PREACHING WHAT WE PRACTICE: HOW INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE SUPPORTS QUALITY TEACHING

Jessica Riddell and Corinne A. Haigh
Bishop's University

Abstract

In this paper, we provide a selected review of recent research that illustrates the relationships between student learning and faculty engagement, while arguing for the central importance of an institutional culture that supports teaching and learning. We review both internal and external factors that can negatively influence institutional cultures around teaching and learning in order to fully understand the challenges that block change and hamper student learning and pedagogical development. Finally, we discuss the institutional culture around teaching and learning at Bishop's University, especially in the light of the newly established Teaching and Learning Centre Initiative (TLCI), and outline ways that we can study change within this evolving culture.

Résumé

Cet article fournit une analyse bibliographique sélective de recherches récentes illustrant les relations entre l'apprentissage étudiant et l'engagement professoral tout en faisant valoir la grande importante d'une culture institutionnelle en appui à l'enseignement et l'apprentissage. Nous analysons les facteurs tant internes qu'externes qui peuvent influencer négativement les cultures institutionnelles liées à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage afin de mieux comprendre ce qui bloque le changement et entrave l'apprentissage étudiant et le développement pédagogique. Enfin, l'article fournit une discussion sur la culture institutionnelle liée à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage à l'Université Bishop's, en particulier à la lumière du nouveau programme Teaching and Learning Centre Initiative (TLCI). *Il propose aussi un survol des moyens à utiliser pour étudier le changement dans le cadre de cette culture en évolution.*

The Importance of Student Learning Outcomes in Higher Education

In the midst of a rapidly changing world, higher education is facing increasingly acute challenges with respect to resources, mission, and legitimization. Post-secondary institutions must be equipped to respond to a host of ethical challenges in the twenty-first century, including globalization, economic instability, developing technologies, and endangered environments. However, universities – whose role is to prepare students for responsible, ethical, and sustainable leadership roles – are struggling. A number of books have been published recently that call into question the ability of universities to deliver significant learning experiences to their students.[1] It is beyond the scope of the paper to conduct a comprehensive review of the literature on the effect institutional cultures have on student learning outcomes. What follows is a selected review of the literature and an illustration of one institution's attempt to shape and enhance their institutional culture around quality teaching.

Perhaps most controversially, Richard Arum and Josipa Roska (2011), in *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, argue that students do not learn "very much" in the contemporary higher education system. The statistics they have compiled are shocking: 45 percent of students "did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning" during the first two years of college and 36 percent of students "did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning" over four years of college (Arum & Roska, 2011; 121). The cause of this failure is complex, but many scholars of teaching and learning in higher education assert that while student learning outcomes are directly related to the level of student engagement, academic rigor, and the type of education delivered (for example, liberal arts, professional degrees, technical training), an important indicator of how a student will fare is the institutional culture at the university they attend (Arum & Roska, 2011; Astin, 1993; Bok, 2006; Bok, 2003; Bok, 1986). This research suggests that an institutional culture that supports a comprehensive liberal education, high academic expectations for students, and pedagogical support for faculty creates ideal conditions for positive student learning outcomes.

There is an established link between a liberal education model and positive learning outcomes. For our purposes, we use the Association of American Universities and Colleges (AAU&C) definition of a liberal education:

> Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change.

It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. The broad goals of liberal education have been enduring even as the courses and requirements that comprise a liberal education have changed over the years. Today, a liberal education usually includes a general education curriculum that provides broad learning in multiple disciplines and ways of knowing, along with more in-depth study in a major (AAU&C, par. 1).

According to recent research, students majoring in liberal arts fields see "significantly higher gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills over time than students in other fields of study" (Arum & Roska, 2011; 104). In 2006, Charles Blaich at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College launched the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education. Although the initial study examined only liberal arts institutions, it was expanded to include 49 institutions in the US, including liberal arts colleges, regional universities, research universities, and community colleges. The longitudinal study assesses a range of learning outcomes with the mission to assess how academic and non-academic experiences impact student learning. As a part of this larger research project, Pascarella, Wang, Trolian, and Blaich (2013; 569) analyzed longitudinal data from 17 post-secondary institutions with four-year degrees in the United States "to determine how the distinctive instructional and learning environment of American liberal arts colleges" leads to growth in critical thinking skills, cognitive development, and other gains in learning. They found that students who attended an American liberal arts college (versus a research university or a regional institution) had enhanced approaches to deep learning that facilitated growth in both critical thinking and meta-cognition (Pascarella *et al*, 2013). A liberal education seeks to promote the development of cross-curricular competencies through engagement with multiple disciplines. It makes sense, therefore, that fostering a sense of intellectual curiosity at a programmatic and institutional level produces greater student learning outcomes.

