

SOTA Meeting Minutes

December 2, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

CNH 607

In attendance: Rita Crespo and Professors Alfaro-Laganse, Cockett, Graham, Hladki, McKay, McQueen, Palmer, Rensink-Hoff, Schutz and Woolhouse.

Regrets: Professors Ford, Myhr, and Sokalski

On leave: Professors Major-Girardin, Mitchell, Renwick, Sheng

1) Previous Minutes

Prof. McQueen called for a motion to approve the previous minutes. Prof. Hladki moved on the motion. Prof. Palmer seconded. The motion carried.

2) General Announcements and Updates

Art Technologist Hire

Prof. McQueen announced the Printmaking Technologist hire. Agata Derda was hired as of late October and will be continuing for a year. With the expansion of art spaces, we're very fortunate to have this extra attention to health and safety. Prof. McQueen, Rose Mannarino, Prof. Palmer and Mike Syms were part of the hire and were very impressed with the pool of candidates.

Student Code of Conduct -

http://studentconduct.mcmaster.ca/student_code_of_conduct.html

Prof. McQueen asked everyone to consult and review the student code of conduct in full and noted that at McMaster students have the right to *"live and work in an environment free from harassment, intimidation, discrimination or assault."* The student code of conduct also outlines that students are responsible for *"supporting the ethical environment on campus through stability, honesty and respect and through valuing the inherent diversity of our community."* If instructors are approached by students who are experiencing anything experienced as a breach of acceptable conduct either on campus or in the context of social media, instructors need to tell students to consult this code and file the appropriate form when necessary. There are two student Conduct Officers on campus: Tim Cameron and Kaitlin Kellogg who work under the Associate Vice President of Students and Learning Affairs, Sean Van-Koughnett. This office can be reached by email -

studentcode@mcmaster.ca. Prof. McQueen recommended faculty not take on personal responsibility when issues related to students' inter-personal relations do not relate to their work as a teacher and researcher; but also emphasized the need to direct students to the code of conduct and support all concerned students by making clear that McMaster's Student Code of Conduct is designed, in part, to protect them from inappropriate behaviour. Prof. McKay asked for clarification regarding the social media aspect of this code of conduct and Prof. McQueen said she will convey that concern to Sean Van-Koughnett. Profs. Palmer and McQueen emphasized that this code includes all individuals attending events on campus, such as those attending conferences, presentations, or contributing as volunteers.

On the topic of conduct, Prof. Woolhouse raised a concern related to a Sessional instructor in Music for whom mid-semester “Fast Feedback” questionnaires had been completed by students in all three of his classes, due to concerns expressed by Music students and faculty. Prof. Woolhouse noted that students in a smaller-sized class were concerned about how the questionnaires and that the Sessional instructor’s responses, which Prof. Woolhouse described as having been verbally antagonizing, could affect the learning environment in their classes.

Black Box Users’ Group Update

Prof. Cockett outlined how The Black Box is a shared space with Multimedia and that a schedule for its use is being designed, and that Multimedia faculty are designing schedules similar to those that have been in place for Theatre & Film Studies for some time. Prof. Cockett noted Theatre & Film Studies hopes to move to this space in January and that the dean has assigned the task of overseeing the move to Patrick Brennan. Prof. McQueen added details about the short-term contract position to which he was hired by the dean, Mr. Brennan’s role including developing a plan for how the Black Box space will be used.

L. R. Wilson Hall Celebration Planning Committee Update

Prof. Rensink-Hoff stated that the L. R. Wilson Hall Celebration Planning Committee had not yet begun meeting, that here will be celebrations that will likely draw upon many groups within the School, and that she would follow up with updates.

Peer Observation of Teaching in SOTA

Prof. McQueen circulated a form that the Executive Committee worked on regarding Peer Observation of Teaching in the School. This form originated from a desire to give more guidance to faculty, CLA and Tenure-Track instructors who are preparing for promotion, and for fulfilling the review of CLAs in the final year of their contract. Kris Knorr from the MacPherson Centre advised the Executive Committee on aspects of this form. If any instructors have questions or concerns they should speak to the Executive member in their area. Prof. McKay asked why Sessional and CLA instructors don’t get a chance to see the letters submitted by the faculty member undertaking a peer evaluation of teaching. Prof. McQueen explained that the form would be used under different circumstances, ranging from evaluation of a Sessional instructor about whom there have been strong complaints from students, to a professor teaching in a Contractually Limited Appointments, for whom a formal review is required in the final year of their appointment, to evaluation of a tenure-track faculty member preparing for promotion and that in the latter instance the review is part of a larger mentoring process instructor. Prof. McKay stated instructors would benefit from the feedback on the letters, even if they would no longer be teaching at McMaster, as it would support their professional development. General discussion followed and it was requested that the wording of Observation Area 6: Open Comments be reviewed.

Humanities Awards Ceremony

The associate dean is looking for recommendations for an undergraduate student to speak at the Honours Awards Ceremony in February. The student would give a 2-3 minute speech in the context of the Humanities Awards Ceremony. Instructors are asked to send recommendations (of students who are making a significant contribution on campus, and who would be comfortable speaking) to Prof. McQueen. The associate dean would like to start these interviews in January.

