

# **Teaching and Learning Framework Discussion Paper**

**February 15, 2011**



# Table of Contents

PREAMBLE .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	2
VISION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING .....	3
REFLECTING OUR CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING .....	3
QUALITIES OF GRADUATES .....	4
THE TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTEXT AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY .....	5
The Types of Students We Want to Attract .....	5
Profiles of Incoming Students .....	6
THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENTERPRISE .....	7
Student-centred Curriculum and Teaching Practice.....	8
<i>A Learning Paradigm</i> .....	8
<i>Key Components of Student-centred Learning and Teaching Practice</i> .....	8
Supportive Teaching and Learning Environment .....	10
<i>Libraries and Learning Resources</i> .....	10
<i>Research (Including Scholarship and Creative Activity) and Community Engagement</i> .....	10
<i>Supports for Students</i> .....	11
<i>Supports for Teachers</i> .....	12
<i>Formal Learning Spaces</i> .....	13
<i>Gathering Spaces</i> .....	14
<i>Accessibility</i> .....	15
Supportive Institutional Culture .....	15
<i>Academic Programs</i> .....	15
<i>Teaching is Valued and Supportive of Learning</i> .....	16
<i>Collegiality and Cooperation are Core Values</i> .....	16
<i>Strong Linkages to Communities are Fostered and Visible</i> .....	17

**TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND ..... 18**

**Teaching and Learning Initiatives at Other Universities ..... 18**

**The Process for Developing a Teaching and Learning Framework at Memorial University ..... 19**

**APPENDIX A**

**Ethical Principles in University Teaching – Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

**The American Association of University Professors – Statement on Professional Ethics**

**APPENDIX B**

**Teaching and Learning Initiatives in Other Universities**

## PREAMBLE

Memorial University is in the process of developing a Teaching and Learning Framework. This framework will:

- suggest a vision which can guide teaching and learning activities;
- highlight principles and practices that are known to guide good teaching and effective learning;
- celebrate our own good practices;
- identify the current supports for teaching and learning available at Memorial University and gaps in those supports;
- compile a preliminary list of actions for: (1) addressing gaps identified with respect to teaching and learning activities and (2) enhancing complementarity among teaching, learning, research and community engagement activities. We recognize that research encompasses scholarship and creative activities.

The process is sponsored through the office of the VPA and led by Doreen Neville, Albert Johnson and a working group. Advisory committees have been established to provide input on key themes including: critical thinking, student centered learning, academic support services, non-academic support services, diversity on campus and abroad, experiential learning, interdisciplinary activities, life long learning, program quality assurance, faculty recognition and complementarity with the research plan and community engagement activities.

The teaching and learning enterprise at Memorial involves the formal teacher-student interaction, the informal faculty – student – staff interaction, and the overall learning environment in the university. Essentially, every unit in the university is involved in some way in the teaching and learning enterprise. In keeping with the culture of the university community, the process of developing the Framework will be highly consultative, engaging as many units and people as feasible within the timeline of the project.

**The purpose of the discussion paper is to provide a starting point for dialogue about the teaching and learning enterprise at Memorial University. To this end, questions are posed throughout this document, and many more will be raised throughout the consultation process. This document has been posted to the Vice President Academic web site.**

[http://www.mun.ca/vpacademic/TLF\\_Discussion\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.mun.ca/vpacademic/TLF_Discussion_Paper.pdf)

Individuals are invited to respond to the discussion paper or provide any other comments they wish to make about the teaching and learning enterprise at Memorial University to the following address: [TeachingandLearning@mun.ca](mailto:TeachingandLearning@mun.ca).

**In addition a series of consultation sessions and focus groups will be held with faculty, students, and staff across all three campuses: Grenfell, St. John's, and the Marine Institute. Feedback obtained from individuals and groups, in addition to the input received from the working group, advisory groups, and steering committee will inform the development of the final document, *A Comprehensive Framework for Teaching and Learning at Memorial University*.**

A more complete description of the process being used to develop the Teaching and Learning Framework for Memorial University is presented in the final section of this discussion paper.

## INTRODUCTION

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, John Henry Newman spoke eloquently about the idea of a university as a place for:

*the communication and circulation of thought...a place where the intellect may safely range and speculate...where inquiry is pushed forward and discoveries verified and perfected... a place of concourse, whither students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge.*<sup>1</sup>

Memorial University embraces these fundamental concepts and expands upon them in its Mission Statement.

*Memorial University is an inclusive community dedicated to creativity, innovation and excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and to public engagement and service. We recognize our special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Memorial welcomes students and scholars from all over the world, and contributes knowledge and shares expertise locally, nationally and internationally.*<sup>2</sup>

The university fulfills this mission through our supports for teaching and learning, the breadth of our research agenda (including scholarship and creative activity) and the effective mobilization of the skills and talents of our faculty, students and staff. Memorial University is in the process of completing a Research Plan that notes that teaching and learning and research are complementary activities.<sup>3</sup> The development of a Teaching and Learning Framework for the university helps to ensure that this complementarity is preserved and enhanced.

In keeping with the cultural norms of this university, the development of a Teaching and Learning Framework will involve considerable consultation with members of the university community and key community stakeholders. This Discussion Paper is intended to provide background information to inform and focus these consultations. The Discussion Paper proposes a vision for teaching and learning at Memorial University; articulates the principles and core values which underlie the academic enterprise at Memorial; outlines the types of learning outcomes we seek to achieve; highlights the principles and practices that are known to guide good teaching and significant learning; describes the current supports for teaching and learning at Memorial; and identifies the types of actions and resources which will be required to ensure our Teaching and Learning practices are relevant and effective in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Modern History Sourcebook: John Henry Newman: The Idea of a University, 1854.  
[www.fordham.edu/hallsall/mod/newman/newman-university.html](http://www.fordham.edu/hallsall/mod/newman/newman-university.html)

<sup>2</sup> Memorial University Strategic Plan, Mission Statement

<sup>3</sup> Memorial University Research Plan, 2010

## **VISION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Students of Memorial University are 21<sup>st</sup> century explorers - independent thinkers, adventurous, confident, creative, and open-minded. These explorers are supported on their personal journeys of discovery through teaching and learning experiences that are student-centred, innovative and informed by evidence and experience. The curriculum, shaped and continually renewed by the results of research inquiry and the experience and perspectives of faculty and students, challenges *the intellect to range and speculate*. The learning environment, within the classroom and across all manner of learning spaces, encourages the communication of thought and interaction among students, faculty, staff and the community. Information and communication technology tools are employed appropriately to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning experience, and to facilitate access for all students. A Teaching and Learning Framework is in place as a key navigational aid for the university community as it pursues its academic mission.

## **REFLECTING OUR CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Memorial University's role in our province prescribes for us a unique challenge among institutions of our type. As the only university serving Newfoundland and Labrador, we place a special emphasis on meeting the post-secondary educational needs of the province. We have established a set of core values and principles that form the foundation of our thinking, and direct and drive our way forward. We work to achieve the highest possible quality in the delivery of our programs, foster creativity and ingenuity, embrace diversity, make our institution as accessible to students as possible, work collegially, and maintain high ethical standards.