In current debates around higher education, the liberal education model is increasingly under attack while policy makers and politicians have identified initiatives like STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), and other areas that are perceived as being more applied in nature, as areas that should get increased funding and attention.[2] This is not to say that fields such as STEM cannot be taught in a way

that equips students with a sense of social responsibility and develops competencies such as critical thinking, creative and adaptive problem solving, and other transferrable skills traditionally associated with the liberal arts. As we see above, a large body of compelling research has identified the combination of a liberal education approach, high expectations for students, and increased synergies between teaching and research as conditions that provide students with the greatest gains in critical thinking, creative and adaptive problem solving, oral and written communication, information literacy – in short, the skills necessary to innovate and adapt to our increasingly complex and ever changing world. These student learning outcomes are not merely influenced but, rather, *shaped* by institutional culture. In order to respond to many of the challenges that have been leveled against higher education, universities need to better support the efforts of faculty to engage in scholarly teaching given the central influence of faculty members on student learning outcomes.

Faculty Play a Central Role in
Positive Student Learning Outcomes
There is a significant body of research that makes direct causal links between faculty teaching and student learning outcomes (e.g., Arum & Roska, 2011; Astin, 1993; Bok, 2006; Brüssow & Wilkinson, 2009; Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Martin, Prosser, Trigwell, Ramsden, & Benjamin, 2000; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2009). When faculty are pedagogically trained about how to deliver content effectively and support competency development, the gains in student learning and the likelihood of graduation are much higher: "Classrooms are central to the process of retention and the activities that occur therein are critical to the process through which students come to participate in the intellectual life of the institution" (Tinto, 1993; 210). Professors are one of the most significant influences on undergraduate student development, both during their time at university and after graduation: "What faculty members do, and in particular whether they facilitate academic integration of students, is crucial for student development and student persistence" (Arum & Roska, 2011; 60). Astin (1993; 410) further asserts, "Next to the peer group, the faculty represents the most significant aspect of the student's undergraduate development." Students benefit in many aspects of their development – e.g. learning outcomes, well-being, and success after graduation – when faculty are engaged and supported in their pedagogical pursuits.

    One of the key factors that nurtures and enhances exemplary teaching is institutional support. According to Roxå and Mårtensson

(2009; 547, 549), there is "an established link between teachers' conceptions about teaching and learning, and the quality outcome of student learning." Teachers' conceptions about teaching and learning refers here to their beliefs about the teaching and learning process (student-centredness, importance of active/experiential learning, learning is inherently collaborative, etc.), which has a direct connection to quality of student learning outcomes (see also Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). The more reflective professors are regarding their own pedagogy, the more likely it is that the students are more engaged as well: "A culture of inquiry and the exploratory nature of reflective practices increase the probability of successful teaching and learning – where successful learning refers to the achievement of expected outcomes" (Brüssow & Wilkinson, 2009; 166). Furthermore, there is a strong relationship between pedagogical training for university teachers on one hand, and student learning outcomes on the other (Donnelly 2008; Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Postaroff, Lindblom-Ylänne, & Nevgi, 2007; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Ramsden 2005; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2012). Although the relationship between pedagogical development and learning outcomes has been clearly established, Roxå and Mårtensson (2012; 2) point out that the "systemic effects from teacher-training in higher education is an area which is clearly under-researched."

Faculty impact on students is not limited to the time when students are enrolled at university. Results from a large-scale research project led by Gallup and Purdue University, released in May 2014, have underlined the crucial role faculty play in university students' development and well-being well after they leave university. A survey of 30,000 college graduates measured perceptions of their experience at university and compared that to their rates of employment, workplace engagement, and overall well-being once they have entered the workforce.[3] According to the study, "if an employed graduate recalls having a professor who cared about them as a person, one who made them feel excited about learning, and having a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their dreams, the graduate's odds of being engaged at work more than double" (Gallup-Purdue Index Report, 2014; 9, 13). Furthermore, the study found that "if employed graduates are engaged at work, the odds are nearly five times higher that they will be thriving in all five elements of well being" (purpose, financial, social, community, and physical."

This research illustrates that what happens in the classroom is vitally important to overall student outcomes both during the time when students are enrolled in university and after they have graduated. Professors not only foster academic growth in students, but they play

a role in their affective and social development as well. Therefore, if we want graduates who engage in responsible, ethical, and sustainable leadership, then an essential place to start is with pedagogical support for faculty. Institutional cultures that value quality teaching and faculty development are essential to positive student learning outcomes.

