

TABLE 4

DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICES IN
TEACHING

FINAL REPORT

May 31, 2004

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INTRODUCTION:

This document constitutes the white paper resulting from Table 4's discussions on best practices in teaching.

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The group reviewed documents circulated to it and identified and discussed key questions (Appendix 1). The discussion of these questions forms the basis of the themes and recommendations presented.

Problem Statement: Although examples of excellent teaching abound at the University, excellence in teaching nevertheless needs to be better defined and understood. The team felt strongly that, although excellent teaching is greatly appreciated by students, it is undervalued in the University system in general. This problem is not unique to the University of Ottawa. For many years in most North American universities research has been more highly valued as a scholarly activity than teaching. Our challenge is to define excellent teaching, identify the best practices and critical aspects of teaching, and then create an educational environment which fosters and values excellence in both teaching and learning at the University of Ottawa.

Vision Statement: The University of Ottawa supports all professors and teaching staff who strive to achieve excellence and innovation in teaching. The University of Ottawa is an environment in which excellence and innovation in teaching are valued, encouraged and supported.

DISCUSSION THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Definition of excellent teaching at the University of Ottawa

The University's practices in teaching must focus on the enhancement of student learning and a positive learning environment. With respect to this goal, a few basic principles were reiterated throughout the discussions:

- Effective teaching requires pedagogical skills that must be actively developed and maintained. However necessary disciplinary expertise may be, it is insufficient for achieving best practices in teaching. Best practices in teaching require reflection on specific teaching activities with the explicit goal of improving the quality of teaching and, in turn, the learning experience. This is a formative, iterative reflection process, which must be on-going.
- Excellent teaching encourages self-learning.

With these principles, the following description of excellent teaching is proposed¹:

Excellent teaching successfully:

- a) stimulates students to think critically;
- b) produces independent learners;
- c) enables students to develop skills for independent problem solving;
- d) supports students in understanding important concepts and ideas;
- e) prompts questions, debate and other active learning activities;
- f) presents material with enthusiasm and motivates students to learn;
- g) transmits knowledge from teacher to learner.

This description of excellent teaching supplements the *University Statement on Teaching* adopted by Senate in 1992 (Appendix 2).

Recommendation:

1.1 Adopt the above description of excellence in teaching as a basis for building best practices in teaching at the University of Ottawa. In particular, consider this description when planning and developing for learning activities at the University of Ottawa.

2. Best practices in the evaluation of teaching at the University of Ottawa

There are currently two mechanisms in place for evaluating the quality of teaching at the University of Ottawa: the student evaluation and the peer review process. On student evaluations, it appears that the minimum acceptable standard is quite low. A low score, e.g. 3.0, is defined as "acceptable", and scores that are lower still do not automatically trigger a peer review. Perhaps even more important than the quantitative scoring on student

¹ This definition is based on findings from The Survey on Teaching, Senate Committee on Teaching, University of Ottawa, A. Morin, M. Nedzela, T. Quon, Summary of the Results of the Survey on Teaching, April 2001.

evaluations is the need to fully utilize the formative potential of student evaluation and feedback to professors on their teaching. The student evaluation forms could utilize questions and survey instruments that would correlate with the description of excellence in teaching outlined in section 1 above, making student evaluation more relevant to best practices in teaching. In the peer review process, there is an impression that peer evaluators are reluctant to write forthright reports concerning their colleagues, a process necessary for honest, constructive feedback that can be useful to improve teaching.