At Memorial we understand and embrace the diversity of our students and educators, providing, as much as possible, opportunities for each student to succeed. To this end we work to promote student-centred learning and teaching, and consider the complete experience that our university can offer. We endeavour to establish a supportive environment in which students can be safe, intellectually, physically, spiritually and emotionally, to take risks and experiment.

We also encourage an appreciation for the diversity of the disciplines and individuals that weave the scholarly tapestry that is our institution. The people in our faculties and schools work to draw their students into the discourse of their respective disciplines in their own way, each looking for appropriate methods and strategies to produce graduates who meet and surpass the standards expected, and sometimes required, by professional organizations outside of the university.

One of our core values is the promise to maintain high ethical standards. We demonstrate this clearly with our strict adherence to ethics in research as prescribed by the Human Investigations Committee (HIC) and the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR). The university has established policies and infrastructure to support Memorial's development as a physically and emotionally safe place to study for our students and a respectful workplace for our faculty and staff. As we embark on an initiative to develop a teaching and learning framework for Memorial University we can reaffirm our commitment to ethical practice by establishing guidelines that define our teaching and interaction with our students.

Two organizations offer ethical codes as guidelines for institutions to consider. The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) offers a document entitled "Ethical Principles in University

Teaching” (included in Appendix A). These nine principles are not intended as a final product that is ready for adoption, but as a catalyst for debate and consideration so universities can meet their unique needs and the needs of their students. The American Association of University Professors offers a Statement on Professional Ethics that highlights five principles of ethical behaviour for university professors (also included in Appendix A). Grounding our teaching practice in clear and student-focused ethical guidelines will send a strong message to the community of our sincere commitment to the values established for Memorial University.

Research (including scholarship and creative activity), teaching, and community engagement are the three main pillars of our institution and maintaining the connectivity between these pillars helps to create an exciting and stimulating environment. Research and community engagement inform our teaching and learning endeavours. Similarly, teaching and community engagement inform research. Questions that we research often come from our experience and our interaction with our students and the community. Improving the resiliency of these connections helps to ensure the quality of our programs. We are also active in the scholarship of teaching and learning, promoting the value of scholarly work in teaching in every discipline.

We are working towards improving our learning environment by establishing appropriate learning spaces and providing technologies to enhance our faculty members’ teaching and our students’ learning. We have been and continue to be leaders in the appropriate use of technology in teaching and learning, and in promoting flexible modes of access and delivery. We will continue to investigate new technologies and teaching strategies as they become available, continually exploring and evaluating how we teach and how our students learn.

Facilitating a learning culture in our province is an important part of our core values and we foster lifelong learning in a number of ways. We encourage our professionals to come to Memorial to pursue graduate work, and offer a broad range of non-credit courses that respond to the personal development needs of members of the community. We host and participate in provincial, national and international conferences that contribute to the teaching and learning environment. We have a prominent presence in the learning culture of our province as a place where people want to explore and learn new ideas and skills. We work diligently to be both proactive and responsive to the needs of learners of all ages, as they include us in their personal journey towards self-improvement and learning.

We have established high standards for our performance in our role as the province’s only university. Given the dynamic nature of our calling, we are continuously seeking new ways to teach and enhance our students’ learning.

## **QUALITIES OF GRADUATES**

One of the guiding principles of teaching and learning at Memorial University is the valuing of diversity – recognizing the differences among the individuals, units and disciplines that make up our institution. Each faculty and school has specific standards or intended outcomes for learning that students will be required to meet, and specific knowledge and skills that students will be required to attain and apply. There are, however, qualities that all of Memorial’s undergraduate and graduate students should demonstrate after they complete their studies at Memorial.

As a launch to this teaching and learning framework initiative, 90 members of the university community, including deans and directors, faculty, students, and staff, met to identify these qualities. That group determined that our province and the global community need Memorial University graduates to:

- be critical and practical thinkers;
- be responsible citizens;
- demonstrate ethical, moral and intellectual integrity;
- celebrate diversity and promote equity;
- be creative and responsive problem solvers;
- have passion for learning;
- be supportive collaborators with particular regard to diversity of interests;
- be knowledgeable and competent in their field;
- communicate effectively with others; and
- be passionate and industrious individuals.

As the consultation process continues, we look forward to engaging in a dialogue about these qualities and our expectations for our graduates. For example, questions that could be considered include:

1. Are there other qualities of graduating students that need to be considered but are not included in the list above?
2. Are there unique qualities that distinguish our graduates from graduates of other universities or post-secondary institutions?
3. Think about the best student you have known. What characteristics made that individual the best student?
4. Can we measure these qualities?

## **THE TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTEXT AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY**

### **The Types of Students We Want to Attract**

For decades Memorial University has drawn the vast majority of our undergraduate and graduate students from Newfoundland and Labrador. The core of the university population has been, and will continue to be, that of the people of this province. As the number of high school students in the province continues to decrease, and the availability of online graduate programs from other institutions increases, the university faces a significant challenge in attracting our next generation of undergraduate and graduate students from both the province and the global village.

At Memorial we want to attract 21<sup>st</sup> century explorers, students who are willing to pass by many other institutions on their way to a place that offers unique experiences, opportunities and challenges. We want to help our students find their way to become confident adventurers, and independent thinkers, and who are curious, and self-directed. We want to inspire them to become leaders who will help push the boundaries of a multitude of disciplines and professions. We want undergraduate and graduate students who are eager to use their creativity and ingenuity to make a difference, and leave their mark on the world.



Students who study and grow with us know they will have an opportunity to accomplish all of this because of the impressive work that has gone on before them and the legacy of problem solving and resourcefulness that are hallmarks of Memorial and Newfoundland and Labrador. We are an institution that originated almost a century ago. Our graduates have made remarkable contributions and many are leaders in their field locally, nationally, and internationally. For some of our students, however, it is not enough to follow in the footsteps of their illustrious predecessors. They will want to navigate uncharted territory and create new paths for others to follow.

## **Profiles of Incoming Students**

Memorial University continues to see its greatest number of new undergraduate and graduate students each year coming from Newfoundland and Labrador. As the high school population in the province continues to decline, and we cultivate new national and international markets from which to attract both undergraduate and graduate students, our incoming class is drawn from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and includes students with varied degrees of academic preparedness.

Our present enrolment stands at 18,000 students: 80.4% are undergraduates, 16.3% are graduate students and 3.6% are pursuing diploma and certificate programs at the Marine Institute. In 2010,

At the undergraduate level:

- 73% of the incoming class and 81% of continuing students were from Newfoundland and Labrador;
- 20% of the incoming class and 14% of continuing students were from other provinces in Canada; and
- 7% of the incoming class and 5% of continuing students were from other countries.
  
- For the most recent incoming class of undergraduate students,
  - The profile of Newfoundland and Labrador high school students was as follows:
    - Only 48% of high school graduates were eligible to attend Memorial; 67% of that group did attend;
    - 62% of the incoming class were female;
    - 42% of the incoming class were from rural areas of the province;
    - Just under half of the entering class had an average of at least 80%; and
    - 21% of the entering class had an average of 75% or less.
  - The profiles of the Canadian and international groups attending Memorial directly after high school graduation are not significantly different.
  
