

**Governance Executive Summary  
Action**

<b>Agenda Title</b>	<b>Final Report of GFC Executive's Transition Committee</b>
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**Motion**

THAT the General Faculties Council discharge, with thanks, the GFC Executive ad hoc Transition Committee.
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**Item**

Action Requested	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
Proposed by	GFC Executive ad hoc Transition Committee
Presenter	Eleni Stroulia, Chair, GFC Executive ad hoc Transition Committee

**Details**

Responsibility	General Faculties Council
The Purpose of the Proposal is (please be specific)	The proposal is before the committee to report on the activities and outcomes of the transition committee.
Executive Summary ( <i>outline the specific item – and remember your audience</i> )	<p>Following the endorsement by GFC of the Report of the ad hoc Committee on Academic Governance including Delegated Authority on April 21, 2017, the GFC Executive Committee established a Transition Committee on May 15, 2017 to provide advice and guidance in the implementation of the 48 recommendations contained in the report.</p> <p>The Transition Committee began meeting in September 2017 and met monthly thereafter to guide the implementation of the recommendations with a goal of completion by April 2019.</p> <p>In April of 2019 the Transition Committee reported that there were two remaining pieces of work: (a) the revised terms of reference of the Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) and (b) the streamlining of program approval pathways.</p> <p>CLE's new terms of reference were approved to take effect on January 1, 2020 and the proposed changes and streamlining of program approval pathways were approved on May 25, 2020 to take effect in September 1, 2020.</p> <p>At this time, the work of the transition committee is complete.</p>
Supplementary Notes and context	

**Engagement and Routing** (Include proposed plan)

Consultation and Stakeholder Participation	GFC Executive - June 15, 2020 General Faculties Council - June 22, 2020
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**Strategic Alignment**

Alignment with <i>For the Public Good</i>	Objective 21
Alignment with Institutional Risk Indicator	Please note below the specific institutional risk(s) this proposal is addressing.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolment Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relationship with Stakeholders

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	<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty and Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Funding and Resource Management <input type="checkbox"/> IT Services, Software and Hardware <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership and Change <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reputation <input type="checkbox"/> Research Enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Safety <input type="checkbox"/> Student Success
Legislative Compliance and jurisdiction	<i>Post-secondary Learning Act</i> GFC Executive Committee Terms of Reference General Faculties Council	

Attachments:

1. Final Report of the GFC Executive Transition Committee
2. GFC Executive ad hoc Transition Committee Terms of Reference

*Prepared by:* University Governance



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**FINAL REPORT OF THE GFC EXECUTIVE AD HOC TRANSITION COMMITTEE**

**Background**

Following the endorsement by GFC of the Report of the ad hoc Committee on Academic Governance including Delegated Authority on April 21, 2017, the GFC Executive Committee established a Transition Committee on May 15, 2017 to provide advice and guidance in the implementation of the 48 recommendations contained in the report.

The Transition Committee began meeting in September 2017 and met monthly thereafter to guide the implementation of the recommendations with the goal of completion by April 2019.

Because there was additional work to be done on program approval pathways, in January 2019, the Transition Committee recommended the establishment of the ad hoc committee on Program Approval Processes with the purpose to review current approval processes and propose revised pathways with a timeline of no later than April 30, 2020. Due to the events of 2020, the deadline was extended to the end of May 2020.

**Implementation of Recommendations**

The recommendations of the ad hoc committee fell into the following areas:

1. GFC Principles

The following four documents were developed to guide the implementation of the ad hoc committee's recommendations and serve as a basis for future efforts to evaluate and improve academic governance at the University of Alberta.

GFC approved these principles on April 21, 2017:

- [Principles of Delegation of Authority](#)
- [Principles of Committee Composition](#)
- [Roles and Responsibilities of Members](#)
- [Procedural Rules](#)

2. Terms of Reference

When the report of the ad hoc committee was endorsed, GFC had 9 standing committees. With a template designed to provide clarity and transparency, each of these committees was charged with refining draft terms of reference for approval by the committee and by GFC.

The new format of the terms of reference was designed to be easy to read, provide transparency on the role and responsibilities, and clearly articulate the committee's delegated authority from GFC.



In addition, changes were proposed to the committee structure:

- Establishment of a free-standing Nominating Committee (NC)
- Disbandment of the Replenishment Committee and reassignment of duties to NC
- Moving the Council on Student Affairs (COSA) under the governance umbrella and revising its role and mandate to participate in the academic governance mission of the university

GFC has approved new/revised terms of reference for the following committees (available at the [member zone](#) of [ualberta.ca/governance](http://ualberta.ca/governance)):

- Student Conduct Policy Committee (formerly the Campus Law Review Committee)
- Facilities Development Committee
- Nominating Committee (with concurrent disbandment of the Replenishment Committee)
- University Teaching Awards Committee
- Undergraduate Awards and Bursaries Committee (formerly the Undergraduate Awards and Scholarships Committee)
- Executive Committee
- Council on Student Affairs
- Academic Standards Committee
- Academic Planning Committee
- General Faculties Council
- Committee on the Learning Environment

### 3. Overall GFC practices

A number of changes have been implemented to increase engagement:

- The number of GFC meetings increased to 8 per year, from 6, beginning in 2017-2018.
- Early Consultation was added as a regular item to the GFC agenda allowing for members to contribute to items at a strategic level.
- As part of their discussions, committees consider when it is appropriate to send items to GFC rather than exercise their delegated authority.
- There is a commitment for all committees, and GFC, to review terms of reference and delegations on a 3-year cycle. The GFC Executive Committee has been given the responsibility for ensuring this review takes place.

