



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Academic Standards Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, April 19, 2012
3-15, UHALL
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Bill Connor (Delegate)	Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee
Ada Schmude (Delegate)	Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Emerson Csorba	Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Roy Coulthard (Delegate)	Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association
Natalie Sharpe (Delegate)	Director, Student OmbudService
William Street (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Arts
Jim Bohun (Delegate)	Dean, Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Harry Prest (Delegate)	Dean, Augustana Faculty
Elaine Geddes (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Business
Clive Hickson (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Education
Doug Clark (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Engineering
Lois Gander (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Extension
René Poliquin (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
John Law (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Law
Marc Moreau (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Gurston Dacks (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Native Studies
Kaysi Kushner (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Nursing
Janice Causgrove Dunn (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
Sentil Senthilselvan (Delegate)	Dean, School of Public Health
Liz Taylor (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine
Ed Blackburn (Delegate)	Dean, Faculté Saint-Jean
Brenda Leskiw (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Science
Tarek el-Bialy	Academic Staff, Elected by GFC

Presenters:

Bill Connor	Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee
Bobbi Schiestel	Acting Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice- President (Academic)

Staff:

Garry Bodnar
Emily Paulsen

Coordinator, GFC Academic Standards Committee
Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Causgrove Dunn/Prest

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of March 15, 2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

The Coordinator stated that Professor Law should have been listed as an attendee at the March 15, 2012 meeting of GFC ASC.

Motion: Prest/Moreau

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve the Minutes of March 15, 2012, as amended.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair

The Chair commented on a number of items of interest to members.

ACTION ITEMS

4. The Following Proposal(s) are Deemed Minor/Editorial (GFC ASC's Terms of Reference (Mandate) (3.A.i and iii)) by the Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC ASC, and are APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FROM GFC IN A SINGLE OMNIBUS MOTION.

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Bill Connor, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

4A. Faculty of Nursing Proposed Changes to Section 12.7 (Admission and Readmission Deadlines) of the University Calendar

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion:

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, proposed changes to Section 12.7 (Admission and Readmission Deadlines) of the University Calendar, as submitted by the Faculty of Nursing and as set out in Attachment 4A of the documentation, to be effective in 2013-2014.

CARRIED

4B. Office of the Registrar Course Approvals and Denials for March, 2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion:

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from GFC, the proposal for approval of transfer credit, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and as set forth in Attachment 4B, to take effect upon final approval.

CARRIED

4C. Office of the Registrar – University Calendar Revisions to Admissions Chart 6 – International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses Approved for Advanced Standing

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion:

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, revisions to University Calendar Admissions Chart 6 – International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses Approved for Advanced Standing, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and as set for in Attachment 4C, to take effect upon approval and for publication in the 2013-2014 University Calendar.

CARRIED

Omnibus Motion: Kushner/Taylor

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the above-noted proposed editorial changes to existing admission/transfer requirements and the proposed new transfer courses, as set out in Items 4A – 4C.

CARRIED

5. Proposed Assessment and Grading Policy Suite (in UAPPOL) and Proposed Revisions to University Calendar Section 23 (Academic Regulations) and Corresponding Rescission of Sections 52 (Examinations) and 61 (Grading System) of the GFC Policy Manual

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Bill Connor, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee

Purpose of the Proposal: To rescind existing GFC Policy Manual assessment and grading policies and procedures (Sections 52 and 61) and provide, instead, relevant (and revised) assessment and grading policy and procedures in the UAPPOL environment and to revise accordingly current University Calendar

assessment and grading regulations, as set out in Section 23 (Academic Regulations).

Discussion:

Dr Connor explained to members that the proposed Assessment and Grading Policy suite, the attendant revisions to existing grading/assessment policy and procedures, and corresponding rescissions of existing affected regulations, as appropriate, were based extensively on the work carried out in this arena by past-Provost's Fellow, Professor Robert Luth (Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences). Dr Connor noted that the changes needed to be made in order to comply with the ongoing transition of institutional policy and procedure into the UAPPOL environment. He explained that the Students' Union (SU) had a series of suggested revisions to the proposed policy suite, which were provided to members in a handout distributed at the meeting by Mr Emerson Csorba, SU Vice-President (Academic).

