



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

Wednesday, May 06, 2015
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Robert Luth	Chair (Delegate), Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Mikael Adolphson	Member, Associate Dean or Associate Chair, Teaching and Learning (or equivalent)
Gerald Beasley	Member, Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian
John Boeglin	Member, Academic Staff
Scott Delinger	Member (Delegate), Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President of Information Technology
Shannon Erichsen	Member, Support staff representative (Category B1.0), elected by GFC
Roger Graves	Member (Delegate), 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)
Luis Marin	Member, Graduate Student-at-large
Kate McInnes	Member, Undergraduate Student-at-large
Ada Ness	Member (Delegate), Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Fahim Rahman	Member, Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Toni Samek	Member, Major Teaching Award Recipient, Staff Representative
Harsh Thaker	Member Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association
Mani Vaidyanathan	Member, Academic Staff
Stanley Varnhagen	Member, Academic Staff
Sarah Wall	Member, Academic staff member (Category A1.0)* and current member of GFC

Presenter(s):

Janine Andrews	Executive Director, Museums & Collections Services
Gerald Beasley	Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian
John Boeglin	Chair, GFC CLE Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology
Linda Cameron	Director, University of Alberta Press
Roger Graves	Interim Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)
Robert Luth	Associate Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction), and Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
Adrian Sheppard	Director, Copyright Office
Connie Varnhagen	Academic Director, Undergraduate Research Initiative
Stanley Varnhagen	Member, GFC CLE Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology

Staff:

Andrea Patrick, Coordinator, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
Arden Burtnik, 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 Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Motion: Erichsen/ Adolphson

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

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of March 4, 2015

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

Motion: Adolphson/Erichsen

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the Minutes of March 4, 2015.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair

The Chair commented on a number of relevant issues to members.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Learning Services at the University of Alberta: An Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Gerald Beasley, Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian; Janine Andrews, Executive Director, Museums & Collections Services; Linda Cameron, Director, University of Alberta Press; Adrian Sheppard, Director, Copyright Office

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Mr Beasley introduced Ms Andrews, Ms Cameron, and Mr Sheppard and their roles in learning services at the university.

Ms Andrews gave an overview of the role of the museums in the academic environment. She noted that the university curates its collections in order to support its academic mission, while maintaining its diligence as a designated cultural institution under the Canadian government. She explained the museum locations and collections, the innovations and limitations in digitizing collections, border permits, the movement of endangered species in the collections, and the public perception of Enterprise Square Gallery. She reminded members that these collections and museums contribute to some segments of university research.

Ms Cameron outlined the role of the University of Alberta Press. She showcased recent publications from the Press and highlighted the diverse subject matter. In addition to University of Alberta specific textbooks, the Press also publishes texts that elaborate and further expound the university's narrative. This includes but is not limited to: memoirs, poetry, and historical fiction.

Mr Shepherd presented an overview on the roles of the Copyright Office at the university. The Copyright Office's mission is to provide support for faculty and staff in scholarly communication and access to effective communication in accordance with the university's policy. He noted that the Copyright Office encourages the use of open access content and continually strives to inform the university community of its resources.

5. The Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) at the University of Alberta

There were no documents.

Presenter: Connie Varnhagen, Academic Director, Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI)

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Varnhagen described the goals and benefits of undergraduate research, and the functions of the Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) in exercising these goals. She explained to members that a major obstacle URI faces is debriefing students on misconceptions about undergraduate research.

Dr Varnhagen explained the URI Stipend to committee members noting that it is the only undergraduate research funding program in Canada that does not adjudicate or exclude applicants based on: GPA, program/discipline, year of study, full-time/part-time status, and citizenship. Additional URI funding is available through the URI Undergraduate Research Support Fund.

Dr Varnhagen noted that the Festival of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities was one way of creating and sustaining a culture of undergraduate research at the university. She elaborated upon barriers the University of Alberta faces in fostering this culture: lack of awareness in how to get involved; access to resources (including funding); faculty and student perceptions; recognition for undergraduate research. Dr Varnhagen noted that an increase in awareness was seen through results from the Student Awareness Survey which asked "To what degree do you consider the following 'research activities'".

During the ensuing discussion members posed a number of questions and comments, including, but not limited to: URI has received national recognition; the role of social media and the learning environment; what role the URI will play in the future; how GFC CLE and the URI can work in partnership.

6. Formative Assessment using Electronic Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (e-USRI)

There were no documents.

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

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Luth provided members with a brief update.

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

There were no documents.

Presenter(s): John Boeglin, Chair, GFC CLE Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology; Stanley Varnhagen, Member, GFC CLE Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Boeglin provided members with an update on the subcommittee's work. He presented survey results which showed discrepancies between students and academics in perceived value of content delivery. Overall, students placed a higher value on face-to-face and/or traditional instruction compared to online instruction.

Dr Boeglin also noted the differing responses between students and academics in completing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Overall, students were more receptive to MOOCs than academics.

Generally, Dr Boeglin concluded, students and academics carry high levels of satisfaction of various forms of instructional technology.

During the ensuing discussion members discussed how students express high levels of satisfaction towards the eClass model, but low levels of satisfaction towards eClass support and troubleshooting.

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

There were no documents.

Presenter: Roger Graves, Interim Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Dr Graves provided members with a brief update on the university's Centre for Teaching and Learning.

STANDING ITEMS

9. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

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

There were no items.

11. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

12. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.