

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

Wednesday, September 27, 2023  
SAB 2-31  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**ATTENDEES:**

Karsten Mündel (Chair) Shauna Wilton (Vice-Chair) Pedro Almeida Kim Frail Zachary Friggstad John Hu Christine Hughes Rija Kamran Jesse Luyendyk	Pauline Paul Muneeba QaDir Chris Reys-Chikuma Allison Sivak Patrick von Hauff Shauna Wilton <u>Non-Voting Members</u> Kate Peters John Lemieux Jeff Rawlings (Delegate IST)	<u>Regrets</u> Shari Baraniuk Ashley Bhatia Rick Brick Gregory Thomas Tommy Mayberry Angela Bayduza Jana Grekul Andrea MacLeod <u>Staff</u> Faiza Billo
---	--	---

**OPENING SESSION**

The Chair acknowledged that the University of Alberta is located on Treaty 6 territory. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

1. Welcome and Introductions

*Presenter(s):* Karsten Mündel, Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)

*Discussion:*

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of CLE for the academic year and reminded them of their work to decolonize meeting practices over the 22-23 academic year. He recognized the guidance of Orest Zwozdesky, a Métis facilitator, who had opened and closed meetings and noted that Orest had sent his regrets but had provided advice on how to begin in a good way. He then thanked members who had attended a Special Session of CLE to participate in a River Valley Walk with Dwayne Donald in August and suggested that, following Dr Donald's teachings, the committee should start with trust and relationship building. The committee was asked to speak to what started them on their path to being an educator and to share the achievement they are most proud of.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Karsten Mündel, Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)

*Discussion:*

The Chair provided members an overview of how agendas were crafted and offered the opportunity to provide input, items or feedback on both the agenda and the minutes. Hearing none, he suggested the committee move forward with the agenda as set out and the minutes for the April 26, 2023 meeting of CLE be kept as a formal record of the meeting.

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

**CARRIED**

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of April 26, 2023

*Discussion:*

The Chair reminded members of the Special Session of CLE - Riverwalk on August 30, 2023 - guided by Professor Dwayne Donald, during which they received oral traditions and knowledge of Indigenous peoples. The meeting has not yet been documented in the record of University Governance. The Chair provided the Committee with the opening paragraph of the article "Homo Economicus and Forgetful Curriculum Remembering Other Ways to be a Human Being" as a basis for personal and professional reflection. The Chair suggested that if members feel comfortable they could provide reflections of the experience as a method of "minuting" the River Valley walk, and that the article would be distributed to members for reference.

The following motion was considered to be approved:

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the open session minutes of April 26, 2023.

**CARRIED**

4. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

*Presenter(s)*: Karsten Mündel, Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE

*Discussion:*

The Chair invited K Peters to support the committee's discussion of the role of Vice Chair. K Peters noted that according to the committee Terms of Reference, the Vice-Chair should be a GFC elected academic staff member. She shared that she had reached out to several members to ask them to consider taking on the role over the summer and that S Wilton had agreed to put her name forward. She noted that members were asked to elect their chair and invited additional nominations. Hearing none, S Wilton was considered acclaimed to play the role.

The Chair then provided updates and made comments related to:

- AI and the learning environment;
- Indigenization of curricula in the Faculty of Science;
- The resignation of the ex-officio non voting member from Centre of Teaching and Learning;
- The Awards for Faculty Excellence and a request for a member of CLE to sit on the Adjudication Committee.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

4. Academic Materials Program

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Kevin Moffitt, Director, Retail Operations; Adam Medaglia, Manager, Bookstore, Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE

*Discussion:*

The Chair introduced the proponents who gave an overview of the program, proposed timing, advantages and limitations of an Academic Materials Program (AMP).

Members discussed:

- Pricing, governance routing and timing; and when the cost of the program would be known;
- The presence of Zero Cost for Textbooks initiatives across the university, including in the Faculty of Arts;
- The large disparities in cost for textbooks across disciplines and a concern that some faculties would be subsidizing others;
- The ability to opt out and also a potential for an “opt in” approach;
- An opinion that compatibility with the AMP and current software being used in classrooms is desired;
- The length of time that students will have access to the materials and a comment that some programs require access long after the conclusion of the course;
- An opinion about the importance of accessibility of materials and that it should remain similar to the standard in class; and
- The delineation of services provided by University Libraries and AMP in relation to efficiency of access, obtaining and maintaining academic materials;

7. Learning Management System

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE; Jessica Butts Scott, Associate Vice-President, Online and Continuing Education

*Discussion:*

J Butts Scott presented a slide deck and explained the rationale, and process to make a proposed change to the University Learning Management System (LMS) from eClass through the Moodle platform to another platform. She provided context including: the comprehensiveness of the LMS across campus; U15 LMS comparators; limitations of the current system; feedback received from the community; concerns received regarding the lack of intuitiveness of the current LMS; procurement of new systems; the current limits to access live data; and estimated implementation timelines and onboarding.

Members expressed their gratitude for the work to improve the LMS, and discussed:

- The advisory committee membership and a question of whether a non-academic staff member and student members would be included;
- Opportunities to apply a critical lens throughout implementation of the new system to identify barriers;
- A suggestion that clear, concise and timely communications were required; and
- How learning analytics are provided in LMS;

The Chair concluded by committing to bring updates as the work towards a new LMS continues and that part of CLE's mandate on the learning environment includes the digital learning environment.

8. Question Period

*Presenter(s)*: Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE

*Discussion:*

The Chair invited K Peters to share information on the Search for a new Chancellor and distributed information on how to participate. A member asked about the Syllabus Tool and the plans for roll out and implementation and the committee heard that this has been estimated to be in in Fall, 2024

**CLOSING SESSION**

The Chair reminded members of the next CLE meeting and thanked everyone for their participation.

10 Adjournment

- . - Next meeting of CLE: October 25, 2023
- . - Next meeting of GFC: October 16, 2023