- Six years after admission, 32% of undergraduate students with an admission average less than 75%, and 83% of students with an admission average of at least 85%, have graduated.
  
- Students are increasing mobile. Research suggests that as many as 50% of North American students attend more than one post-secondary institution before completing their first degree. Forty-one percent of undergraduate students graduating last year had transfer credits, which means that they had attended at least two institutions either on campus or through distance programs.

At the graduate level:

- 63% of students were from Newfoundland and Labrador;
- 19% of students were from other provinces in Canada; and
- 18% of students were from other countries.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century student is no longer exclusively the traditional learner who enters university immediately after high school. Changing careers goals, evolving credential requirements, continued personal development and non-mandatory retirement have resulted in the prospective and current student profile expanding to include a wide variety of learners. More and more students are entering Memorial's programs and courses from different life paths and at points in their lives different from the traditional student, fresh out of high school.

Some questions to consider include:

1. What impact will the increasing diversity of the student body (non-traditional learners, students, aboriginal students, students learning at a distance, international students, etc.) have on the teaching and learning environment and future program development and delivery?
2. Are current teaching and learning models appropriate for students who enter Memorial University with lower levels of academic preparedness? If not, what do we need to change?
3. Are we doing enough to recognize the value of prior learning and experience that students bring to their undergraduate and graduate programs?
4. Is there an appropriate mix of on-campus and distance delivery of courses within a program that we should be seeking to achieve?
5. Is there an ideal balance between the number and type of undergraduate versus graduate programs that Memorial University provides?
6. Additional questions...

## **THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENTERPRISE**

Robert Barr and John Tagg, in their 1995 landmark article "*From Teaching to Learning – A New Paradigm for Undergraduate education*" describe a major change occurring in post-secondary education, a shift away from *providing instruction* (which focuses on the faculty and the quality of the instruction) towards *producing learning* (which focuses on students and learning outcomes). Within the Learning Paradigm, universities take responsibility for learning at two levels: (1) institutional outcomes - the aggregate of student learning and success and (2) individual student outcomes – individual student learning.

At Memorial we believe that three components constitute the teaching and learning enterprise and contribute to the attainment of student outcomes at both the institutional and individual student levels: student-centred curriculum and teaching practice; appropriate learning environments (both physical

and virtual); and a supportive institutional culture around learning and teaching. Each is considered below.

## **Student-centred Curriculum and Teaching Practice**

### **A Learning Paradigm**

*In a Learning Paradigm College, the structures of courses and lectures become dispensable and negotiable. Semesters and quarters, lectures, labs syllabi – indeed classes themselves become options rather than received structures of mandatory activities. The Learning Paradigm prescribes no one “answer” to the questions of how to organize learning environments and experiences. It supports any learning method and structure that works, where “works” is defined in terms of learning outcomes, not as the degree of conformity to an ideal classroom archetype. In fact, the Learning Paradigm requires a constant search for new structures and methods that work better for student learning and success, and expects even these to be redesigned continuously and evolve over time.<sup>4</sup>*

### **Key Components of Student-centred Learning and Teaching Practice**

While the focus in a learner-centred paradigm is on continuous improvement in the quality of learning for students individually and in the aggregate, continuous improvement in teaching practice and the quality of the information made available to the student through the formal curriculum also remain important.

Student-centred curriculum and teaching practice:

- (1) is learner-focused – starts where the student is and builds from this foundation; clearly identifies outcomes for student learning, develops the curriculum and aligns instructional techniques and evaluation strategy to support the achievement of these learning outcomes;
- (2) is evidence-based – continuously updated based on: (a) findings from research (including scholarship and creative activity) and experience in the field of study and (b) student feedback regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting their learning objectives;
- (3) facilitates student engagement and active learning - encouraging student engagement by providing a variety of ways to learn, appropriate to their discipline;
- (4) utilizes technology appropriately to facilitate and enhance learning, demonstrate the tools used in the discipline, and broaden student access;

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<sup>4</sup> Barr, R. B. & Tagg, J. (1995). Teaching to Learning – A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education. *Change*. 27(6), 13 – 25.

- (5) promotes personal growth with respect to the desired qualities of a graduate described above, such as capacity for critical thinking;
- (6) is inclusive – utilizes examples from diverse communities locally, nationally and internationally; considers perspectives from a variety of stakeholders; and accommodates learner diversity by utilizing a variety of assessment strategies so that students can represent what they know in ways that are most suited to their abilities.
- (7) incorporates an experiential component where appropriate - students experience learning environments in the university, community, or practice setting that reinforce learning that occurs in more formal settings within the university; and
- (8) provides a foundation for lifelong learning.

Some questions to consider include:

1. Students at our institution need to be engaged in meaningful learning. How is that different for the undergraduate and graduate student experience and how can we ensure learner-centredness at both levels?
2. Student engagement is important in learning. What are we doing right and what do we need to do better to ensure student engagement?
3. What are the responsibilities of students to ensure meaningful learning experiences?
4. What are the responsibilities of faculty to ensure meaningful learning experiences?
5. What are the responsibilities of administrators and staff to ensure meaningful learning experiences?
6. How much flexibility do students need to chart their own journey of discovery within undergraduate and graduate programs?
7. How can we ensure learner-centredness in programs provided for professional and personal development that are not necessarily undertaken for university credit?
8. What understandings and skill sets are required by faculty, students, staff, and administrators to facilitate interdisciplinary teaching and learning experiences?
9. What current resources are brought to bear on supporting interdisciplinary teaching and learning, and are they appropriate and sufficient?
10. What current resources are brought to bear on supporting experiential teaching and learning, and are they appropriate and sufficient?
11. Additional questions...

## **Supportive Teaching and Learning Environment**

### **Libraries and Learning Resources**

The Libraries at Memorial (all four campuses) are key partners in our teaching and learning activities. They are a focal point for Memorial's research and information resources and archives that include print, multimedia and online (licensed and open access) materials, and provide research services and information literacy instruction both in person and online. The libraries at Memorial are challenged to move beyond the physical space and into a virtual presence and increasingly into knowledge management services. At the same time, they are also reviewing their roles to incorporate the growing need for learning and social spaces that support collaborative learning, group study and discussion, tutoring, meeting places, as well as spaces for partnered services such as the Learning Commons.

Other learning resources include but are not limited to Computing and Communications Help Desk and Digital Media Centre, Distance Education and Learning Technologies, The Writing Centre, The Blundon Centre, The Curriculum Materials Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archives, Centre for Music Media and Place, The Maritime History Archive, The Math Learning Centre, Native Liaison Office, and Grenfell Learning Centre.

Some questions to consider:

1. What challenges and opportunities do the proliferation of information and scholarly literature available on the web pose to those seeking to ensure student and faculty access to learning resources?
2. What types of library spaces are needed to support the teaching and learning enterprise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
3. Additional questions...

