Suggestions around Teaching Processes and Policies

provided during the Provost's Discussion on Teaching and Learning,
November 30th University of Guelph Senate Meeting

(senate meeting recording timestamp 1:08 – 1:53)

Assessment, Curriculum and Course Management Suggestions

- Allow instructors more flexibility with Course Outline changes such that they can alter assessment weights and schedules more independently (unanimous consent can be difficult to obtain in large classes and is a time-consuming process).
- Provide support for instructors to create alternative assessment formats e.g., write exam questions that are hard to 'google'.
- Provide better coordination of exams (and assessments generally) across all courses in a program.
- Allow students to 'pause' a course (not drop) and then re-engage with it in a following semester, with recognition for work already completed.
- Provide alternative delivery options for courses that are currently being limited to specializations but are also required courses for applications to professional programs.
- Shorten the semester or allow instructors to shorten the time spent teaching to 11 weeks where feasible in courses/programs.

Engagement and Learning Supports

- Provide more opportunities and tools for students to 'check in' in an ongoing manner (university-wide) to facilitate increased communication and feedback and to improve the student experience (in and out of class).
- Frequent engagements with students (polls, surveys) at a course level to get feedback during semester.
- Build in intentional breaks between classes.
  - ➢ Reduce lecture times (e.g., 45 minutes for a 50-minute class) and encourage students to use the 15 minutes to engage in physical activity e.g., get up and move around.
- Ensure lectures (synchronous and asynchronous) do not exceed the allotted time i.e., lectures should not begin before or end after scheduled time - several reports indicating this is happening.

Technical/Technology support

- Improve internet access, speed, and reliability for all students, particularly those in rural areas.
- Employ TAs at the department level as technical support to help with moving things online and connectivity

Suggestions below adapted and re-organized by theme from the shared Integrative Biology google doc posted to the chat.

For Instructors

- Take advantage of the resources available from the Office of Teaching and Learning, OpenEd, The Hub, COESP, and PSEER.
- Consider allocation/revision of workload responsibilities with your department based upon inequitable effects of the current situation
- Review DE courses early in the prior semester, in order for OpenEd to be able to make any changes instructors want to introduce.
- Discourage downloading across the university community - SAS, Courselink and CCS will sometimes respond to faculty by downloading duties and responsibilities.
- Encourage instructors to set firm boundaries around when they are available to respond to student emails

For Students

Student Engagement

- Consider at least some synchronous course components to encourage social interactions and community.
- Encourage students to have webcams/mics on where possible to improve interpersonal engagement. Start classes with a fun video; chat with the class; have regular check-ins

Student Assessment

- Openly discuss academic integrity and ethical behaviour; outline expected behaviours for testing.
- Multiple low-stakes assessment *in every course* that a student is taking can result in ongoing assignment overload. Ensure that these are actually low-stakes with an appropriate amount of time to complete them.

- Coordinate the due dates of your assignments and exams with instructors from the other courses that your students are likely to be taking.
  - ➢ Add assessment dates to a shared calendar so all instructors can see when quizzes/assignments/exams are concentrated among courses.
- Limit the number of new activities to just one or two. A large number of new activities, and technology options can be overwhelming for students.
- Give students choice in the <u>content</u> of assignments, and <u>selection</u> of assignments / quizzes / etc. that count towards a final grade – e.g., best 8 of 10.
- Consider the bias, inequities, and mental health challenges using Respondus (or other surveillance software) has on students.
- Consider take-home exams if that format could work in your course.

Communication with Students

- Reach out early to students who appear to be struggling with smaller assignments and/ or tests.
- Consider setting up intelligent agents to send emails to students reminding them of upcoming assessments to help students stay on track with tasks.
- Ask for mid-semester / regular feedback – give your students a voice, hear them, and respond to them as best you can.

Student Accommodations

- Employ Universal Design Principles to avoid individual accommodation requirements (for example everyone gets double time on quizzes).
- Try to be accommodating when students miss quizzes or deadlines due to struggling with workload and time management.
- Provide a pre-determined grace option for submitting (e.g., a 48-hour pass that can be used once or twice in the semester).

Note: The Office of Teaching and Learning website includes numerous resources for course design and remote delivery, including a number of the suggestions noted in this document.