

General Faculties Council
Committee on the Learning Environment
Approved Minutes

Wednesday, November 02, 2011
2-1, Council Chamber
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

ATTENDEES:

Bill Connor – Interim Vice-Provost (Academic) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE), Emerson Csorba, Nima Yousefi Moghaddam (Delegate), Scott Delinger (Delegate), Norma Nocente (Delegate), Ada Schmude (Delegate), Rachel Milner, Karim Damji, John Boeglin, Trevor Woods, Anne McIntosh, Erendira Cervantes-Altamirano, Brock Richardson, Lili Liu, Fern Snart, Janet Scott Hoyt, Garry Bodnar (Coordinator and Scribe)

PRESENTERS AND GUESTS:

Garry Bodnar, Coordinator, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
John Boeglin, Chair, Joint Subcommittee on the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment/Teaching, Learning and Technology Council Fostering Pedagogy of Technology
Bill Connor, Interim Vice-Provost (Academic) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC))
Emerson Csorba, Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies
Scott Delinger, IT Strategic Initiatives Officer, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Nima Yousefi Moghaddam, Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Boeglin/Delinger

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) approve the Agenda.
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CARRIED

2. Approval of the Regular Session Minutes of October 5, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Dr Delinger noted his name had been misspelled in the Minutes from the October 5, 2011 meeting of GFC CLE.

Motion: Schmude/McIntosh

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) approve the Minutes of October 5, 2011, as

amended.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Co-Chair

The Chair commented on a number of items of interest to members.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Joint Subcommittee on the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)/Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLAT) Council Fostering Pedagogy of Technology Report

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: John Boeglin, Chair, Joint Subcommittee on the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)/Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLAT) Council Fostering Pedagogy of Technology

Purpose of the Proposal: To update GFC CLE on the progress of the joint GFC CLE/TLAT Subcommittee on Fostering Pedagogy of Technology and receive members' feedback on the attached Evaluation Plan.

Discussion:

Dr Boeglin introduced this item to members. He reported on the Subcommittee's progress to date by first summarizing the work undertaken by this group over the past five-month period. He noted that, at today's meeting of GFC CLE, he was seeking members' consensus/agreement that the time being spent by this subcommittee was, in fact, 'time well spent' and that the group should continue with its investigation on matters related to the fostering of pedagogy of technology.

In turn, Dr Boeglin reviewed in detail the two documents before members. In the second of the two documents, he noted the Subcommittee's plan for further action had been delineated. The primary recommendation contained therein was that an extensive survey be conducted with focus groups of teaching staff and technical/classroom support staff to determine what instructors are doing with respect to the deployment of technology in the learning environment; what it will take to move the University forward with regard to the use of technology in this environment; and to examine what students are using by way of technology to support their own learning. He noted that the survey questions had not yet been developed and that the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Information Technology), Dr Jonathan Schaeffer, was encouraging the Subcommittee to consider provocative, searching queries that would serve to drive to the core of these issues.

During the ensuing discussion, the presenter addressed questions and comments from members including, but not limited to, the following: the value of sharing the lessons learned here at the University of Alberta beyond the confines of the institution, itself; the amount of thought that has been given to the administration/management and costs associated with what appears to be a fairly-ambitious project; the nature of the needs assessment that would be undertaken within this project; the nature of base technology in the classroom and the push to ensure this technology is straightforward and easily understood by instructors; the need to acknowledge that technology will not necessarily make certain instructors better instructors; the speed of technological change globally and the need to anticipate and account for these changes in institutional planning; the need to develop guidelines that deal with appropriate behaviours—professionalism—associated with the uses of technology and social media in the classroom, in research, in clinical and other placements, in study, and, generally, in the wider community; the ways in which the work undertaken by the Subcommittee could connect with that of the University's Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL); and the need for the Subcommittee to be as forward thinking in its approach to this subject

matter as it can possibly be rather than focussing on existing processes, policies, and circumstances.

In response to the Chair's call for an informal vote of endorsement of the Subcommittee's proposal and for encouraging this group to continue with its designated undertaking, all members present voted (by a show of hands) in the affirmative.

5. GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies Report: Update

There were no documents.

Presenters: Emerson Csorba, Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies; Nima Yousefi Moghaddam, Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Mr Csorba briefly updated members on the work of the above-noted subcommittee since the last meeting of GFC CLE. He stated that a Moodle website had been established to support discussion on the topics being addressed by this subcommittee and that working groups were being set up to consider further both undergraduate and graduate attributes and competencies. He concluded his remarks by describing the nature of the research that would be undertaken to support the Subcommittee's work.

STANDING ITEMS

6. GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Bill Connor, Interim Vice-Provost (Academic) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Dr Connor provided a brief report on the October 26, 2011 meetings of GFC APC.

7. GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Bill Connor, Interim Vice-Provost (Academic) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC))

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Dr Connor provided a brief report on the October 20, 2011 meetings of GFC ASC.

8. GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Garry Bodnar, Coordinator, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

Mr Bodnar provided a brief report on the October 27, 2011 meeting of GFC FDC.

9. Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLAT) Council Update

There were no documents.

Presenter: Scott Delinger, IT Strategic Initiatives Officer, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Dr Delinger noted that there had not been a meeting of TLAT Council since the last meeting of GFC CLE on October 5, 2011.

10. Question Period

During Question Period, there was some discussion on the ways in which the effectiveness and scope of the University's Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) could be addressed by GFC CLE and, potentially, the GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC). It was suggested by a member that this particular issue could be broadened so that it became a discussion centring on the topic of support for and of teaching generally across the institution.

Dr Connor noted that he would be prepared to discuss the matters raised by members at this meeting further with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and, after doing so, report back to GFC CLE.

Dr Nocente agreed to share with members the latest Annual Report for CTL.

INFORMATION ITEMS

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 Co-Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:25 pm.