**Links between Student Learning Outcomes
and Institutional Culture**

What role does institutional culture play in student learning outcomes? According to a growing number of scholars, a great deal (Clegg, 2009; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2012). Arum and Roska (2011; 60) explain how institutional culture directly affects student learning outcomes by suggesting that while students bring with them their own individual characteristics ("inputs"), student outcomes are best explained by understanding how these "inputs interact with, and are channeled within, specific institutional contexts." They state, "institutional contexts mattered over and above the individual-level differences, such as prior academic preparation and social background, that students brought to campus" (Arum & Roska, 2011; 89). If the culture at a particular institution does not value the factors that contribute to positive student learning outcomes (e.g., student-faculty interaction, faculty engagement in teaching and learning, pedagogical development, balanced workload), then even the most engaged students will not be well supported. Vincent Tinto (1993; 132) asserts that the movement of the student through the complex ecosystem of their particular university is directly influenced by institutional culture: "Institutions influence the quality of student effort via their capacity to involve students with other members of the institution in the learning process."

For our purposes, we define institutional culture in the context of higher education as a community of people employed at the same university or college who contribute in some way to knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, and knowledge dissemination. Meaning is constantly generated by, shared amongst, and contested by a diverse group of people that include faculty, staff, administrators, students, and alumni. Although a university community is often governed by an institutional mission and a strategic mandate, the official mission, vision, and values can be interpreted by several subcultures (drawn along various axes, including departmental or disciplinary boundaries, or informed by research or teaching interests, personal affinities, or as serendipitous as office proximity, etc.) who can adopt, appropriate, question, or reject the institutionally sanctioned values depending on their interpretation of these mandates in relation to a multitude of

factors, such as academic freedom and autonomy (Roxå, Mårtensson, & Alveteg, 2011; Sporn, 1996; Trowler 2005; Trowler & Cooper, 2002). With any dominant ideology, the common set of shared beliefs, values, assumptions, and traditions are for the most part taken for granted and therefore invisible to members within the specific ideological framework, which makes any analysis of institutional cultures within the context of higher education complex (see also Roxå, Mårtensson, & Alveteg, 2011; 100). Furthermore, there is a great deal of research beginning to emerge on different layers of culture using social network theory – micro (individuals/small groups), meso (level of department/ faculty), macro (institutional), and mega (provincial/national/ disciplinary across all institutions) – that adds crucial nuance to our understanding of institutional cultures (e.g. Poole & Simmons, 2013; Willingham-McLain & Simpson, 2006). While it is beyond the scope of this paper, a literature review of the emerging body of research on institutional cultures within a higher education context would help us better understand how the various indicators work together to impact student learning outcomes.

Understanding different institutional cultures would illuminate what factors enhance student learning and faculty engagement, and create a sustainable and vibrant ecosystem for teaching and learning. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2010) analyzed 20 universities and colleges that had higher than average graduation rates and levels of student engagement in their National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) scores. The institutions all shared a strong focus on undergraduate learning, an institutional openness to new and innovative ideas in the realm of teaching and learning, a faculty commitment to receiving and providing feedback, and "experimental instructional techniques" (Kuh *et al*, 2010; 47), therefore showing strengths on the majority of institutional indicators around how a culture values teaching and learning. Keeping these success stories in mind can equip us with powerful conceptual and analytical implements with which to affect positive institutional change in higher education, particularly with the aim to enhance support for teaching and learning cultures.

Challenges to Quality Teaching at an Institutional Level
Up to this point, we have provided a brief overview of research that illustrates the reciprocal relationships between student learning and faculty engagement, while arguing for the central importance of an institutional culture that supports teaching and learning (which includes such factors as academic expectations and rigor, liberal education approaches, and a strong undergraduate focus). However, it is also important to review factors that can negatively influence

institutional cultures around teaching and learning in order to fully understand the challenges that block change and hamper student learning and pedagogical development.

Although professors spend an average of 60–70% of their time during the school term teaching (Golde & Dore, 2001; 22), doctoral and post-doctoral students are not always provided the necessary pedagogical training to equip them for jobs within the academy. As Arum and Roska (2011; 130) observe, "unlike elementary and secondary school teachers … college professors have typically not received formal training in instruction that has emphasized the pedagogical functions of educational expectations." In a recent study of faculty in the State University System in Florida, over 80% of faculty reported that they received no pedagogical training during their graduate programs (Robinson & Hope, 2013; 6). In another survey of over 4,000 doctoral students at 27 selected universities, 62.4% reported access to some form of pedagogical development support (e.g., a teaching development center, pedagogical workshops or seminars, teaching assistant training courses); however, only two thirds of those students who *could* access these resources participated (Golde & Dore, 2001; 5). This means that only 37% of doctoral students surveyed received pedagogical training. This gap in training is built into the higher education system and should be of special concern as faculty are one of the most important indicators of positive student learning outcomes.

