



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Committee on the Learning Environment
Approved Open Session Minutes

Wednesday, September 03, 2014
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Robert Luth	Co-Chair (Delegate), Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Kathleen DeLong	Member (Delegate), Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian
John Boeglin	Member, Academic Staff
Scott Delinger	Member (Delegate), Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Information Technology)
Sheree Kwong See	Member, Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning
Jacqueline Leighton	Member, Chair Representative, Selected by Chairs' Council
Glen Loppnow	Member, Associate Dean or Associate Chair, Teaching and Learning (or Equivalent)
Kangyi Lou	Member, Graduate Student-at-large
Colin More	Member (Delegate), President of the Graduate Students' Association
Ada Ness	Member (Delegate), Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Kathryn Orydzuk	Member, Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Fahim Rahman	Member, Undergraduate Student-at-large
Toni Samek	Member, Major Teaching Award Recipient, Staff Representative
Mani Vaidyanathan	Member, Academic Staff
Stanley Varnhagen	Member, Academic Staff

Presenter(s):

John Boeglin	Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology
Marion Haggarty-France	University Secretary
Sheree Kwong See	Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning
Robert Luth	Associate Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
Olive Yonge	Deputy Provost

Staff:

Garry Bodnar, Coordinator, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
Andrea Patrick, Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Robert Luth, Associate Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Motion: Loppnow/Leighton

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of May 7, 2014

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Robert Luth, Associate Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Motion: DeLong/More

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the Minutes of May 7, 2014.

CARRIED

3. Welcome and Introductions from the Deputy Provost

There were no documents.

Presenter: Olive Yonge, Deputy Provost

Discussion:

The Deputy Provost welcomed members to the Committee's first meeting of the 2014-2015 Academic Year and provided a number of relevant comments, including emphasizing the importance of the work of GFC CLE and the necessity for continued focus on teaching and learning at the University of Alberta.

A member thanked the Deputy Provost for her supportive comments.

4. Comments from the Co-Chair

There were no documents.

Presenter: Robert Luth, Associate Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Discussion:

The Co-Chair provided a brief introduction to members and welcomed them to the new Academic Year. He invited members to introduce themselves.

5. Comments from the University Secretary for the New Academic Year

There were no documents.

Presenter: Marion Haggarty-France, University Secretary

Discussion:

Ms Haggarty-France welcomed members to the first GFC CLE meeting of the 2014-2015 Academic Year and thanked them for their willingness to serve academic governance at the University of Alberta. She provided members with a brief overview of the Committee's Terms of Reference, including a description of the mandate of the Committee and related information on delegation of authority. She noted that the work of the Committee with regard to institutional teaching and learning is crucial, as these two activities represent the core business of the University of Alberta. She reported that the Committee's Coordinator, Mr Garry Bodnar, would be retiring in February, 2015, and thanked him for his 35 years of service to the academy. Ms Haggarty-France also reminded members about the Governance 101 session scheduled for September 15, 2014. Finally, she invited members to contact University Governance if they required assistance or had any questions with respect to academic governance at the University of Alberta.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. Arts Pedagogy Research and Innovation Laboratory (APRIL)

Because the presenter of this item, Dr Mikael Adolphson, was not in attendance, the Co-Chair announced that this item would be deferred until the next meeting of GFC CLE.

7. University of Alberta's Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL): Update from the Director

There were no documents.

Presenter(s): Sheree Kwong See, Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Kwong See provided members with an update about the various activities organized over the summer by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), including: details surrounding the CTL summer student awards; information with regard to the two CTL visiting speaker awards; that the New Professor Orientation was well attended; and information about the recently-held educational leaders networking meeting.

In addition, Dr Kwong See provided a brief update about upcoming events hosted by CTL, including: the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) panel exploring the key trends in educational technology; sessions planned on student engagement strategies for larger classrooms, learning outcomes, and instructional strategies; information about the next CATALYSTS series; details surrounding the 'Back to Basics' series; a session on teaching philosophy; and an upcoming session on preparing teaching dossiers.

Dr Kwong See made several announcements regarding changes made to the CTL technical staff reporting structure and made note, as well, of personnel changes at CTL. She encouraged members to check the CTL website for more information.

