

## **RGASC Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes May 8, 2017**

**Attending:** Maya Tomkiewicz, Jiajia Zhou, Justin Murfitt, Joe Leydon, Christoph Richter, Catherine Seguin, Andrew Petersen, Jackie Goodman, Paula Hannaford, Sharon Marjadsingh, Diane Matias, Tom Klubi, Cliona Kelly, and Tyler Evans-Tokaryk

**Regrets:** Michelle Troberg

**Absent:** Connor Fitzpatrick

Minutes taken by Grace Xie

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### **Item One: Introduction**

Committee Members introduced themselves.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk introduced the Agenda and emphasized that the goals of this meeting were to get feedback and communicate with stakeholders.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk talked about the Centre's recent growth, first by discussing changes to the Organization Chart. He highlighted 3 new positions created since the last meeting and indicated that even with the move to the larger space in the new North Building, the RGASC will be using all available office spaces. Tyler Evans-Tokaryk then pointed out a number of other areas of growth: the overall number of students supported; the number of academic writing workshops; the Program for Accessing Research Training (PART); writing retreats; Professional English Language Support (PELS); TA training; collaboration with the TATP and GPS programs; Active Learning Classroom (ALC) support; the Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS) program; and collaborative programming with OST.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk highlighted the effective work done by Cliona Kelly and Grace Xie to engage in "community building" through social media, media screens, and face-to-face interaction with people.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk identified two areas of contraction: Head Start and the FSG program. Head Start's programming is starting to move into Orientation Week. The FSG program has fewer courses, facilitators and sessions, but the same number of attendances (around 5000).

In the discussion of the *General Undergraduate Support* section of the Annual Report, Catherine Seguin asked about the link between time management and plagiarism. Committee Members agreed that students are not aware that the RGASC

offers resources to help students manage their time. There was a lot of discussion about the kinds of plagiarism cases Committee Members are familiar with.

Catherine Seguin asked about the reference to the RGASC's "online academic integrity tutorials" in the Annual Report. She asked whether the RGASC could create and offer similar online resources to teach Citation Practices.

Cliona Kelly noted that the RGASC does have Time Management workshops, and pointed out that many students register without attending.

Cliona Kelly observed that students are increasingly looking for "just in time" support, and so workshops for which they register weeks or months in advance are not as important to them. Andrew Petersen observed that we could use Portal to remind students about their registration in a workshop or other event.

Jackie Goodman mentioned the UTM Time Tracker which will launch shortly. She described the tool and suggested it may help. Members asked questions about and discussed the Time Tracker.

Joe Leydon asked whether the RGASC was offering more drop-ins and changing programming to accommodate students' demand for just-in-time support. He also suggested that the RGASC should be included in UTM course syllabi. Diane Matias pointed out that references to plagiarism should be included in course syllabi. There was general agreement from the Committee members on this point.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk agreed that some RGASC programming had changed for this reason. Committee Members discussed this challenge and others related to academic offenses. Committee Members agreed that relevant videos and style guides related to appropriate source use need to be embedded in the course Blackboard site and discussed by instructors in class.

Jijia Zhou and others urged the RGASC to advise students to use online referencing tools. Committee Members discussed the challenge of getting students interested in appropriate source use, particularly in a classroom context. Committee Members debated the degree to which online referencing software, resources mentioned on course syllabi, and TLC professional development seminars could help prevent incidents of plagiarism.

## **Item Two: Recommendations and Actions Taken (2016 Advisory Committee Meeting)**

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk introduced the *"2016 Advisory Committee Meeting: Summary of Recommendations & Actions Taken"* document.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk noted the presentations given to Academic Affairs and other stakeholders.

Cliona Kelly explained the collaborative relationship between student clubs and the RGASC and the process the RGASC uses to provide support to clubs interested in integrating academic skills development into their programming and activities. Committee Members discussed funding and other kinds of support provided to UTMSU and Academic Societies.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk provided an overview of the training and support provided by the RGASC to high school teachers.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk explained the collaboration between the AccessAbility Resource Centre and RGASC, particularly with regards to the work being done by the the RGASC's new Program Strategist, Kerrie Martin.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk highlighted the RGASC's improved use of social media, revisions to the website, new essay contest, and cold calls to instructors to promote the Centre and reach out to new partners.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk pointed out new initiatives including the writing retreats, PELS workshops, and Math Drops-ins. Andrew Petersen and Joe Leydon asked questions about the Math Drop-In data and kind of support being provided through this new model. Some Committee Members expressed concern about remedial support being offered to students immediately before a math test. Committee Members discussed the differences and similarities between math drop-in support and the GRM embedded in courses.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk elaborated on changes and improvements to to graduate student support in the last year. Many Committee Members remarked that these changes were quite impressive. Tyler Evans-Tokaryk agreed that the Educational Developer, Dianne Ashbourne, had done a good job with this portfolio.

### **Item Three (RGASC 2016-2017 Annual Report)**

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk introduced the *RGASC 2016-2017 Annual Report*.