There is also very little time or attention paid to pedagogical training when faculty members enter the academy. For a junior faculty member, there is a great deal of pressure to research, often alongside heavy teaching loads and high expectations of service. According to Côté and Allahar (2011; 100), professors work between 50 and 60 hours a week, and 58.7% of faculty report that their workload is "unmanageable to some degree" (Sorenson & de Peuter, 2006; 28).[4] At many universities, teaching and service are not weighted as heavily as research in tenure and/or promotion processes, so there are few incentives that acknowledge and reward quality teaching. Add to the list a chronic shortage of time, and – if you are a sessional, part-time, or limited term instructor – a climate of job insecurity, and you have a sliding scale of priorities built into the system whereby teaching – and pedagogical development – often takes a backseat to the attendant pressures of the job.

At an institutional level, when teaching is assessed, evaluation committees often rely solely on student evaluations of their professors. A recent study by Braga, Paccagnella, and Pellizzari (2014) provided an in-depth analysis of student evaluations and concluded that the more effective the professor was in developing student learning outcomes,

the *lower* their teaching evaluation scores. They hypothesize that students evaluate professors based on grades awarded and whether their expectations of the course were met, rather than on their learning itself. According to the authors, "teachers who give higher grades also receive better evaluations, a finding that is confirmed by several other studies and that is thought to be a key cause of grade inflation" (Braga *et al*, 2014; 72; see also Carrell & West 2010; Weinberg, Fleisher & Hashimoto 2009).[5] Teaching evaluations carry a disproportionate amount of weight in the job market and in evaluation processes, despite the range of more balanced, triangulated tools that can be used to gather data on quality teaching, such as classroom observation, evidence of pedagogical development, peer assessment, etc. (Braga *et al*, 2014; 73). As a result, Kuh (2003; 28) argues that there is a "disengagement compact" that has been made between many faculty members and students where "faculty members allow students to get by with far less than maximum effort" to alleviate pressure on teaching workloads and enhance job performance based on existing institutional metrics around quality teaching.

Furthermore, and perhaps most disturbing, former Harvard University President Derek Bok argues that there are few incentives for *institutions* to focus on student learning: "Success in increasing student learning is seldom rewarded, and its benefits are usually hard to demonstrate, far more so than success in lifting the SAT scores of the entering class or in raising the money to build new laboratories or libraries" (Bok, 1986; 323–4). In the Canadian higher education system, the funding model is such that universities are not rewarded for the quality of graduates but rather for the quantity of enrolled students. This has led to rapid growth in enrollment, decrease in faculty hires, larger class sizes, increased faculty-student ratios – to the detriment of student learning outcomes. Furthermore, the funding models for higher education in North America reward institutions with large numbers of funded researchers (with federal and provincial/state research dollars being channeled to specific sectors depending on what is valued by government at the time) (Arum & Roska, 2011;125). All of these factors – lack of graduate school training in pedagogy, a paucity of incentives to develop teaching competencies, a focus on research at the expense of teaching, a disproportionate amount of weight given to flawed metrics around quality teaching – contribute to institutional cultures that may create negative perceptions around teaching *and* certainly have direct consequences on student learning outcomes.

The Institutional Culture at Bishop's University: a Case Study
Bishop's University is a bilingual, small, residential, primarily undergraduate, liberal education-focused university nestled in the heart of the Eastern Townships. Bishop's has stayed true to the mission of its founders: "to offer to the country at large the blessing of a sound and liberal education" (Bishop's University, n.d., par. 2) even as the university has weathered cuts to funding, language politics, the Quebec sovereignty movement, changing demographics, and countless other crises in 171 years. In the landscape of higher education in Canada and the funding models that reward graduate programs and large class sizes, Bishop's has struggled to be sustainable since its inception (see Nicholl, 1994).

Although the current funding model in Canada, and Quebec in particular, has not been favourable to the Bishop's University operating budget, the values of the institution are closely aligned with factors that have been demonstrated to enhance student learning outcomes, specifically the emphasis on a liberal education model and a strong focus on undergraduate learning. While Bishop's could be described as already having an institutional culture that values quality teaching, the newly founded Teaching and Learning Centre Initiative (TLCI), and a series of interconnected activities generated by this faculty learning community, enhances this culture of exemplary teaching. Furthermore, it includes a research agenda to systematically analyze – through empirical research – the institutional culture as it relates to quality teaching along the axes of liberal education, undergraduate teaching, and pedagogical development. We outline the research agenda in detail below, but first provide context for the founding of the TLCI at Bishop's.