### **Research (Including Scholarship and Creative Activity) and Community Engagement**

Research (including scholarship and creative activity) informs teaching and facilitates recruitment and retention of scholars and graduate students who conduct research and teach. Community engagement ensures that community needs and perspectives inform the academic programs currently offered or under consideration for future development.

Some questions to consider:

1. What can we do to further strengthen the teaching and learning/research/community engagement nexus?
2. Additional questions...

## **Supports for Students**

At Memorial we strive to understand and embrace the diversity of our students and educators, providing, as much as possible, opportunities for each student to succeed. We also help students find balance in their lives, encouraging them to grow as whole persons. To this end we offer supports to scaffold student learning, providing both academic and non-academic support.

The university views academic support services as integral to the teaching and learning enterprise. Services available at Memorial include learning support services provided by the Math Learning Centre, the Writing Centre, The Supplemental Instruction program on Grenfell Campus and various help centres and peer tutorial programs run by faculties and schools.

In addition, the Registrar's Office offers support through the Academic Advising Centre (AAC). The AAC assists students who are at various stages of their academic careers. By reaching out to potential students through the Establishing Student Relationships Program (ESRP), the AAC aims to ease students' transition from high school to university. The Centre also counsels current students of Memorial University. Whether students are: undecided about which program of study they wish to pursue, uncertain of their academic goals, in need of assistance with their course curriculum, in need of guidance in exploring new academic opportunities, or facing potential academic prejudice, the AAC furnishes them with academic advice. The Academic Advising Centre also pairs instructors of first-year courses with students in their classes who have not yet declared a major area of study for the purposes of providing mentorship and academic advising.

Many non-academic support services available at Memorial University are administered through Student Affairs and Services. Student Affairs and Services provides significant support to students who are dealing with issues that: affect their ability to attend university, impact on the quality of their lives, and/or significantly influence the quality of their university experience. The services are offered through the Counselling Centre; the Career Counselling Centre; Student Health Services; Housing, Food and Conference Service; Chaplaincy Program, and Student Success Programs.

Other non-academic support services include those offered by the student unions, such as the Academic Advocacy Services and those offered by clubs and societies.

Some questions to consider:

1. Are there gaps in our current academic and non-academic student support services? Are these gaps related to the needs of specific groups of students and/or the broader student population we serve?
2. Are there gaps in the delivery of our academic and non-academic student support services?
3. How can we build on our current strengths in academic and non-academic student support services?
4. Additional questions...

## **Supports for Teachers**

Memorial University is home to faculty, contractual and sessional instructors who are experts in their content areas, and are not necessarily expert teachers. We want to encourage sound and creative teaching by rewarding innovation and changing the culture of the institution so that teaching is valued and recognized as much as research (including scholarship and creative activity).

The needs of teachers change throughout the continuum of their professional development. In a learner-centred environment new ways to expand and enhance the opportunities provided for professional growth in teaching are continually explored. The Division of Academic and Student Services at the Marine Institute, IT support staff on Grenfell Campus, and Distance Education and Learning Technologies (DELT) provide a range of support to the teaching community.

The Division of Academic and Student Services at the Marine Institute provides a range of faculty support, some formal and other informal under three categories: curriculum development support, instructional design support, and graphic design support. Our curriculum developers guide the new program/course development process and program/course review process at all levels of program offerings, from one-day workshops to full Masters programs. Every program (and subsequently course) is formally reviewed once a year. The curriculum designer helps the instructor(s) take the information gleaned from these processes and formulate them into programs and courses that meet the needs of industry. The instructional design group delivers formal professional development training through three courses: Fundamentals of Teaching and Learning, Introduction to D2L, and Teaching and Learning Online. IDs also provide individualized instruction on a wide range of software products and teaching technologies (e.g., clickers, smartboard). They work with instructors to create effective teaching methodologies in both the face-to-face and online environments. Graphic designers provide graphical support for our faculty. Web design, graphics, and course handbooks are typically requested.

The Medical Education Scholarship Centre (MESC) is a support unit within the Faculty of Medicine staffed with individuals who possess expertise in education scholarship. The purpose of the centre is to foster research and development in medical education. MESC supports faculty and students in developing expertise in medical education scholarship over the continuum of lifelong learning but with a focus on undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate education.

The Health Sciences Information and Media Services provides IT, multimedia, public relations, teaching facilities, and instructional support services to Memorial University's, Faculty of Medicine, the School of Nursing and the School of Pharmacy. By agreement, some services are also provided to the Eastern Health Care Board and affiliated teaching hospitals.

DELT advises faculty and staff on all three campuses on issues of pedagogy, media creation, and technical support. They also actively participate in the development and deployment of online courses and instructional media, as well as supporting and maintaining the technical infrastructure for both on-campus and virtual classroom environments. The Instructional Development Office (IDO), a unit within DELT, supports the university teaching community in the enhancement of teaching knowledge and skills. All faculty members, per-course instructors, lecturers, graduate students, and other professional teaching staff, whether they teach on campus or online, are invited to participate in the programs, events, and services that are made available through the Office. Services offered include: providing assistance in the development of teaching dossiers to help

faculty create a record of their teaching and the professional development activities in which they have engaged that focused on teaching; providing resources that focus on pedagogical issues; offering teaching consultations; and helping the university community celebrate distinguished teaching. Faculty and professional staff are encouraged to participate in Faculty Learning Communities. The Classroom Support Unit works with units and faculty members to design appropriate learning spaces and to provide day-to-day support for in classroom delivery. The Instructional Design Unit works with faculty to incorporate the use of technology in on-campus courses as well as in distance education courses.

Expanding the role that graduate students play in undergraduate teaching and learning can enhance the learning experiences of our undergraduate students, and prepare our graduate students with the teaching skills they will require if they accept faculty positions of their own. Currently, a Graduate Program in Teaching is offered by the School of Graduate Studies in cooperation with the Instructional Development Office. To facilitate a greater role for graduate students in the delivery of the undergraduate curriculum will require multiple opportunities for graduate student development in teaching in addition to the provision of adequate office space for graduate students.

Some questions to consider:

1. Think of your best learning experience. What are the qualities of that experience that stand out? What was the role of the teacher in that experience?
2. What are the best strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching?
3. How do we currently recognize the effective teaching that occurs at our university and are those recognition mechanisms appropriate and sufficient?
4. How can we support the lifelong development of teaching expertise among our faculty and instructors?
5. What is the current role of graduate students in the teaching and learning enterprise at Memorial? Should this be enhanced, and if so, what supports are required?
6. Do we have sufficient and appropriate infrastructure and human resources to support effective teaching?
7. Additional questions...

### **Formal Learning Spaces**

Appropriate learning spaces for both undergraduate and graduate students are a key feature of an engaging, collaborative, and learner-centred environment. Formal learning spaces are locations where formal delivery of learning occurs whether on campus or in virtual environments. On-campus space use and design (classrooms, faculty and graduate student offices) have a significant impact on the quality of the learning experience. Memorial seeks to provide learning spaces that: enable student engagement with the content, their instructors and their peers; provide equitable access to all students irrespective of location or physical challenges; integrate technologies appropriately; are



up-to-date with current best practices for learning space design; and meet and exceed student expectations of a modern university. Designs should be creative and flexible, provide accessibility for students, and have student learning and engagement as their primary focus.

