



## ATTENDANCE

### Education Council Members

Elle Ting (Chair)  
Andrew Candela (Vice Chair)  
Ali Oliver  
Brett Griffiths  
Dave McMullen  
David Wells  
Denise Beerwald  
Heidi Parisotto  
Jessica Yeung  
Jo-Ellen Zakoor  
John Demeulemeester  
Julie Gilbert  
Lucy Griffith  
Marcus Ng  
Natasha Mandryk  
Nona Coles  
Shane McGowan  
Sukhmanjot Singh  
Todd Rowlatt

### Regrets

Lisa Hunter

### Guests

Amber Ariss  
Andrew Dunn  
Bonnie Chan  
Claire Sauvé  
Clayton Munro  
Dennis Innes  
Jennifer Cummins  
Jennifer Gossen  
Les Apouchtine  
Lindsay Tiemer  
Lucia Zabrieszch  
Melinda Schram  
Nicole Degagne  
Pervin Fahim  
Phoebe Patigdas  
Rachel Warick  
Shirley Lew  
Taryn Thomson  
Yulia Gracheva

### Recording Secretary

Darija Rabadzija

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 11:30 a.m. The meeting was conducted via videoconference. E. Ting welcomed new Education Council members A. Oliver, J. Yeung, M. Ng, J. Gilbert, S. Singh and S. McGowan.

## 2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- E. Ting acknowledged that the meeting is being held on the traditional unceded territory of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), x̓m̓əθk̓w̓əy̓əm (Musqueam) and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

## 3. ADOPT AGENDA

**MOTION:** THAT Education Council adopt the March 30, 2020 agenda as presented.

**Moved by D. Wells, Seconded & CARRIED (Unanimously)**

## 4. BUSINESS ARISING

### a) Education Council and Standing Committee Process Adjustments

- E. Ting opened the discussion on adjusting governance processes to address the need for timely responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. One example is the current proposal for revisions to policy C.1.1 (item 4c), which did not go through the standard process outlined in policy A.3.2 Policy Development

and Maintenance. While N. Degagne is currently reviewing policy A.3.2, revising this policy will take time, and an alternative process to fast-track urgent changes needs to be adopted in the meantime.

- Education Council agreed to the following:
  - The minimum notice requirement for meetings will be reduced from one week to two days (with exceptions for urgent responses required by the ministry or health authorities).
  - A two-thirds majority vote will be required to approve changes made outside of standard policies and procedures; quorum remains the same. The rationale is to ensure broader consensus and increased control in situations with very tight timelines.
  - Provisional changes made in response to the current crisis will have a (preliminary) end date, where appropriate.
  - Changes will be tracked by the EdCo Chair and EdCo Assistant and revisited by Education Council at a predetermined date and/or at the end of the medical crisis.
  - Decisions will be made in meetings via videoconference, rather than via email.
- T. Thomson requested a statement be sent out to provide clear guidance to faculty, outlining what emergency measures EdCo is taking. E. Ting will present a note detailing EdCo's process adjustments at the next meeting on April 14.

#### b) Alternative English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment

**MOTION:** THAT Education Council approve a pilot program, in the form described, using the Duolingo English Test as an option for demonstrating English Language Proficiency for admissions for the 2020/21 year.

**Moved by T. Rowlatt, Seconded & CARRIED (Unanimously)**

- D. McMullen presented the proposal, developed in collaboration with C. Munro, to accept the online Duolingo English Test as an alternative way to assess English Language Proficiency (ELP). The rationale is that, since VCC's Assessment Centre is closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an alternative is required to allow for continued student assessment and registration. Duolingo is currently the only available online assessment option, and is employed by several other institutions. T. Rowlatt added that the current proposal is for a one-year pilot. Details on the Duolingo English Test, including testing conditions, are outlined here: <https://testcenter.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>.
- R. Warick suggested supplementing the test with an interview. D. McMullen responded that implementing an additional interview process is not feasible in the short time frame and in view of the large number of registrants. L. Apouchtine added that SFU is accepting the Duolingo English Test for undergraduate admission, without any additional assessments.
- R. Warick offered to contact Cell-Ed, the company that developed VCC's mlearning app, if there is interest in developing an in-house online assessment option based on Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). R. Warick will connect with C. Munro.
- E. Ting inquired about transfer options for students assessed through Duolingo; D. Wells did not expect an impact on course transferability, since it is based on course learning outcomes.
- Responding to J. Demeulemeester's question about LINC, D. McMullen explained that a new registration process is being developed for continuing students. New students cannot be accepted for the next intake due to public health orders; alternatives to the usual in-person registration process need to be developed. T. Rowlatt added that due to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) restrictions, Duolingo is not accepted as an assessment for entry to LINC.
- Responding to A. Candela, C. Munro clarified that using Duolingo creates a separate assessment pathway for students, independent of VCC's Assessment Centre.