In Fall 2011, the Dean of the School of Education was mandated by the Academic Officers to launch an initiative to enhance the culture of university teaching and learning at Bishop's. The membership was formed from people expressing interest and also from soliciting participation from sectors that needed representation. A number of dedicated individuals – from across the academic divisions – became founding members of the TLCI in Fall 2012. Faculty – from English, Psychology, Chemistry, Education, Business, Political Science – and librarians and staff (Information and Technology Services) formed the committee, which was – until recently – an ad hoc group of dedicated individuals passionate about supporting scholarly teaching. The approach from the outset has been strongly interdisciplinary: the committee values the range of disciplines and academic perspectives not only in committee membership but also represented in our community more broadly.

Although quality teaching is at the core of the university's mission, Bishop's had hitherto been informal in its approach to pedagogical development. However, the pre-existing culture, which values undergraduate teaching, made the establishment of a new initiative very easy. Founding members of the TLCI undertook a strategic visioning exercise and generated a mission, which was to formalize support around "inspired and innovative pedagogy within the classroom and beyond, in research, scholarship, and creative activity" (Bishop's University, TLCI, par. 2). The successful and smooth integration of the TLCI into the institutional culture at Bishop's was further facilitated by a larger vision of a Learning Commons that the University is developing through the re-imagining and updating of its Library. The TLCI have worked closely with the University Librarian, who is a TLCI member, and members of the TLCI also sit on the Learning Commons committee. This cross-fertilization provides wonderful opportunities to participate in conversations around a larger strategic orientation around university teaching and learning that is ongoing at Bishop's.

In the early stages of the TLCI, several potential challenges were identified within the institutional culture that had to be addressed to ensure that perceptions around the TLCI – and the activities, programs, and pedagogical support – would be positive. First, conversations around pedagogy can be personal, and professors are sometimes reticent to open up the doors of their classrooms. Roxå and Mårtensson's (2009) research suggests that only a select number of professors will seek out guidance and support in the scholarship of teaching and learning. More often, faculty members approach trusted confidantes to solve teaching problems. Second, teaching and research are sometimes thought of as mutually exclusive, and faculty members are not always familiar with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and how it can contribute to both their scholarly teaching practices and their disciplinary research. Third, the demands on faculty members' time – heavy teaching loads, high expectations of service, and the rigors of disciplinary research – can be overwhelming. Members of the TLCI had to be creative in their approach to these challenges: they established a safe and supportive milieu for discussions around teaching and learning, illuminated the potential for cross-fertilization between disciplinary research and scholarly teaching, and ensured that contributions were perceived as value-added activities.

From the outset, the TLCI took the approach that one of the best ways to shape an institutional culture around teaching and learning was to initiate a series of conversations. As Parker Palmer and Arthur Zajonc write, in *The Heart of Higher Education* (2010; 5), "sometimes good conversations are ends in themselves, good simply because they

are enjoyable and edifying. At other times, something stirs in the participants, and larger forms of dialogue and action begin to take shape." The TLCI has, from its inception, created intentional spaces for encounters at every level (between individuals, within departments, across disciplines, amongst administrators). The conversations initiated through the TLCI have generated ideas that have gained momentum and taken shape in ways that have already had significant impact on the institutional culture at Bishop's.

There are many fruitful avenues of inquiry into how we evaluate and analyze institutional cultures along the axes of undergraduate teaching, the delivery of a liberal education, pedagogical development, and student learning outcomes. Arum and Roska (2011; 116) note that "researchers have yet to evaluate the effects of learning communities on standardized objective measures of learning [in higher education] – this is an important area of future research, as these programs are poised to facilitate persistence as well as learning." Paul Ramsden and colleagues (2007) suggest that more research is necessary to understand the role academic leaders play in shaping institutional cultures around teaching and learning: "Less attention has been paid to what we here call local level leadership, although some authors have indicated that leadership close to academic teachers is important and linked to student learning" (Ramsden *et al*, 2007; 153). Below, we outline how we have built a community of practice through a series of conversation and activities, and how we plan to contribute to the research in these above areas.

The Teaching and Learning Centre as a Community of Practice
We take as our starting point that although there are personal, disciplinary, institutional, and even ontological (gender, age, race, sexual orientation) differences in how university teachers understand teaching and learning, learning outcomes are improved when teaching and learning are valued and supported by an institutional culture. The TLCI has generated a number of initiatives, including opportunities for 1) pedagogical development, 2) conversational partners around teaching and learning, both within shared disciplines and in interdisciplinary interactions,[6] 3) support from academic officers and administrators, 4) interrelated, overlapping activities accessible to the whole community, and 5) engagement in research around scholarly teaching.