The technologies used to enhance learning through the use of virtual environments should be intuitive, interactive and readily available, and be sufficiently and effectively supported. A continued commitment to innovation and development in emerging technologies provides us with opportunities to explore new ways to create, and offer our courses. We need to consider what those options are and what administrative changes are required to facilitate innovation in the service of quality enhancement and learner centredness.

Some questions to consider:

1. What formal learning spaces at Memorial work well and why?
2. What types of formal learning spaces does Memorial need to develop to support interactive teaching and learning experiences?
3. What role can aesthetics and technologies play in the effectiveness of these spaces?
4. Additional questions...

### **Gathering Spaces**

Access to suitable gathering spaces that foster informal learning experiences is important. Students gather to explore course content and ideas in informal group settings, both face-to-face and virtually through social networking technologies. Collaborative group work is a key component to many courses and, in particular, senior undergraduate and graduate courses. Dialogue and engagement in wider societal and discipline specific issues provide avenues for critical thinking and deeper understanding that is central to the university experience.

Students, faculty and staff often seek informal interactions as well. These interactions are not only fertile ground for creative and innovative work in teaching, learning and research; they promote the exchange of ideas and perspectives which contribute to personal growth for all involved.

Some questions to consider:

1. What informal learning spaces at Memorial work well and why?
2. What types of informal learning/gathering spaces does Memorial need to develop to support interactive teaching and learning experiences?
3. What role can aesthetics and technologies play in the effectiveness of these spaces?
4. Additional questions...

## **Accessibility**

A learning environment that facilitates student participation and success recognizes that disabilities encompass both physical and learning challenges. The Blundon Centre, for example, provides a wide range of support to students requiring academic accommodations. The infrastructure on the campuses requires continuous review with respect to accessibility and accommodation for students, faculty, and staff. Universal web design holds the potential to deliver digital services to students with a broad range of sensory challenges. Professional development for all faculty and staff interacting with students with special needs is required. Student support services, and general university community awareness and support are required to facilitate a successful implementation of accessibility initiatives.

Some questions to consider:

1. Are there gaps in our current support services around accessibility?
2. How can we build on our current strengths in support services around accessibility?
3. Additional questions...

## **Supportive Institutional Culture**

### **Academic Programs**

We work diligently to use all of our strengths to establish and maintain the integrity of our academic programs. Teaching, research (including scholarship and creative activity) and community engagement are our significant strengths. We use our research and our experience with the community to enhance and update the content of our programs and the context in which we deliver them. Teaching makes a significant contribution to our research. Interacting with students and helping them to understand the nature of our research help us to discover and refine questions we need to investigate. The teaching/research/community engagement nexus is vitally important and provides our students and the community with the assurance that the content of our programs is current. To this end, we need to establish mechanisms that will support and enhance the connections that exist between teaching, research and community engagement.

The calibre of the programs offered by a university lies not only in the quality of the content, but also in the quality of the teaching carried out to deliver these programs. Teaching strategies that encourage interaction between faculty, students, and communities provide opportunities for the co-construction of knowledge. Continuous improvement in teaching involves using our students' learning as a scale of measure, testing and evaluating new methods of teaching, and being aware of the dynamic nature our students' needs.

Questions to consider:

1. How do we define the quality of a course or program?
2. How can we best measure the quality of a course or program?
3. Additional questions...

### **Teaching is Valued and Supportive of Learning**

Memorial University's collective agreements, university strategic plans, and mission statements state the equal importance of research (including scholarship and creative activity) and teaching. Some argue that teaching is favoured over research in the documents that define the work of the university. Many individuals within the institution and much of the literature about teaching and learning in the academy, however, assert the opposite, that the research mandate has overshadowed teaching within the culture of the institution. As an institution we need to explore the processes used to evaluate teaching, support improvement in teaching, and reward teaching achievements in the promotion and tenure process.

One component of the teaching and learning enterprise in the academy is research about teaching and learning (e.g., discipline-based pedagogy, issues and challenges of post-secondary teaching and learning). Faculty involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning pursue excellence through the broad-base dissemination of knowledge pertaining to student learning and teaching practices. It is important to support and recognize the contribution of this research to understanding teaching and learning.

Some questions to consider:

1. Does Memorial University value teaching and research (including scholarship and creative activity) equally?
2. Do we at Memorial value and recognize teaching appropriately?
3. What processes do we use to evaluate teaching and how effective are they?
4. Additional questions...

### **Collegiality and Cooperation are Core Values**

A core value of universities is the principle of collegiality. Collegiality and cooperation are built on foundational principles such as deep listening, effective dialogue, openness to multiple worldviews and perspectives, respect, courage, honesty, and trust. Collegiality at Memorial University is demonstrated through: the number of programs that engage several departments, faculties and schools; the widespread cooperation among administrative, academic and support units; and pan university committee membership and activities that aim to be inclusive of the university community and the broader community outside of Memorial University.

Some questions to consider:

1. Are there other activities that we can undertake to promote inclusiveness?
2. Additional questions...

### **Strong Linkages to Communities are Fostered and Visible**

Many communities are key partners with Memorial in the teaching and learning enterprise. Citizens, community groups and agencies help define the needs of the province that in turn shape our mission and our approach to meeting our mandate. For example, a need for accessibility to post-secondary education has driven the growth in the number of courses and programs offered through distance delivery technologies. Communities and agencies provide experiential learning opportunities for our students through provision of internships, residences, co-op placements, service learning and volunteer positions. Research (including scholarship and creative activity) conducted in and with the community informs our curriculum development and teaching practices.

Memorial University recognizes the importance of discovering and nurturing strong links to the wider community, nationally and internationally.

Some questions to consider:

1. How accessible is the university to the communities of the province?
2. How can we foster community engagement in the teaching and learning enterprise?
3. What roles can the community play in experiential learning?
4. How can we include the diversity of our communities in the teaching and learning process?
5. Additional questions...

## **TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND**

### **Teaching and Learning Initiatives at Other Universities**

Universities throughout the world are dedicating time, energy and resources to introspection about teaching and learning. This journey of self-discovery has led them to reevaluate teaching and learning, and establish guidelines that place new emphasis on teaching practices, the infrastructure that supports teaching and learning, and the quality of the learning experienced by their students. In an attempt to cultivate discussion about the nature of teaching and learning at their institutions, many have created a teaching and learning framework for their university.

