

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

Wednesday, April 26, 2023
SAB 2-31
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Karsten Mundel (Chair) Hollis Lai (Vice-Chair) Joanne Bortnick (delegate) Benjamin Cheung Zachary Friggstad Jana Grekul Christine Hughes Gurleen Kaur Andrea Macleod	Jesse Luyendyk Gregory Thomas Connie Winther Rachel Yang Shauna Wilton Patrick von Hauff <u>Non-Voting Members</u> Kate Peters Mike Macgregor Tommy Mayberry	<u>Regrets</u> Bishoi Aziz Angela Bayduza Brad Hamdon Christian Reyns-Chikuma Angie Mandeville Lana McClelland Simran Kaur Dhillon <u>Staff</u> Faiza Billo
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OPENING SESSION

The Chair asked O Zwozdesky to open the meeting with ceremony. O Zwozdesky began the meeting in a good way by acknowledging the creator.

The Chair acknowledged the territory and spoke to how the committee’s work could support reconciliation and decolonisation. He further acknowledged the work the committee had done to think through different ways of meeting and making decisions. He thanked in particular A Menard and O Zwozdesky for their guidance, and all members of the committee for their openness to working in new ways.

O Zwozdesky asked members to speak to some of the accomplishments the committee had made, especially in coming to decision-making in new ways. The Chair led members in a sharing circle.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)

Discussion: The Chair offered members an opportunity to provide input, items or feedback on both the agenda and the minutes. Hearing none, he suggested the committee move forward with the agenda as set out and the minutes for the March 30 meeting of CLE be kept as a formal record of the meeting.

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning environment approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of March 29, 2023

The following motion was considered to be approved:

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the open session minutes of March 29, 2023.
CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE

Discussion: The Chair provided updates and made comments related to:

- Thanks to students and members of CLE who were completing their term;
- Forthcoming updates to the Code of Student Behaviour
- Work done by the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Learning Environment Taskforce;
- A new website on AI and the learning environment published by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)
- Faculty Excellence and Teaching Excellence Awards

The Secretary to General Faculties Council informed committee members about changes to documentation and an additional meeting in the 2023-2024 academic year.

Karsten Mündel stepped out of the chair and Vice-Chair Hollis Lai assumed the role.

ACTION ITEMS

4. Revised UAPPOL Student Input to the Evaluation of Teaching and Learning Procedure

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE

Discussion: The Vice-Chair H Lai noted the authority of CLE to approve the proposed changes to the procedure and the guiding frameworks of the Collective Agreement and the Framework for Effective Teaching. He invited K Mündel to present the item.

Members discussed the decision in circle noting:

- The support of students for the proposed changes;
- Appreciation for the work that had gone into the proposals;
- The delegated authority of CLE to approve the procedures;

The Vice-Chair thanked members for their input and asked if there was consensus for the proposal to be accepted as distributed. Members agreed and the following motion was considered approved.

In closing, K Mündel provided some information on the implementation.

THAT the Committee on the Learning Environment approve the proposed revisions to the UAPPOL Student Input to the Evaluation of Teaching and Learning, as set forth in Attachment 1 to take effect July 1, 2023.
CARRIED

Hollis Lai stepped out of the chair and Karsten Mündel resumed the role.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Syllabus Management Tool Project

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Robert Brennan, Project Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic, University of Alberta; Vannessa Grabia, Director, Office of Education, College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Discussion: The Chair asked R Brennan and V Grabia to present on the syllabus tool. They presented the rationale for implementing a syllabus management tool, especially the advantages for students. The other potential advantages include:

- mechanisms to facilitate search for past syllabi;
- providing documentation for the purpose of accreditation;
- instructors being able to see how students are using syllabi; and
- the possibility of comparison across courses.

They presented estimated timelines for the project and asked the committee to provide feedback while noting other opportunities for engagement across the university.

Members asked:

- If implementation of the tool would be mandatory;
- How much could be personalised in the syllabus created by the tool and the need for instructors to be able to give their course outline elements a personal touch;
- The importance of defining what a syllabus is and how it should be used to support teaching and learning;
- A suggestion that the University should work with students to learn about their design needs;
- Whether a syllabus tool could accommodate course evolution and changes;
- If the tool was only to support administrative processes or also pedagogical goals; and
- Where the tool will live and how will students access the syllabi.