The TLCI has two pillars: first, to support a professional learning community around pedagogical development in higher education and second, to take a research-intensive approach to scholarly teaching. With regard to the first pillar, we have taken steps to begin

building a more formalized professional learning community. The TLCI has organized pedagogical development workshops and retreats, hosted round table events, and established a monthly series of talks run by faculty called Bishop's University Teaching TalkS (BUTTS) around relevant topics as diverse as technology in the classroom and formative assessment. This inter-related series of workshops, held over a long period of time, build upon one another in order to create a sustainable culture around teaching and learning. Each activity is an opportunity for a conversation. Roxå and Mårtensson (2009; 554) argue that there is a clear link between how supportive an institutional culture is of teaching and the number of "conversational partners" an individual faculty member has to discuss teaching and learning. They found that when an individual faculty member had a higher number of confidantes – within their department, discipline, and university – they also had higher perceptions of institutional support around teaching. Furthermore, Roxå and Mårtensson linked high faculty perceptions around teaching to enhanced learning outcomes for students. The development of a professional learning community helps to solidify the institutional commitment to scholarly teaching, making it something of value within our broader university culture.

Our second pillar supports a research-intensive approach to scholarly teaching. At the heart of our research agenda is the belief that we can forge a community of practice around teaching and learning within a larger context of sustainable, evidence-based and capacity-building strategies. This, in turn, will directly benefit student learning outcomes. We know that institutions shape students' experiences in ways that facilitate learning. We also know that institutions shape faculty perceptions and engagement around teaching and learning. What we are interested in is how do these things combine in a small, residential, liberal education modeled undergraduate university? What does our institutional culture look like, and how does it compare to other institutional cultures in universities across the country? How can we continue to nurture growth in this culture around teaching and learning as the TLCI itself continues to evolve?

The TLCI has recently developed an assessment to address the following three questions: 1) What needs and beliefs do full-time faculty, contract faculty, and academic librarians at Bishop's University have regarding teaching and learning more generally, and their own teaching practice more specifically? 2) What is the existing institutional culture around supports for teaching and learning here at Bishop's University?, and 3) What pedagogical development activities and resources are valued within this culture? The results of this survey will give us an idea of the impact of the TLCI on our institutional culture

so far, and we will use these results to design a series of surveys to be administered regularly to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on our evolving institutional culture around teaching and learning at Bishop's. If we study an institutional culture over time, we can gain insights into the long-term impact of this culture, and pose questions such as: Does the particular culture support growth and initiatives from its members? When change is necessary, is it treated as an obstacle or as an opportunity? What are the core values and practices within this culture and how are these maintained and defended? How are they subject to critique and change? Does the creation of a Teaching and Learning Centre have an effect on classroom experiences and learning outcomes for students? Does it change the ways in which faculty talk about and interpret teaching and learning, including assessment, content delivery, etc.? Does a TLCI change faculty perceptions around how supportive the institutional culture is regarding teaching and learning?

We have also just created a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Think Tank in order to encourage faculty and librarians to design research projects that will allow them to study their own teaching and the learning outcomes of their students. Our classrooms are incubators of research, and we aim to help faculty design projects, collect data, and then disseminate their research on teaching to the broader community. Members of the TLCI have already presented together at teaching and learning conferences (most recently at the Canadian Learning Commons Conference, June 11, 2014) and will continue to purse a collaborative research portfolio. To date, the TLCI has created multiple opportunities for significant knowledge exchange between members of our community both with regard to pedagogical development and the development of research projects in the field of teaching and learning. In an era when many have called into question whether positive student learning outcomes remain at the heart of the decisions made by universities with regard to programming, faculty hiring, and student recruitment, these opportunities structured by the TLCI serve as one avenue of support for this core mission in higher education.

Conclusion
In this paper, we have made links between approaches to higher education and student learning outcomes, and the role faculty members play in gains in student learning. Furthermore, we have argued that institutional culture is perhaps the single most important influence on both faculty perceptions of teaching and learning, and student success and well-being. Next, we outlined a number of

challenges to quality teaching at the institutional and external levels to better understand potential obstacles to change and to generate solutions that have a positive impact in the landscape of higher education. While the challenges to the system of higher education are complex and multi-faceted, we believe that an institutional culture that values quality teaching can significantly contribute to understanding how students learn and how faculty teach. Moreover, this not only positively impacts students at Bishop's but also inspires us to become an exemplary model of teaching and learning, and participate in a conversation about the future of Canadian universities. Although the challenges in higher education seem daunting, and change needs to be enacted at every level – from the governmental policies around funding models to graduate school pedagogical training – the TLCI is a case-study about how a small initiative – that is grassroots and faculty-driven – has formalized an institutional culture that values what is at the heart of higher education: student learning.

