



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

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

Wednesday, October 30, 2019
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

John Nychka, Chair
Cathy Adams
Radim Barta
Adam Brown (delegate)
Brian Maraj
Janice Miller-Young

Milad Nazarahari
Norma Rodenburg
Mani Vaidyanathan
Christine Wiesenthal

REGRETS:

Joel Agarwal
Dale Askey

Pascal Lupien
Mike MacGregor
Amber Sayed
Jennifer Tupper

Staff:

David Epp, Coordinator

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Maraj/Miller-Young

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

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of October 2, 2019

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Wiesenthal/Miller-Young

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the open session minutes of October 2, 2019.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

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

Discussion: The Chair informed members that a Faculty of Science proposal that will impact the awarding of 'With Distinction' and 'First-Class Honors' upon graduation was brought to the Council on Student Affairs (COSA) for discussion. Current Faculty regulations state that to be awarded these honorifics a student must maintain a GPA of 3.5 on a normal full course load (24 credits) within the last two Fall/Winters of the program. Not all students are able to carry a course load of at least 24 credits for a number of life circumstances, and under the Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy the university cannot discriminate against these students. As the current regulations disadvantage students that cannot take 24 credits a term, and advantages those that can, it

was proposed that the most equitable solution would be to remove this stipulation and focus on the last 60 credits of the program.

The Chair noted that faculty excellence awards will be discussed at a future CLE meeting to gather feedback on the application process; how the awards are adjudicated; and how to commit to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles.

The Chair noted that the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR), will be attending the December 4, 2019 CLE meeting for early consultation on graduate student supervision, adding that the topic is of particular interest to the Board.

The Chair reported on the impact of the provincial budget, noting that it signals a major shift in government policy around the funding of post-secondary education and that educating students will have to be done differently. With potentially higher class sizes the challenge will be to design curriculum and techniques to remain excellent in teaching.

Dr Maraj, Vice-Chair, CLE, announced that Dr Nychka was one of five educators selected from an international pool of applicants for the 2019 D2L Innovation Award in Teaching and Learning. The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), in partnership with D2L (Desire to Learn), present this award to recognize outstanding educators who are redefining the learning experience of students through innovative practises.

DISCUSSION ITEM

4. Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Quality Assurance Administrative Portfolio Review 2018-2019
• Excerpted Report • Self-Study Review

Presenter(s): Tammy Hopper, Vice-Provost (Programs); Janice Miller-Young, Academic Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Purpose of the Proposal: To provide the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) with a summary of the final recommendations and corresponding response stemming from the Quality Assurance (QA) Administrative Portfolio Review of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which occurred in June 2019.

Discussion: Dr Hopper provided background information on the QA Administrative Portfolio Review of the CTL, noting that the external reviewers were excellent and provided constructive and positive feedback.

Dr Miller-Young used a presentation to describe CTL's approach to a practical and engaging self study review, listing CTL's key messages, vision and mission, and current activities. She then noted challenges of assessing impacts of CTLs, how CTL designed and implemented a survey, the survey results, and next steps.

Comments and questions from members included, but were not limited to: the CTL associate director's role; inviting associate deans to join meetings with deans and CTL; access to data on the blended learning initiative; and creating connections between CTL and course designers, possibly including CTL in the new program approval process.

ACTION ITEM

5. Proposed Revisions to Standing Committee Terms of Reference - GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to approve the revised terms of reference for the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment.

Discussion: Dr Nychka updated members on feedback on the CLE Terms of Reference received from GFC and GFC Executive Committee noting that the only change was to add the Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR), as an ex-officio voting member to Section 3: Composition. Dr Nychka clarified that Section 5.9 does not refer to awards that would conflict with the mandate of the University Teaching Awards Committee (UTAC).

Comments and questions from members included, but were not limited to: approval of including an FGSR administrator to CLE to clarify graduate student issues; the process for updating the Terms of Reference if required; delegated authority from GFC; and the role of CLE to provide value in the changing times of the future.

Motion: Maraj/Barta

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment recommend that General Faculties Council approve the proposed changes to the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Terms of Reference, as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect January 1, 2020.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEM

6. Teaching Assessment and Evaluation Policy Suite

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

Purpose of the Proposal: The item is for committee discussion to guide the development of new teaching assessment and evaluation procedures.

Discussion: Dr Nychka introduced the item noting that the goal of the new policy suite is to be able to define effective teaching, generate clear outcomes, design assessment and evaluation methods, and support instructors to be effective, by incorporating the five core dimensions that CTL has been working on and were presented at the October 2 CLE meeting. Dr Nychka noted that he would be reviewing FEC standards for every Faculty and speak with FEC Chairs to determine how the standard is being used for teaching evaluation and assessment.

Comments and questions from members included, but were not limited to: the student engagement experience; creating a definition of effective learning; student perceptions of USRIs; mid-semester evaluations; use of USRIs by administrators; creating indicators for each of the five dimensions and map FEC to that, with links to training opportunities for each dimension; separate USRI questions for teaching and courses; different types of assessment for different types of classes; evaluation for instructors that do not go to FEC; peer-review of instructors; inviting instructors doing things differently to discuss their work at future CLE meetings; revisiting the draft teaching assessment policy from April 19, 2019 following high-level discussion; and accessibility and duty to accommodate issues.

7. Updates

A. Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) – There was no update.

B. Information Technology – There was no update.

C. Learning Services – There was no update.

D. General Faculties Council – Dr. Adams reported that GFC met on October 21, 2019 and that the revisions to the CLE Terms of Reference, and the recommendations on program approval pathways were on the agenda for early consultation. Discussion items included presentations on St Joseph's and St Stephen's affiliated colleges, and principles on free expression. Questions for GFC included speech critical of Bill C-16 and enforcement of violation of principles of free expression, and international student tuition.

8. Question Period

Presenter(s): John Nychka

A member asked whether there was enough interest in the university to support potentially higher enrollment targets. It was noted that international applicant numbers were increasing and that Alberta is the fastest growing province, especially in the K-12 age group. The international to local student ratio is currently around 15% overall for international students, however, that may change if total enrollment is increased.

INFORMATION REPORTS

9. Items Approved by the Committee by E-Mail Ballots (non-debatable) (no items to date)

10. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings (no items to date)

CLOSING SESSION

11. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.