During the ensuing discussion, members provided a number of comments and questions, including, but not limited to: clarification surrounding the proposed move of CTL to Cameron Library; positive feedback on the events organized by CTL; and an expressed concern about the changes surrounding technological support of eClass and other tools.

8. GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology – Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: John Boeglin, Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Boeglin reported on the recent activities of the GFC CLE Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology, adding that its primary focus over the summer had been on drafting and distributing survey letters. He stated that they received 360 completed surveys from staff and 380 from students. He noted that they were now in the process of analyzing the data and would report back to GFC CLE in due course on the progress of the project. He provided members with a brief description of the mandate and history of the Subcommittee.

Members expressed a number of comments and questions in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: clarification on when the results of the survey would be available and to which committees the results would be presented; that some of the survey questions seemed to be leading in nature; whether all outcomes were considered before the survey was drafted; that the survey appeared to be a bit lengthy; that the summer was not an ideal time to distribute a survey to students; and that there could have been more questions on the survey in relation to Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

9. Plans for the Coming Year (2014-2015)

There were no documents.

Presenter: Robert Luth, Associate Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

The Co-Chair provided members with an update regarding the GFC CLE Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies Final Report, which had been drafted and discussed and finally endorsed by GFC CLE in June of 2013; he added that members of General Faculties Council (GFC), at Council's March 24, 2014 meeting, had engaged in a lengthy and diverse discussion surrounding the Report. The Co-Chair noted that the Report is currently posted on the website of the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

The Deputy Provost reported on her previous experiences working in the area of educational outcomes during her tenure with the Provincial Government of Alberta and reported that institutional attributes and competencies will be an inevitability in the future for the academy.

The Co-Chair reviewed some of the attributes and competencies within the Subcommittee Report as well as related GFC policy approved in 2000 and suggested that the Subcommittee's list could be further developed within individual Faculties, with such discussions led by those Associate Deans with responsibilities for teaching/learning. He pledged to keep members updated on the status of this issue.

Members, during the ensuing discussion, provided a number of comments and questions, including, but not limited to: that there is student support for this initiative, which was demonstrated at the March, 2014 GFC meeting; that, even though professional programs have been required to list student learning outcomes as

part of external accreditation, there is a difference between student learning outcomes and measurable student learning outcomes; clarification on who would be ultimately responsible for transferring attributes and competencies to students; that the issue has been contentious, even during discussions at GFC CLE; clarification surrounding the future direction of this Report and its recommendations; clarification on how institutional alignment could be achieved in relation to attributes and competencies; whether there will be additional student consultation with regard to the development of attributes and competencies; clarification surrounding the changes to the roles of Chairs of certain GFC Standing Committees; a suggestion to include the Faculty student associations in the consultations; that graduate students appeared to speak in favour of this proposal at the March, 2014 GFC meeting; that graduate students are interested in how to best to articulate their acquired skills and competencies; that some of the GFC commentary related to terminology and different interpretations of the terms within the Report; and that attributes and competencies may very well be imposed upon the institution eventually by external agencies.

The Co-Chair then elicited work plan ideas from members for the next academic year. He reminded members to review the document on the GFC CLE website entitled, "Possible Agenda Items for Consideration," and he announced that he would like to investigate further over the coming year a range of issues associated with digital learning at the University of Alberta.

During the discussion in relation to this, members expressed several comments and questions, including, but not limited to: support for this topic; that there are other elements within this area which require additional discussion; and clarification on the role of the Provost's Digital Learning Committee (PDLC).

Following an invitation from the Co-Chair to suggest additional topics for discussion at future meetings of GFC CLE, members suggested the following: ensuring learning spaces meet present and future teaching/learning needs, requirements, and expectations; continued review of current policies and procedures associated with institutional assessment and grading; review of policies associated with the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRIs); and the University of Alberta's uniqueness in terms of teaching.

Dr Luth thanked members for their input and noted there would very likely be further discussion on a work plan for GFC CLE at the Committee's October, 2014 meeting.

10. Question Period

The Co-Chair invited the student members to provide an update to members regarding Week of Welcome activities on campus.

A member enquired about funding from the Provincial Government for open educational resources at the University of Alberta.

INFORMATION REPORTS

11. Items Approved by the Committee by E-Mail Ballots

There were no items.

12. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

13. Adjournment

The Co-Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.