



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Academic Standards Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, January 19, 2012
3-15, UHALL
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Bill Connor (Delegate)	Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee
Ada Schmude (Delegate)	Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Emerson Csorba	Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Vikki Northrup (Delegate)	Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association
Natalie Sharpe (Delegate)	Director, Student OmbudService
William Street (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Arts
Nat Kav (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Harry Prest (Delegate)	Dean, Augustana Campus
Elaine Geddes (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Business
Clive Hickson (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Education
Ken Porteous (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Engineering
Walter Archer (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Extension
René Poliquin (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
John Law (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Law
Marc Moreau (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Gurston Dacks (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Native Studies
Kaysi Kushner (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Nursing
Dion Brocks (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Janice Causgrove Dunn (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
Sentil Senthilselvan (Delegate)	Dean, School of Public Health
Liz Taylor (Delegate)	Dean, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine
Ed Blackburn (Delegate)	Dean, Faculté Saint-Jean
Tarek el-Bialy	Academic Staff Member, Elected by GFC
Matthew Li	Undergraduate at-large, Elected by GFC

Non-Voting Members:

Pat Schultz	Associate Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management, Office of the Registrar
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Presenter(s):

Marion Allen	Chair of the Transfer Credit Task Force
Kathleen Brough	Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Deborah Gougeon	Assistant Registrar (National Admissions), Office of the Registrar
Gerry Kendal	Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Frank Robinson	Vice-Provost and Dean of Students
Rory Tighe	President, Students' Union
Anna Vocioni	Assistant Registrar, Exams and Timetabling Division, Office of the Registrar

Staff:

Garry Bodnar	Coordinator, GFC Academic Standards Committee
Emily Paulsen	Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Several items on the Agenda were reordered to accommodate guests.

Motion: Moreau/Street

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve the Agenda.	CARRIED
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2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of October 20 and December 15, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Moreau/Causgrove-Dunn

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve the Minutes of October 20, 2011	CARRIED
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Motion: Northrup/Porteous

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve the Minutes of December 15, 2011.	CARRIED
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3. Comments from the Chair

The Chair provided comments on several items of interest to members.

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 Interim Vice-Provost (Academic) 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: Bill Connor, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

4A. Faculty of Arts Proposed Change to Admission and Readmission Deadlines (Section 12.7 of the University Calendar)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Purpose of the Proposal:

Motion:

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, a proposed change to 'Admission and Readmission Deadlines' (Section 12.7 of the *University Calendar*), as submitted by the Faculty of Arts and as set out in Attachment 4A of the documentation, to be effective in 2012-2013.

CARRIED

4B. Office of the Registrar Course Approvals for January, 2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Purpose of the Proposal:

Motion:

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from GFC, the proposal for approval of transfer credit, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and as set forth in Attachment 4B, to take effect upon final approval.

CARRIED

4C. Faculté Saint-Jean Proposed Changes to Faculty-Specific Credit by Special Assessment (CSA) Regulations

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Purpose of the Proposal:

Motion:

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, proposed changes to Faculty-specific Credit by Special Assessment (CSA) regulations, as submitted by Faculté Saint-Jean and as set out in Attachment 4C of the documentation, to be effective in 2012-2013.

CARRIED

Omnibus Motion: Dacks/Street

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the above-noted editorial changes to existing admission/transfer requirements, new transfer courses, and proposed changes to Faculty-specific Credit by Special Assessment (CSA) regulations, as set out in Items 4A – 4C.

5. Proposed Suspension of the Range and Pasture Management Major in the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Agriculture Program (Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Nat Kav, Associate Dean, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences

Purpose of the Proposal: To suspend the existing Range and Pasture Management Major in the BSc in Agriculture program offered by the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences.

Discussion:

Dr Kav introduced the proposal, noting that many of the undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences were being reviewed. He mentioned that the Range and Pasture Management Major experienced very low enrollment with four students currently in the program. These students will be the last to complete this major because, as of September, 2012, it will no longer be offered. The Faculty will recommend interested students apply instead to the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Environmental and Conservation Sciences, Wildlife and Rangeland Resources Management Major.

Motion: Kav/Causgrove-Dunn

THAT the GFC Academic Standards Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the suspension of the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences' Range and Pasture Management Major in the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Agriculture program, as submitted by the Faculty and as set forth in Attachment 1, to be effective in September, 2012.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

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

There were no documents.

Presenter(s): Bill Connor, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee; Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Ms Brough reported to members the following:

External Reviews -

- Concordia University College of Alberta's Four-Year Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Sociology – this review

was recently completed by the Faculty of Arts.