Recommendations:

- 2.1 Consider developing a system of regular peer review of teaching, to occur at regular intervals and be linked to feedback and professional development (e.g. coaching, training) that support best practices in teaching. The system must support peer evaluators in their efforts to provide specific and honest feedback to their peers.
- 2.2 Consider revision of the required minimum achievement on student evaluations for promotion and tenure. Scores below a certain level should automatically trigger the peer review process, in addition to the regular review process recommended.
- 2.3 Revise the system of student evaluation of teaching to support a reflective process of constructive feedback to professors. The student evaluation process, including the evaluation forms, should be revised to support evaluation based on the University of Ottawa's definition of best practices in teaching, e.g. asking whether the professor has assisted the student in understanding important, difficult concepts. Link the evaluation process to outcomes expected from the specific teaching activity.
- 2.4 After mechanisms for evaluation and review and opportunity for professional development and remediation have been utilized, develop reasonable and clear mechanisms for the University to take action where the requirements for quality in teaching are not met.

3. Valuing excellence in teaching at the University of Ottawa (This includes fostering and rewarding best practices, scholarship in education and innovation in teaching.)

Traditionally in North American institutions of higher learning, including the University of Ottawa, achievements in research are valued significantly higher than achievements in teaching. This provides a significant challenge to creating an environment where teaching is fostered and rewarded, both within University walls and beyond. Table 4 identified many challenges to creating an environment that values excellence in teaching at the University that must be taken into consideration. An important component of the challenges is the perception that research by its very nature is innovative, creative, prestigious and revenue-generating (e.g. grants and contracts), while teaching is not. This challenge highlights the critical importance of developing evaluation systems and metrics to support excellence, best practices and innovation in teaching in the University environment. This encompasses the broad definition of scholarship, including the scholarship of teaching defined by Boyer, and elaborated upon by others (E.L. Boyer. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, 1990).

The team also identified an important systemic barrier to encouraging and supporting excellence in teaching at the University of Ottawa. With regards to obtaining promotion and tenure, the Collective Agreement (25.3.2.2.b) states: “The member has evidenced teaching which, when evaluated in accordance with the provisions of article 24, is deemed to meet expectations...at the University of Ottawa.” Moreover, these expectations are explicitly stated to be ‘in house’. In contrast, scientific, literary, artistic, or professional works must be “deemed of good quality” in “the opinion of three outside evaluators.” Given that the university is a teaching *and* research institute, it would be helpful if both could be held to similar standards.

Recommendations:

- 3.1 Review and revise the promotion and tenure criteria to support, encourage and value teaching quality, best practices in teaching and scholarship in education at the University of Ottawa. The same emphasis should be given to scholarship and innovation in education as to other forms of scholarship when granting tenure and promotion. Study and publicize the actual outcome of applications for promotion and tenure based on educational scholarship to ensure that teaching and scholarship are being given equal emphasis. All faculty should undergo a full ‘peer teaching evaluation’ at the time of application for tenure and promotion.
- 3.2 Develop and implement a career path for “Teaching Masters” or “Educational Scholars” based on scholarship in education, including curricular innovation and educational research that would be recognized at an international level. Such faculty members would engage in teaching and educational scholarship (which might include educational research), with lesser involvement in research activity in their primary discipline, and will be on a tenure and promotion career path.
- 3.3 Support and enable continued professional development to facilitate professors’ improvement in teaching and development of expertise in pedagogy, educational innovation and research. This includes allowing faculty members to take courses, including graduate level courses and degrees in Education, at the University of Ottawa.
- 3.4 Develop a system of awards and recognition that supports the value of excellence, best practices, educational scholarship and innovation in teaching, including such examples as:
 - The introduction of a Teacher Recognition Award that could be given to one teacher (full, part-time or graduate student) at a convocation ceremony. The winner could be selected from one of the participating units graduating during that particular session. This would effectively place a teacher front and centre at a forum where students, parents, faculty and administrators are present.
- 3.5 Communicate to staff, faculty, and the public examples of excellent teaching, educational innovation and professors’ accomplishments and awards in teaching at the University of Ottawa. This includes equal emphasis on research and teaching excellence in advertisements and other publications appearing both internally and externally. For example, publish the names of teaching awards and their respective winners on a regular basis in both internal and external publications.