Committee Members discussed the RGASC's online academic integrity module, the problem of so-called shadow courses, students selling lecture notes, and other issues related to academic integrity. Tyler Evans-Tokaryk mentioned that the RGASC was in discussion with the Dean's Office regarding this issue.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk introduced the topic of *ELL Support* provided within courses. The Committee asked for details and whether this was related to the ACE program. Tyler Evans-Tokaryk indicated this initiative was unrelated to ACE, but that ACE and the RGASC were planning more collaborative programming for 2017-2018. Tyler Evans-Tokaryk also mentioned that ELL support was provided through a utmONE

course (UTM115). The idea of developing a continuing education course for ELL students was also mentioned as a possible strategy for supporting this population.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk introduced the topic of *Graduate Student Support*. Discussion focused on graduate student orientation, the TATP program (especially the numbers of students who complete it), and a new Graduate Student Professional Development Day being planned for early October 2017. Committee members debated the timing of this event. Jackie Goodman mentioned a new website for incoming undergraduate students and suggested this might be a useful tool to develop for graduate students as well.

Christoph Richter mentioned the need for more events that get graduate students from different departments together. Diane Matias asked whether the School of Graduate Studies would have an office at UTM. Many members of the Committee suggested that this would not happen.

Diane Matias asked whether advisors are being sent information regarding graduate student programming; Tyler Evans-Tokaryk indicated that they were.

Andrew Petersen pointed out the need for a “local champion” to communicate with stakeholders (including Department Chairs), to recruit instructors, and motivate people to attend.

### **[Break for lunch]**

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk introduced the discussion of the RGASC's *Faculty Support* by reminding the Committee that UTM does not pay money into CTSI and so CTSI has no requirement to provide direct support to UTM. CTSI will build capacity at UTM and support UTM initiatives, but is not able to staff and deliver programming at the suburban campuses. The Vice-Dean Teaching and Learning is exploring this issue and looking for ways to ensure UTM faculty are supported.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk highlighted the work done by the RGASC's new Educational Developer, Dianne Ashbourne, to organize and promote the Teaching-Learning-Collaboration (TLC) Group seminar series. The TLC is more active and attracting more interest, but getting people to attend is still challenging. The Committee noted that the RGASC has only published registration data, not actual attendance data. The RGASC will address this next year.

Andrew Petersen provided an update on the three Communities of Practice (CoPs) launched by TLC this year. The results have been varied. One was very successful and met regularly with a pre-established schedule. Others met less frequently. In the future, the SoTL CoP will try to be more project-based.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk introduced the topic of Active Learning Classrooms by assuring the Committee that the Office of the Dean is aware that this important

initiative needs more support going forward. Andrew Petersen echoed this point. The Committee discussed the fact that more support for the switch to a new Learning Management Engine (an update to or replacement for Blackboard) would be needed at the same time as the 8 new ALCs would be coming online.

The discussion of Head Start focused on declining attendance and the increasing importance of Orientation Week events led by the Office of Student Transition. Jackie Goodman pointed out that the schedule for Head Start and Orientation might improve attendance this year. The Committee discussed the change in student culture, the replication of Head Start programming during Orientation, the need to accommodate International Students in Orientation, and the renewed focus in Head Start on more generic rather than discipline-specific programming.

Tom Klubi led the discussion of the Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS) program. Tom Klubi pointed out recent changes in the curriculum and explained the intake process. Joe Leydon and others asked how students are referred to the program, and Tom Klubi explained the nature of the relationship between the Office of the Registrar and the RGASC. Joe Leydon asked if there was a relationship between the Early Alert program and the PASS program. Tyler Evans-Tokaryk answered that there was no relationship. Joe Leydon suggested that the RGASC could find ways to measure the impact of the PASS program and Tyler Evans-Tokaryk mentioned that assessment was being conducted on this and many other RGASC programs.

Andrew Petersen gave an update on the Early Alert program and indicated that much of the assessment of the program's impact has not yet been completed. The Committee agreed that this kind of assessment was very important.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk invited the Committee to ask questions or make recommendations for future programming.

Joe Leydon asked about the enrolment data for PART—a very small percentage of registrants actually attended both sessions of many modules. The Committee discussed strategies for ensuring registration numbers translate into attendance numbers.

Tom Klubi discussed the history of the FSG program, the current model (where FSG leaders attend one class per week) and the RGASC's plan to offer an Experiential Learning course for FSG leaders. This course would be similar to the EDS 377 course for LAUNCH leaders.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk mentioned a current gap in RGASC programming—support for senior and graduating undergraduate students. The Committee discussed the challenges with offering this kind of support, as it has to be discipline specific in order to be effective. The Committee agreed that discipline-specific workshops on “transferrable skills” would be useful.

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk asked for feedback on how the RGASC could engage more directly in community outreach. He raised, as an example, the potential for the RGASC to help establish writing centres in private companies. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of such an approach. Christoph Richter suggested working with libraries instead. Joe Leydon cautioned about spreading ourselves too thin.

[End of the meeting]

\*Minutes updated and published to the RGASC website June 12, 2017