

## MEMORANDUM

**ATTENTION:** Senate

**FROM:** Elizabeth Elle, Vice Provost Learning & Teaching, for the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning

**RE:** UPDATE: Implementation of the SETCwg and TAWG reports

**DATE:** January 20, 2023

*The Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning (SCUTL) has approved the following update to the implementation plan, originally brought to Senate for information in March of 2020, and brought to Senate for information.*

In response to reports of two working groups (*Developing a Teaching Assessment Framework for Simon Fraser University: Final Report of the Student Evaluation of Teaching and Course Working Group* [SETCWG, 2018], and *Strategies to Value Effective Teaching* [Teaching Assessment WG, 2019]) SCUTL proposed a number of actions to improve how we assess and value teaching at SFU. Here, we summarize the recommendations brought to Senate in 2020, and provide an update on actions that have been taken since that time.

1. Both reports clearly state best practices for evaluating teaching, which include using multiple assessment methods, over multiple points in time, and adopting a holistic approach to the evidence that considers the instructor's career path. Departments and Faculties at SFU should adopt these best practices. In addition, Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC) Chairs and TPC members should be provided with support and guidance to ensure they appropriately assess teaching as part of a fair and transparent process in biennial and promotion reviews.
  - Develop of guidance for Tenure and Promotion Committees on interpretation of the Collective Agreement. Advice was developed by the Vice-Provost, Learning & Teaching and Faculty Relations, and brought to Chairs and Directors meetings and workshops; now available [as a 1-page overview](#). Units were encouraged to send revised criteria to SCUTL for formative feedback, but only one department did so. SCUTL and the Vice-Provost remain willing to provide formative feedback on teaching assessment criteria.
  - Development of workshops and resources on assessing teaching by the Centre for Educational Excellence. There are [guiding documents](#) on the CEE web page, and CEE provides both scheduled and custom workshops and consultation to departments or individual instructors on multidimensional assessment, peer observation, dossier development, and more.

2. Student experience surveys such as the current SETC system at SFU provide a voice for students, and an opportunity for instructors to get formative feedback on their teaching. Some concerns have been raised about SFU's current system, including survey length, question format, and response rates. In some cases, the results of these surveys are misused, suggesting their strengths and limitations are not well understood.
  - Review, update, and improve the student experience surveys. The Vice Provost, with the department of Learning Experiences Assessment and Planning, launched a project to [evaluate and improve](#) the Student Experiences with Teaching and Courses framework. We launched new [Course Experience Surveys](#) in fall of 2022. Work is ongoing to address concerns with response rates, and guidance on appropriate use of the surveys is captured in documents under #1.
3. Reconsider the definition and implementation of the Excellence in Teaching Award, and consider expanding this and other recognition programs to better align with SFU's commitment to innovation and leadership in teaching.
  - New policy: passed Senate in May of 2022 and the new, expanded Awards for Excellence in Teaching program launched in fall of 2022. You can review the [policy](#) online, and there is more information about celebrating teaching on the Vice Provost's [website](#).
4. Instructors should be provided with support (especially early in their careers) for multiple aspects of their teaching, including how to increase the effectiveness of their teaching practice and assistance with the development of resources, such as teaching portfolios, that will be considered by TPCs.
  - Instructor support: The [Centre for Educational Excellence](#) continues to develop resources to support instructors at all career stages, both early career instructors (including TAs) and more experienced instructors, including those nominated for teaching awards.