The teaching and learning frameworks studied as part of the research to develop this discussion paper (see Appendix B for references) were all invariably tied to the institutions' strategic plan. When other universities investigated the nature of their teaching practice, they considered their mission, and the values and principles that direct their teaching. They identified the qualities that they want their graduates to demonstrate. They indicated that they want to enhance the level of student engagement, and the quality of the overall university experience for their students. They considered the importance of flexible learning environments that are enhanced by the appropriate use of technology. They indicated the desire to direct resources toward the development of new technologies for teaching and learning, and to put in place infrastructure and mechanism to support technology integration. The framework documents promised to improve the quality of the programs that their respective institutions offer, and to reaffirm and enhance the connections being made between teaching and research. They supported and promoted student-centred learning that incorporates the advantage of a variety of teaching strategies, such as problem-based learning and experiential learning. They acknowledged the diversity of their students and the richness that this diversity brings to their institution. They also described unique programs and opportunities that are offered by their university in an attempt to define their niche in the post-secondary market.

These framework documents also outlined the need to develop "cornerstone" courses that will be delivered to all new students to help prepare them to succeed in university. They emphasize the need for students to possess good communications skills and indicate students need to learn these skills early in their university career. Many of the institutions noted the need to enhance their student support programs, indicating that they wanted to improve the quality of both their academic and non-academic support.

Other universities also described changes in institutional culture that they would like to make in support of teaching and learning. These institutions indicated that they understand their faculty members are experts in their content areas, but are not necessarily experts in teaching. They want to support faculty members by providing professional development, and opportunities for them to learn about new technologies and teaching methodologies that will engage their students, not only in the content, but also in discussion with each other, so that they can participate in the co-construction of knowledge. Many of the framework documents indicated that universities are looking for a way to evaluate teaching and devise mechanisms to recognize and reward good teaching. They want to establish an institutional culture that promotes teaching as a scholarly activity and supports research in teaching and learning. They supported and encouraged the expansion of connections to the community through teaching and learning.

The characteristic that is common to all of the framework documents examined is a statement of intent to continually work to improve teaching and learning, and the engagement of students. All of the institutions view teaching as a dynamic and demanding activity that requires faculty members and support staff within their institutions to continuously consider new teaching strategies and technologies that will engage their students.

### **The Process for Developing a Teaching and Learning Framework at Memorial University**

The process for developing a teaching and learning framework at Memorial University is sponsored by the Office of the Vice President, Academic. The Academic Deans and Directors form the Steering Committee for the Teaching and Learning Framework. The Steering Committee provides oversight to the Working Group, reviews documentation submitted during the consultation process and approves the final draft of the Framework document before it is forwarded to Senate.

The process of developing the Framework is led by Doreen Neville (AVPA), Albert Johnson (senior instructional designer) and a Working Group consisting of:

- two faculty members who have been recognized with Distinguished Teaching Awards and 3M Teaching Fellowships (Andrea Rose and Georg Gunther);
- a faculty member with research expertise in teaching and learning (Trudi Johnson);
- the Director of DELT (Ann-Marie Vaughan);
- an undergraduate student (George Furey);
- a graduate student (Sebastien Despres);
- a staff member from the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning (Sharon Pippy);
- a staff member from the Office of the Registrar (Shelia Singleton);
- a representative from MI (Derek Howse); and
- a representative of the library (Lorna Adcock).

The Working Group has established Advisory Committees to provide input on specific aspects of Teaching and Learning and contribute to the development of the final teaching and learning framework document. The committees have been constituted to support balanced representation from the Arts and Humanities, Science, and Professional Schools and the relevant areas of expertise in the university. A list of the advisory committee chairs and co-chairs is provided below:

- **Student-centred Learning** – Joyce Fewer, Instructional Development Office;
- **Experiential Learning** – Peter Rans, Director of CO-OP;
- **Academic Support** – Peter Ayres, Associate Dean of Arts, and Kelly Knight, Manager, Academic Advising;
- **Non-academic Advising** – Tom Brophy, Director, Student Success Program, and Angie Clarke, Division of Academic and Student Affairs, Marine Institute;
- **Interdisciplinary** – Ellen Waterman, Director of the School of Music;
- **Critical Thinking** – Shane O’Dea, Faculty of Arts (Retired Faculty);
- **Diversity on Campus and Abroad** – Sonja Knutson, Director, International Center;
- **Lifelong Learning** – Karen Kennedy, Director, Lifelong Learning;
- **Laboratory Instruction** – Christine Castagne, Laboratory Instructor, Nursing;
- **Program Quality Assurance** – Su Cleyle, Associate University Librarian and Rob Wells, Associate Director, Distance Education and Learning Technologies;

- **Faculty Recognition** – Dale Foster, Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, and Sonja Corbin Dwyer, Professor, Grenfell Campus; and
- **Complementarity with the Memorial Research Plan** – Carrie Dyck, Associate Dean of Arts (Acting).

The input of the Vice-President (Research), Vice-President (Finance and Administration), Vice-President (Grenfell Campus), Executive Director of the Marine Institute, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, the Senate Committee Educational Technology, the Senate Committee on Course Evaluation, and the Academic Council of the School of Graduate Studies will be sought throughout the process. Academic and academic support units (through their Deans and Directors) will be asked to identify key stakeholders in the community who should be engaged in a discussion of teaching and learning.

This discussion paper, *Teaching and Learning Framework Working Document*, will be circulated to all academic units, academic support units, other units within the university, and external stakeholders. In addition the document will be posted on the Vice President Academic web site under Teaching and Learning Framework ([http://www.mun.ca/vpacademic/teach\\_learn.php](http://www.mun.ca/vpacademic/teach_learn.php)). This document will serve as background for a series of consultations which will be held across the university and with the community.

Feedback from the Steering Committee, Working Group, Advisory Committees, and consultation sessions will inform the development of a document titled ***A Comprehensive Framework For Teaching and Learning at Memorial University***. This Framework will articulate the principles which should guide teaching and learning activities at Memorial University and identify the types of learning outcomes we seek to achieve. The resources required to ensure that our teaching and learning practices are relevant and effective will be noted. Recommended actions to support the teaching and learning environment will be included.

The Framework document will be reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee, ***prior to submitting it to*** the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, the Senate Committee on Educational Technology, the Academic Council of the School of Graduate Studies and the Senate.

Once the framework document is approved by Senate, the Office of the Vice President Academic will develop a plan to address the key recommendations of the report.

# **APPENDIX A**



# Ethical Principles in University Teaching

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## Preamble

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of basic ethical principles that define the professional responsibilities of university professors in their role as teacher.

Ethical principles are conceptualized here as general guidelines, ideals or expectations that need to be taken into account, along with other relevant conditions and circumstances, in the design and analysis of university teaching.

The intent of this document is not to provide a list of ironclad rules, or a systematic code of conduct, along with prescribed penalties for infractions, that will automatically apply in all situations and govern all eventualities. Similarly, the intent is not to contradict the concept of academic freedom, but rather to describe ways in which academic freedom can be exercised in a responsible manner.

Finally, this document is intended only as a first approximation, or as food for thought, not necessarily as a final product that is ready for adoption in the absence of discussion and consideration of local needs.

Ethical Principles in University Teaching was developed by the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and is endorsed by the winners of the national 3M teaching award whose names appear on the cover page. The document was created by individuals actively involved in university teaching, and will be distributed to university professors across Canada.

