

General Faculties Council
GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)
Approved Open Session Minutes

Wednesday, March 27, 2024
Geoffrey and Robyn Sperber Health Sciences Library,
Edmonton Clinic Health Academy (ECHA) Main Floor
1:30 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Karsten Mündel, Chair
Pedro Almeida
Rick Brick
Kim Frail
Zachary Friggstad
John Hu
Christine Hughes
Jesse Luyendyk
Pauline Paul
Muneeba Qadir
Chris Reynolds

Allison Sivak
Gregory Thomas
Patrick von Hauff

REGRETS:

Sandeep Agrawal
Angela Bayduza
Ashley Bhatia
Jana Grekul
Rija Kamran
John Lemieux

Shauna Wilton (Vice Chair)

non-voting:
Deanna Davis
Kate Peters
Jeff Rawlings

staff:
Faiza Billo
Kate Peters
Carley Roth

OPENING SESSION

The Chair began by thanking K Frail and A Sivak for their invitation to tour the Geoffrey and Robyn Sperber Health Sciences Library and acknowledging the territory:

The University of Alberta is located on Treaty 6 territory. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) and Chair of CLE

The Chair welcomed members and observers. He invited members to reflect on anything they would take forward from the tour of the library into their work at CLE or their teaching and learning.

He suggested that the committee adopt the agenda, and hearing no concerns, the agenda was considered adopted.

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of January 24, 2024

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) and Chair of CLE

The Chair gave members an opportunity to indicate any changes they thought necessary to the draft minutes to ensure they reflect the record of the meeting, and hearing none, expressed that the minutes would be considered approved.

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) and Chair of CLE

Discussion: The Chair noted the appointment of a new Chancellor, the recent Provincial Budget, where to find Updates on Bargaining, and new resources from the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programs and Research). The committee watched a video on Sweetgrass Teachings.

He then indicated that he would be stepping out of the Chair for Item 4 and thanked G Thomas who he designated to Chair.

ACTION ITEMS

4. Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Policy: Appendix B: Multifaceted Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives)

Discussion: K Mündel thanked members for their engagement and feedback over the preceding year and noted that the item had been presented to GFC at the March 18th meeting.

G Thomas invited members to share comments and questions and members discussed:

- Support for a multifaceted approach to evaluating teaching;
- How the Centre for Teaching and Learning can support implementation on Campus; and
- Why scheduling was included in the tool;

Other members expressed support and appreciation for the work to put the proposal together.

Hearing no further comments, G Thomas suggested there was consensus to approve the item.

K Mündel stepped back into the Chair.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Exam Reschedule Procedure

Presenter(s): Anna Hughes, Associate Registrar, Office of the Registrar; Jesse Luyendyk, Assistant Registrar, Office of the Registrar

Discussion: The Chair reminded members of their authority to make recommendations on policies related to assessment of teaching. A Hughes explained the rationale for the proposal, namely the move to three exams per day starting in the 2024-2025 academic year. She thanked the student representatives for their work to support the development of the proposal.

Members asked questions and made comments about:

- Whether an instructor might need to invigilate concurrent exams for students' rescheduled exams from the same class;
- Whether consultation with the Office of the Dean of Students, particularly the Accommodations staff, had been done;
- Clarification around accommodations with rescheduling versus deferrals;
- Whether statistics would be kept during the first year to gather lessons learned for future reference;
- The benefit to conduct an analysis comparing the performance of students who had three exams in one day with those from previous years; and
- The importance of student flexibility (i.e. those that fall in 3-in-4) and the ability to catch them early on, therefore, giving instructors more leeway.

6. Revised Terms of Reference GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Presenter(s): Kate Peters, Secretary to GFC, Manager of GFC Services

Discussion: K Peters presented the change to integrate delegated authority over student affairs to the committee and noted the requisite changes to composition. She added that the change aligned with the broader change to approach at the University which shifts student discipline to a less punitive and more preventative process as set out in the new Student Academic Integrity Policy suite.

Members asked questions and made comments about:

- The impact on their terms of service;
- How the Chair feels about these changes;
- That the change reflects the move towards a culture of care and good pedagogy;
- Undergraduate student membership shifting from a student residence representative to an at-large student rep and to designating the University of Alberta Students' Union Vice-President (Academic) instead of the President.

7. Update on the New Learning Management System

- [Moving to a New Learning Management System](#)
- [Ticket to Launch](#)

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives); Robert Brennan, Senior Project Manager, Office of the Provost

Discussion: K Mündel presented the next steps for the new Learning Management System.

Members discussed:

- Where the Students' Union who uses eClass for Fall Orientation might fall in the plans for implementation;
- Who would be included in the "first wave" of implementation and when these changes will be made;
- Whether the decision about who could be included in the each wave would be made by individual instructors, chairs, or deans;
- If the platform would have language options for making students studying in French; and
- How staff supporting faculty and people generally supporting the implementation in faculties might participate in the first-wave of implementation.

8. Update on the Review of the Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Policy: Appendix A: Student Perspectives on Teaching (SPOT) Survey (no documents)

Presenter(s): Michelle Marato, Associate Professor of Sociology, Arts; Celine Beaulieu, Research Assistant, Sociology, Arts

Discussion: M Marato reminded members of the project within Sociology 415 to evaluate the SPOT Survey. Students presented the rationale for evaluating SPOT, their work to conduct a literature review, the research questions and how they were designed, and their survey methods. They clarified how focus groups were conducted and the preliminary analysis of both surveys and focus groups. The proponents noted they will be compiling results and presenting recommendations at the April 24th meeting of CLE.

Members asked questions and made comments about the methods including, but not limited to:

- How well managed the focus groups were;
- The use of the term substantive in the research questions and who will determine what is considered substantive;
- What the presenters have discovered about SPOT either from preliminary data analysis or the initiative to review them;
- Whether the shift in the questions is changing the students' perceptions about how the data is being used or the purpose of SPOT;
- A request that recommendations include ideas about how to prepare students to fill in surveys with their purpose in mind; and
- Whether the data might speak to faculty-specific differences in how students use SPOT.

9. Learning Environment of the Future

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives)

Discussion: K Mündel asked Committee members for input on supports, policies, curriculum, and infrastructure that support the learning environment. He presented questions to support discussion and invited members to submit feedback through a Google Form.

Members discussed:

- How non-learning environment initiatives such as bureaucratic tasks within the University can impact teaching and learning;
- The inequities in physical learning environments and the diversity of classroom conditions across campus;
- How digital and physical infrastructure may interact and the availability of enterprise solutions for software used in teaching and learning;
- How the learning environment may include complex roles where individuals are teaching in multiple contexts beyond the well-known roles of Academic Faculty and Academic Teaching Staff; and
- The definition of the Learning Environment.

10. Question Period

Presenter(s): Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) and Chair of CLE

Discussion: In light of the lack of time, the Chair encouraged members to submit their questions by email and invited members to the Three-Minute Thesis presentations.

INFORMATION REPORTS

11. Affirming and Acknowledging Indigenous Ceremonial Practices at the University of Alberta and Indigenous Honoraria Educational Video

CLOSING SESSION

12. Adjournment
 - Next meeting of CLE: April 24, 2024
 - Next meeting of GFC: April 29, 2024