- 3.6 In addition to research potential, emphasize, at the time of hiring, the candidate's teaching and educational scholarship and innovation potential. This could include having candidates give a "teaching" session, during which their teaching would be assessed, and asking for references based on their teaching history and abilities. Consideration should also be given to assessing other factors critical to a teaching faculty member's contribution to University life, such as the ability to work with a team, potential to contribute to the University community and potential as a "University citizen".

4. Meeting the varied teaching needs of students at different stages of their studies

First year is arguably the most important part of a department's program, and first-year students are often in need of guidance. First-year courses often set the foundation for the rest of the program, and the overall impression of the importance of teaching at the University is likely influenced substantially by the experience in the student's first year. Overall, Table 4 felt that excellent teaching and implementation of best teaching practices is critically important in the first year. This, of course, should not detract from excellent teaching and best practices in the upper years. On the subject of best practices in teaching assignments to faculty members and teachers, Table 4 did not want to generalize. In any given department, the effectiveness of the teaching assignments will depend on the strengths and expertise of the professors, the courses to be taught, and the availability of different types and categories of teachers, including full-time professors, part-time professors, graduate students or outside experts. Careful consideration should be given to all of the above-mentioned factors in the assignment of courses to be taught at all levels of University programs. For example, the group recognized that teaching very large classes can present special challenges that less experienced professors may not be prepared to handle, and this should be taken into consideration in planning.

The group also recognized that availability of teachers is an important part of meeting the needs of students. For example, part-time professors may be less accessible to students since they are less often on campus and may not have access to sufficient office space when they are on campus. Issues related to adequate support, evaluation and feedback, and professional development for all levels and categories of professors and teachers are critical for ensuring the excellent delivery of educational programs. As well, sufficient planning is necessary so that teaching assignments are done in a timely fashion, and all teachers have enough time to prepare. The system of hiring part-time faculty according to seniority points may not match strengths and expertise with the teaching needs of students.

With respect to teaching assistants (TAs), the group generally agreed that TAs can be effective partners in teaching, and that their role needs to be well linked to pedagogically useful assignments, both for the students and the TAs. For example, the marking of problems on routine homework assignments may not be an effective use of TA time. In contrast, for large courses, "help rooms" staffed by TAs could provide more effective consulting hours. TAs and senior students can be successfully engaged in mentoring and teaching junior students.

Recommendations:

- 4.1 Develop a framework and implement a plan for teaching assignments that takes into consideration the best fit between teachers, students and course needs. Consider specific policies for specific teaching situations. For example, a policy could require that large first-year classes be taught by professors who have excellent teaching skills particular to this type of venue.
- 4.2 Review the provisions of the APTPUO Collective Agreement to ensure that part-time teachers and their 'best fit' (see above) with teaching assignments are supported. Consider conducting a needs assessment of part-time teachers that would specifically address their needs in regard to support, reward and value of their teaching.
- 4.3 Develop systems where experienced faculty members can mentor, guide and supervise TAs and senior students who mentor and teach small groups of junior students. For example, this can be particularly useful when "star" senior professors teach large first-year classes, and then supervise TAs who take responsibility for small group sessions with a section of the class. The TAs can then be available for questions and assistance in situations where a single professor could not manage successfully alone. In another example, promising graduate students could be given part-time contracts to apprentice in teaching under the guidance of a faculty mentor.
- 4.4 Proactively communicate the above considerations of the best teachers for given situations across the continuum of University education, regardless of academic status (rank, tenure, full or part-time, TA etc), emphasizing the richness that is brought to a program through the contributions of outside experts functioning as visiting or part-time professors and other teaching participants.

5. Integrating technology into teaching and learning

Educational technologies are tools that have always played a role in teaching and learning. The Sciences and the Arts have traditionally been the fields where technology has played the greatest role; however, as technologies become more sophisticated, they are becoming more a part of the mainstream in modern classrooms. With close to 90 per cent of our students owning a computer and being connected to the Internet at home, the University must maximize the potential added value that technology can bring to learners and the learning environment.