Level I Courses in the Humanities

At the last meeting of the Dean's Advisory, the associate dean raised the issue of Level I courses in the Humanities. These were created to become required courses for Level I students who are not yet in Level I programs. Due to the nature of Level 1 entry programs, students in Art and Music are currently not eligible to take Level I Humanities courses. These specific courses were optional up until now; however, starting in September 2017 they will be required courses. The two courses are: *Insight and Inquiry* and *Voice and Vision*. Instructors interested in teaching either of the courses are to let Prof. McQueen know. Details on these courses include: capacity up to 99, part of instructors' regular teaching load, taught in the active learning classroom, minimum of 2 TAs, technical support (active learning classroom) and a sessional to cover the instructor's teaching in their discipline. Prof. McQueen suggested that the Art and Music faculty may wish to review their curriculum so students in those two programs could enrol in the courses and be part of the broader Level I Humanities' experience.

Adjunct Assistant Prof. Appointment in SOTA

Prof. McQueen recommended Prof. Sabine Noack-Haley as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School. Prof. Noack-Haley has a Ph.D. from the University of Hamburg and has been teaching for the Art History program for the last 2 years. Prof. McQueen outlined the benefits to instructors teaching regularly for a program to be granted Adjunct Assistant Professor status: they have access to library resources beyond the dates of their scheduled teaching, and that she had just learned from Grace Pollock that they are also eligible to apply for Tri-Council funding, such as from the SSHRC. Prof. McQueen noted that when an Adjunct Assistant Professor receives an SSHRC or other grant, the money is assigned to McMaster as an institution that, in turn, has a positive impact on research monies assigned to the Faculty of Humanities from the Office of the Associate Vice-President Research as well as the Arts Research Board. Dr. Rensink-Hoff asked if this proposal could set a precedent for other Sessional instructors. Prof. McQueen referred to the university's policy, which states that this should be reserved for persons holding full-time positions at other institutions, or for independent scholars who will have a significant involvement teaching at the School. Prof. Woolhouse suggested Music faculty would like to appoint Dr. David Gerry, and Prof. Hladki voiced her support of that suggestion. Prof. McQueen suggested the Music faculty prepare a proposal for an upcoming departmental meeting and called for a motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Sabine Noack-Haley as Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School. Prof. McKay moved on the motion. Prof. Cockett seconded. The motion carried.

3) Recruitment and Retention Responsibilities

Prof. Hladki discussed issues with recruitment and retention activities for the School. Three specific concerns she raised were: the increase in the expectation of faculty members regarding these events, the location of the events, and the number of hours that need to be covered on weekends and evenings. Prof. Hladki offered two suggestions to help address these concerns:

1. To organize so that representatives were not required of each program in the school at every event; programs would provide information sheets and could be represented by faculty from another area. For example, two faculty, one from Theatre & Film Studies and

one from Art, would be present in the morning of the first Fall Preview, and another two faculty, one from Art History and one from Music, would be present in the afternoon – the faculty would draw on information sheets provided by each program and would answer all questions, not just about their own respective program, but about each of the four programs in the school,

2. Honorariums would be offered for program students who would replace faculty representatives at the events; there is precedent for honorariums in other departments in the Faculty.

Prof. McQueen asked faculty members to think about the suggestions Prof. Hladki had made and to come to the January meeting prepared to discuss them in detail.

4) Systems and Structures

Prof. McQueen mentioned three points that are time sensitive:

1. Retention of grade breakdown for every assignment (as part of course management policy), class, and instructor. Individuals can now ask for a retroactive grade change (possibly with no time limit to that retroaction) on the basis of a health issue that might be diagnosed later. Prof. McQueen urged instructors to submit their charts in a timely fashion, and in order to ensure this requirement is fulfilled, faculty will receive their course evaluations following submission of their breakdown of grades. This submission should take place no later than one week following the final date to submit grades.

2. Clarifications about staff: Prof. McQueen noted that, while certain staff members undertake work directly in support on specific program activities, no staff member is designated to an individual program. Prof. McQueen also asked faculty to please be respectful and be mindful of staff space, including not going around and into the working space of a staff members' desk. Prof. McQueen also noted that, as finances allow, the School is committed to creating better and specifically more ergonomic working environments for the staff, including more appropriately designed standing work areas.

3. Prof. McQueen met with the new Recruitment Officer, Nathan Nash, who was very impressed with the well-organized liaison charts the School currently has in place. There will be program-specific follow-up meetings with Mr. Nash in January (and early February as necessary) and he will talk about enhancing our recruitment strategies.

4. A system that the School needs to institute going forward is the approval by the director of any recruitment materials before they are printed or produced. Prof. McQueen emphasized that no program within the School is its own entity and that the director is the one responsible for making sure that anything that is being represented externally adheres to McMaster's branding policy. Prof. Schutz noted the Music faculty had been given permission by Rose Mannarino to use money from endowment funds for recruitment initiatives. He raised with the director his concern about the communication the Music faculty had received, and asked that this concern be addressed. Prof. McQueen noted that the banner created by the Music program will be permitted to be used at Music auditions, and at off-campus recruitment events. In order to clarify the approval procedure, "review and approval of all publicity material" will be added to the list of director's responsibilities in the Administrative Structures Document.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.