- University of Seattle Master of Education (MEd) – this proposal has just been received by the University of Alberta for review.

Program Proposals from the University of Alberta –

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Performance Studies – the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) has completed their review and has passed their recommendation on to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology (AET).
- Collège Saint-Jean Diploma Program in techniques d'administration des affaires (Business Administration) – This proposal is still with the Ministry of AET for system coordination review.
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)/Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Pharmacy Combined Degrees program was approved by the GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) on January 11, 2012 and does not require Government approval.
- Master of Coaching (MCoach) program was recommended by GFC APC on January 11, 2012 and goes now to the Board of Governors for final approval before being submitted to the Government for its review.

7. Green and Gold Week

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Rory Tighe, President, Students' Union; Frank Robinson, Vice-Provost and Dean of Students

Purpose of the Proposal: To propose the creation of a Green and Gold Week during which academic-, career- and community-based programming takes place. To achieve this week, instructional days will not be scheduled in the week in which Remembrance Day falls.

Discussion:

Mr Tighe introduced the discussion item noting that previous Students' Union (SU) President Nick Dehod ran his campaign based on the initiative to introduce a Fall reading break. Mr Tighe emphasized the importance of mental health among students, which he feels must be addressed by the University regardless of one's opinion of the proposed Green and Gold Week. The break was described as a step towards better student wellness, which ultimately requires a multi-faceted approach.

Mr Tighe made mention of several different proposals to change the University's Academic Schedule in order to facilitate the break (all of which were included in the documentation before members), the most popular being to begin the Fall Term one day early and to drop two instructional days. It was noted that the University of Alberta has a higher number of instructional days than its peers.

Mr Tighe reinforced that students will use the time off to accomplish what they need to relieve stress, whether this be catching up on material or partaking in social activities (eg, going to visit their families; taking a short trip; etc). However, as an incentive for students to use this time productively, Mr Tighe noted that there would be numerous campus events, activities, and programs aimed at helping students relieve stress, catch up on work, and assist them academically. He noted that in his view attaching this break to the Thanksgiving long weekend was generally regarded as too early in the semester because, at that time, not enough information would be available to students regarding their academic studies/performance. Mr Tighe emphasized that conversations around a Fall reading week were occurring in many institutions and moving forward with this initiative would be an opportunity for the University of Alberta to be a national leader in addressing student wellness-related issues.

Dr Robinson continued the discussion, mentioning his involvement with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) conference held in Ottawa in December, 2011 in which he saw data presented from the 2011 National College Health Assessment (NCHA) Survey that did not put the University of Alberta in a flattering light with regard to student mental health/wellness and related issues. Dr Robinson noted that the current generation of students, especially international students, faces greater stresses than those encountered by previous cohorts. He emphasized the importance of retaining students rather than just recruiting them, which he linked to low student involvement at the University of Alberta. He noted at the time of the recommended break in November, students would have enough marks back to evaluate their academic standing.

A member commented on what he believed to be the lack of support shown for this initiative among the Deans. This member also noted that the introduction of a Fall Term Reading Week, as set out in the material before members, would have huge implications for accredited professional programs and worried that material in support of these academic offerings would be detrimentally condensed. Mr Tighe responded, acknowledging the problem of accreditation and noting that there will be no tuition decrease for the lost instructional days because the break will so greatly benefit the students.

The Coordinator explained that at the most recent Deans' Council meetings at which this proposal had been discussed, members had agreed that, while something needed to be done institutionally to improve student wellness, there had been some expressions of scepticism that a Fall break was the best option.

Several members supported the University taking action to better student health and success but did not believe the Fall break would be sufficiently beneficial, noting that the institution should be making evidence-based decisions on such matters. As well, they voiced concern that the break was too late in the year to give students an opportunity to catch up on their academic work and deal appropriately and effectively with their stresses. A member suggested that the resources that would be spent on Green and Gold Week be spent instead on the expansion of counselling services for students. On this point, Dr Robinson responded that students who seek help are never turned away from the University's Student Counselling Services. Mr Tighe added that while there is no research to reinforce the break's success, there is also no research discounting it.

Mr Roy Coulthard, President, Graduate Students' Association (GSA), who was in attendance for this discussion, noted that losing instructional days and the threat of complications with accreditation are significant issues but that the GSA is in favour, nonetheless, of taking this step to help students.

