will focus its work on the first step—that is building a culture that emphasizes teaching as a dynamic process, where continued learning and self-improvement are paramount. Integral to this process is a campus-wide effort to educate instructors, departments, faculties and administration on the importance of defining goals for student-learning outcomes and assessing our progress. While this working group will address the first steps of this process, ideally, this topic will be revisited at the end of the VPA’s next three-year plan.

Description: How to evaluate and reward teaching; clarifying & meeting SFU/Faculty/departmental, student and one’s own expectations about teaching; the teacher’s obligations at SFU

Members: Michelle Nilson (co-chair), Nicole Berry (co-chair), Stephen Spector, Russell Day, Tom Grieve, Petra Menz, Alistair Lachlan, Paul Budra, Michael Monagan, Stephanie Chu (roamer)

Previously Identified Issues

- Teaching evaluations and other means and models to evaluate teaching
- Providing peer mentoring and coaching (for instructors & staff)
- SFU/Faculty/department, student and one’s own expectations about teaching
- Rewarding individuals and groups (e.g. departments) for teaching excellence and teaching development
- Incentives, rewards, accountability, responsibility & readiness for all instructors and staff

A. Proposed Terms of Reference

1) Determine if there is an improved system for student evaluation of teaching that could serve across campuses, informed by the current SCUTL report, and make recommendations accordingly
2) Research the approaches that various units across campus and other universities are implementing to recognize and improve teaching practices among individual faculty members
3) Recommend standardized mechanism for review and reporting of all teaching which could include documentation for a teaching portfolio that could be implemented campus wide or an arm’s length third party assessment system
4) Identify particular mechanisms through which the evaluation of teaching and learning, both campus wide and at the individual department/faculty level, can be strengthened
5) Identify particular mechanisms, both campus wide and at the individual department/faculty level, to strengthen the reward for excellent teaching
6) Recommend a comprehensive system to improve the evaluation and reward of all teaching activities
7) Looking forward, identify and suggest long-term, step-wise processes to strengthen the evaluation of overall departmental/faculty curricula based on student learning outcomes
B. Proposed Deliverables

1) System for student evaluations including sample evaluations
2) Guide to SFU faculty member teaching portfolios
3) Action steps for improving evaluation and reward of all teaching activities
4) Model for long-term reform of teaching and learning at SFU

Other: Recommend an analysis of the various dimensions and composition of the teaching workforce and the correlated impact on effective teaching and learning

2. Coordination & Representation

Description: Coordination and representation of teaching issues and programs. Includes discipline, instructor groups, organizational support and resources, infrastructure

Members: Cheryl Amundsen (co-chair), Dennis Krebs (co-chair), Bill Glackman, Frances Atkinson, Annique Boelryk, Gerald Thomas, Danielle Deveau, Adrienne Burk, Chris Groeneboer, Sophie Lavieri, Stephanie Chu (roamer)

Previously Identified Issues

- Multi-level and multifaceted supports, venues & opportunities for instructors and staff who support teaching to understand and meet expectations
- Establishing efficient and effective teaching supports and services starting with existing resources
- Address changes in teaching and learning landscape, student population, budgetary implications, digital medium, academic initiatives
- Providing opportunities for dialogue, peer mentorship, and collaboration (among instructors, among support staff and between instructors, staff & students)
- Improving instructional/learning environment (e.g. spaces, tools, equipment) & processes, opportunities for instructors to try different approaches and offer different learning experiences, supporting different programs, campus visions
- Customized support and resources: discipline-based/general; varying teaching experience; different instructor groups; to provide different learning experiences
- Program/curriculum evaluation/development: where do teaching support and improvements fit with these? How?
- Long-term evaluation of the extent to which existing supports and services are meeting instructor needs (to meet institutional expectations around teaching and learning)

A. Proposed Issues to Address

1) What kind of structure or system is best equipped to ensure that initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning at SFU are developed and supported on an ongoing basis?
   - How can we most effectively inspire/motivate instructors from all programs to offer effective instruction/courses on an ongoing basis?
   - What kinds of guidance and support should we offer?
   - How can we ensure that good teaching is appropriately recognized and rewarded?

2) What is the best way of integrating central and discipline-based/local support for teaching and learning in the context of existing institutional structures?
   - What is the most effective way of coordinating the instructional support services we believe are working well?
What are the most optimal ways of building on, refining, and integrating existing resources that support teaching and learning?
What is missing at SFU: What kinds of instructional support do we need to develop?
Which existing instructional support services we should retain in their present form? Which ones should we abandon or refine?
3) What implications for effective forms of instruction and teaching and learning methods do changes in student populations, budgetary constraints, digital media, and academic initiatives have, and how can we best accommodate to them?
4) How can we most effectively improve the instructional/learning processes and environment at SFU (e.g. spaces, tools, equipment)?
5) How can we ensure that curricula are appropriately revised and evaluated on an ongoing basis?
6) What are the best ways to evaluate the extent to which existing supports and services for teaching and learning are meeting instructor needs and institutional goals, in the short and long term?

B. Proposed Products (Deliverables): Recommendations about all above issues

3. Community & Policy

This working group will make recommendations 1) toward improving SFU’s community around teaching and learning (communication, culture, visibility and awareness) and 2) policies. The latter entails a review of existing policies, identifying process or policy amendments to address disconnects between reality and existing policy and suggesting key areas where additional policies are needed. The intention of our work is to provide key recommendations and skeletal plans to be fleshed out and operationalized by others in the future.

