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

Wednesday, September 04, 2013
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Bill Connor	Ex-Officio Co-Chair, Vice-Provost (Academic)
Colin More (Delegate)	Ex-Officio Member, President, GSA
Dustin Chelen	Ex-Officio Member, Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Gerald Beasley	Ex-Officio Member, Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian
Sheree Kwong See	Ex-Officio Member, Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning
Lisa Collins	Ex-Officio Member, Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Ada Ness (Delegate)	Ex-Officio Member (Delegate), Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Scott Delinger (Delegate)	Ex-Officio Member (Delegate), Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President of Information Technology
Brock Richardson	Elected Member, Support staff representative (Category B1.0), elected by GFC
John Boeglin	Elected Member, Academic Staff
Nikki Way	Elected Member, Undergraduate Student-at-large
Stanley Varnhagen	Elected Member, Academic Staff
Katy Campbell	Appointed Member, Dean, Selected by Deans' Council
Toni Samek	Appointed Member, Major Teaching Award Recipient, Staff Representative

Presenter(s):

John Boeglin	Associate Professor, Faculté Saint-Jean, University of Alberta
Bill Connor	Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction), Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), University of Alberta
Sheree Kwong See	Interim Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Alberta
Josh Ryder	Information Technology Strategic Initiatives Officer, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Staff:

Garry Bodnar, Coordinator, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
Andrea Patrick, Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1.   Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

The Co-Chair reordered the Agenda to accommodate a presenter.

Motion: Samek/Boeglin

THAT the Committee on the Learning Environment approve the Agenda, as reordered.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of June 5, 2013

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Chelen/Kwong See

THAT the Committee on the Learning Environment approve the Minutes of June 5, 2013.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Co-Chair

The Co-Chair commented on a number of relevant issues to members.

Mr Chelen reported that the Students' Union has continued to consult with Deans regarding the possible implementation of a (proposed) Fall Term Reading Week. A member enquired about how this proposal would impact instructional minutes.

4. Comments from the University Secretary for the New Academic Year

There were no documents.

Presenter: Marion Haggarty-France

Discussion:
Ms Haggarty-France thanked members for their engagement in GFC CLE and encouraged members to attend the upcoming *Celebrate!Teaching.Learning.Research.* event. She reminded members to reference the University Governance website for all meeting-related information and material, as well as a committee-specific orientation manual. She advised members that the next "Governance 101" session has been scheduled for September 10, 2013, and a link to register is included on the University Governance website.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Review of Items for Possible Consideration by the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)

There were no documents.

Presenter: Bill Connor

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:
Dr Connor referenced the document posted on the University Governance website entitled, "GFC Committee on the Learning Environment: Possible Agenda Items for Consideration" and invited members

to suggest additional possible items for this new academic year.

In the ensuing discussion, suggestions made by members included the following ideas: digital learning; open learning; developing ideas towards the creation of the international college; an academy-wide teaching plan; the development of a guide for Chairs to reference in terms of multifaceted teaching evaluations; accountability for teaching and learning; a mid-term review of *Dare to Deliver* with an aim to identify possible projects for GFC CLE to review; a review of the University's library environment; and continuing examination of e-textbooks and open educational resources.

In response to a member's suggestion that GFC CLE look at learning space-related issues, Mr Bodnar stated that the GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) Learning Spaces Subcommittee, created several years ago with the support of GFC CLE, had circulated a comprehensive report in late 2011 and, again, in early 2012 that addressed the matter of learning spaces at the University of Alberta—he confirmed that he would arrange to have this subcommittee report posted on the University Governance website for members to review.

Dr Connor outlined brief details surrounding the creation of an open education resources website, and he clarified that the project is still in the early stages of development. Members expressed a number of questions and comments in relation to this website, including, but not limited to: clarification about the contents of the website; support for the development of open educational resource initiatives at the University of Alberta; and clarification as to whether GFC CLE would be asked to contribute towards the development of the website.

Dr Connor thanked members for their suggestions and requested that members update him with any additional ideas.

6. <u>GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) Subcommittee on the Status of Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRIs) - Next Steps</u>

There were no documents.