The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education believes that implementation of an ethical code similar to that described herein will be advantageous to university teachers (eg., in removing ambiguity concerning teaching responsibilities); and will contribute significantly to improvement of teaching. For these reasons, STLHE recommends that the document be discussed thoroughly at Canadian universities, with input from professors, students, and administrators, and that universities consider adopting or implementing ethical principles of teaching similar to those described in this document.

## Principle 1—Content Competence

A university teacher maintains a high level of subject matter knowledge and ensures that course content is current, accurate, representative, and appropriate to the position of the course within the student's program of studies.

This principle means that a teacher is responsible for maintaining (or acquiring) subject matter competence not only in areas of personal interest but in all areas relevant to course goals or objectives. Appropriateness of course content implies that what is actually taught in the course is consistent with stated course objectives and prepares students adequately for subsequent courses for which the present course is a prerequisite. Representativeness of course content implies that for topics involving difference of opinion or interpretation, representative points of view are acknowledged and placed in perspective. Achievement of content competence requires that the teacher take active steps to be up-to-date in content areas relevant to his or her courses; to be informed of the content of prerequisite courses and of courses for which the teacher's course is prerequisite; and to provide adequate representation of important topic areas and points of view. Specific examples of failure to fulfill the principle of content competence occur when an instructor teaches subjects for which she or he has an insufficient knowledge base, when an instructor misinterprets research evidence to support a theory or social policy favored by the instructor, or when an instructor responsible for a prerequisite survey course teaches only those topics in which the instructor has a personal interest.

## Principle 2—Pedagogical Competence

A pedagogically competent teacher communicates the objectives of the course to students, is aware of alternative instructional methods or strategies, and selects methods of instruction that, according to

research evidence (including personal or self-reflective research), are effective in helping students to achieve the course objectives.

This principle implies that, in addition to knowing the subject matter, a teacher has adequate pedagogical knowledge and skills, including communication of objectives, selection of effective instructional methods, provision of practice and feedback opportunities, and accommodation of student diversity. If mastery of a certain skill (eg., critical analysis, design of experiments) is part of the course objectives and will be considered in evaluation and grading of students, the teacher provides students with adequate opportunity to practice and receive feedback on that skill during the course. If learning styles differ significantly for different students or groups of students, the teacher is aware of these differences and, if feasible, varies her or his style of teaching accordingly. To maintain pedagogical competence, and instructor takes active steps to stay current regarding teaching strategies that will help students learn relevant knowledge and skills and will provide equal educational opportunity for diverse groups. This might involve reading general or discipline-specific educational literature, attending workshops and conferences, or experimentation with alternative methods or teaching a given course or a specific group of students.

Specific examples of failure to fulfill the principle of pedagogical competence include using an instructional method or assessment method that is incongruent with the stated course objectives (eg., using exams consisting solely of fact-memorization questions when the main objective of the course is to teach problem-solving skills); and failing to give students adequate opportunity to practice or learn skills that are included in the course objectives and will be tested on the final exam.

### **Principle 3—Dealing With Sensitive Topics**

Topics that students are likely to find sensitive or discomfoting are dealt with in an open, honest, and positive way.

Among other things, this principle means that the teacher acknowledges from the outset that a particular topic is sensitive, and explains why it is necessary to include it in the course syllabus. Also, the teacher identified his or her own perspective on the topic and compares it to alternative approaches or interpretations, thereby providing students with an understanding of the complexity of the issue and the difficulty of achieving a single objective" conclusion. Finally, in order to provide a safe and open environment for class discussion, the teacher invites all students to state their position on the issue, sets ground rules for discussion, is respectful of students even when it is necessary to disagree, and encourages students to be respectful of one another. As one example of a sensitive topic, analysis of certain poems written by John Donne can cause distress among students who perceive racial slurs embedded in the professor's interpretation, particularly if the latter is presented as the authoritative reading of the poem. As a result, some students may view the class as closed and exclusive rather than open and inclusive. A reasonable option is for the professor's analysis of the poem to be followed by an open class discussion of other possible interpretations and the pros and cons of each.

Another example of a sensitive topic occurs when a film depicting scenes of child abuse is shown, without forewarning, in a developmental psychology class. Assuming that such a film has a valid pedagogical role, student distress and discomfort can be minimized by warning students in advance of the content of the film, explaining why it is included in the curriculum, and providing opportunities for students to discuss their reactions to the film.

### **Principle 4—Student Development**

The overriding responsibility of the teacher is to contribute to the intellectual development of the student, at least in the context of the teacher's own area of expertise, and to avoid actions such as exploitation and discrimination that detract from student development.

According to this principle, the teacher's most basic responsibility is to design instruction that facilitates learning and encourages autonomy and independent thinking in students, to treat students with respect and dignity, and to avoid actions that detract unjustifiably from student development. Failure to take responsibility for student development occurs when the teacher comes to class under-prepared, fails

to design effective instruction, coerces students to adopt a particular value or point of view, or fails to discuss alternative theoretical interpretations (see also Principles 1, 2, and 3). Less obvious examples of failure to take responsibility for student development can arise when teachers ignore the power differential between themselves and students and behave in ways that exploit or denigrate students. Such behaviors include sexual or racial discrimination; derogatory comments toward students; taking primary or sole authorship of a publication reporting research conceptualized, designed, and conducted by a student collaborator; failure to acknowledge academic or intellectual debts to students; and assigning research work to students that serves the ends of the teacher but is unrelated to the educational goals of the course.

In some cases, the teacher's responsibility to contribute to student development can come into conflict with responsibilities to other agencies, such as the university, the academic discipline, or society as a whole. This can happen, for example, when a marginal student requests a letter of reference in support of advanced education, or when a student with learning disabilities requests accommodations that require modification of normal grading standards or graduation requirements. There are no hard and fast rules that govern situations such as these. The teacher must weigh all conflicting responsibilities, possibly consult with other individuals, and come to a reasoned decision.

### **Principle 5—Dual Relationships with Students**

To avoid conflict of interest, a teacher does not enter into dual-role relationships with students that are likely to detract from student development or lead to actual or perceived favoritism on the part of the teacher.

This principle means that it is the responsibility of the teacher to keep relationships with students focused on pedagogical goals and academic requirements. The most obvious example of a dual relationship that is likely to impair teacher objectivity and/or detract from student development is any form of sexual or close personal relationship with a current student. Other potentially problematic dual relationships include: accepting a teaching (or grading) role with respect to a member of one's immediate family, a close friend, or an individual who is also a client, patient, or business partner; excessive socializing with students outside of class, either individually or as a group; lending money to or borrowing money from students; giving gifts to or accepting gifts from students; and introducing a course requirement that students participate in a political movement advocated by the instructor. Even if the teacher believes that she or he is maintaining objectivity in situations such as these, the perception of favoritism on the part of other students is as educationally disastrous as actual favoritism or unfairness. If a teacher does become involved in a dual relationship with a student, despite efforts to the contrary, it is the responsibility of the teacher to notify his or her supervisor of the situation as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made for supervision or evaluation of the student. Although there are definite pedagogical benefits to establishing good rapport with students and interacting with students both inside and outside the classroom, there are also serious risks of exploitation, compromise of academic standards, and harm to student development. It is the responsibility of the teacher to prevent these risks from materializing into real or perceived conflicts of interest.