At this point in the meeting, Dr Connor turned the chair over to Ms Ada Schmude, Associate Registrar and Director of Records, so that he would be free to speak to the proposal and respond to members' questions and concerns.

During the ensuing discussion, members centered on the amendments provided by the SU.

The presenter and members addressed questions, comments, and concerns including, but not limited to, the following: the wealth of diversity at the University of Alberta that prevents excessive specificity in the policy suite; the need to keep terminology congruent with what now appears in the University Calendar; defining what the SU perceives as "assessment criteria;" the amount of work that mandating rubrics would create for instructors, Departments, and Faculties; the desire for clear communication between professors and students; the adverse effects of 'grading on the curve'; encouraging professors to express expectations rather than mandating it; concern that the proposed amendment to include assessment criteria in the course syllabi would be micromanaging the professors' classrooms; the appropriateness of trusting instructors to carry out assessment and grading to the best of their abilities; reiteration of the fact not all Faculties (and, hence, the instructors within) assign letter grades to each assignment completed by students; clarification of the differences between "marking" and "grading;" whether or not communicating all changes to assessment and grading practices in the University Calendar is necessary since proposed revisions to the Calendar are subject to a lengthy approval process; expressed concern about Faculty-specific procedures being required to go to General Faculties Council (GFC) for approval; and the need to emphasize that grading on the curve is not required but that some Faculties do have recommended grade distributions.

Motion to Amend I: Csorba/Coulthard

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee provide for the addition within the proposed Assessment and Grading Policy of a new point #4 (to fall between the existing points #3 and #4) that reads, as follows: "Clear and transparent assessment criteria should be provided to students throughout the course."

CARRIED

Motion to Amend II: Csorba/Coulthard

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee provide for the addition within University Calendar Section 23.4.2 of a new point (f) (to fall between the existing points (f) and (g)) that reads, as follows: "Each assessment is linked to the stated course objectives and/or learning outcomes. Students should be provided with the criteria for these assessments early in and, if necessary, throughout the course."

CARRIED

Dr Connor asked that text never intended by the proposers to appear in the proposed Assessment and Grading Policy be removed—the affected text to be struck appears in point #1 (page 5 of the material before members) and read as follows: “[...] ~~for the University is committed to the design and delivery of assessment that enables (promotes) the achievement of specified learning outcomes or objectives of courses and programs; [...]~~” Additionally, a series of ‘friendly amendments’ were made to page 21 of the proposal to reflect the formally-amended changes set out in the above-noted Motions to Amend; a heading inadvertently dropped from Section 23.4.4 of the University Calendar text (page 21 of the document before members) was re-added. Members discussed the current practice of holding consolidated exams on December 22, which was currently not reflected in current procedure—a friendly amendment was made to the proposed Consolidated Final Examinations Procedure to rectify this. Finally, members agreed to the correction of several minor typographical errors appearing throughout the proposed changes to Section 23 of the University Calendar.

Motion: Prest/Sharpe

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee recommend to the GFC Executive Committee the proposed Assessment and Grading Policy Suite (in UAPPOL) and proposed revisions to University Calendar Section 23 (Academic Regulations), as provided by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and as set forth in Attachments 1 (as amended), 2, 3, 4, 5 (as amended), and 6 (as amended), and the corresponding rescission of GFC Policy Manual Section 52 (Examinations) and Section 61 (Grading System), all to be effective for the Fall Term, 2012.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. External Programs for Review and Programs in Progress on Campus: Standing Item

There were no documents.

Presenters: Bill Connor, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee; Bobbi Schiestel, Acting Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Ms Schiestel spoke to a series of the external program reviews being conducted by representatives of the University of Alberta, which included a review by the Health Sciences Council of a proposal from Athabasca University for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Health Disciplines and a review by the Faculty of Education of a proposal from Simon Fraser University (SFU) for a Master of Education (Med) (Curriculum and Instruction Numeracy). Ms Schiestel noted that the University of Alberta’s Master of Coaching (MCoach) has been forwarded to the Department of Advanced Education and Technology (AET) and is currently undergoing a system coordination review. She also informed committee members that AET has approved the suspension of the Range and Pasture Management Major within the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree program, effective July 1, 2012.

7. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

8. Items Approved by the GFC Academic Standards Committee by E-Mail Ballots

There were no items.

9. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

10. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:10 am.