Presenter: Sheree Kwong See

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
Dr Connor explained that the final report of the Subcommittee on the Status of Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRIs) had been approved by GFC CLE in June, 2013.

Dr Kwong See briefed members on the history of the Subcommittee and explained that a possible future strategy, in light of the contents of the report, might include the creation of a new working group to establish methods to promote the consistent interpretation and implementation of the USRI tool and that, perhaps, as well, the group could also move GFC Policy Manual Section 111 (Teaching and Learning and Teaching Evaluation) into the University of Alberta Policy and Procedures On-Line (UAPPOL) environment.

During the ensuing discussion, members expressed several comments and questions, including, but not limited to: whether "rank and file" faculty members should be included in the new working group; a suggestion to have the transition of the GFC Policy Manual Section 111 into UAPPOL moved to the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), thereby allowing the working group members time to focus, instead, on policy changes; clarification about the process of transitioning policy and procedures into UAPPOL; brief review of a mandate authored by a member which outlines specific suggestions for

strategic direction following the contents of the report; that Faculties already comply with current policy on USRI interpretation, even though they are all different; that some of the suggested changes would impact Faculty resources; that the focus should be to promote, not police; that Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) processes already allow autonomy surrounding the issue of USRI interpretation; that it might be an ideal time to discuss these issues as Faculties prepare to vote on the imminent e-USRI changes; that this subject is becoming less relevant as new teaching and learning methods evolve; that a considerable number of instructors are not tenure-track faculty members.

Mr Bodnar suggested that any members with additional comments forward their ideas to Dr Kwong See and that these could be translated into documentation for consideration at the next meeting of GFC CLE.

Dr Connor concluded by thanking members for their feedback and noted that the item would be placed on the next meeting's agenda for further discussion.

7.   University of Alberta's Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL): Update from the Interim Director

There were no documents.

Presenter: Sheree Kwong See

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
Dr Kwong See updated members on recent activities undertaken at the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), including: the addition of new staff; updates about the peer consulting program; Moodle and Adobe Connect updates; upgrades to the CTL website; the development of workshops in alternative forms; consultation surrounding course design; the creation of a library blog; updates on the Technology Symposium; changes to the new professor teaching orientation; and updates concerning future projects including courses on graduate supervision, mentorship, conflict resolution, how to provide constructive feedback for thesis projects, Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) workshops, and a blended learning showcase.

Members expressed gratitude towards CTL, their staff, and the various activities that they provide to the wider academic community.

8.   GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology: Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: John Boeglin

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:
Dr Boeglin reported that the GFC CLE Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology met in May and June, 2013, adding that the group is currently focused on drafting survey questions as well as reviewing the logistics of the survey's administration. He stated that a draft of the survey will be available for discussion at GFC CLE by November, 2013 and that Dr José da Costa (Faculty of Education) is assisting with the project.

9.   Working Group on Online Course/Teaching Evaluations: Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: Josh Ryder

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:
Mr Ryder provided members with an update concerning the electronic Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (e-USRI) initiative, reporting that two trials have been completed recently within the Faculty of Science and that the preliminary data reflects that response rates decreased, which is consistent with existing data on e-USRI usage. He stated that an executive summary of the compiled data will be created and eventually distributed to the University of Alberta community for review and that several Faculties have expressed interest in participating in future pilots.

During the discussion on this matter, members expressed several comments and questions, including, but not limited to: clarification about the exact percentage of the decrease in response rates; whether response rates differ between various terms; whether other pilots are currently underway; clarification about the average class size within the pilot; whether a 20% decrease in response is of concern and what can be done to address it; whether there was a control on where the e-USRI's were done; and whether or not e-USRIs reduce costs associated with the evaluation of instructor teaching.

Dr Connor thanked Mr Ryder for the update.

STANDING ITEMS

10.   GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: Bill Connor

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
There was no discussion.

11.   GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: Bill Connor

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
There was no discussion.

12.   GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: Bill Connor

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:
There was no discussion.

13. Question Period

A member enquired about whether GFC CLE would be involved in the development of the international college currently being discussed in other quarters of the institution.

INFORMATION REPORTS

14. Items Approved by the Committee by E-Mail Ballots (non-debatable)

There were no items.

15. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

16. Adjournment

The Co-Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.