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

Wednesday, March 07, 2012
3-15, UHALL
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Bill Connor	Co-Chair and Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction)
Emerson Csorba	Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Renée Elio (Delegate)	Vice-President (Research)
Nima Yousefi Moghaddam (Delegate)	President, Graduate Students' Association
Scott Delinger (Delegate)	Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Information Technology)
Ada Schmude (Delegate)	Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Rachel Milner	Academic Staff - Member of GFC
John Boeglin	Academic Staff
Trevor Woods	Academic Staff
Anne McIntosh	Graduate Student-at-large
Brock Richardson	Support Staff
Lili Liu	Department Chair
Deanna Williamson	Cross-Representative (GFC Academic Planning Committee)
Janet Scott Hoyt	Major Teaching Award Recipient

Presenter(s):

Garry Bodnar	Coordinator, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
John Boeglin	Chair, Joint Subcommittee on the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment/Teaching, Learning and Technology Council Fostering Pedagogy of Technology
Bill Connor	Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee)
Emerson Csorba	Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies
Scott Delinger	Information Technology Strategic Initiatives Officer, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Nima Yousefi Moghaddam	Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies
Deanna Williamson	GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Member Cross-Appointed from the GFC Academic Planning Committee

Staff:

Garry Bodnar	Coordinator, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
Emily Paulsen	Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Members agreed to the Agenda, as circulated.

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of February 1, 2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Elio/Delinger

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the Minutes of February 1, 2012.
CARRIED

3. Comments from the Co-Chair

The Chair commented on a number of items of interest to members.

The Chair invited comments from members, which included an update on the current Students' Union elections which are expected to yield a high participation rate and an update on the major restructuring of Academic Information and Communication Technologies (AICT).

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Moving Forward – Discussion on Possible Items for Consideration by the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) (2011-2012 Academic Year)

There were no documents.

Presenter: Bill Connor, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
The Chair noted that Dr Jonathan Schaeffer, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Information Technology), had recommended that GFC CLE consider the ramifications of moving processes associated with the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) online. The Chair, with the support of Dr Elio, indicated that the University's 'web strategy', concepts associated with digital instruction, and how work being undertaken in these areas is intersecting with teaching/learning units could be discussion points for the Committee.

During the ensuring discussion, members shared many ideas for possible items for future discussion at meetings of GFC CLE, which included:

- the changing academic materials industry, with reference, in particular, to e-books;
- the indicators of quality teaching (eg, USRI, awards), especially ones, if any, deployed across all Faculties;
- the use, design, and effectiveness of USRI, with reference to recent past reports generated *via* the legislative system on this and related topics;
- privacy issues around USRIs, such as who can access them and how long they are kept on file;
- addressing the pedagogy of collaboration at every level within the institution (what is each individual's personal responsibility? what can and should instructors do to foster appropriate and effective collaboration? what is the right skill set for collaborative work (leadership, negotiation, team-building, terminology, etc)? what resources and support are necessary for instructors to make student group work successful? would the University's Centre for Teaching and Learning have a role to play?);
- and the multi-faceted issue of international students, which could include discussions on the added workload for instructors, bridging programs, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) assistance, the creation of a 'International Students' Association', the viability of internationalization at the University, instructional challenges faced with international student cohorts, the acclimatization of international students, and the interaction of domestic students with their international counterparts.

With regard to the issue of collaborative learning, a member suggested inviting Professor Roxanne Harde (Associate Dean (Research), Augustana Faculty) to meet with GFC CLE—Professor Harde has been actively reviewing this issue. On the issue of USRI access and retention, the Co-Chair suggested Dr Harry Davis, Information and Privacy Officer, be invited to participate in discussion; on the issue of the acclimatization of international students, the Co-Chair noted Dean Katy Campbell, Faculty of Extension, and her colleagues in the Faculty's ESL programming area may be able to provide insights on effecting change.

Members discussed soliciting advice on possible future items for GFC CLE from General Faculties Council (GFC), the GFC Executive Committee, the Vice-Provosts, and Deans' Council.

5. GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies Report: Update

There were no documents.

Presenters: Emerson Csorba, Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies; Nima Yousefi Moghaddam, Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
Mr Csorba reported to members that the GFC CLE Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies has divided into two working groups. He noted that he has been working on the Student Attributes Plan, which has involved meeting with every student Faculty association and preparing a document that will be submitted to the Subcommittee for its consideration. Mr Moghaddam reported that they have been discussing with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) issues with regard to the development and implementation of a professional development program for graduate students.

6. Joint Subcommittee on the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)/Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLAT) Council Fostering Pedagogy of Technology Report

There were no documents.

Presenter: John Boeglin, Chair, Joint Subcommittee on the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment/Teaching, Learning and Technology Council Fostering Pedagogy of Technology

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
Dr Boeglin indicated that there will be a report coming out from the above-noted subcommittee in April, 2012. He added that consultation will continue to occur over the next several weeks, all prior to the GFC CLE/TLAT Council joint meeting to be held on April 4, 2012.

7. Working Group on Online Course/Teaching Evaluations – Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: Scott Delinger, Information Technology Strategic Initiatives Officer, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
Dr Delinger reported to members that the Working Group on Online/Course Teaching Evaluation membership, which consists of seven individuals, has been finalized along with the Working Group's terms of reference. He noted that this group will consider many issues, including: how student participation will be affected; the possibility of mandating the change to an online evaluative process; and options for motivating students to participate.

STANDING ITEMS

8. GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Deanna Williamson, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Member Cross-Appointed from the GFC Academic Planning Committee

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
Professor Williamson reported that, on February 8, 2012, the main focus of the GFC APC meeting held on that occasion was to consider the University of Alberta's Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP). At the Committee's meeting on February 22, 2012, she noted that the two important agenda items for GFC APC were a proposal to recommend to the Board of Governors proposed changes to the existing Mandatory Student Instructional Support Fees, new Mandatory Student Instructional Support Fees, and the new Non-Instructional Fees and a proposal to eliminate the fee for deferred exams.

9.   GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) Update

No update was provided.

10.   GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) Update

No update was provided.

11.   Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLAT) Council Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: Scott Delinger, Information Technology Strategic Initiatives Officer, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
Dr Delinger informed members that he had not attended the most recent TLAT Council meeting. Dr Connor reported to members that TLAT Council, at its February 7, 2012 meeting, had considered several items, including: online evaluations; e-textbooks; Google calendars; and Moodle.

12.   Question Period

There were no questions. Members were informed that the next meeting, to be held on April 4, 2012, would be a joint session with the Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLAT) Council.

INFORMATION REPORTS

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

There were no items.

14.   Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

15.   Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:40 pm.

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