At the same time, computer technology is not the solution to every pedagogical challenge, and not every technological innovation is actually necessary or an improvement to teaching and learning.

The best practices in the integration of technology into the classroom and University programs will vary from discipline to discipline. The University should concentrate its efforts on ensuring technological availability and providing access, training and support for the new technologies to students, staff and faculty members. Computer and other new technologies need to be available for use and must be supported by the University. The methods of implementation are best created in collaboration with the content experts, technological experts and professionals with expertise in pedagogical e-learning methods. Together, such

teams can create, implement and evaluate the best practices in e-learning that apply to the specific discipline and content area.

Technology can be used to facilitate two-way communication between students and teachers.

Recommendations:

- 5.1 Access to technology has become an essential element of teaching and learning in the 21st century. Unrestricted access to enabling technologies (i.e. the internet) and computers for teaching and learning for all learners and faculty members must be a priority in the University's strategic planning.
- 5.2 Current programs and services that support and work with faculty in the design and development of educational tools and technology should be maintained and enhanced. These services are critical to ensuring the seamless integration of useful technologies into the teaching and learning environment.
- 5.3 Explore and promote collaborations between different sectors to facilitate the use of technology in teaching, such as the MedEd Image Repository, repository of learning objects, and the new Information Literacy component developed between E-Learning and the Library.
- 5.4 Support the professional development and recognition of faculty, staff and students in the area of technological innovation, as in other areas of teaching and scholarship in education.
- 5.5 Consider setting standards such as minimum response times for communications between students and faculty and teachers. This should facilitate consultation between teachers and students.

6. *The future of instructional innovation and the application of new teaching*

Currently, the system of lectures, discussion groups/laboratories, seminars, and consultation with faculty members during office hours is the predominant framework for teaching and learning activities at the University of Ottawa. Table 4 considered principles of adult and life-long learning, as well as the varied goals, learning styles and needs of University students in the formulation of its recommendations. Also to be taken into consideration is the fact that innovations and new practices in teaching may or may not be transferable from one field of study to another. It is important and necessary for the University and teachers to experiment frequently with new pedagogical approaches; however, there must be sound justification for pedagogical change and evaluation of outcomes. Evaluation and subsequent revision and reconsideration will ensure best practices in teaching are applied. .

What follows is a list of selected teaching innovations that could be used to realize teaching objectives. Each suggestion is accompanied by a brief description of the strategy, the level for which it is best suited and, in some cases, some of its benefits and/or disadvantages.

Multi-disciplinary Co-ordination: The University could make a concerted effort to link various first-year courses across disciplines. For example, applications of calculus and linear algebra to economics could be presented to all students of calculus and linear algebra – not only to those in economics. Texts used for French grammar might include philosophical and scientific passages, etc. This approach is best suited for introductory or survey courses, since various applications and examples are studied in detail later on; as a result, no necessary material need be omitted. This multi-disciplinary approach also allows students whose minds are not yet made up to “see more of the world” and perhaps make more informed choices.

Active Learning: Studies show that learning is maximized when learners are actively engaged in thinking about material, collaborating, and exchanging ideas. This form of learning fosters critical thinking skills and is learning-driven rather than content-driven.

Classroom Publication: This approach facilitates first contact with publication and peer ideas. In some classes, independent research projects are assigned to individuals or groups. The final products are shared amongst the students using a proceedings-style publication of the projects. This approach is best suited for smaller, non-introductory classes.

Students as Teachers: This approach would see parts of courses taught by the students themselves. In certain fields where the subject matter is less open to interpretation, students would be responsible for the presentation of some of the curriculum. This approach is well suited for small advanced classes and can also be useful as adjunct to larger and introductory courses. The strength of this strategy lies in the fact that helping others to understand strengthens one’s own understanding.