Members also suggested that the project scope was only for the introduction of the tool and that there was important work in integrating the tool into the evolution of courses. The Chair committed to keeping the committee informed.

6. Learning Management System (no documents)

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE; Mike MacGregor, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Information Services Technology) and Chief Information Officer

Discussion: K Mundel recognised that this was the final meeting of M MacGregor and thanked him for his service to the committee. He invited M Macgregor to present on the changes to the Learning Management System (LMS). M Macgregor reminded the committee that J Rawlings had informed the committee about the planned updates to the University of Alberta Learning Management System (LMS) Moodle that would be made at the end of June for instructors to implement in July and August 2023. He reflected that the University had chosen an open access LMS to benefit from the open source community innovation and that Moodle had not kept pace with commercial industry leaders in terms of functionality and user experience. He noted that in addition, the analytics capabilities had moved quickly and could be used to improve the student experience and the learning environment. He asked the committee to discuss their ideas.

The Chair introduced J Butts Scott, the Associate Vice-President (Continuing and Professional Education).

Members provided insights and made suggestions including:

- Timelines for implementation and the impact on Spring and Summer courses;
- That instructors were frustrated with the limitations in the LMS and had invested out of pocket in other tools to supplement eClass;

- That if we as a university are serious about looking at an LMS, that some flexibility on how to integrate functionality from a third party vendor (vs a open source platform or a institutional made program)
- That professional programs have their own needs and that flexibility was key
- That it was important to consider what the work that we are asking the LMS to do, and who we are asking to do it;
- That our people within the university have a very important role to play in making infrastructure work;
- An opinion that LMS was a something that would have some very important implications in terms of individual pedagogy and teaching
- That this conversation was related to the syllabus tool and that both academic and technological perspectives were needed;
- Whether we could ask the University community for feedback through a survey to determine how people are using eClass and what they need from the tool;
- A suggestion that a needs analysis and an external review of the market trends were necessary to understand what is available and to help formulate recommendations for a procurement strategy;
- That this was a question about our digital needs for the future.

The Chair closed with a commitment to distribute details on the implementation of the Moodle upgrades and to bring back the conversation.

7. Multifaceted Evaluation of Teaching

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE

Discussion: The Chair reminded members about the conversation on multifaceted evaluation at the March 30 meeting of CLE. He asked members to consider how we might use the work of the Faculty of Arts and whether there were intersections with the syllabus tool, with the analytics that might be found on an LMS or with peer review and mentorship. He asked members to consider how to continue this conversation at CLE in the coming year and who else should be involved.

8. Question Period

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Acting Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair, CLE

Item was deferred

ACTION ITEMS

9. FGSR Graduate Exam Committee Membership

This item was considered out of order.

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Roger Epp, Interim Vice-Provost and Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR); Micah True, Associate Dean, FGSR

Discussion: The Chair noted that CLE was asked to recommend on this proposal because of their responsibility to review proposals for regulations for student evaluation that apply to a substantial group of students.

R Epp noted that FGSR Council had approved the proposal in the preceding hour and had made a friendly amendment to align with the University of Alberta Supervisory Suite. M True thanked the committee for their engagement in March and noted that changes suggested by CLE to ensure that librarians were eligible to sit on committee had been added and that the suggested change to the conflict of interest policy had not been integrated because it was not necessary.

The Chair asked if there were any questions and looked around the circle to ascertain consensus for approval of the proposal.

THAT CLE approve the changes to the Committee Membership policies for Graduate Examinations, as amended, for implementation as of September 1, 2023, and inclusion in the next Calendar.

CARRIED

CLOSING SESSION

The Chair invited O Zwosdesky to lead the committee in a closing circle. He asked committee members to consider how the new ways of working together as a community inspire you in the ways of working outside the committee.

In closing, O Zwozdesky acknowledged the leadership of the Chair.

10 Adjournment

- . - Next meeting of CLE: August 30, 2023
- Next meeting of GFC: May 29, 2023