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

Wednesday, December 02, 2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:
John Nychka, Chair
Dale Askey
Benjamin Cheung
David Draper
Ivan Fair
Simran Ghoman
Bora Kim
Janice Kung
Hollis Lai

Pascal Lupien
Brian Maraj
Abner Monteiro
Kerry Mummery
Karsten Mundel
Cheryl Poth
Sachiketha Reddy
Norma Rodenburg
Ali Shiri
Christine Wiesenthal

non-voting:
Lorna Baker-Perri
Cosette Lemelin
Mike MacGregor
Kate Peters

REGRETS:
Brad Hamdon

Staff:
Heather Richholt, Coordinator

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives), and Chair of GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)

Discussion:
The Chair introduced the addition of an action item to the meeting materials and proposed the agenda be amended to add the new item as item 4 and to renumber the remaining items accordingly.

Motion: Mündel/Cheung

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the agenda as amended.
CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of September 30, 2020

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives), and Chair of CLE

Motion: Maraj/Wiesenthal

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the open session minutes of September 30, 2020.
CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives), and Chair of CLE

Discussion:
The Chair welcomed the new members to the committee and noted the university's recent decision for a delayed start to most classes for winter 2021 term.

ACTION ITEMS

4. Proposed Revisions to the Conduct of Examinations Section of the University Calendar

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Tammy Hopper, Vice-Provost (Programs); Carlo Dimailig, University Calendar Editor

Purpose of the Proposal: To revise the Conduct of Examinations section of the University Calendar.

Discussion:
Dr Hopper explained that she and Mr Dimailig had been working with a team to make revisions to the Conduct of Exams Section of the Calendar in order to reflect the current context of online examinations and assessments since the university moved to remote learning in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the discussion, the presenters responded to member questions and comments including:
- whether or not final exams were required and the amount of control an instructor had over the final grade for a course;
- that more revisions to the section may be needed but that the current proposal was just to include references to remote delivery;
- that exams were not the only form of assessment and that other methods could be more effective;
- numerous equity issues related to online learning and proctoring of exams; and
- that there was interest in further work to address the issues that remained.

Suggestions were made to revise the language around required identification and to note that enforcement of the regulations was bound by the Discrimination Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy. The document was amended accordingly.

Motion: Mündel/Lai

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment recommend to the GFC Executive Committee proposed revisions to the Conduct of Examinations Section of the University Calendar, as contained in Attachment 1, as amended, and to take effect upon final approval by GFC.
CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Updates:

A. Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Presenter(s): Cosette Lemelin, Assistant Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Discussion:
Dr Lemelin announced that the CTL team had won an excellence award for their work on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response in supporting instructors as they moved to online teaching. She also noted that there was a new section of the CTL website related to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Teaching and Learning, and some new podcasts had been posted showcasing innovative and interesting strategies for online learning.

B. Information Technology
- USRI Data Update

Presenter(s): Mike MacGregor, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Information Services & Technology)

Discussion:
Dr MacGregor noted that there had been a change to how Universal Student Rating of Instruction (USRI) data could be searched and viewed and that he would share some visuals with the committee.

C. Library and Museums

Presenter(s): Dale Askey, Vice-Provost (Library and Museums) and Chief Librarian

Discussion:
Dr Askey provided an update on available Library services during COVID-19 related campus closures and spoke about the upcoming move of the Health Sciences Library to the Edmonton Clinic Health Academy.

D. General Faculties Council

Presenter(s): Kate Peters, GFC Secretary and Manager, GFC Services

Discussion:
Ms Peters provided an update on timelines and decision making related to Academic Restructuring.

6. GFC Committee Orientation

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Kate Peters, GFC Secretary and Manager, GFC Services

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to provide governance orientation to committee members.

Discussion:
Ms Peters provided a brief committee orientation that touched on the following topics:
- roles and responsibilities for GFC committee members;
- CLE's specific mandate and delegated authority;
- CLE's role related to university policies and procedures; and
- composition and the variety of perspectives on the committee.

7. Teaching Policy

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives), and Chair of CLE

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to discuss the parameters of a Teaching Policy for the University of Alberta.

Discussion:

The Chair referred members to the meeting materials for this item, which provided some of the background and previous conversations about the university's teaching policy. He explained that before moving forward with development of the Teaching Policy and rescission of GFC Policy 111 he wanted to hear from members on the purpose of a Teaching Policy and how it could fit within the university's ecosystem of teaching and learning.

During the discussion, members asked questions and expressed opinions including but not limited to:
- whether or not a teaching policy was needed;
- the aspirational nature of a teaching policy;
- how such a policy would reflect innovation, research, and continuing development;
- recognizing the importance of the student experience;
- whether a strategy, a strategic plan, or principles on teaching would be more useful to the community;
- an observation that the current policy was not effectively changing the culture;
- a question about how teaching would fit into the institution's priorities in the current climate of budget crisis and restructuring;
- that the Institutional Strategic Plan, *For the Public Good* should be at the center of any policy development;
- the implications of academic restructuring and that it was the ideal time to focus on what was important and key to the university's vision and mission; and
- the many different kinds of teaching and the opportunity to raise the profile of teaching at the university.

8. Student Experience of Teaching and Learning (SETL)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Brian Maraj, Co-Chair SETL Taskforce; Cheryl Poth, Co-Chair SETL Taskforce

Purpose of the Proposal: To inform CLE about the work of the Taskforce on SETL.

Discussion:
Dr Maraj and Dr Poth reported on the meeting of the taskforce earlier that day and the discussion about some of the issues and opportunities around USRIs. They explained that they would like to consult CLE on the development of a pilot project to integrate eClass and USRIs and that, if the committee was supportive, they would proceed and keep CLE informed of the pilot and its outcomes.

Members expressed support for the pilot project.

9. Question Period

Presenter(s): John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives), and Chair of CLE

Discussion:
A member asked for an update on the conversations around remote proctoring. The Chair answered that administration was looking into the issue and that it was challenging to find viable alternatives.

INFORMATION REPORTS
Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

There were no items.

11. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings
    - Email Oct 27, 2020 - Centre for Teaching and Learning Infographic

CLOSING SESSION

12. Adjournment:
    - Next Meeting of CLE: February 3, 2020
    - Next Meeting of GFC: December 7, 2020

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