Mentoring/TA-based learning: This is a teaching method that incorporates students as teachers in a pyramidal system. Graduate students, supervised by professors, can teach concepts, etc. to senior students, who in turn teach first- and second-year students. This system of layered teaching and mentoring has been introduced effectively in some courses at the University of Ottawa.

Self-paced Learning by Modules: Each semester could be divided into set modules of limited learning. Students would be responsible to meet the objectives of each module within a specified time frame. At the end of the module they would be evaluated by whatever means are appropriate. The modules would become progressively more complex. Students will need to master fundamental principles in each module before proceeding to the next.

Problem-Based Learning: This process emphasizes “learning to learn.” Groups are set up to find solutions to real problems. The problems are designed so that the process and the solution (whether optimal or not) give insight or lead into the subject matter. Students learn to think analytically, and to find and use appropriate resources. They also use and improve their team-working skills. This approach is particularly well suited to fields where knowledge will allow one to solve such problems (*i.e.* commerce, law, chemistry, etc.) Such programs are already in place at the University of Ottawa (in the Faculty of Medicine, for instance).

Service Learning: A service learning pilot project is currently underway at the University of Ottawa. The report of The Working Group on Service Learning (25 February 2004) describes service learning as follows: “Service Learning integrates academic study and community service. Students engage in volunteerism and relate it back to course concepts by

means of journal writing, discussions and formal written reports.” The report further concludes that this type of study “goes to the heart of what universities are dedicated to: create better, more well-rounded and engaged citizens.”²

Recommendations:

- 6.1 Consider widespread innovation, implementation and evaluation of learning strategies, including the examples listed above and as identified in departments and programs where appropriate.
- 6.2 Plan for active learning at the core of University of Ottawa teaching strategies.

7. *Best practices for teaching and learning in a bilingual environment*

From 1996-97 to 2003-04, the percentage of francophone students has diminished from 38.2 per cent to 33 per cent (undergraduate). Although the University promotes itself as a bilingual University, students believe that it does not do enough to make this vision a reality in concrete terms. Students repeatedly express dissatisfaction with the linguistic abilities of their professors and with differences observed in courses offered in both French and English. This is a problem for French and English students alike. Anglophone students have voiced concerns with respect to professors who have an insufficient command of English to perform well in the classroom. Similarly, Francophone students have complained about professors teaching in French who have less than satisfactory skills in that language. In addition, Francophone students have expressed the concern that many courses offered in French, which are supposed to be the same as courses offered in English, are not equal at all. Francophone students often feel that much of the education they receive is inferior both in terms of content covered and quality of teaching provided when compared to courses offered in English. This can have an impact on subsequent courses, as students often switch back and forth between courses offered in French and English within one program. If a student has taken an inferior prerequisite course, the necessary material for subsequent courses may not have been presented adequately or learned sufficiently to allow the students to continue without an unreasonable disadvantage. Unfortunately, the obligation to provide parallel courses in both official languages to unequal numbers of students puts a substantial strain on many departments. This affects the quality of the teaching and may force department chairs to recruit professors who are less than ideally suited to the tasks required of them.

There are francophone professors and teachers who, though able to teach in French either with or without some further training, are not currently teaching in French.

Recommendations:

- 7.1 Support the creation of a *Writing Centre* for faculty members to assist them in developing and writing course materials. Its focus should be to enhance faculty

² Report on the Implementation of a Service Learning Pilot Project at the University of Ottawa for September 2004. Submitted by the Working Group on Service Learning, Jeffrey Keshen, Committee Chair, 25 February 2004.

- members' own writing abilities in both languages.
- 7.2 The *Second Language Institute* should focus on the promotion of active bilingualism, speaking and understanding the language on the part of learners.
 - 7.3 Consider linguistic diversity in the implementation of recommendations with respect to best practices in teaching methods.
 - 7.4 Where the same courses are taught in both English and French (i.e. same course code), the courses should utilize the same learning objectives. Course material and evaluations/examinations should reflect these learning objectives in the two languages. In many, but not all, cases, this will involve using similar course materials and evaluations/examinations.
 - 7.5 The University should make the recruitment of bilingual professors and professors able to teach in French a priority.
 - 7.6 Develop and implement faculty development strategies and an environment that encourages and supports teaching in French by all faculty, regardless of their mother tongue.

