



General Faculties Council
Academic Standards Committee
Minutes

Thursday, February 17, 2011
3-15 University Hall
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

ATTENDEES:

Colleen Skidmore – Chair (delegate), Ada Schmude (delegate), James Eastham, Vikki Northrup (delegate), Natalie Sharpe, William Street (delegate), Jim Bohun (delegate), Harry Prest (delegate), Elaine Geddes (delegate), Clive Hickson (delegate), Doug Clark (delegate), Helen Madill (delegate), René Poliquin (delegate), John Law (delegate), Joanne Olson (delegate), Dion Brocks (delegate), Pierre Baudin (delegate), Felicity Hay (delegate), Dave Magee (delegate), Ed Blackburn (delegate), Brenda Leskiw (delegate), Tarek el-Bialy, Sharla King, Pat Dalton, Alex Clark, Wayne Renke, Marlene Lewis – Coordinator, Deborah Holloway – Scribe

PRESENTERS AND GUESTS:

Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Pat Dalton, Associate Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management
Nick Dehod, President, University of Alberta Students' Union
Kyle Marshall, University & Governance Advocacy Advisor, Students' Union
Ada Schmude, Member, GFC ASC
Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost (Academic) and Chair, GFC ASC
Anna Vocioni, Assistant Registrar, Exams and Timetabling

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Magee/Baudin

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve the Agenda as presented.
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CARRIED

2. Approval of the Regular Session Minutes of January 20, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

The Chair asked that the minutes be amended regarding Item 10. Question Period: that the item be amended to read "Regarding a query about whether teaching awards in graduate programs are being contemplated, the Chair reported that the Provost will be forming a group to examine this and other related teaching award issues."

Motion: Magee/Prest

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve the Minutes of January 20, 2011, as amended. **CARRIED**

3. Comments from the Chair

The Chair provided comments of interest to members regarding the following matters: the On-Line Alberta Transfer Guide; an upcoming PLAR workshop; a Student Advisors' Conference; changes to meeting days for ASC Subcommittee on Standards for 2011-2012; the timeline for the integration of the Faculty of Extension onto *Bear Tracks*; the National Survey of Student Engagement; and the 2011 Festival of Teaching.

ACTION ITEMS

4. The Following Proposal(s) are Deemed Minor/Editorial (GFC ASC's Terms of Reference (Mandate) (3.A.i and iii)) by the Vice-Provost (Academic Programs) and Chair, GFC ASC and are APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FROM GFC IN A SINGLE OMNIBUS MOTION.

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

- 4A. Faculty of Nursing Deletion of the Certificate Programs in Critical Care Nursing, Neonatal Nursing and Nurse Midwifery

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the deletion of the Certificate Program in Critical Care Nursing, as submitted by the Faculty of Nursing, to be effective in 2010-2011.

CARRIED

- 4B. Faculté Saint-Jean Admission/Readmission Requirements for the Bachelor of Science (BSc) Degree Program

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from GFC, proposed admission/readmission requirements for the Bachelor of Science (BSc) Degree Program, as submitted by Faculté Saint-Jean, for implementation in 2012-2013.

CARRIED

- 4C. Faculté Saint-Jean Admission/Readmission Requirements for the Bachelor of Science (Environmental and Conservation Sciences-Bilingual) Degree Program

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from GFC, proposed admission/readmission requirements for the Bachelor of Science (Environmental and Conservation Sciences— Bilingual) Degree Program, as double barred in the Attachment and as submitted by Faculté Saint-Jean, for implementation upon approval.

CARRIED

- 4D. Office of the Registrar and Student Awards Transfer Course Approvals for February, 2011

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from GFC, the proposal for approval of courses for transfer credit, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and Student Awards.

CARRIED

Omnibus Motion: Olson/Geddes

THAT the Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from GFC, the above-noted editorial changes to academic standing/graduation/promotions, admission/transfer requirements, and changes to the University Calendar for Items 4A – 4D.

CARRIED

5. Office of the Registrar and Student Awards Changes to University Calendar Section 16.1 – Additional (Bonus) International Baccalaureate (IB) Points

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Pat Dalton, Associate Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management

Purpose of the Proposal: Since 2005, the U of A has offered final admission to International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBD) students based on the predicted and final grades of six IB subjects, excluding additional points (also known as bonus points). The grades awarded for each course range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest).

Students can, however, also be awarded up to three additional points for their combined results on an IB Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, an Extended Essay, and enough hours for the “Creativity, Action and Service.” Currently, the U of A does not include these additional points in the final admission calculation. University of Toronto, University of British Columbia, and University of Calgary do use additional points in their admission calculation along with a number of other Canadian post secondary institutions.

In order for the University of Alberta to remain in a competitive position in attracting IBD students, we propose that IB additional points be included in the admission calculation for undergraduate students and that Section 16.1 of the University Calendar be adjusted to reflect this change.

Recruiters will be able to use this change as a recruitment tool in communication with IB schools and students.

Discussion:

Ms Dalton presented the item, noting that that this proposal had benefitted from substantial input from the Faculties. In response to a question, she noted that this proposal would not give preferential treatment regarding admission to International Baccalaureate students.

