External Review of the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT):

Response to the report of the review team

Simon Bates, Academic Director CTLT February 2017

We are pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the report of the Review Team (RT), and thank them for producing a concise yet thoughtful report. During their visit, the RT digested a great deal of material and had conversations with over 100 faculty, staff and students from Vancouver and leadership from both campuses. Their report provides the basis for discussions about CTLT's role and services to support teaching and learning, not only within the unit but also more broadly across the university. These considerations come at a particularly apposite time for us and the institution, as UBC embarks on a major strategic planning process. In the coming year, as the priority areas and actions around the teaching and learning mandate crystallize, together with the structures and resources to deliver on these priorities, this report will provide valuable input and actionable guidance to enable us to contribute to this conversation.

Against this context of an evolving set of strategic priorities, we frame our responses into two broad categories: areas or recommendations where CTLT can internally take the lead on actions and making changes starting now, and those areas that necessarily require on-going conversations (with the Provost's Office and other units) to shape, refine and move forwards. Despite being listed as discrete actions, a separation is somewhat artificial, since there are many overlapping areas with blurred boundaries.

1. CTLT-led actions

1a. Clarifying support roles. It is gratifying to read the RT commendations for the effort we have put in to become more F/faculty focused with services and partnerships, and how that emerged repeatedly through their various conversations with the UBC community. Nonetheless, we heed the comments (p4) around the need to clarify the relationships with local T&L support units and other campus partners as well. (Our own self-study documentation highlighted the unevenness of support across some areas.) The upcoming LMS transition provides a timely route into these conversations with Faculties, acknowledging that these need to be broader than just around learning technology support.

1b. Impact of activities. The RT report fairly states that we have limited measures of the impact of our activities (p3). Measuring impact of service provision and support is difficult, but we commit to address this, drawing on effective practices elsewhere, and linking to the recommendation to broaden our focus to student outcomes (2d) and broader evaluation of teaching and learning effectiveness and impact (2b). We will ensure measures of impact align with broader institutional priorities, and incorporate input from stakeholders.

1c. Pedagogy / technology balance. The RT report comments that 'the technology / pedagogy balance seems to be skewed towards the technology side' (p4). It is certainly true that we have grown a strong partnership with UBC IT for central learning technology support and taken leadership roles in major technology projects with a teaching and learning component (LMS transition, Learning Analytics). However, we strive to ensure that use of and advocacy for learning technology tools is always in the context of supporting pedagogical or educational goals. We believe that there are areas of our service portfolio that do approach teaching and learning issues from a pedagogical and curricular standpoint but we will enhance routes to communicate these to our stakeholders. We will continue to provide tailored support for the teaching pathways faculty members follow, for instructors in the educational leadership stream, research faculty, sessional lecturers and graduate teaching assistants. On a related issue, operation & support of enterprise technologies is becoming a shared activity within the LTHub and we will also work to streamline the retirement of learning technologies.

1d. Discovery, innovation and retirement of initiatives. (p9) As we outlined in our self-study review, we have developed processes to prioritize the lifecycle of projects we take on internally, and commit to progressing the operationalization of this in the light of this recommendation. However, this also extends more widely into institutional initiatives, for example measuring the impact of teaching and learning enhancements (2b) and piloting (or sun-setting) learning technology applications.

2. **Collaborative actions**

2a. <u>TLEF process.</u> Comments regarding the TLEF featured prominently in the RT report. To clarify, the Provost's Office disburses TLEF funds through competitive proposal submission and adjudication by a committee comprising faculty and students from across the University. CTLT supports the annual process and provides consultation support, along with Faculty-based support units, on proposal development prior to submission. The RT recommendations to 'increase transparency around the selection process' and 'align funding with the strategic priorities of the Faculties' (p9) are areas where we will work with the Provost's Office to enhance communication. TLEF priorities are set in consultation with Associate Deans Academic and the 'Large' TLEF project cycle does require alignment with Faculty priorities: this can be communicated more effectively.

2b. <u>TLEF outcomes.</u> The RT report recommends 'rigorous assessment of the impact of TLEF outcomes' and 'deliberate dissemination of the results' (p10). It is certainly true that despite being the innovation engine for teaching and learning for more than 20 years, more could have been done to evaluate the impact of TLEF projects, and deliberate cross-pollination of high impact practices. We commit to developing better ways to do this, in collaboration with the teaching and learning community at UBC. We have an early prototype of an impact framework for teaching and learning enhancement and leadership that will be refined through broad consultation during 2017. In addition, we will look to further enhance the dissemination of highly successful enhancements and innovation through a variety of channels. This effort will be coordinated with our evaluation of CTLT activities (1b).

2c. <u>Online learning in an expanding range of contexts</u> (p6). We agree that revenue generation from a broader range of learning contexts (e.g. career and personal education) using online learning as a channel is not part of our core mandate. The establishment of a separate team for more market-focused and entrepreneurial offerings is currently underway in the portfolio of the Assistant Provost, Academic Innovation and we will continue to engage in these discussions, particularly around the interfaces (pedagogical, curricular, technological) between this area and the core undergraduate teaching and learning mandate.

2d. <u>Shift from teaching to student engagement (and outcomes).</u> In several places within the RT report, recommendation is made to consider our role in 'catalyzing a shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on student engagement' (p1) and a reconceptualization of our vision and mission to align with this. We see great possibility here to develop an even stronger culture of innovation in pedagogy, one that encourages all actors (faculty, staff and students) to collaboratively take up the challenge of co-design and co-creation of an outstanding learning environment. In addition to the core focus of the work we do with faculty and TAs to support the improvement of student learning, there are opportunities for us to work more directly in partnership with student groups in the evaluation of teaching and learning outcomes (2b), with data from the nascent Learning Analytics (p8) effort a vital addition. We will actively pursue conversations to realize this with relevant VPs (Academic, Students) and with student leadership groups within the developing strategic planning process. Within the context of graduate students, we continue to support over 500 graduate students each year through specific programming for aspects of teaching and learning. This brings opportunities for collaboration with FoGPS (e.g. our membership of CIRTL) but we consider support for graduate supervision outside of our core mandate.

In summary, we note these are a wide ranging set of actions and conversations that we intend to progress. However, whilst they are broad in scope, it is also clear that there are over-arching themes we take note of as we move forwards:

1. A focus on clear communication and on developing and sustaining relationships;
2. A focus on (student) outcomes, impact and ways to support and assess these;
3. A continued, and where appropriate expanded, role in strategic conversations and priorities around teaching and learning.

We look forward to engaging with UBC's leadership and diverse teaching and learning community in responding to the actions outlined above.