### **Principle 6—Confidentiality**

Student grades, attendance records, and private communications are treated as confidential materials, and are released only with student consent, or for legitimate academic purposes, or if there are reasonable grounds for believing that releasing such information will be beneficial to the student or will prevent harm to others.

This principle suggests that students are entitled to the same level of confidentiality in their relationships with teachers as would exist in a lawyer-client or doctor-patient relationship. Violation of confidentiality in the teacher-student relationship can cause students to distrust teachers and to show decreased academic motivation. Whatever rules or policies are followed with respect to confidentiality of student records, these should be disclosed in full to students at the beginning of the academic term.

In the absence of adequate grounds (i.e., student consent, legitimate purpose, or benefit to student) any of the following could be construed as a violation of confidentiality: providing student academic

records to a potential employer, researcher, or private investigator; discussing a student's grades or academic problems with another faculty member; and using privately communicated student experiences as teaching or research materials. Similarly, leaving graded student papers or exams in a pile outside one's office makes it possible for any student to determine any other student's grade and thus fails to protect the confidentiality of individual student grades. This problem can be avoided by having students pick up their papers individually during office hours, or by returning papers with no identifying information or grade visible on the cover page.

### **Principle 7—Respect for Colleagues**

A university teacher respects the dignity of her or his colleagues and works cooperatively with colleagues in the interest of fostering student development.

This principle means that in interactions among colleagues with respect to teaching, the overriding concern is the development of students. Disagreements between colleagues relating to teaching are settled privately, if possible, with no harm to student development. If a teacher suspects that a colleague has shown incompetence or ethical violations in teaching, the teacher takes responsibility for investigating the matter thoroughly and consulting privately with the colleague before taking further action.

A specific example of failure to show respect for colleagues occurs when a teacher makes unwarranted derogatory comments in the classroom about the competence of another teacher...for example, Professor A tells students that information provided to them last year by Professor B is of no use and will be replaced by information from Professor A in the course at hand. Other examples of failure to uphold this principle would be for a curriculum committee to refuse to require courses in other departments that compete with their own department for student enrolment; or for Professor X to refuse a student permission to take a course from Professor Y, who is disliked by Professor X, even though the course would be useful to the student.

### **Principle 8—Valid Assessment of Students**

Given the importance of assessment of student performance in university teaching and in students' lives and careers, instructors are responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure that assessment of students is valid, open, fair, and congruent with course objectives.

This principle means that the teacher is aware of research (including personal or self-reflective research) on the advantages and disadvantages of alternative methods of assessment, and based on this knowledge, the teacher selects assessment techniques that are consistent with the objectives of the course and at the same time are as reliable and valid as possible. Furthermore, assessment procedures and grading standards are communicated clearly to students at the beginning of the course, and except in rare circumstances, there is no deviation from the announced procedures. Student exams, papers, and assignments are graded carefully and fairly through the use of a rational marking system that can be communicated to students. By means appropriate for the size of the class, students are provided with prompt and accurate feedback on their performance at regular intervals throughout the course, plus an explanation as to how their work was graded, and constructive suggestions as to how to improve their standing in the course. In a similar vein, teachers are fair and objective in writing letters of reference for students.

One example of an ethically questionable assessment practice is to grade students on skills that were not part of the announced course objectives and/or were not allocated adequate practice opportunity during the course. If students are expected to demonstrate critical inquiry skills on the final exam, they should have been given the opportunity to develop critical inquiry skills during the course. Another violation of valid assessment occurs when faculty members teaching two different sections of the same course use drastically different assessment procedures or grading standards, such that the same level of student performance earns significantly different final grades in the two sections.

## Principle 9—Respect for Institution

In the interests of student development, a university teacher is aware of and respects the educational goals, policies, and standards of the institution in which he or she teaches.

This principle implies that a teacher shares a collective responsibility to work for the good of the university as a whole, to uphold the educational goals and standards of the university, and to abide by university policies and regulations pertaining to the education of students.

Specific examples of failure to uphold the principle of respect for institution include engaging in excessive work activity outside the university that conflicts with university teaching responsibilities; and being unaware of or ignoring valid university regulations on provision of course outlines, scheduling of exams, or academic misconduct.

## References

The authors are indebted to the following for ideas that were incorporated into the present document:

1. American Psychological Association (1990). Ethical principles of psychologists. *American Psychologist* 45, 390-395.
2. University of Calgary (1994). Code of Professional Ethics for Academic Staff.
3. Matthews, J.R. (1991). The teaching of ethics and the ethics of teaching. *Teaching Psychology*, 18, 80-85.

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## American Association of University Professors

### Statement on Professional Ethics

The statement that follows was originally adopted in 1966. Revisions were made and approved by the Association's Council in 1987 and 2009.

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#### Introduction

From its inception, the American Association of University Professors has recognized that membership in the academic profession carries with it special responsibilities. The Association has consistently affirmed these responsibilities in major policy statements, providing guidance to professors in such matters as their utterances as citizens, the exercise of their responsibilities to students and colleagues, and their conduct when resigning from an institution or when undertaking sponsored research. The *Statement on Professional Ethics* that follows sets forth those general standards that serve as a reminder of the variety of responsibilities assumed by all members of the profession.

In the enforcement of ethical standards, the academic profession differs from those of law and medicine, whose associations act to ensure the integrity of members engaged in private practice. In the academic profession the individual institution of higher learning provides this assurance and so should normally handle questions concerning propriety of conduct within its own framework by reference to a faculty group. The Association supports such local action and stands ready, through the general secretary and the Committee on Professional Ethics, to counsel with members of the academic community concerning questions of professional ethics and to inquire into complaints when local consideration is impossible or inappropriate. If the alleged offense is deemed sufficiently serious to raise the possibility of adverse action, the procedures should be in accordance with the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, the 1958 *Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings*, or the applicable provisions of the Association's *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.

#### The Statement

1. Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end professors devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although professors may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.
2. As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors

- demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.
3. As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates, even when it leads to findings and conclusions that differ from their own. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.
  4. As members of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although professors observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Professors give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution in determining the amount and character of work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, professors recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.
  5. As members of their community, professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens. Professors measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

American Association of University Professors. (2009). *Statement on Professional Ethics*.

Retrieved from

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/statementonprofessionalethics.htm>

## **APPENDIX B**



## Teaching and Learning Initiatives in Other Universities

Concordia: Centre for Teaching and Learning Services

<http://teaching.concordia.ca/resources/teaching-handbook-and-course-outline-guide/index.php>

Mount Allison: Changing to Preserve – An Academic Renewal Plan for Mount Allison University 2009-2016

[http://www.mta.ca/administration/vp/Renewal/MTA\\_Academic%20Renewal%20Plan09-16.pdf](http://www.mta.ca/administration/vp/Renewal/MTA_Academic%20Renewal%20Plan09-16.pdf)

University of Alberta: Academic Plan 2007 – 2011, Dare to Deliver

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