



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

Wednesday, October 04, 2017  
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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**ATTENDEES:**

Sarah Forgie, Chair  
Janice Causgrove Dunn  
Robert Desjardins  
Yuuki Ito  
Firouz Khodayari  
Eva Lemaire  
Janice Miller-Young  
Jeff Rawlings

Norma Rodenburg  
Shane Scott  
Andrews Tawiah  
Jennifer Tupper  
Mani Vaidyanathan  
Stanley Varnhagen  
Janet Wesselius

**REGRETS:**

Samer Adeeb  
Kathleen DeLong

**STAFF:**

Meg Brolley

**OPENING SESSION**

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment approve the Agenda.

**CARRIED**

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of September 6, 2017

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

A member requested that the concerns about the addition of learning outcomes to course outlines be reflected in the minutes. Approval of this item was deferred.

3. Comments from the Chair

The Chair reminded members that the selection committee for the Chief Librarian required a CLE representative and indicated that details on the relevant dates would be circulated through email for consideration by members. She noted that a couple of members had stepped forward to serve on a working group to consider the committee terms of reference; additional members volunteered for this working group which will include: Janice Miller-Young, Kathleen DeLong, Stanley Varnhagen, Mani Vaidyanathan, and Firouz Khodayari.

**ACTION ITEMS**

4. Election of a Vice-Chair

Mr Rawlings volunteered to serve in this capacity for 2017/18.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### 5. Faculty of Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum Renewal

*Presenter(s):* Sandra Davidson, Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programs), Faculty of Nursing

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Dr Davidson presented an overview of the undergraduate curriculum renewal process. She explained how the project was framed as a developmental evaluation research project that would address the need for a renewal and recalibration of the curriculum which had been in place for twenty years. Support for the project was sought from the Faculty and Vice-Dean Olive Yonge and Associate Dean Sandra Davidson were identified to lead the project.

Dr Davidson reported that the project included large scale consultation, literature review, and data analysis, including quality assurance data on student satisfaction. This informed the philosophical and educational approaches which, in turn, were used to formulate the curriculum goals and outcomes. Dr Davidson reported that the three pillars of the renewal are: scholarship, faculty development and ongoing appraisal. She noted that implementation and evaluation items were assessed throughout curriculum design and course creation activities. She further indicated that ongoing evaluation and refinement would occur as the new curriculum rolls out.

She reviewed the pedagogical approaches taken: concept based, learner-centred, and relational practice. She noted that the curriculum is structured by the movement from simple to complex, and with a relational practice focus that moves the student through guiding relationships: groups, teams, and individual. The first year provides a foundation of knowledge; the focus is on the student as an individual including what it means to be a nurse and the development of self-awareness. The focus in year two widens to look at groups and teams in patient care with a scope beyond the individual to the community. Year three provides students with global perspective and an introduction to population systems based care. This would be done through a concept based curriculum that focuses on enduring concepts of what the profession is. Dr Davidson noted the difficulties in keeping pace with the rate of knowledge creation, and that the concepts for this curriculum focus on how to provide an education when future settings are not known.

Dr Davidson focused on how the new curriculum would offer improved learning opportunities for students by restructuring the connection of theory to practice. This would be accomplished through scheduling classroom, lab, and clinical experiences within the same week so that the theory and concepts taught in the classroom are cemented in the lab and then students have clinical practice to learn how to apply the knowledge. By scheduling in this way, she noted, there would be less relearning for students as occurs when there is too much time between the classroom and practice.

Dr Davidson noted the other organizing frameworks used in the renewal: nursing process, simple to complex, individual to group, determinants of health, and across the lifespan. She noted that graduates of this new curriculum would develop strong innovative leadership skills, integrate evidence, and appreciate the role of research. The education received would equip graduates with the skills to be agents of change.

During the implementation of the new curriculum in fall 2018, Dr Davidson noted that evaluation would start immediately and would continue as an ongoing process, and that the role of faculty development was essential to the success of the program.