Motion: Schmude/Leskiw

That the Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from GFC, the inclusion of Additional (Bonus) International Baccalaureate (IB) points in the calculation for undergraduate admission to the University of Alberta, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and Student Awards, to take effect upon approval and for publication in the 2012-13 University Calendar.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. External Programs for Review and Programs in Progress on Campus: Standing Item

Presenters: Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); and Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost (Academic) and Chair, GFC ASC

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Ms Brough reported that the BSc/BEd (Secondary) combined degrees program (Augustana) had been approved.

7. Fall Term Reading Week

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Nick Dehod, President, University of Alberta Students' Union; and Kyle Marshall, University & Governance Advocacy Advisor, Students' Union

Purpose of the Proposal: To discuss the challenges and elicit suggestions on the Students' Union's (SU's) Fall Term Reading Week Proposal.

Discussion:

Mr Dehod introduced the item, noting increases in requests for assistance at Student Counseling Services, adding that the University has taken a number of steps to assist students including an increase in the frequency and quality of programming to address mental health issues and the development of the Helping Individuals at Risk policy and procedures. He highlighted academic and non-academic programming opportunities that may be incorporated into the Reading Weeks, referring to York University's "Co-Curricular Week" which features a variety of services designed to enhance academic success.

The proposal would require that Fall Term classes begin on the Wednesday before Labour Day with Reading Week being the week of Remembrance Day. The timing of the proposed reading week may be opportune as a follow-up to Fall Orientation.

Mr Dehod reported that the Students' Union had worked closely with the Registrar's Office and others to understand the challenges this proposal might pose. These potential challenges are outlined in the document before members. A plebiscite question will go before students in March.

During the ensuing discussion, the presenter addressed comments and question expressed by members concerning the following matters: challenges presented by the early start to researchers who require that time to complete grant proposals; whether data exists regarding the pro-rating of leases for partial month residency as well as data regarding University of Alberta students arriving at University residences prior to September; the impact on graduate students who are already challenged to arrive at the current start date and face difficulties obtaining visas on time; the impact on Faculty orientation programs; challenges for staff regarding admissions and lab preparations; impacts on field schools; the narrowing of the time frame during which support and administrative staff are able to take vacation time; whether the possibility of adding an academic assignment to be completed during Reading Week had been contemplated; concern that the argument regarding the requirement for a mental health break was not compelling; whether adding one extra day to the Remembrance Day weekend would suffice; whether students would be sufficiently

aware of the challenges prior to the plebiscite; a note that that research findings show that the availability of accessible, culturally-specific early intervention initiatives have a stronger and more positive impact on those coping with mental health issues than do time-off strategies; whether data exists addressing the impact of an additional Reading Week on students experiencing stress; and the suggestion that positioning the Reading Week as a 'promise' to improve mental health might be unwise without evidence clearly demonstrating that this has been the case at other institutions.

8. Academic Policy and Process Review Task Force (APPRTF)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Pat Dalton, Associate Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management; and Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost (Academic) and Chair, GFC ASC

Purpose of the Proposal: Discuss outcomes of the Academic Policy and Process Review Task Force (APPRTF).

Discussion:

The Chair introduced the item, noting that GFC ASC had engaged in an initial discussion regarding this topic at its meeting of January 11, 2011. Since then, GFC ASC Subcommittee on Standards (SOS) discussed the item at its meeting of February 3, 2011.

Ms Brough summarized the suggestions from ASC SOS as follows: admission requirements are the purview of the Faculties; transfer credit be prioritized and be broadened to include internal transfers between Faculties; emphasis should be put on communication with students, including the development and implementation of common terminology across the University and policies regarding types of communication to be employed.

In response to a question regarding the Access Center, Ms Brough reported that while it would likely exist within the Registrar's Office, the academic advice would be the in the domain of the Faculties.

9. Missed Term Work

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Ada Schmude, Member, GFC ASC; Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost (Academic) and Chair, GFC ASC; and Anna Vocioni, Assistant Registrar, Exams and Timetabling

Purpose of the Proposal: To follow-up regarding concerns/questions raised at the November, 2010 GFC ASC meeting regarding this item.

Discussion:

The Chair introduced the item, noting that it had been before members at the November 2010 meeting of GFC ASC. Ms Schmude added that the goal of the discussion would be to identify best practices and seek advice regarding next steps, if any.

Members engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding the following matters: clarification of "term work" was sought; clarification regarding the definition of "incapacitating illness" and which individual/entity makes that determination; whether more detailed rules are needed regarding the cancellation of papers when a

student becomes ill while writing an exam; whether consistency between Faculties needs further discussion regarding how they deal with deferred exams; whether the Academy is comfortable with the differing rules among Faculties about what types of situations/reasons are/are not acceptable in consideration of students asking to be excused from midterm exams (the Department of Chemistry's Declaration form was cited as an example); the difficulties that arise when instructors are tasked with making the decisions about excused absences when individual instructor decisions vary; and the appropriateness of regulations stating that the weight of missed term work is added to the final examination, but if the final is not cumulative, the final grade does not reflect the student's understanding of the entire material of the course.

Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION ITEMS

11. Items Approved by the GFC Academic Standards Committee by E-mail Ballots (non-debatable)

There were no items.

12. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

Assessment and Grading reference group (sent by e-mail on January 24, 2011)

13. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.