AUTHORS' NOTE
Jessica Riddell, Department of English, Bishop's University, Corinne A. Haigh, The School of Education, Bishop's University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jessica Riddell, Department of English, Bishop's University, 2600 College, Sherbrooke, QC, J1M 1Z7. Contact: *jessica.riddell@ubishops.ca*

ENDNOTES

1   See, for example, Deresiewicz (2014); Côté and Allahar (2011); Côté and Allahar (2007); Bok (2006); Johnson (2003).

2   For more information on President Obama's STEM initiative, called "Educate to Innovate," see the US Department of Education website, http://www.ed.gov/stem. For a comprehensive overview of the attack on liberal arts and liberal education models in higher education, see Côté and Allahar (2011), Small (2013), and Selingo (2013). For a defense of a liberal education as fundamental training for global citizens and innovative thinkers, see Chopp, Frost, and Weiss (2013), Roth (2014), and Brooks and Jewett (2014).

3   The Gallup-Purdue Index report, supported by the Lumina
     Foundation and Perdue University, is a large-scale study that will
     poll 30,000 college graduates every year for five years, and will
     eventually gather data on over 150,000 people by 2020. Results from
     the first phase of polling were released in a report in May 2014. The
     report cites the crisis in higher education in North America as their
     inspiration for gathering data: "Responding to the call for increased
     accountability among higher education institutions, Gallup and
     Purdue University focused their research efforts on outcomes that
     provide insight into the common and essential aspirations for
     college graduates, no matter what type of institution they attend"
     (3).

4   Côté and Allahar (2011; 100–101) looked at literature from Canada,
     the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom
     and the averages were consistent across these countries.

5   See, for example, Weinberg, Fleisher and Hashimoto (2009);
     and Carrell and West (2010). Recent work by Valen Johnson
     has demonstrated that "higher grades do lead to better course
     evaluations" and "student course evaluations are not very good
     indicators of how much students have learned" (as cited in Arum &
     Roska, 2011; 7).

6   Roxå and Mårtensson (2009; 2011).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arum, R., & Roska, J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college
     campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Association of American Universities and Colleges (AAU&C) (n.d.).
     Retrieved from: *http://www.aacu.org/leap/what-is-a-liberal-education*

Astin, A. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San
     Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bishop's University (n.d.). *Vision, Mission, Values*. Retrieved from:
     http://www.ubishops.ca/about-bu/mission-statement.html

Bishop's University Teaching and Learning Centre (n.d.). *About & Contact
     Info*. Retrieved from: *http://www.ubishops.ca/faculty/teaching-and-
     learning-centre/about-contact-info.html*

Bok, D. (2006). *Our underachieving colleges: A candid look at how much
     students learn and why they should be learning more*. Princeton, NJ:
     Princeton University Press.

Bok, D. (2003). *Universities in the marketplace: The commercialization of
     higher education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bok, D. (1986). *Higher learning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Braga, M., Paccagnella, M., & Pellizzari, M. (2014). Evaluating students'
     evaluations of professors. *Economics of Education Review*, *41*, 71–88.

Brooks, P., & Jewett, H. (2014). *The humanities and public life*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Brüssow, S., & Wilkinson, A. (2009). Reflective teaching: A tool to improve student learning. In C. Nygaard, C. Holtham, & N. Courtney (Eds.) *Improving students' learning outcomes*, 163–174. Copenhagan: Copenhagen Business School University Press.

Carrell, S. E. & West, J. E. (2010). Does Professor Quality Matter? Evidence from Random Assignment of Students to Professors. *Journal of Political Economy*, University of Chicago Press, *118*(3), 409–432.

Chopp, R., Frost, S. & Weiss, D. H. (2013). *Remaking college: Innovation and the Liberal Arts*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Clegg, S. (2009). Forms of knowing and academic development practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, *34*(4), 403–416.

Côté, J., & Allahar, A. L. (2011). *Lowering higher education: The rise of corporate universities and the fall of liberal education*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Côté, J., & Allahar, A. L. (2007). *Ivory tower blues: A university system in crisis*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Deresiewicz, W. (2014). *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and The Way to a Meaningful life*. New York: Free Press.

Donnelly, R. (2008). Lecturers' self-perception of change in their teaching approaches: Reflections on a qualitative study. *Educational Research*, *50*(3), 207–222.

