Lakehead
U N I V E R S I T Y

Senate Teaching & Learning Committee

Date: 2015-05-01

To: Karen Roche, Secretary of Senate

From: Monica Flegel, Chair of Senate Teaching and Learning Committee

Subject: Annual Report of the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC) to Senate

The Committee has been very busy taking on a number of tasks related to teaching and learning; I would like to thank all the members of the committee for the hard work they put in throughout the year, and Miranda Tomlinson for her administrative help.

This report includes a yearly review of the activities of the Instructional Development Centre, as well as an overview of the work taken on by the STLC and its main sub-committees throughout the year.

1. INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The IDC's main focus this year was on the Provost's Task Force on Innovation and Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Technology. The work of the Task Force is ongoing. Further efforts went into maximizing attendance at IDC events and encouraging participation in Student Evaluations of Teaching (now Student Feedback on Teaching). The Graduate Student Teaching Practicum (GSTP) and Workshop options were suspended in 2013-2014, with the 2014-2015 year being the final one for students to complete, with 7 Graduate Student Teaching Certificates issued. The GSTP committee has been reviewing dossiers. The IDC has begun to research options for new graduate teaching programs.

The IDC currently operates with a 1.0 FCE release for the Director and a part-time (2 days per week) Coordinating Assistant. The IDC Coordinator sits on 11 committees, university-wide.

Workshops (2014-15)	Presenter	Date	Registrants
2015 Teaching & Learning Swap Meet	Dr. Jane Nicholas	Friday, April 10, 2015	19
Place-based Education	Dr. David Greenwood	Thursday, March 19, 2015	10
Lights, Camera, Action!	Dr. Janice Hughes	Thursday, February 26, 2015	16
Principles of Instructional Design*	Dr. Jane Nicholas	Monday, February 9, 2015	12
Community Service Learning	Dr. Doug West	Monday, January 26, 2015	8
Small Group Learning Using Collaborative Writing	Ms. Anthea Kyle	Monday, November 17, 2014	12
Using Art to Teach Critical Thinking and Writing Skills	Dr. Kristy Holmes	Wednesday, November 5, 2014	14
Integrating the Arts to Create Dynamic Curriculum	Dr. Pauline Sameshima	Tuesday, October 21, 2014	12
Philosophy and Goals of Teaching in Higher Education	Dr. Jason Blahuta	Tuesday, September 30, 2014	11
Total	9 workshops		114

2. TEACHING AWARDS

The rejection of the Committee's recommendation for the Distinguished Teaching Award by Senate at the Nov 2014 meeting reinforced the importance of a review of the Award criteria. This task was begun by the Teaching Awards Sub-committee. Due to time constraints, the existing criteria, with additional guidance from the Senate discussion, was used for the 2015 competition. The Sub-Committee has made significant headway on drafting new criteria, and plans to present it to the full STLC in the fall of 2015, well in time for approval by Senate for the 2016 competition.

As per the Terms of Reference, the STLC met to review applicants for the Contribution to Teaching Awards (CTA), which were well advertised by the IDC via Twitter, Facebook, and the University's Communication Bulletin. There were 17 nominees resulting in 11 eligible candidates. STLC subsequently identified suitable recipients for six awards (the maximum allowable number). By committee decision, their recommendation has been forwarded according to the Policy.

STLC also discussed future revisions to the CTA criteria in 2016.

The Nominations Committee will meet in June to review applications for the Distinguished Instructor Award.

3. STUDENT FEEDBACK ON TEACHING

The STLC continued to address issues regarding student feedback of instructors. One of the major tasks of the Student Evaluation Sub-Committee was to update and revise the policy on "Student Evaluation of Teaching at Lakehead University." The new "Student Feedback on Teaching at Lakehead University" policy was approved at the Feb. 23, 2015 Senate meeting.

The Chair of the STLC made a report to the Senate Academic Committee on the online system in November 2014, noting the challenge of increasing student engagement. The sub-committee, lead by IDC, continues to act proactively by providing additional guidance to instructors for promoting student engagement and encouraging students through social media, email and print to participate in the process. Over the course of the 2014-15 year, a number of communications initiatives were undertaken by STLC in conjunction with the Instructional Development Centre (IDC) to increase engagement in online evaluations. These included putting out information via the University's Communication Bulletin and social media, direct emails to students and faculty, and a FAQ about online evaluations on the IDC website. As well, the "Student Feedback on Teaching" policy extended the time period in which evaluations could be administered to the last week of classes. Preliminary results suggest that student response to online evaluation continues to improve with some instructors achieving response rates of more than 80%.

The Committee has also approached Institutional Analysis to discuss the possibility of developing an app to make the evaluations more accessible to students, and has also begun the process of revising the instrument itself to increase both student engagement and instructor satisfaction with the results.

The Senate Teaching and Learning committee also discussed issues related to the paper versions of student feedback, particularly in terms of the security of the data and the cost of new software for the Scantron system (see below in re: to SAIT committee).

In the winter of 2015 (2014Y and 2015W courses), 775 course sections were administered online. This represents approximately 72% of all sections evaluated, which is similar to the winter of 2014 when approximately 73% of all sections evaluated were done online. In the winter of 2015 the average response rate for those surveys administered online was 36.3%. Since beginning the online administration in the fall of 2013 the response rate has been rising (from 31.2% in 2013F).   Not only has the response rate been rising but there has been an increase in the number of course sections with high

response rates. In the 2015 winter term (when the 2014Y and 2015W courses were evaluated) there were 29 course sections administered online that had greater than 80% response rate and 34 with an 80% and above. Many of these were small classes but almost half (14) had more than 10 students and 1 had over 100 students. 168 course sections had response rates of 50% or more. In conversations with professors it seems that the increases in response rates may be attributable to increased promotion of the evaluations within the class and the provision of time for students to complete the online evaluations during class.

	Sections online* (percent)	Online response rate
Fall - 2013F	79	31.2%
Winter – 2013Y and 2014W	73	22.4%
Fall – 2014F	67	34.4%
Winter – 2014Y and 2015W	72	36.3%

From a technical standpoint, the administration of the online evaluations went well. There are still some issues with regard to the information provided by Academic Units in the loading sheets and a need for them to be filled out properly so that online evaluations can be accurate (i.e. identifying all the sections/ instructors involved, the timing of the class, etc.).

4. AD-HOC COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE WITH SENATE ACADEMIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES COMMITTEE (SAITC)

The Senate Academic Information Technologies Committee, chaired by Joan Chambers, requested that a joint ad-hoc sub-committee be struck with STLC in order to address 1. developing new best practices for Scantron usage and 2. providing advice to TSC about updating software and hardware for the current Scantron system (used for both exams and paper student feedback forms). With input from deans and Chairs, the sub-committee developed a "best practices" guidelines for using Scantron test sheets in time for the Winter exam period.

5. ACCESSIBILITY SUB-COMMITTEE

The Accessibility Sub-Committee met in early 2015 to discuss the role this sub-committee should play, particularly in relation to the larger university Accessibility Committee, chaired by the Vice-Provost Student Affairs. The Sub-Committee developed Terms of Reference to provide guidance to the 2015-2016 committee. This will be an ad hoc committee. As well, the Chair of the STLC participated in a "Academic Accommodations and a Duty to Accommodate" Round-table organized by the VP-Student Affairs.

Respectfully submitted,
Monica Flegel