



General Faculties Council
Committee on the Learning Environment
Minutes

Thursday, March 03, 2011
3-15, UHALL
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

ATTENDEES:

Colleen Skidmore (Co-Chair), Renée Elio (delegate), James Eastham, Andrea Rawluk (delegate), Scott Delinger (delegate), Heather Kanuka, Ada Schmude (delegate), Rachel Milner, Anne McIntosh, Elaine Chow, Lili Liu, Fern Snart, Bob Luth, Frank Nargang, Sheree Kwong See (observer), Garry Bodnar (Acting Coordinator). Deborah Holloway (Scribe)

PRESENTERS AND GUESTS:

Elaine Chow, Elected Support Staff GFC CLE Representative and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee

Scott Delinger, IT Strategic Initiatives Officer

Nathalie Kermaal, Faculty of Native Studies and Appointed GFC CLE Member Cross-Representative from the GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC)

Bob Luth, Professor, Faculty of Science and GFC CLE Member Cross-Appointed from the GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) and Provost's Fellow, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Frank Nargang, Faculty of Science and Appointed GFC CLE Member Cross-Representative from the GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee

Andrea Rawluk, Vice-President, Academic, GSA, Ex-officio GFC CLE Member and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee

Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost (Academic) and Co-Chair, GFC CLE

Fern Snart, GFC CLE Elected Dean Representative and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Delinger/Chow

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Regular Session Minutes of February 3, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Chow/Schmude

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) approve the Minutes of February 3, 2011.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Co-Chair

The Co-Chair commented on a number of items of interest to members, including: Ms Chow's resignation from GFC CLE as she has been admitted to the MBA program at Queen's University; the Administrative Innovation and Process Review Task Force co-chaired by Associate Vice-President (Audit and Analysis) Mary Persson, and Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Arts, Sheree Kwong See; and recent changes to online access to Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI).

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Assessment and Grading Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Bob Luth, Faculty of Science and Appointed GFC CLE Member Cross-Representative from the GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Dr Luth distributed material sent to GFC CLE members on February 15, 2011. He reported that the first page provided an update regarding progress, while the second page contained the draft *Purposes and Principles of Assessment*. He requested that any questions or comments regarding the project be directed to his attention by early in the week of March 7, 2011.

During the ensuing discussion, the presenter addressed questions and comments expressed by members concerning the following matters: the primary audience for the policies once they are available in UAPPOL; why the outcome of assessment is not addressed; and what would be considered appropriate outcomes.

5. Academic Plan Subcommittee Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Fern Snart, GFC CLE Elected Dean Representative and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee; Frank Nargang, Faculty of Science and Appointed GFC CLE Member Cross-Representative from the GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee; Andrea Rawluk, Vice-President, Academic, GSA, Ex-officio GFC CLE Member and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee; and Elaine Chow, Elected Support Staff GFC CLE Representative and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

The Co-Chair introduced the item, noting that it is related to Item 6 on the Agenda. She commented that in the Fall of 2010, GFC CLE began developing a 1-3 year work plan for the Committee and progress was reported during the December 2, 2010 meeting GFC CLE. Work related to the Academic Plan: 2011-2015 was deferred until the Plan was finalized and approved. She introduced the members of the Academic Plan Sub-Committee, reporting that Dean Campbell is on leave from the University, and Dean Snart has agreed to take her place in the interim.

Dean Snart spoke to a document placed before members outlining the outcomes of the February 23, 2011 meeting of the Sub-Committee. She highlighted areas where the Sub-Committee saw opportunities for significant contributions from CLE toward the implementation of the Academic Plan. Regarding Item 5: "Graduate student supervision" she added that the Graduate Supervision Sub-Committee is now working on that issue therefore there is no immediate need for CLE to be involved. Ms Rawluk reported that the Graduate Supervision Sub-Committee is a cooperative effort between the Graduate Students' Association, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and the Office of the Provost. Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee are being developed, and the item will be brought forward to a meeting of the GFC CLE.

The Co-Chair led a discussion of Items 1-4 as laid out in the document before members, noting that Item 5 had been dealt with by the presenters, as described above. She asked that CLE receive regular updates from the Graduate Studies Sub-Committee, and noted that the creation of the Sub-Committee would be reported as an accomplishment of CLE this year. During the ensuing discussion, the following matters were addressed:

1. Undergraduate Student Research: that the CLE Sub-Committee *Report on Teaching, Research and Discovery* set a great deal in motion regarding this item and a report on progress would be made at the April 7, 2011 meeting of CLE; a suggestion that work-study programs wherein funding from a Faculty is matched to a researcher's funding have been helpful in institutions including McGill University; appreciation was expressed for the highlighting of initiatives already in place; a suggestion was put forward to develop an institution-wide undergraduate research conference similar to the University of Calgary's conference, perhaps in partnership with the Students' Union; and a suggestion was made to highlight undergraduate research opportunities during Orientation. The Co-Chair noted that this item would be brought forward to the April 7, 2011 CLE meeting.
2. Global engagement: The Co-Chair noted the two-year secondment of Professor Wayne Renke to University of Alberta International as University Advisor – International Educational Experiences, and indicated that he would be invited to a future meeting of CLE to discuss current initiatives and hear suggestions and comments from CLE members. She added that attendance at events during International Week this year was not high, and that perhaps CLE has a role to play in increasing attendance in the future. She also noted that the Standing Advisory Council on International Engagement is in place and will be producing a report for the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). The following matters were also discussed: a bridging/foundation program that would help international students integrate at the pre-degree level; preparation of students through writing support; that the Faculty of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Science had piloted University 101 and University 102 for International students; and whether the discussion should be broadened to include non-Anglophone Canadian students. The Co-Chair suggested that this item be brought forward to the May 5, 2011 CLE meeting.
3. Attributes and Competencies: Discussion ensued on current literature on attributes and competencies, the definition of these, how they would be identified at the University of Alberta, and how they would be measured. The Co-Chair sought and received consensus that CLE should form a sub-committee or task force to undertake an inventory of existing attributes and identify gaps. She agreed to take this decision to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-President (Research) and would report on their response at the next meeting of CLE.
4. Transformational Organization and Support: It was noted that while the Administrative Innovation and Process Review Task Force is reviewing University-wide administrative processes and individual administrative units or processes in order to seek efficiencies and streamline processes, the Academic Policy and Review Task Force is facilitating students' learning by assuring that the

University's academic policies and processes for academic programs do not present unnecessary barriers to student engagement and do not prevent students from having positive and rewarding experiences at the University of Alberta, therefore the consensus of the members was that the first bullet under this item is not needed.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding childcare. It was noted that childcare is identified in the Academic Plan as an area to support only because such facilities are in the purview of the Vice-President, Facilities and Operations. CLE may serve an advisory role however, as the childcare issue impacts the student experience and the learning environment due to financial and time pressures, and it can also impact the length of time to degree completion and student retention. Therefore, childcare may be seen as an issue of access. Members shared ideas, including: creation of a new fee, similar to the U-Pass fee, to address the cost of delivering childcare services; whether increasing the number of University Camps would be of assistance; whether data exists regarding the impacts of lack of access to childcare that could be helpful in discussions with Facilities and Operations; and whether adjusting course schedules would be useful and, if so, possible. The Co-Chair suggested that representatives from Facilities and Operations be invited to the September 2011 meeting of CLE to present the current situation regarding childcare.

6. GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Work Plan (no documents)

- Graduate Studies Issues
- Recognition of Teaching
- International Issues
- Fostering Pedagogy of Technology

Presenter: Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost (Academic) and Co-Chair, GFC CLE

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

The Co-Chair presented the item, noting that Graduate Studies Issues are being investigated by the Graduate Studies Sub-Committee, as discussed earlier in this meeting, and that International Issues will be placed on the Agenda of the May 5, 2011 meeting of CLE.

Regarding Recognition of Teaching, the Co-Chair noted that the evaluation of teaching is within the purview of her portfolio. The Teaching Evaluation Sub-Committee Report had been tabled in 2009, and the Co-Chair intends to bring this item back to CLE in the Fall of 2011.

Regarding International Issues, the Co-Chair noted coverage during earlier global engagement discussion.

Regarding Fostering Pedagogy of Technology, the Co-Chair noted that John Boeglin is taking the lead on this issue. In his absence, she noted that this item would be brought forward to the next meeting of CLE.

7. GFC CLE Membership

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost (Academic) and Co-Chair, GFC CLE

Purpose of the Proposal: To discuss the value of adding Associate Deans of Teaching and Learning to the CLE membership and the value of retaining the Major Teaching Award Recipient appointed members.

Discussion:

The Co-Chair reported that challenges were encountered in filling positions on CLE this year, with both Major Teaching Award Recipients places vacant. She noted that Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Arts, Sheree Kwong See has been regularly attending as an observer. After some discussion, CLE members agreed to remove one Major Teaching Award Recipient and add two Associate Deans of Teaching and Learning (or equivalent). Mr Bodnar advised that a motion will be required therefore University Governance will prepare the appropriate documents.

STANDING ITEMS

8. GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Bob Luth, Faculty of Science and Appointed GFC CLE Member Cross-Representative from the GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Dr Luth provided a report regarding the meetings of GFC APC held on February 9, 2011 and February. He noted that the major items considered were the Academic Plan and the Comprehensive Institution Plan.

9. GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) Update

No update was provided.

10. GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Frank Nargang, Faculty of Science and Appointed GFC CLE Member Cross-Representative from the GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) and Member of the CLE Academic Plan Subcommittee

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Dr Nargang reported that during the February 23, 2011 meeting of GFC FDC, members discussed the following items: the re-purposing of the Balmoral Facility to accommodate research; the expansion of the Infant and Toddler Centre; and an update from the Sub-Committee on Learning Spaces.

11. Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLAT) Council Update (no documents)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Scott Delinger, IT Strategic Initiatives Officer

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Dr Delinger reported that TLAT had received a presentation regarding the University's web strategy, and discussed the transition to Moodle, and the new encryption policy.

12. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION ITEMS

13. Items Approved by the Committee by E-Mail Ballots (non-debatable)

There were no items.

14. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

15. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.