



The following Motions and Documents were considered by the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment at its Wednesday, March 02, 2016 meeting:

Agenda Title: **Proposed Terms of Reference for GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) Subcommittee to Explore Teaching Tenure Stream at the University of Alberta**

CARRIED MOTION: THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) approve, with delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the proposed terms of reference CLE Subcommittee to Explore Teaching Tenure Stream at University of Alberta, as set forth in Attachment 1.

Final Item: 7

OUTLINE OF ISSUE

Agenda Title: **Proposed Terms of Reference for GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) Subcommittee to Explore Teaching Tenure Stream at University of Alberta**

Motion: THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) approve, with delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the proposed terms of reference CLE Subcommittee to Explore Teaching Tenure Stream at University of Alberta, as set forth in Attachment 1.

Item

Action Requested	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion/Advice <input type="checkbox"/> Information
Proposed by	Sarah Forgie, Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment and Fahim Rahman, Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Presenter	Navneet Khinda, President, Students' Union (delegate, Fahim Rahman, Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union)
Subject	Proposed Terms of Reference for GFC CLE Subcommittee to Explore Teaching Tenure Stream at University of Alberta

Details

Responsibility	Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
The Purpose of the Proposal is (please be specific)	To approve the terms of reference to establish a CLE Subcommittee to explore the opportunities and challenges for creating a teaching tenure stream at the University of Alberta.
The Impact of the Proposal is	The CLE sub-committee will examine the opportunities and barriers to creating a teaching tenure stream at University of Alberta and will prepare a report summarizing its discussions, review of existing evidence and its likely consequences (excluding financial implications) for the teaching and learning environment at the University of Alberta.
Replaces/Revises (eg, policies, resolutions)	N/A
Timeline/Implementation Date	N/A
Estimated Cost	N/A
Sources of Funding	N/A
Notes	

Alignment/Compliance

Alignment with Guiding Documents	<p><i>Dare to Discover Values:</i> Excellence: Excellence in teaching that promotes learning; outstanding research and creative activity that fuel discovery and advance knowledge; and enlightened service that builds citizenship. Student Experience: The centrality of our students and our responsibility to provide an intellectually superior educational environment. Diversity and Creativity: A diverse, yet inclusive, dynamic collegial community that welcomes change and seizes opportunity with passion and creativity.</p> <p>Recommendation 2-11 of the Report of the Renaissance Committee of University of Alberta (2013) articulated: "Within the tenure track constituencies, create a career progression structure for teaching-focused staff that accommodates variances within the Faculty</p>
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Item No. 7

	Agreement to allow for emphasis on teaching, and that encourages and allows for promotion by means analogous to the current structure for tenure-track faculty”.
Compliance with Legislation, Policy and/or Procedure Relevant to the Proposal (please <u>quote</u> legislation and include identifying section numbers)	<p>GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Terms of Reference (3. Mandate of the Committee)</p> <p>“The Committee on the Learning Environment is responsible for making recommendations concerning policy matters and action matters with respect to the following: [...]</p> <p>b) To review and, as necessary, recommend to the GFC Academic Planning Committee or the GFC Executive Committee policies on teaching, learning, teaching evaluation, and recognition for teaching that promote the University’s Academic Plan. [...]</p> <p>e) To nurture the development of innovative and creative learning services and teaching practices.</p> <p>f) To encourage the sharing and discussion of evidence about effective teaching, learning, and learning services.</p> <p>g) To promote critical reflection on the impact of broad societal changes in teaching, learning, and the learning environment.</p> <p>h) To promote projects with relevant internal and external bodies that offer unique teaching and learning opportunities that would benefit the university community.</p> <p>i) To consider any matter deemed by the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment to be within the purview of its general responsibility.”</p>

Routing (Include meeting dates)

Participation: (parties who have seen the proposal and in what capacity)	GFC CLE October 7, 2015 Meeting: Discussion on Topics for 2015-2016 Committee Workplan GFC CLE November 4, 2015 Meeting: Draft Template GFC CLE January 20, 2016 Meeting: Challenges for CLE – Topics for Discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who have been informed • Those who have been consulted • Those who are actively participating 	
Approval Route (Governance) (including meeting dates)	GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (March 2, 2016) – for approval
Final Approver	GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Attachments (each to be numbered 1 - <>)

1. Attachment 1 (page(s) 1 - 3) – GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Exploring Teaching Tenure Stream at University of Alberta Terms of Reference for Approval

Prepared by: <Fahim Rahman, Vice-President (Academic), University of Alberta Students’ Union, fahim.rahman@su.ualberta.ca and Surma Das, University Governance and Advocacy Advisor, Students’ Union, Surma.das@su.ualberta.ca>

GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)
Subcommittee on the Exploring Teaching Tenure Stream at University of Alberta (TTS)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

Exploring Teaching Tenure Stream at University of Alberta

In response to growing enrollment and shrinking per-student funding, universities are forced to be more creative in how they allocate resources. A common response across North America has been the rapid expansion of contract teaching positions, as opposed to the traditional research-teaching-service model of tenured positions. Individuals in these contract positions generally lack the job security, compensation and benefits of their tenured or tenure-track counterparts. In 2014-15, there were 922 contract academics at our institution; as the number of contract instructors continues to grow, failure to address this issue creates a liability for the institution.