8. *Best practices in evaluation of students and learning*

It is clear that students learn in many different ways. The question we face is whether or not it is possible for students to be evaluated fairly using limited evaluation tools. Some students perform very well on written exams while others perform well on practical exams. In attending to this issue, the team explored a variety of possibilities. Table 4 felt it was important that a major goal of student evaluation be the fostering of improvement and learning, and not a simple rank ordering.

Final Exams: Final exams are important and, as much as universities talk about eliminating them, they continue to serve a valuable purpose. Unfortunately, final exams are not always fair since the same exam is not always administered to all students. Also, as previously mentioned, there are frequently differences between the French and English learning experience which ultimately prepare students differently for the exam. This can be overcome by insisting that departments set high-level, measurable objectives for each course (regardless of language stream) that will facilitate some measure of standardized teaching and evaluation.

Open-Book Exams: Although more difficult than the traditional closed-book exams, open-book exams are a good way of assessing student learning. They allow professors to evaluate the student's ability to use his or her resources to solve more difficult problems.

Assignments:

- Take-home Assignments (uncontrolled conditions): These assignments are practical where research is required.
- In-class Scheduled Assignments (controlled conditions): This type of assignment can be given several times over the course of the semester. They encourage students to study throughout the semester, thereby minimizing "cramming."
- In-class Unscheduled Assignments (controlled conditions - unannounced): These are a good way to motivate students to understand the course material as they learn it in class. This will minimize the tendency toward "cramming" and absenteeism, as students frequently skip classes to cram for a test.

Oral Examinations: Although they are difficult to administer and even more difficult to keep objective, oral examinations are preferred by some students.

Problem-Based Evaluation Modules: By using problem-based modules in evaluation, professors can assess the ability of students to apply learned concepts or theories. This type of evaluation also allows professors to determine the knowledge, skills and thought processes of each student. Finally, the team environment specific to PBL will allow professors to evaluate leadership and team-working skills, which are essential assets in almost all fields of professional practice.

Recommendations:

- 8.1 Consider the adoption of the preceding student evaluation tools in departments and programs where appropriate.
- 8.2 Ensure a variety of student evaluation tools rather than any single method across the University.

9. Improving preparedness and competencies of students entering University of Ottawa

The members of Table 4 agreed that many students are inadequately prepared by their high-school training to cope with the challenges of university. They are often unable to express themselves clearly and correctly in their first language or have not mastered the fundamental concepts of their chosen discipline. Closer collaboration with high schools is crucial to addressing one of the primary causes of teaching and learning difficulties experienced by new students.

Recommendations:

- 9.1 Explore the development of a mentoring system that would involve both faculty and students, with the goal of assisting in the adjustment to university studies.
- 9.2 Develop and implement programs that would link the University and high schools, in order to improve the preparation of students for transition into the university environment. Work with other Ontario universities and the provincial government towards the common goal of improving the secondary-school preparation of Ontario students for university studies.

ASSESSMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

With regard to organizational readiness, the following enablers and barriers to success have been identified.

Enablers:

- a) The University has many excellent teachers and scholars in education.

- b) The University has many well-taught courses and innovations in education that can serve as models from which to build other “best practices” in teaching.
- c) The University recognizes the need to improve the overall quality of its teaching and is committed to facilitating this change.
- d) There are many programs in place to support teaching excellence: Teaching and Learning Support Services, Second Language Institute, and others.