A member added that the University should not comply with mediocrity by giving up days but rather consider itself an institution which is prepared to provide excellent and comprehensive instruction to its students. Another member addressed three issues in support of the break: firstly, that there is no evidence that this week will not work and that the University must take the risk in order to help its students; secondly, that even if the NCHA Survey data from University of Alberta is similar to that for other Canadian post-secondary institutions, it does not make that evidence any less abhorrent; and thirdly, that there has been good participation in the 'Take Back the Term' events, which suggests that students are willing to get involved with programming.

A member noted that starting the semester on the Tuesday following Labour Day rather than the Wednesday would complicate the institutional Orientation events that are typically planned for that Tuesday.

Mr Tighe emphasized that Green and Gold Week is not designed as a 'fix-all' for the individual and complex problems of each student. Dr Robinson continued, noting that there is a peak in student health

services around the time of the proposed break, which suggests that this would be an appropriate time for a Green and Gold Week.

8. Review of Fees for Deferred Exams

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Gerry Kendal, Vice-Provost and University Registrar; Ada Schmude, Associate Registrar and Director of Records, Office of the Registrar; Anna Vocioni, Assistant Registrar, Exams and Timetabling Division, Office of the Registrar

Purpose of the Proposal: To review policy on fees for deferred examinations (in both fees policies found within the *University Calendar* and Section 44.8 of the GFC Policy Manual (University of Alberta Reasonable Accommodation Policy)). The Provost has asked GFC ASC to consider the deferred exam fees and offer advice on an approach to these fees that reconciles the need to oblige the University of Alberta Reasonable Accommodation Policy while maintaining fairness to and consistency for all University students and coming to terms with the use of the fee as a deterrent for deferred exams.

Discussion:

Mr Kendal explained to members that there is little consistency between Faculties on whether or not to waive the fee students making applications for deferred exams are charged. He stated that he would like to see uniform treatment of students and asked for the opinions of members of GFC ASC.

There was a general consensus from members that it was ethically problematic to ask a student who has been granted a deferred exam to pay a fee. Members generally agreed that if a student deserved a deferred exam, they deserved a waived fee. Mr Kendal noted that the fee may have been acting as a deterrent and, with the fee abolished, there could be a spike in deferral requests.

Members discussed that the fees do not return to the Faculties that put resources into organizing the deferred exams; therefore, since the fee is not being used as cost recovery, it should be abolished.

There was agreement among members that the greater issue of how and to whom deferred exams are granted should be addressed at some point in the near to medium future. It was suggested that this issue be discussed with the Deans and brought back for future debate.

9. Transfer Credit Task Force (TCTF) Recommendations

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): William Street, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts; Marion Allen, Chair of the Transfer Credit Task Force

Purpose of the Proposal: The purpose of the proposal is to outline the work of the Transfer Credit Task Force (TCTF) on the issues assigned to it by the Provost's Academic Policy and Process Review Task Force (APPRTF) (as set out in the materials before members) and to present the TCTF recommendations for best practices. The TCTF is seeking feedback from GFC ASC. In particular, the TCTF is asking whether the recommendations are feasible; what concerns, if any, GFC ASC members have with the suggested best practices; whether any best practices are missing; and, most importantly, how the best practices might be moved forward.

Discussion:

Dr Allen explained that many concerns already raised by the University community with regard to transfer credit matters have been included in the document. She noted that transfer credit problems are exaggerated on campus and almost always anecdotal. She cited poor communication with students for this problem. Dr Street agreed that miscommunication was their biggest issue, noting that the series of improvements set out in the Task Force's report would be positive steps to address existing problems and issues. Dr Allen added that often miscommunication comes from non-University of Alberta advisors who give inaccurate information to students. Dr Street stated that developing a better communication network with other colleges and universities is important and mutually beneficial.

A member commented that there are institutions that put their own interests over the interests of their students and knowingly provide them misinformation, which has the effect of preventing students from transferring to the University. A member noted that the Faculty of Education was asked to stop doing workshops at other institutions because these entities were telling students that they could only transfer to the University of Alberta after complete 60 credits when, in reality, they could transfer after completing 30 credits. A member suggested that if this issue was referenced in the document, it should be stated in a positive manner to avoid the appearance of accusation.

A member indicated that there is a sense of elitism surrounding the University of Alberta, but the student is always the priority and, generally, the University is extremely flexible with regard to transfer credit issues.

Members generally appreciated the document, referencing a few points that needed clarification. They also agreed that greater communication, especially web-based, would be extremely beneficial for students and for the University.

10. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

11. Items Approved by the GFC Academic Standards Committee by E-Mail Ballots

There were no items.

12. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

13. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:20 am.