Members: Stephanie Chu (chair), Joan Collinge, John Moore, Lynn Copeland, Karen Marotz, Lorna Boschman, Steve Whitmore (up to March 31)

Previously Identified Issues

- Clarity and consistency of communicated expectations around teaching and learning at all levels and to all stakeholder groups
- Improving the perceived value of teaching and learning at all levels and across all stakeholder groups
- Showcasing and celebrating teaching and learning across SFU, across and within Faculties, departments, & units and stakeholders
- Increased awareness about teaching supports and services; means for sharing and collaboration
- Synergy at the institutional level on the relationship between research, teaching and learning (i.e. VP Research, VP Academic, Associate VP Student Services and their strategic plans; institutional vision)
- Means to involve all stakeholders (members of admin, academic units, support units, unions, associations, etc.) and foster community around T&L
- Consolidating information, communicating about T&L (expectations, available resources) at all levels, consistency
- Fit between reality and existing policies; necessary improvements to related processes or policies themselves to increase the value of and accountability toward teaching and learning

A. Proposed Terms of Reference

1) Review the detailed information gathering document created for this working group to extract ideas relevant to the working group’s activities.
2) Liaise with the three other working groups to identify and align policy and community recommendations.
3) Examine select examples from comparable other institutions and at SFU for best practices in celebrating and communicating the importance of teaching and learning.

4) Prioritize key areas for changes to communications, valuing, expectations, and showcasing teaching and learning at SFU.

5) Identify and review existing policies related to teaching and learning and make change recommendations where appropriate.

6) Prioritize key areas for policy and procedural changes, and identify potential challenges with policy changes and implementation.

Proposed Deliverables

1) High-level outline and recommendations toward a multifaceted plan for improvements to communication, culture, visibility and awareness of teaching and learning at SFU over time.

2) Recommendations for key: a) amendments, b) improvements to processes to better support existing policies and 3) areas for new policies.

4. Student Learning

The Learning Working Group used their first 3 meetings for general discussion of what ideal attributes of a SFU graduate should be. Implicit in this list is the necessary role of all participants in improving the university experience. We are now using the list as a guide in proposing a set of deliverables/recommendations.

**Description:** Student/academic learning experience (teaching, research and learning synergy), curriculum review

**Members:** George Agnes (chair), Sarah Dench, Nancy Johnston, Reema Jayaka, Elaine Fairey, Candy Ho, Malgorzata Dubiel, Trina Isakson, Janet McCracken, Stephanie Chu (roamer)

Previously Identified Issues

- Supports for broad range of learners (e.g. International students) and learning experiences (e.g. fieldwork, volunteer)
- Student responsibility & readiness; incentives and rewards
- The compatibility between research & teaching, how they can be integral to one another, how this affects learning and how students can benefit
- Program/curriculum evaluation/development: where does learning support and improvements fit with this
- Evaluating learning through a multifaceted approach (i.e. address learning styles); support skill development
- The extent to which existing supports and services are meeting learner needs (to meet institutional expectations around teaching and learning)

A. Proposed Terms of Reference

1) Define an attribute set that all SFU graduates should possess.
2) Identify what the University (curriculum, content & delivery, within & outside classroom, learning support) offers now, and needs, that leads to these outcomes?
3) Research strategies, old and innovative, that will result in SFU curriculum evolution with respect to these attributes, and identify how to implement processes to improve learning, and who is involved?
B. SFU Graduate Attributes

SFU Graduates should be able to:

1) Academic/Professional
   ▪ know and apply in-depth knowledge and skills about one or more disciplines, as well as understand connections among disciplines
   ▪ demonstrate a high level of analytical problem solving skills and tools, i.e. recognize and frame questions, know when and how to use various methods of inquiry (qualitative & quantitative), use technology effectively, and make informed conclusions and recommendations
   ▪ have had at least one experience of learning in situ, i.e. co-op, research assistant, service learning, field school, practicum, etc.
   ▪ appreciate the value of their university experience as more than the acquisition of specific content and skills but rather as an experience that has taught them how to learn, question, evaluate, and apply new ideas and concepts to an ever-changing world

2) Personal
   ▪ demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills in a variety of settings (academic, professional, community)
   ▪ understand their personal values and how they apply to their goals and aspirations
   ▪ demonstrate exemplary leadership and team skills
   ▪ understand their role as a learner (reflection and projection), so that they are able to learn in multiple environments and throughout their life

3) Citizen
   ▪ have experienced at least one “internationalization” experience, i.e. exchange, field school, international research, international co-op, international mentorship, on campus international activities, etc.
   ▪ make effective and appropriate contributions to their discipline and their diverse communities as an engaged citizen with a sense of social responsibility

C. Proposed Recommendations

   ▪ define learning expectations, responsibility & accountability, and outcomes throughout the curriculum
   ▪ facilitate and support collegial interdisciplinary curriculum development
   ▪ research strategies for;
     ▪ Experiential, mentored, on-campus learning (eg. add E to WQB, competitive admission to interdisciplinary team-taught learning)
     ▪ discipline, and interdisciplinary, opportunities for learning ‘ownership’
     ▪ active learning, supporting exploration, interaction, and engagement
     ▪ effective mentoring platforms
     ▪ team-taught academic content
     ▪ inclusion into curriculum of opportunities for ‘no-instructor present’ group learning
   ▪ investigate the merit of campuses-wide, interdisciplinary cohort streaming of academic content in 1st year
   ▪ upfront investment in our clientele (eg. a 1st year office in the Maggie Benston Building)
   ▪ celebrate learning successes
   ▪ infrastructure for replacing or augmenting classroom learning