Barriers:

- a) Excellence in teaching is not well defined or understood, which makes it difficult to achieve as a standard.
- b) Teaching is undervalued by universities in general when compared with other scholarly activities.
- c) The University has contractual agreements that could be improved with regards to realizing teaching expectations.
- d) There are difficulties in ensuring that teaching and learning experiences have comparable outcomes in both French and English classes within the same programs.
- e) The University teaching evaluation processes do not effectively support reflection and teaching improvement. Effective mechanisms to identify and improve poor teaching practices are also needed.
- f) Not all faculty members have access to the educational technologies that could facilitate enriched teaching and learning experiences.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND INDICATORS

Performance measures may include but are not limited to:

1. Student evaluations of teaching and professors;
2. Student performance (using provincial, national, and international standards and comparators);
3. Peer review processes and evaluations of teaching;
4. Retention and recruitment statistics for students and professors;
5. External teaching awards received by faculty members;
6. Understanding of and agreement across the University on excellence and standards in teaching;
7. Evidence that professors and teachers reflect on their teaching with subsequent revision and improvement;

8. Evidence of scholarship and innovation in education, including but not limited to funding for educational research, publication of educational innovations and teaching practices, and invitations to consult and speak at other institutions, national and international venues;
9. Increased awareness internally and externally of teaching excellence at the University of Ottawa;
10. The number of professors and teachers teaching in French throughout the University of Ottawa;
11. Evidence of reaching the learning objectives of courses in both English and French.

Appendix 1

Revised Questions Table 4 Best practices in teaching April 2, 2004

Question 1:

- a) What is the definition of excellence in teaching at the University of Ottawa?
- b) How should the quality of teaching be evaluated?
- c) Who should evaluate teaching quality?

Note: In answering this question the group will include in its discussions the identification of actions to be taken as a result of the evaluation process.

Question 2:

- a) How can we create and build on an environment in which excellence in teaching is fostered and respected?
- b) What else needs to happen in order to communicate that excellence in teaching is valued by the University?

Note: In answering this question the discussion will include the following: the perception and comparative value of research and teaching as academic endeavours. Why is research valued more than teaching? How can this knowledge be used to raise the value of excellent teaching? In addition, the group will discuss possible motivators for excellence in teaching -- rewards, recognition, etc. – and their effectiveness.

Question 3:

- a) Which professors are best suited to the various levels and types of teaching activities?
- b) How can the University convince the larger community that different teachers, including tenured and non-tenured faculty members, teaching assistants, and part-time professors, are being used appropriately in various teaching activities?

Questions 4:

- a) What is the role of technology in teaching?
- b) How can we best integrate technology into the classroom?
- c) Can the tools of technology provide an alternative to actual in-lab and in-class experience?
- d) What does the University need to offer students, faculty and staff in order to facilitate and support the use of technology for teaching?

Note: This discussion will include debate of practical issues such as accessibility and support necessary to integrate successfully useful technologies into classroom settings. It will also explore the need to assess and evaluate the relative success of teaching and learning using technology. New on-line resources now available at the Library and their effects on pedagogy will also be discussed.

Question 5:

What is the future for instructional innovation and for the application of new teaching practices?

Note: This discussion will explore innovation in teaching from a purely pedagogical perspective: i.e. how can students be led to explore traditional curricula in new and interesting ways to enhance learning?

Question 6:

What are the best practices for teaching in a bilingual environment?

Note: This discussion will focus on how a bilingual environment affects the quality of teaching at the University. It will additionally focus on practical issues and the identification of key recommendations aimed at ensuring consistently high quality of teaching in both French and English.

Question 7:

What can the University do to ensure that the quality of students being accepted into first year programs is consistently high?

Note: There was general consensus among group members that secondary schools are doing a less than satisfactory job of preparing students for their first year in university. Although the group recognizes that Table 4 is unlikely to be able to facilitate change at the secondary-school level, it also recognizes that change is impossible if the problem is not formally identified.

Question 8:

How can the University best evaluate students?

Note: This discussion will explore how examinations and evaluations of students might be modified to ensure that published results are an accurate reflection of student knowledge and skills.