



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

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

Wednesday, October 02, 2019
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Brian Maraj, Acting Chair
Dale Askey
Radim Barta
Pascal Lupien
Janice Miller-Young
Norma Rodenburg

Jennifer Tupper
Mani Vaidyanathan
Christine Wiesenthal

REGRETS:

Cathy Adams
Joel Agarwal
Mike MacGregor

Milad Nazarahari
John Nychka
Amber Sayed

Staff:

Meg Brolley, GFC Secretary
David Epp, Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Dr Maraj opened the meeting by noting that he was asked to chair the meeting in the absence of the chair. He introduced David Epp, who will be acting as coordinator for CLE on an interim basis.

He then asked that Item 8, Teaching Assessment and Evaluation Policy Suite, be deferred to the October 30 meeting.

Motion: Tupper/Miller-Young

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the agenda, as amended

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of September 4, 2019

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Askey/Miller-Young

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the open session minutes of September 4, 2019.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Brian Maraj, Vice-Chair GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Discussion: The Chair noted that the draft ethics framework for student learning analytics that was discussed at the September 4, 2019 CLE meeting will go to the October GFC Executive Committee meeting and the November GFC meeting for early consultation.

The Chair noted that the CLE terms of reference will go to the October GFC Executive Committee and GFC meetings for early consultation, after which they will come back to CLE for any final revisions before appearing on the GFC agenda again as an approval item. Dr Causgrove Dunn, Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR), was invited to speak to the draft terms of reference; she noted that there was no specific representation from FGSR on the committee. Dr Causgrove Dunn suggested that the proposed terms of reference be amended to include the Dean of FGSR as an ex-officio member to enhance discussions concerning graduate student items. Members noted that the intention was not to exclude the FGSR from the committee composition and agreed that it would be a good addition. The Chair of CLE will recommend this addition to the proposed composition of the committee when he presents the item to GFC Executive Committee and GFC.

ACTION ITEMS

4. Thesis-based Master's and PhD Learning Outcomes

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Janice Causgrove Dunn, Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research;
Victoria Ruetalo, Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee within its mandate to promote an optimal learning environment.

Discussion: Dr Causgrove Dunn introduced the Thesis-based Master's and PhD Learning Outcomes item and noted that a sample learning outcomes template was included in the meeting package.

A member asked about the requirement for annual supervisory committee meetings. The presenters and other members pointed out that annual supervisory committee meetings are mandatory in FGSR policy, and that removing "annual" would create a discrepancy with current policy. Members discussed the requirements of the annual meetings and the purpose of them.

Motion: Tupper/Miller-Young

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment recommend that General Faculties Council approve the learning outcomes for PhD programs as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect upon approval.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. White Paper: Requirement for Use of Long-Form Handwriting for Examination Purposes

Presenter(s): Janice Miller-Young, Academic Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning;
Patricia Jagger, Graduate Student, Secondary Education

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to discuss the white paper on the use of long-form handwriting for examination purposes.

Discussion: Ms. Jagger provided an overview of the document and noted that she reached out to many other institutions as part of an environmental scan but did not receive a good response rate.

Comments and questions from members included, but were not limited to: the future impact of current practices in K-12 with respect to electronic devices and the reduced quality of handwriting; final exams at high schools; students may feel uncomfortable and disadvantaged using electronic devices, while some students with

advanced keyboarding skills may gain an advantage; it is important to keep track of trends in K-12; and this has broad implications that will impact IT, the Registrar's Office and many other units.

The chair thanked Ms. Jagger for her work and noted that the committee will decide on next steps in the future.

6. Draft Principles on Free Expression at the University of Alberta

Presenter(s): Wendy Rodgers, Deputy Provost; Brad Hamdon, General Counsel; Logan Mardhani-Bayne, Strategic Development Manager, Office of the Provost

Purpose of the Proposal: The university is developing a policy on free expression. The Free Expression Advisory Group, established in May 2019, has developed draft principles to serve as the basis for such a policy. These draft principles are presented for discussion.

Discussion: Dr Rodgers noted that the statement seeks to satisfy the requirements of the government and still allow university community engagement in diverse topics. She noted that the university was given a choice by the Ministry to adopt the "Chicago Principles" or adapt them and the Advisory Group on Free Expression chose to adapt. Dr Rodgers indicated that the guidelines need to be submitted to the Ministry by November 15, 2019 and be approved and posted on the university's website by December 15, 2019.

Dr Rodgers noted that the university has been working on this topic for two years as it was the first topic of the joint Board/GFC/Senate Summit held in January 2018. The aim is to have alignment with the discrimination and harassment policy which will result in a safe learning and working environment. She invited feedback on the draft documents and indicated that comments could be made online on the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) website.

Mr Hamdon provided some insight into the differences in legal context between the American and Canadian jurisdictions. He noted that "Chicago Principles" are based on American laws where free speech is given priority protection under their constitution. He noted that free expression in Canada is enshrined in the Charter and that it must be balanced with other rights.

Dr Rodgers noted that Ontario is the only other province that requires post-secondary institutions to have a free expression statement. Colleges in Ontario were mandated to adopt a supplied statement while universities were allowed to draft their own. The Free Expression Advisory Group has reviewed the Ontario statements and has also consulted with UBC and other Alberta institutions.

Members provided comments on: the similar position that current Ontario and Alberta governments hold on the political spectrum: praise for balancing freedom of expression with other sets of rights to promote a community of inclusivity without harassment, which is necessary and captures the essence of a university campus.

7. Developing Indicators of Effective Teaching and Learning: A Framework for Multifaceted Assessment (no documents)

Presenter(s): Janice Miller Young, Academic Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning; Cheryl Poth, Associate Director, Education, Centre for Teaching and Learning; Fernando Marin, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Discussion: Mr Marin presented effective teaching and learning indicators grouped into five dimensions: a) content expertise, b) course design, c) instructional delivery, d) climate for learning, and e) reflection, growth, and leadership.

Mr Marin noted that this framework could help guide efforts to provide robust supports, tools, and training to develop and assess teaching quality, and identify qualitative and quantitative criteria that are fair, equitable, and meaningful across disciplines.

Comments and questions from members included, but were not limited to: how chairs and vice-chairs can use this to evaluate an instructor; how this can be used as a foundation that can be adapted to use for assessments in the future; how the descriptive terms are innovative and can be used to evaluate instructors; all five dimensions have equal value; use in providing guidelines for a teaching dossier; use in adjudication of major teaching awards; and for the development of workshops on individual components.

Members discussed the role of effective teaching in effective learning; flexibility to adapt to different situations, ways of teaching, and disciplines; measuring reliability and validity of evidence; how the framework can be utilised for a developmental approach to teaching; and the limitations of USRIs.

8. Teaching Assessment and Evaluation Procedures

This item was deferred.

9. Updates

A. Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) – Dr Miller-Young noted that the CTL has a redesigned website and encouraged members to view it.

B. Information Technology – There was no update.

C. Learning Services – There was no update.

D. General Faculties Council – Ms. Brolley reported that GFC met on September 23, 2019 and the Draft Principles on Free Expression at the University of Alberta were discussed. She noted that CLE items going to GFC for approval or discussion increases the profile of CLE in the community.

10. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

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

There were no items.

12. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

13. Adjournment

The Chair noted that this would be Ms. Brolley's final CLE meeting and thanked her on behalf of CLE members for her work and support of this committee. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.