Entwistle, N., & Peterson, E. (2004). Conceptions of learning and knowledge in higher education: Relationships with study behavior and influences of learning environments. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *41*, 407–28.

Gallup-Purdue Index Report (2014). *Great jobs, great lives. The 2014 Gallup-Purdue index report. A study of more than 30,000 college graduates across the U.S.* Perdue University: Gallup Inc. Retrieved from: *http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2014.ptw.%2860%29.pdf*

Gibbs, G., & Coffey, M. (2004). The impact of training of university teachers on their teaching skills, their approach to teaching and their approach to learning of their students. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *5*(1), 87–100.

Golde, C. M., & Dore, T. M. (2001). *At cross purposes: What the experiences of doctoral students reveal about doctoral education*. Philadelphia: A report prepared for The Pew Charitable Trusts. Retrieved from: *http://www.phd-survey.org/report%20final.pdf*

Johnson, V. (2003). *Grade inflation: A crisis in higher education*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Kuh, G. D. (2003). What are we learning about student engagement from NSSE. *Change*, *35*, 24–32.

Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., & Whitt, E.J. (2010). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Martin, E., Prosser, M., Trigwell, K., Ramsden, P., & Benjamin, J. (2000). What university teachers teach and how they teach it. *Instructional Science*, *28*, 387–412.

Nicholl, C. (1994). *Bishop's University: 1843–1970*. Sherbrooke, QC.: Bishop's University.

Palmer, P. J., & Zajonc, A. (2010). *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal*. San Francisco: Jossy-Bass.

Pascarella, E.T., Wang, J.-S., Trolian, T.L., & Blaich, C. (2013). How the instructional and learning environments of liberal arts colleges enhance cognitive development. *Higher Education*, *66*(5), 569–583.

Poole, G. & Simmons, N. (2013). The contributions of the scholarship of teaching and learning to quality enhancement in Canada. In G. Gordon, & R. Land (Eds.), *Quality enhancement in higher education: International perspectives*. London: Routledge, 118–128.

Postaroff, L., Lindblom-Ylänne, S., & Nevgi. A. (2007). The effect of pedagogical training on teaching in higher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *23*(5), 557–571.

Prosser, M., & Trigwell, K. (1999). *Understanding learning and teaching. The experience in higher education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Ramsden, P. (2005). *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge.

Ramsden, P., Prosser, M., Trigwell, K., & Martin, E. (2007). University teachers' experiences of academic leadership and their approaches to teaching. *Learning and Instruction*, *17*(2), 140–155.

Robinson, T.F., & Hope, W. C. (2013). Teaching in higher education: Is there a need for training in pedagogy in graduate degree programs? *Research in Higher Education Journal*, *21*, 1–11. Retrieved from: *http://www.aabri.com/manuscripts/131564.pdf*

Roth, M.S. (2014). *Beyond the university: Why liberal education matters*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Roxå, T., & Mårtensson, K. (2012). How effects from teacher-training of academic teachers propagate into the meso level and beyond. In E. Simon & G. Pleschova (Eds.). *Teacher development in higher education. Existing programs, programs impact, and future trends* (213–233). London: Routledge.

Roxå, T., & Mårtensson, K. (2009). Significant conversations and significant networks: exploring the backstage of the teaching arena. *Studies in Higher Education*, *34*(5), 547–559.

Roxå, T., Mårtensson, K., & Alveteg, M. (2011). Understanding and influencing teaching and learning cultures at university: A network approach. *Higher Education*, *62*, 99–111.

Selingo, J.J. (2013). *College (un)bound: The future of higher education and what it means for students*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Small, H. (2013). *The value of the humanities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sorenson, M. & de Peuter, J. (2006). University of Alberta Workload/ Work Life Study for the Association of Academic Staff. Retrieved from: *http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/aasua//pdfs/ AASUAworkloadReportJune30.pdf*

Sporn, B. (1996). Managing university culture: An analysis of the relationship between institutional culture and management approaches. *Higher Education*, *31*, 41–61.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Trowler, P. (2005). Academic tribes: Their significance in enhancement processes. Proceedings from *Utvecklingskonferensen för högre utbildning*. Karlstad: Lunds.

Trowler, P. & Cooper, A. (2002). Teaching and learning regimes: Implicit theories and recurrent practice in the enhancement of teaching and learning through educational development programmes. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *21*(3), 221–240.

Weinberg, B.A., Hashimoto, M. & Fleisher, B.M. (2009). Evaluating Teaching in Higher Education. *The Journal of Economic Education,* *40*(3), 227–261.

Willingham-McLain, L. & Simpson, N. (2006). Incorporating Course-Level Evidence of Student Learning into Program Assessment. *The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education*, *18*(3).