



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Campus Law Review Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, March 22, 2012
3-15, UHALL
9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Steven Penney	Staff Member (Elected from at-large) and Appointed by GFC Executive Committee as Chair
Deborah Eerkes	Discipline Officer
Frank Robinson	Vice-Provost and Dean of Students
Dima Utgoff	Director of Resident Services
Jayson MacLean	Student OmbudService
Tamara Korassa	Graduate Students' Association
Lise Gotell	Academic Staff
Elaine Geddes	Academic Staff [2011-2012 Current Associate Dean]
Adrienne Wright	Staff from A1.0, A2.0 and/or B1.0
Ada Schmude	Staff from A1.0, A2.0 and/or B1.0
Jess Ann Gordon	Student at-large
Maxi Miciak	Student at-large

Non-Voting Members:

Iva Spence	Appeals Coordinator
Garry Bodnar	Director of GFC Services and Secretary to GFC

Presenters:

Deborah Eerkes	Director, Office of Student Judicial Affairs
Chris Hackett	Discipline Officer, Office of Student Judicial Affairs
Marion Haggarty-France	University Secretary
Jayson MacLean	Graduate Ombudsperson, Student OmbudService
Steven Penney	Chair, GFC Campus Law Review Committee
Iva Spence	Appeals Coordinator, University Governance

Staff:

Garry Bodnar	Coordinator, GFC Campus Law Review Committee
Emily Paulsen	Scribe
Marion Haggarty-France	University Secretary

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Eerkes/Utgoff

THAT the GFC Campus Law Review Committee approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of February 23, 2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Miciak/Geddes

THAT the GFC Campus Law Review Committee approve the Minutes of February 23, 2012.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair

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

ACTION ITEMS

4. Offences Committed by Electronic Means

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Deborah Eerkes, Director, Office of Student Judicial Affairs

Purpose of the Proposal: To clarify how the Code of Student Behaviour applies to offences committed electronically.

Discussion:

Ms Eerkes explained that the proposed change to the Code of Student Behaviour before members was meant to make it clear and explicit that misconduct by electronic means is a viable offence as long as there is a tangible link to the University. She added that this change reflects current practice.

During the ensuing discussion, members discussed briefly specific word choice in the document.

Motion: Eerkes/Utgoff

THAT the GFC Campus Law Review Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, proposed revisions to Section 30.3.1 (Offences Under the Code/Application) of the Code of Student Behaviour, as submitted by the Director of the Office of Student Judicial Affairs (OSJA) and as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect upon final approval.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Disclosure Within and Around Student Discipline Processes

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Deborah Eerkes, Director, Office of Student Judicial Affairs

Purpose of the Proposal: To bring clarity and transparency to the Code about current practices of disclosure of disciplinary decisions; to evaluate effectiveness of current practices; and to propose new practices where the Code does not currently meet the needs of the University Community.

Discussion:

Ms Eerkes explained to members that a document had been created several years ago to explicate how the Provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) Act applies to the discipline processes at the University of Alberta. Upon recent review, it had been determined this document was no longer useful. The new policy/procedure revisions before member involved examining definitions and better relaying information to students about how decisions are communicated; they are an attempt to make processes more transparent and to update regulations to reflect current practice.

During the ensuing discussion, the presenter addressed questions and comments from members including, but not limited to, the following: clarification on the rights of the victim, which recently came up as a disclosure issue; clarification of how the University 'Protocol for Urgent Cases of Disruptive, Threatening or Violent Conduct', which does not involve disciplinary sanctions, dovetails with the recommended changes before members; clarification on the inclusiveness of the language used in the revisions; how definitions used in the policy/procedural revisions worked with relevant definitions found in the *University Calendar*; disclosing information for the purposes of administrating a program; allowing some ambiguity in wording since it is impossible to define all circumstances; specifying a time limit on conduct probation; where and how records are kept; the nature of annotations on transcripts; the attempt at consistency but the varied nature of sanctioned cases; the distribution of decisions and giving students higher-quality information; and clarification around a number of typographical errors.

6. Exploring the Use of Text Matching Software to Detect Plagiarism at the University of Alberta

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Chris Hackett, Discipline Officer, Office of Student Judicial Affairs

Purpose of the Proposal: To discuss striking a subcommittee to explore the implications of using text-matching software to detect plagiarism in University of Alberta classrooms.

Discussion:

Mr Hackett introduced the item to members by explaining there needs to be a campus-wide discussion on the use of text-matching software to detect plagiarism at the University of Alberta. He noted that there are many different software programs, the best known being *turnitin.com*. Positive implications of the deployment of this and similar software included simplifying detection of acts of plagiarism, reducing workload for professors, and providing assurance for students that the University is striving to achieve a level of fairness when detecting cases of possible academic dishonesty. Concerns include creating an atmosphere of alienation for students in which they are made to feel that they are guilty before being proven innocent of academic dishonesty, privacy issues in that the detection software databases store students' information, 'false positives', and the false sense of security the use of said software sometimes provides.

During the ensuing discussion, the presenter addressed questions and comments from members including,

but not limited to, the following: whether or not the positive implications outweigh the negative implications; the extremely unfair issue of 'false positives' and how these would be dealt handled if and when encountered; the University providing guidance on how to use the software as fairly as possible; clarification that the software finds matching text and would therefore not detect plagiarized concepts, ideas, or paraphrasing; professors potentially becoming reliant on the software; the possible varied application of the detection software across campus, which creates an inconsistent and unfair environment for students; the extremely time-consuming and arduous task of tracking and documenting plagiarized work without any assistance or tools; and who should be represented on the subcommittee charged dealing with delving into these issues further.

7. Proposed Changes to the Code of Student Behaviour, Code of Applicant Behaviour, and the Practicum Intervention Policy

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Iva Spence, Appeals Coordinator, University Governance; Jayson MacLean, Graduate Ombudsperson, Student OmbudService

Purpose of the Proposal: To bring more closely into line with each other the Code of Student Behaviour, the Code of Applicant Behaviour, and the Practicum Intervention Policy. The changes include such matters as: adding e-mail as an official method of communication, clarifying the definition of academic standing, clarifying the definition of Working or Business Day, and general housekeeping.

Discussion:

Ms Spence introduced the item to members and asked for their general questions and comments. She noted she was especially interested to know if members had issues with the proposed clarification of the definition of 'Working or Business Day'.

During the ensuing discussion, the presenters addressed questions and comments from members including, but not limited to, the following: the suitability of the definition of 'Working or Business Day'; the role of the Chair if the Chair is the subject being questioned by either party to an appeal; small inconsistencies in language; clarification on the use of e-mail as the means of communicating appeal-related decisions; using Google Docs and secure sites to relay information to all parties to an appeal; and the restrictive language of "Christmas holiday."

8. Chart of Proposed Changes to Appeal Regulations

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Marion Haggarty-France, University Secretary

Purpose of the Proposal: Information and sharing.

Discussion:

Ms Haggarty-France informed members that items are added to the above-noted chart as they arise for further review and possible revision of existing appeal-related policy and procedure.

9. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

10. Items Approved by the GFC Campus Law Review Committee by E-Mail Ballots

There were no items.

11. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

12. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:05 am.