

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
TEACHING, LEARNING AND ACADEMIC RESOURCES COMMITTEE
REQUEST FOR DECISION**

PRESENTED BY: Alec Aitken, chair, teaching, learning and academic resources committee of Council
Patti McDougall, vice provost teaching, learning and student experience

DATE OF MEETING: April 19, 2018

SUBJECT: Request for Decision: Student Experience of Teaching and Learning Instrument

DECISIONS REQUESTED:

Motion 1: *It is recommended:*

- *That the SETLQ supplied by eXplorance be designated the validated, institutionally supported student experience of teaching and learning instrument at the University of Saskatchewan;*

Motion 2: *It is recommended:*

- *That the approval process for minor modifications to the SETLQ core question set based on validation results or requested by colleges/departments be delegated to TLARC.*

PURPOSE:

The teaching, learning and academic resource committee of council has undertaken a principles-based process to select a new student experience of teaching and learning instrument that is recommended to become the new institutionally supported instrument. The new tool has been selected through an extensive process of research, consultation and piloting and has been shown to:

1. reflect institutional, college and departmental priorities in teaching and learning;
2. be valid and reliable in our institutional context;
3. ask students questions that they are well positioned to answer;
4. be useful in informing enhancement of teaching quality; and
5. be appropriate for use as one element within collegial teaching quality processes.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:

In 2007 University Council approved use of the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) as the validated instructor/course evaluation instrument at the University of Saskatchewan. This was the first Council approved instrument for the institution approved on the recommendation of the Instructional Development Committee of Council and framed by the 2004 Council approved *Framework for Student Evaluation of Teaching at the University of Saskatchewan*.

In 2015, the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning (GMCTL), with oversight from the teaching, learning and academic resources committee of Council (TLARC), began a project to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how teaching quality is conceptualized at our institution and to consider how teaching quality is measured. A key finding, outlined in the final report authored by Chelsea Willness (Edwards School of Business), Nancy Turner (Teaching and Learning Enhancement) and Colleen George (Edwards School of Business), was that SEEQ did not reflect the priorities of the institution in teaching and learning and that it therefore be considered for modification or replacement.

At the time of this report less than half of courses evaluated at the institution were using the SEEQ tool with many colleges/departments using different instruments. During the broad stakeholder consultation on the findings of the teaching quality report, the replacement of SEEQ was enthusiastically supported.

SELECTION PROCESS:

In the 2016/17 academic year TLARC commissioned a literature review on student evaluation/experience of teaching and learning across the higher education sector. The results of this review and the findings of the 2015/16 teaching quality project were used by TLARC to develop a set of principles to guide selection of a new instrument. The group reviewed several instruments with an instrument and system provided by the Montreal based company, eXplorance, ultimately being the highest rated on all principles. The instrument and system from eXplorance were developed through extensive research undertaken at the University of Toronto where the instrument was also validated.

Representatives from eXplorance were invited to present to U of S stakeholders on the instrument and system in May 2017. Stakeholders involved included students (graduate and undergraduate), student leaders, faculty, academic leaders, college administrators, and members of several institutional committees. Based on positive feedback from all stakeholders, TLARC made the decision in July to pilot this student experience of teaching and learning instrument and system in the 2017/18 academic year. The fall pilot was very successful with feedback from college/departmental leaders, administrators, faculty and students overwhelmingly positive.

The key features of this instrument and system that align with the principles set by TLARC and were of particular importance to pilot participants are:

1. The core institutional questions are focused primarily on gathering input from students about their experience in a course and how it supported their learning (thus the shift to use of the term student experience of teaching and learning questionnaire). These are questions that students are well positioned to answer with responses able to meaningfully inform teaching enhancement efforts.
2. The cascaded nature of the instrument provides a concise (9 item) set of core institutional questions (closed- and open-ended) alongside college/department selected items. These college/department questions allow the instrument to be tailored to fit college/departmental teaching practices.
3. The instrument is modular allowing validated question sets to be selected to match the teaching and learning approach taken in a particular course (e.g. field experience, online, community engaged learning, laboratory, lecture based). The system has the capacity for additional modules to be developed and made available.
4. The system allows instructors to add their own questions with the outcomes of these questions going back only to the instructor for teaching enhancement purposes.
5. In addition to end of term use, the system allows instructors to easily distribute the questionnaire in the middle of the term thus gathering early feedback from students.

CONSULTATION:

Throughout the selection and piloting, consultations on the principles and process have been undertaken. The list of those consulted includes:

- University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) Academic Affairs Committee
- University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association (GSA)
- University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) Student Council
- University Review Committee (URC)
- Joint Committee for the Management of the Agreement (JCMA)
- Educational Systems Steering Committee (ESSC)
- Associate Deans Academic Group
- Undergraduate Chairs, College of Arts & Science
- Groups of faculty from the Colleges of Arts & Science, Pharmacy and Nutrition, Education, Nursing, School of Physical Therapy, Engineering and Edwards School of Business

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

As part of its recommendations to Council in implementing SETLQ, TLARC is recommending that the approval process for minor modifications to the core question set based on validation results or as requested by colleges/departments given a particular circumstance in which the core questions are not applicable be delegated to TLARC. This request is being made so as to allow for a balance of consistency in the institutional core items and agility and flexibility in use of the system to meet local needs. These decisions are seen to need academic governance oversight but are not seen to need approval at University Council level. This process will also allow for a more expedient and responsive implementation process.

Additionally, it is recommended that the approval process for selection of college/departamental and individual instructor questions (made possible by SETLQ's cascaded question structure) as well as end of term report distribution be managed through existing college/departamental decision-making processes.

If approved by University Council, a phased implementation of SETLQ will begin in the fall of 2018 with the aim of ending central SEEQ support by 2020. The implementation will see SETLQ available in only an online format (no paper based use will be supported). Alongside this, a series of resources to support informed and effective use of the new instrument will be made available to the campus community.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The teaching, learning and academic resources committee of council has overseen the principles-based selection process and pilot of the student experience of teaching and learning instrument and has had extensive discussions about the instrument and pilot outcomes. The committee supports these recommendations being presented for approval at the April meeting of Council.