#### *Discussion:*

The committee discussed graduate outcomes and how the proposed curriculum aligns with provincial and national requirements. Regarding resource implications, Dr Davidson noted the significant resource

requirements for the problem based learning currently used would be reallocated and, in combination with specific, dedicated faculty development, would be used for the new curriculum.

A member asked how this would impact graduate programs; Dr Davidson noted that consultation had occurred with graduate students and many were engaged in the research team. She further noted that the proposed curriculum aligns with national competencies which are articulated into masters programs and that, additionally, the leadership component of the new program feeds well into the advanced practice graduate programs in the Faculty.

Members discussed international opportunities for students; it was indicated that there is a global health office in the Faculty and that existing opportunities would be enhanced. A question arose about participation in the course INT D 410 Interprofessional Health Team Development. Dr Davidson noted that, to date, nursing students did not receive the full benefit of this course as they entered at a different level than others in the course; the new course will provide students with a clearer vision of their role and how they contribute in a team environment.

Members discussed how data would be gathered on confidence and resiliency. Dr Davidson noted that there are validated and reliable measures/surveys on resiliency that will be used to evaluate student outcomes in this area.

Dr Davidson noted that there would be a follow up report on the curriculum renewal.

#### 6. Update on Learning Outcomes (no documents)

*Presenter(s):* Sarah Forgie, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives), Chair CLE

Dr Forgie reported on a survey conducted by the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) asking about course, program, and campus-wide learning outcomes. She noted that this survey was sent by the Provost's Office to each Associate Dean and that responses received ranged from none to substantial, mostly seen in professional programs. She noted that learning outcomes, while not currently mandated in the province at this time, should be implemented in a thoughtful way. She reminded members that learning outcomes had been discussed at GFC as an early consultation item in the spring, and that this was followed by a retreat and workshop. Dr Forgie noted that a report of this retreat would soon be available and that CTL had followed up on the retreat with additional workshops on learning outcomes.

Dr Forgie noted that Ontario has mandated learning outcomes for all programs and Harvey Weingarten, President of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) has been invited to speak at the university on November 14; committee members, and the community, will receive an invitation once details are confirmed.

Members noted the advantage to students of articulating learning outcomes. It was also noted that learning outcomes contribute to how the quality of programs are reviewed.

#### 7. Update - Recommendations from the Report of the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) on Teaching and Learning and Teaching Evaluation and the Use of Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) as an Evaluation Tool

*Presenter(s):* Sarah Forgie, Chair, Committee on the Learning Environment

The Chair updated the committee on the discussion of the item at the September 25 GFC meeting. Members noted that debate included whether bias existed, and also the use of USRIs for tenure and promotion. Members

agreed that it was important to continue to look at bias as much of the research to date is inconclusive, and to emphasize that the USRI is not a precise item and should not be the only evaluative tool used.

8. Review of CLE Terms of Reference

Members asked about graduate studies items coming to the committee such as mentorship, supervision of graduate students, and professional development.

9. Updates (no documents)

A. Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

*Presenter(s):* Janice Miller-Young

Dr Miller-Young provided the following update:

- Survey of teaching practices will begin shortly
- Faculty specific workshops on learning outcomes are occurring

B. Information Technology

*Presenter(s):* Jeff Rawlings

Mr Rawling provided the following update:

- A student response system within e-class is being developed to replace i-clickers; beta testing on mobile devices will occur this summer.

C. Learning Services

*Presenter(s):* Kathleen DeLong

No report

D. General Faculties Council (GFC)

Items approved at the September 25, 2017 GFC meeting:

- Changes to University of Alberta Convocation Admission
- Increases to required English Language Proficiency scores for undergraduate admission
- Budget Model Principles
- Faculty Name Change: Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation (formerly Physical Education and Recreation)

10. Question Period

A member asked a question about how students are assessed on assignments/tests which occur before they enter a course.

**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 meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.