Some North American universities, including the University of Toronto, UBC, Waterloo and the Pennsylvania State University system have recognized that contract staff represent a tremendous asset to the academy and have implemented programs alike tenure to assure these individuals job security, fair compensation and the ability to conduct research – usually on discipline-specific pedagogy. Departments tend to employ these individuals to teach junior courses, reserving more advanced classes for “traditional” academics.

The disproportionate presence of contract faculty in introductory classes raises important questions about the relationship between their precarious status and student learning outcomes. With respect to student learning, there are two distinct issues: the innate ability of contract staff to teach at the same level as their research-focused colleagues, and the institutional support lent to contract faculty to ensure they are able to engage with and support their students. The majority of available data on student learning outcomes under the two classes of instructors suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in learning outcomes, and in some cases contract instructors may affect improvement in students’ performance in later classes in the same discipline. Hence, creating permanent, secure positions for these instructors would not be detrimental, and may actually have benefits for students. Additionally, the creation of these new, secure appointments would allow instructors to dedicate more time to students and become more deeply invested in the university. Studies suggest that where shortcomings have been identified with contract instructors, they tend to be attributable to structural factors (lack of office space, insufficient time to prepare for courses, rushed evaluative measures) rather than instructor inability. Taken together, the creation of teaching-tenure positions is likely to have a positive impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes. While the mechanics of a teaching-tenure system remain unclear, and obtaining broad institutional buy-in will be critical to any initiative, the issue warrants further deliberation and study. The University of Alberta must demonstrate leadership on this issue to help ensure that the stock of teaching-focused faculty remains stable and that students are able to continue to access high-quality education.

The Students' Union VPA proposes that CLE establishes a sub-committee to operate from March - October 2016 that will explore the opportunities and challenges of establishing a teaching tenure stream at the University of Alberta.

2. Committee Mandate

The mandate of the CLE Subcommittee is to explore the opportunities and challenges for creating a teaching tenure stream at University of Alberta with the goal to enhance quality instruction and learning environment for undergraduate students. To fulfill this mandate the committee will consider undertaking the following activities:

- i. Consider the ways creation of teaching tenure stream (potentially accompanied by continuing appointments and job stability, greater professional development opportunities, increased scholarship of teaching and learning, increased support and resources from home department and faculty) will potentially affect the learning environment and quality of instruction available to undergraduate students at University of Alberta.
- ii. Review teaching tenure stream practices and arrangements at other Canadian peer institutions and research available literature on the issue in Canadian post-secondary landscape (and if need be, at equivalent American public post-secondary context).
- iii. Collect comprehensive statistics on total number of undergraduate courses and sections taught by instructors who are not appointed as tenure track /tenured/ full time academic staff/non-industry experts, by department / programs and faculties at University of Alberta.
- iv. Consult key stakeholders on consequences of creating teaching tenure stream at University of Alberta on teaching and learning environment for undergraduate students and the opportunities and barriers to establishing a teaching tenure stream at University of Alberta. This can include but is not limited to members of Dean's Council, Chair's Council or Undergraduate Chair's Council, Students' Union, GSA, Academic Staff Association of University of Alberta (including representatives of Contract Academic Staff Association and Sessional and Other Temporary Staff, members of AASUA Teaching and Learning Committee) and former members (co-chairs) of Renaissance Committee.
- v. Survey and solicit aggregated feedback from members of university community on their views on teaching tenure stream, with a caveat that it is only in exploratory stages.

3. Committee Composition

- One representative of the Graduate Students' Association
- One representative of the Students' Union
- One representative of the Provost's office
- One representative of Department Chairs
- One representative of Academic Staff
- One representative of the Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta (external to CLE)

- The Director (or delegate) of the Centre for Teaching and Learning

4. Committee Meetings and Timeline

- The subcommittee will meet bi-weekly between March 2016 and October 2016.
- A draft report for discussion will be presented at the October 2016 CLE meeting.

5. Committee Support

The Office of Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union; Office of Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) will provide administrative support.

6. Reference and Resource Documents:

GFC Policy Manual section 111 on Teaching and Learning

<http://www.gfcpolicymanual.ualberta.ca/111TeachingandLearningandT each.aspx>