

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

Wednesday, January 24, 2024  
SAB 2-31  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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**ATTENDEES:**

Karsten Mündel (Chair)  
Pedro Almeida  
Angela Bayduza  
Rick Brick  
Kim Frail  
Zachary Friggstad  
John Hu  
Christine Hughes  
Rija Kamran

Pauline Paul  
Muneeba QaDir  
Chris Reyns-Chikuma  
Allison Sivak

Non-Voting Members  
Ashley Bhatia  
Deanna Davis  
Kate Peters  
Jeff Rawlings (Delegate IST)

Regrets  
Jana Grekul  
John Lemieux  
Jesse Luyendyk  
Gregory Thomas  
Patrick von Hauff  
Shauna Wilton (Vice-Chair)

Guests  
Orest Zwozdesky

Staff  
Faiza Billo

**OPENING SESSION**

*Presenter(s):* Karsten Mündel, Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE); Orest Zwozdesky, Indigepreneur and Chief Value Officer of Orest Zwozdesky International

The Chair invited O Zwozdesky to lead the committee in ceremony. O Zwozdesky invited members to smudge if they wished.

The Chair acknowledged that the University of Alberta is located on Treaty 6 territory and that 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.

O Zwozdesky asked members to consider how vulnerability serves them in their work or their life.

1. 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 offered the opportunity to provide input, items or feedback on the agenda. Hearing none, he suggested the committee move forward with the agenda as set out.

2 Comments from the Chair (no documents)

*Presenter(s)*: Karsten Mündel, Chair, CLE

*Discussion*: The Chair made comments on the Presidential Review Committee, the Faculty Excellence Adjudication Committee, the Round Dance, the Academic Materials Program, and the implementation of a new Learning Management System (LMS).

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of November 29, 2023

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the open session minutes of November 29, 2023.

**CARRIED**

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

4. Overview of the Council on Systemic Ableism

*Presenter(s)*: Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion); Danielle Peers, Academic Lead on Equity Praxis and Systemic Ableism

*Discussion*: D Peers connected the discussion on vulnerability with the experience of ableism. They presented the origin of the Council on Systemic Ableism as a new way of approaching systemic ableism by centering individuals with lived experience of disability. C Smith noted the importance of supporting the institution in its learning about disability cultures and access across portfolios in the University. The Council's work consists of supporting projects, providing advice, and mapping initiatives to resolve accessibility issues across the University. The aim is to provide more systematic approaches to accommodation. D Peers noted that the legal requirement to accommodate, can also be viewed as a license for institutions to continue to discriminate and exclude individuals. These barriers may be policy, programs, infrastructures, or systems and eliminating them improves the experience for all. C Smith pointed members to the Terms of Reference what were built collaboratively with individuals.

Members asked:

- How to improve the experience of students by identifying ableist practices in the teaching and learning environment;
- Whether the Council was actively recruiting members and how to get involved; and
- A comment that inverting the perspective to focus on the lived experience of being accommodated in an ableist institution was important.

5. Revised Draft of the Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Policy - Appendix B: Multifaceted Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives); Brad Ambury, Lead Educational Developer, Centre for Teaching and Learning;

*Discussion*: The Chair reminded members that this item had been discussed at the November meeting and asked members to consider if this draft was ready to be presented to the General Faculties Council (GFC) for discussion. He expressed a hope that the Appendix would be ready for approval at the March meeting of CLE. B Ambury described the work to integrate comments from the Committee from the last meeting and noted that

guidelines or a how-to document for implementing the Appendix would not serve the purpose of supporting multi-faceted evaluation as units should adapt it to their context.

Members expressed their support for the Appendix moving forward to GFC for discussion. They asked about inclusion of open-educational resources as an assessment criteria and whether inclusive and accessible practices could be foregrounded in the document.

