



**GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
Friday, March 6, 2020
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm / EME 2124**

Meeting commenced at 2:34 pm

1. Introductions

2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Innovation (ICI) Functional Program

Guests: Janet Kalesnikoff, Michael Burgess

Michael Burgess introduced the Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Innovation (ICI) Building (working title) which is intended to be a 165,000 sq. ft., five-floor, Indigenous design building to provide multi-use space in four focus areas: Climate and High Value Agriculture (HVA), Health, Data, and Social Economic Regional Development. Current aspirations for the building include a 200-person round classroom, language program, Indigenous research program, lab space, two thesis defence rooms, Maker Space, and space for all IGS programs as well as communal space for food services, studying, and socializing. Due to the research-intensive focus of the building, primarily graduate students and postdoctoral fellows will use the building. The ICI building will be located on what is now E lot (next to EME), and will house end-of-trip facilities such as showers and lockers due to proximity to the bus exchange. Approximately 60 faculty members and 300 graduate students are intended to be housed in the building.

GSAC members were invited to provide input on the ICI building.

- Q: What is the timeline?
 - o A: It will be approximately four years before the building is open (around 2025).
- Q: Will the lab space be used only for the four focus areas identified?
 - o A: The goal is to build the labs so that they are available for a range of uses, and to design the building to maximize flexibility.
- Q: What is the plan to incentivize collaboration?
 - o A: Other interdisciplinary buildings on other campuses have run into situations where individuals are still compartmentalized (by floors, labs, etc.). This building will be designed to provide “collision space” and thoroughfare. Ideally, faculty will not be moved into the building for the long term – the intention is for new people to be coming through regularly.
- Q: Is it going to be a green/renewable building? What about LEED certification?



- A: The intent is to do as much as possible to push the envelope for sustainability. Some things like deadlines to apply for gray water processing on site make the build more challenging. This will be more fully addressed in the design stage.
- Q: Is the planned Collegium space in addition to what exists now, or to replace it?
 - A: ICI Collegium space will be in addition to existing space.
- Members prioritized food services space with room to sit and talk, rather than more express spaces. This also acts as good informal meeting space and collision space.
- Specific lab equipment and needs on campus (such as BSL-3) will need to come from other sources and other funding; however, the building will consider flexible infrastructure so that it can meet future and changing needs.
- Offices for guests who are visiting: Indigenous collaborators, visiting professors, community members
- Need to balance spaces for open collaboration and private rooms while minimizing noise. Members requested as many small meeting rooms as possible, which could be arranged around a larger room. Specifically, students requested space for phone calls and conference calls and TA-student meetings. Also need interview rooms and focus group space.
- Suggestion that the Commons building is not the most efficient use of space; students suggested installing bar stools and tabletop to allow larger atrium spaces to function as working space when not in use for events.
- Part of the plan is to include two rooms for thesis defence; one room for 50 seats, and one room for 12 seats. Members agreed that 12 seats – which is a similar size to the existing COM 311 room – is too small to use for a formal defence. 50 seats was considered an appropriate size. IT also needs to be brought in to make sure that there is appropriate videoconference capacity.

CoGS will share ICI contact information and a copy of the presentation with GSAC members.

3. SEOT Working Group consultation

Guests: Peter Arthur, Deborah Roberts, Peter Newbury

Peter Arthur introduced the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SEoT) Working Group and the mandate of the working group: to investigate bias in the SEoT system, review University questions, propose recommendations for appropriate metrics, and assess the impact of the process. He explained the value of the graduate student voice, as they make up one third of the individuals who receive student evaluations.

Since the first set of forums in the first term, the first two recommendations made to the SEoT working group are:



1. Include student voices
2. Change the name of the evaluation process to Student Feedback on Instruction

The third goal is to receive feedback on the five drafted core questions, which are to replace the existing 20 questions:

1. I knew what I was expected to learn.
 2. I feel that the instructor communicated the subject matter effectively.
 3. The instructor helped inspire my interest in learning the subject.
 4. I was treated respectfully by the instructor.
 5. The instructor was effective in helping me learn.
- Comment boxes will also be included at the end of the evaluation. The existing system includes three comment boxes. The proposed system is planned to include one box, but there has not yet been a discussion on how to phrase the question for written feedback.
 - The questions have been revised to be more personal/individualized with “I” statements.
 - The Working Group is considering incentives (eg. extra credit) to encourage students to complete the evaluations, but this needs to be assessed.
 - Actively engaging student leadership to raise the profile of student feedback on instruction

GSAC members were invited to provide input on the proposed SEoT:

- Appreciate shorter and more personalized questions
- Q: Consider: who is best suited to offer critique? Peers and supervisors can provide valuable feedback and constructive criticism
 - o A: One of the recommendations is to incorporate peer evaluations and self-reflection, and creating a teaching dossier. This is just one component of evaluation.
- Q: How do students learn to give constructive feedback? What tools are provided to first year students to help them examine or reflect on their experiences in the classroom?
 - o A: Agreed that there is not much training provided to students on how to evaluate their classroom experiences. Also important is to train faculty on how to present the idea that evaluations are a useful exercise, and how to use feedback positively in the classroom.



- Members agreed that comment boxes were very important, possibly more valuable than the questions in providing feedback. Q: What is the plan to get students to include both positive and negative feedback?
 - A: This could be addressed in the wording of the preamble, rather than in multiple/separate boxes. Multiple boxes may make students feel obligated to fill out every box.

- Q: Has there been any investigation regarding what time the evaluations are offered?
 - A: Policy has been to do evaluations prior to final exams. Student feedback has been that they don't like the reminders. Students have requested one survey during midterms so that it can make a difference in the course, instead of at the end.

- Q: What about bias in the teaching evaluations?
 - A: Local analysis found some difference between gender, but it was not statistically different. A Vancouver study showed that female students rated female professors slightly higher, but not significantly. A break down by discipline has been requested but the data is not yet available. Literature says there is a potential for racial/ethnic bias and it is something they are trying to look at, but they don't know how to evaluate that. Accents could also be a factor, and are also challenging to evaluate.

- Q: What is the committee doing to address bias?
 - A: The committee did considerable review of literature and found conflicted studies, with no clear guidelines to move forward. Student members suggested making it a continuous process with direction, for example "I received this feedback from last year, can you focus on progress in that area...". Members also suggested holding a pedagogical seminar based on student feedback for programs.

4. Adjournment