Orientation and education have also been strengthened:

- Enhanced orientation for GFC, committees and committee chairs and vice-chairs occurs annually each fall.
- Governance 101 materials have been updated and there are typically three sessions per year (Sep, Feb and Jun) to new GFC members and other members of the community.



- A [GFC and Committee Member Guidebook](#) has been developed and is available online.
- University Governance has been added to the orientation of different cohorts (new faculty, new Deans, new chairs and other members of the U of A community) so that they are introduced to governance in a contextual manner, relevant to their interests and activities.
- A prototype searchable web site, OpenGov, has been developed to enable text-based search of the meeting agendas and key words of the GFC committee and standing committees. Due to timing and resources, OpenGov has not yet been implemented and work will continue to refine this tool. It remains a key objective to improve access to governance decisions and materials.

#### 4. Relationship between GFC and the Board of Governors

The following changes were made starting in 2017-2018 to improve communications between the two governing bodies:

- The Chair of the Board is invited to speak at a GFC meeting annually, typically early in the academic year.
- An annual joint, Board, GFC, and Senate Summit has been established (and has occurred three times), with its agenda co-developed by members of the Exec and the Board.

#### 5. Delegated Authority

Delegation was one of the key issues examined in the ad hoc committee review of academic governance, which resulted in the following actions:

- GFC approved the Principles of Delegation of Authority, which outline what can be delegated, under what circumstances, and when delegated authority should not be exercised.
- Delegated authorities are clearly delineated within the terms of reference of each committee and a curated list of all GFC delegations is linked to the GFC terms of reference.
- Terms of reference call for a review of delegations every three years.
- A [curated list of GFC delegations](#) is available on the University Governance website and linked to the GFC terms of reference. This will be a continuing project to ensure a complete and accurate list.

#### 6. Academic Program Approval

Through the implementation phase, it became apparent that program pathways (including establishment, evolution, and suspension) were quite complex, and asymmetrical for the undergraduate and graduate levels. Some streamlining of this process occurred through review of committee terms of reference and were reflected in the terms for ASC and APC.



Further work was needed to provide a system that would serve the university well into the future. Therefore the GFC Executive Committee established an ad hoc committee in January 2019 to review current program approval processes and propose revised pathways. These recommendations came forward for consultation in fall 2019.

The recommendations presented a significant departure from current practice but provided a cohesive, transparent, and streamlined approach to the process. The proposal was refined and strengthened through extensive consultation over the following months and was approved by GFC on May 25, 2020 to take effect in September 2020.

Structurally, one new standing committee (the GFC Programs Committee) will be added to GFC, the Academic Standards Committee will be disbanded, and GFC Policy Manual Section 37 will be rescinded. Components of program approval have been removed from the terms of reference of APC and Executive. APC will continue to deal with proposals with institution wide implications to the university's longer term academic, research, financial, and facilities development according to their mandate.

#### 7. Relationship between GFC and Faculty Councils

Faculty Councils play an important role in academic governance, but an apparent disconnect between them was identified by the ad hoc committee. The following steps have been taken to assist the Faculty Councils to clarify their work and will continue in the coming months:

- A template has been drafted to support Faculties in reviewing and, if necessary, updating their terms of reference. This was shared with Deans' Council in March 2019.
- The Faculties have been encouraged to review their membership and quorum requirements.
- Some Faculties are in the process of reviewing and revising terms of reference.
- Reports to Faculty Council by their GFC representatives are instituted into some Faculty Council agendas.
- Ongoing activities are under way to curate delegations from GFC to Faculty Councils.

#### **Conclusion**

The Transition Committee was tasked with ensuring the implementation of the 48 recommendations of the ad hoc committee and given a two-year time line for completion. Through the efforts of many participating at the committee and stakeholder levels, and with the support of the GFC Executive Committee and GFC, the implementation has concluded.

At this time, academic governance is ready to engage in the renewal process as terms of reference approved in the early implementation stages will be coming forward as part of the



regular review process. The lessons learned will continue to inform improvement to processes and respond to a changing environment.

**Reference documents:**

1. [Report of the ad hoc Committee on Academic Governance including Delegated Authority](#)
2. Terms of Reference of the GFC Executive Transition Committee (attached)

*Submitted by:*

Eleni Stroulia, Chair (GFC and GFC Executive Committee member)  
Tammy Hopper, Vice-Chair (Vice-Provost Programs)  
Mark Loewen (Chair of the ad hoc committee)  
Steve Patten (Vice-Chair of the ad hoc committee)  
Shane Scott/Akanksha Bhatnagar (student representatives)

**GFC Executive ad hoc Transition Committee**  
(Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority)

**Purpose:**

To advise and guide the implementation of the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority

**Composition:**

- One member of the GFC Executive Committee
- One recent past member of the GFC Executive Committee
- Two members of the ad hoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority
- Provost, or delegate
  
- Resource members: GFC Secretary, University Secretary, others as required

**Terms of Reference:**

1. Monitor the progress of the implementation groups
2. Provide advice and guidance to implementation groups
3. Report to GFC and the GFC Executive Committee on the status of the recommendations

**Timeline:**

Consideration and action on the recommendations to be complete on or before April 2019

Approved by GFC Executive Committee: May 15, 2017