- Education Council approved the motion unanimously. After the vote, J. Demeulemeester suggested limiting the pilot to the duration of the medical crisis. He expressed concern that the use of this external assessment constitutes outsourcing, which could negatively impact employment for both faculty and staff. T. Thomson echoed concerns about potential job losses. J. Demeulemeester agreed to the one-year time frame, under the provision that the pilot is then reviewed within the context of the original decision. E. Ting confirmed that the pilot will be reviewed in twelve months, and was open to an earlier review if circumstances change.

### c) Revisions to C.1.1 Grading, Progression, and Withdrawal Policy and Procedures

**MOTION:** THAT Education Council approve, with changes approved at this meeting, revisions to C.1.1 Grading, Progression and Withdrawal policy and procedures to add the Aegrotat course standing.

**Moved by A. Candela, Seconded & CARRIED (with one (1) opposed)**

- T. Rowlatt presented the proposal to add the Aegrotat course standing to the policy and procedures. The Aegrotat was removed several years ago, since it was rarely used. The goal is not to use it widely, but to provide this option in appropriate cases. D. McMullen cautioned that adding the Aegrotat to C.1.1 should not be time limited, since the course standing will need to remain on transcripts.
- The definition for “Aegrotat” was adapted from UBC’s definition. A. Candela added that the revisions were sent out to Education Policy Committee members, who suggested rewording the definition by replacing “medical, emotional, or other difficulties” with the more general “unforeseen circumstances,” as well as adding a note that students still need to meet the requirements of external regulatory bodies. D. McMullen requested adding consultation with the Registrar’s Office to ensure appropriate use of the Aegrotat. Education Council agreed on the following definition:
  - Aegrotat: A course standing that allows a student credit for a course even though the course requirements have not been completed due to unforeseen circumstances. This standing is awarded only if the course instructor and the Dean agree, in consultation with the Registrar’s Office, that the student has demonstrated the capacity to deal with the course material satisfactorily, and that the student still meets the requirements of external regulatory bodies
- D. McMullen clarified that students receive credit for the course, but the grade is not included in VCC’s GPA calculation. The transcript shows a letter grade with a notation of “(AEG)” after the grade. Responding to D. Beerwald, D. McMullen noted no concerns about the Aegrotat impacting transferability; however, each receiving institution determines its own GPA calculation and requirements.

### d) Withdrawal Process for Students

- E. Ting opened a conversation around the withdrawal process for students who are unable to make the transition to online learning. VCC has extended withdrawal deadlines for those currently enrolled up to the final day of class. E. Ting expressed concern around negative connotations of a ‘W’ grade for students. D. McMullen noted that some institutions are considering allowing withdrawals even after the final grade has been issued.
- Responding to J. Demeulemeester, S. McGowan explained that the refund policy has not changed; D. McMullen added that the Ministry’s directive is to minimize refunds.
- Responding to A. Candela, D. McMullen explained that courses students have withdrawn from in the current situation will not count towards the limited number of repeats; rules around ‘In Progress (IP)’ grades have not been reviewed yet.

### e) Pass/Fail Grading

- E. Ting and N. Mandryk opened the discussion on pass/fail grading, which has been introduced by several Canadian universities. These institutions mostly allow students to choose between a grade and pass/fail.
- Responding to E. Ting, D. Wells clarified that pass/fail grading has not been discussed at VCC's Emergency Operations Centre. D. McMullen added that there is some opposition to this grading system, and students petitioned the University of Alberta to allow students the choice between a grade and pass/fail. Introducing pass/fail grading would create a large operational workload and may be opposed by students applying for scholarships or other programs, and those who achieved high grades.

## 5. NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

- The next regular Education Council meeting will be held on April 14, 2020, 3:30-5:30 p.m., via videoconference.

**MOTION:** THAT Education Council adjourn the March 30, 2020 meeting.

**Moved by N. Coles, Seconded & CARRIED (Unanimously)**

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

## APPROVED AT THE APRIL 14, 2020 EDUCATION COUNCIL MEETING

**Elle Ting**  
**Chair, VCC Education Council**