#### 6. Digital Teaching, Learning & Student Experience Steering Committee

*Presenter(s):* Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives); Jeff Rawlings, Vice-Chair, Digital Teaching, Learning & Student Experience

*Discussion:* The Chair explained the focus of the Digital Teaching, Learning & Student Experience Steering Committee. J Rawlings noted that the committee functioned in multiple directions both as a place for members of the University community to bring information and feedback about digital systems in the University, and to inform members about the development of technology systems. The committee also provides advice on decision-making especially concerning enterprise architecture, which are systems that are seamlessly integrated into the University environment. For example, the committee discusses changes to the Google storage suite and the EduRoam system. He noted that future priorities included computer labs and interactive polling.

Members asked about the interaction between physical plants and technology, for example, access to power outlets. Members expressed interest in hearing more about the Google storage issue and EduRoam. The committee discussed how to make connections between the discussions at the Committee such as regular reporting. The Chair emphasized that CLE should also raise issues that the committee might want to consider. Members noted for example the need for information about administering exams without proctoring technology, a bring-your-own-device policy, access to lab spaces, and the size of desks. They discussed how the committee might collect this information that could feed into the new committee's work.

#### 7. Overview Curricular Experiential Learning Ecosystem and Current Priorities

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Raymond Matthias, Director, Experiential and Work-Integrated Learning

*Discussion:* R Matthias presented different perceptions and definitions of experiential learning on Campus. He noted they may include research-based, innovative and strategic, land-based learning, co-op or internships. He spoke to the different characteristics including for-credit, non-credit and paid or unpaid options. He presented definitions commonly used in the sector. He presented an ongoing data project to categorize experiential learning across programs according to the number of classes taken with an experiential learning component. He informed members about the ongoing issues associated with discrimination and sexual harassment of students on placement and the efforts to mitigate these risks. He expressed a hope of improving accessibility of services to potential employers and students through an online hub.

Members asked questions and made comments on:

- Disciplinary diversity in how "experiential learning" was defined;
- How the data was being verified in the institutional scan and some of the underlying assumptions;
- How Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) are being classified;
- How programs are counted and how course-hours or credit hours intersect with data collection;
- Whether experiential learning could be created as an administrative unit within the University and consideration of the units who employ large numbers of students;
- The importance of student placements within units at the University;

- Whether there had been consideration of the barriers to engagement in experiential learning;
- The cost of experiential learning activities and the presence of a range of options;
- That learning could integrate the benefits of international exchanges without leaving;

#### 8. Space Management Policy

*Presenter(s):* Ashley Bhatia, Associate Vice-President, Integrated Plan & Partnership, Vice-President Facilities & Operations

*Discussion:* A Bhatia spoke to the space optimization initiative which examined under-utilized space on Campus. The Space Optimization Executive Oversight Committee, chaired the Provost, includes representatives from across the institution and is . Implementation of changes to space-use and policies is one of the priorities of the working group. She noted in particular the aging infrastructure and the piecemeal approach to building maintenance. The current approach includes college-level master planning for space. The Space Management Policy is approved by the Board and defines University Space and outlines responsibilities for space management and accountabilities of senior leaders for different aspects such as classroom space. The revision of the policy suite will draw from best practices across the U15 and take into account the emerging changes to use of space as well as the specificities of university space management such as labs. She committed to bringing a draft revised policy to CLE for discussion in the future to ensure that the academic perspective is integrated. She set out the timelines for the work which include consultation throughout 2024 and a goal of approval in 2025.

Members asked about student engagement and encouraged the proponents to consult with student groups who have lost space in the recent years as units have been asked to pay for space.

#### 9. Question Period

*Presenter(s):* Karsten Mündel, Chair, CLE

*Discussion:* Item was deferred.

### **INFORMATION REPORTS**

10. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings  
- CLE Updates: Presentations and Links

### **CLOSING SESSION**

11. Closing Circle

*Presenter:* Orest Zwozdesky, Indigepreneur and Chief Value Officer of Orest Zwozdesky International

*Discussion:* In lieu of a closing circle, the Chair reminded members that at the next meeting, there was limited capacity for hybrid engagement and encouraged members to come for a tour of the new Indigenous Learnign Space.

12. Adjournment

- Next meeting of CLE: March 27, 2024  
- Next meeting of GFC: January 29, 2024