



General Faculties Council
Academic Planning Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Wednesday, December 08, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Steven Dew, Chair
Sandeep Agrawal
Chris Beasley
Peter Berg
Heather Bruce
Martin Coutts (delegate)
Shannon Erichsen
Anas Fassih

Jelena Holovati
Vadim Kravchinsky
Jacqueline Leighton
Rowan Ley
Runjuan Liu
Melissa Padfield
Aminah Robinson Fayek
non-voting:
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Chris Andersen
Yan Yuan
Todd Gilchrist
Brad Hamdon
Sanhita Pal

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Assistant
Secretary to GFC

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC)

Discussion:

The Chair began by acknowledging the territory:

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that the University of Alberta resides on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. To acknowledge the territory is to recognize the longer history of these lands and signifies our commitment to working in Good Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as we engage in our institutional work.

Members asked if it would be possible to discuss college metrics and the Chair suggested that be discussed during Question Period.

Motion: Leighton/Fassih

THAT the GFC Academic Planning Committee approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of APC

Discussion:

The Chair noted that an APC member, Chris Andersen, had been reappointed to serve a second five-year term as Dean of the Faculty of Native Studies from 2023-2028. The Chair also explained that the November 29, 2021 meeting of GFC had been adjourned to continue on December 6, 2021 after undergraduate students decided to walk out to protest incidents of sexual violence. The Chair then explained that the Ministry had recently implemented performance indicators related to work-integrated learning (WIL) and the University was working to reach the target by March 2022. There would be a combination of administrative terminations and potential suspensions or terminations of programs that were in the Ministry database but that were not necessarily active on Campus. The Chair asked the Secretary to GFC to provide an update on the possibility of changes to meeting format and Ms Peters noted that conversations about the potential for hybrid meetings would be happening in January subject to evolving public health guidelines.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Seconder: Padfield/Kravchinsky

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of November 17, 2021

THAT the GFC Academic Planning Committee approve the open session minutes of November 17, 2021.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Student Financial Supports - Continued Discussion

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of APC; Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and University Registrar

Purpose of the Proposal: To continue discussion on the Annual Report on Student Financial Support and Accompanying Overview with the Academic Planning Committee, and to share additional information about data on unfunded financial shortfall.

Discussion:

The Chair noted that the proposal was before members to fulfill a commitment to having a more in-depth discussion on student financial supports made during the approval of tuition proposals in February 2021.

Ms Padfield provided context including cost and affordability of education, financial supports managed by the Registrar's Office and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and the differences between merit and need-based supports. She presented the framework for calculating financial shortfall, which was laid out in the Student Financial Support Policy, and how the unfunded financial shortfall broke down between undergraduate non-professional, undergraduate professional, and graduate students. She provided context on the efforts to improve equity and access through increased investments in bursary spending since 2018-2019 thanks to the tuition offset revenues. She also pointed to the challenge of assessing Alberta students who can obtain loans without need being a criteria, and the unknown impacts of COVID-19. She concluded by providing some future focused objectives to continue to meet institutional objectives for student financial support and some of the strategic approaches anticipated, including for Indigenous students.

Members asked questions and made comments including:

- The funds that might be made available for work-integrated learning and experiences and the difference between them and co-op or other work placements;

- The need to prepare for increased enrolment in professional programs with higher tuition levels especially through work placements, internships and co-op programs;
- The need for career counselling as a parallel service offered with bursaries to improve outcomes for graduates;
- Whether the University of Alberta is moving to a system with more certainty on their tuition and the reputational risks associated with tuition changes;
- That the International tuition model now has predictability for the course of each program since changes to the Tuition fee regulation;
- The constraints that are set out in the Tuition fee regulation that look to ensure that predictability for students who can count on tuition only increasing by CPI;
- The financial challenges faced by international graduate students;
- That the minimum funding packages are managed by FGSR and that many of the additional funding available through mechanisms like emergency loans are taken up by International students;
- That the general increase in funding available for international graduate students has made a big difference, especially for students with dependents;
- That policy around funding is highly variable across the university which presents challenges for some students while other remain unaware of them;
- That restructuring may offer an opportunity to provide more standardized approaches in graduate funding; and
- That family income is one metric for determining affordability but that food insecurity among students, debt levels, and inequality within the province may affect some students disproportionately.

5. Proposed Changes to BSc Degree Framework

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Gerda de Vries, Professor and Associate Dean (Undergraduate), Faculty of Science

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to provide enough background information for discussion in order to socialize the planned changes ahead of the formal governance approval process.

Discussion:

The Chair noted that the Faculty of Science was working on a renewal of their Bachelor of Science programs and that this was before the committee for early consultation to facilitate later discussions.

Dr de Vries explained the current degree structure and some of the issues that students might experience, including switching programs, completing requirements for their program; course sequencing and degree completion issues; and the variability in degree requirements due to a lack of structure in specialization and honours programs. Dr de Vries noted that the proposed framework will give all students access to the same program areas, with common breadth requirements for all programs and explained that the total proposal will be complex and involve numerous templates for the suspensions, name changes, creation of new majors, minors, and honours programs.

Members asked questions and heard answers to their raised concerns including:

- The ongoing efforts to ensure that students were appropriately consulted including through department councils where students hold seats, a Science Mentor Group, the Interdepartmental Science Students Society, town halls and a Student Advisory Committee for the development of the Program Framework;
- That students will not be able to complete multiple minors;
- Whether implementation of the changes should be gradual;
- That, while the changes are important, the administrative issues and student advising challenges as well as the structural issues make these changes imperative;

- That enrolment management by discipline is necessary to increase overall enrolment in the faculty and that these changes will allow for better management of admissions in the faculty;
- That standardizing 12 units of required courses at the 300 and 400-level was primarily about achieving a standard across the faculty and ensuring that students were taking more than 6 units of higher level courses;
- The value of the common core;
- Whether there were plans for teach-out and the possibility of a cross-walk approach where existing students could onboard on the new programs;
- The program-level controls on admissions and the need to maintain simplicity for students;
- That admission, continuation, promotion and graduation requirements must align and that an academic standing model will need to be developed that is coherent for the new framework;
- That a simple AGPA will not be sufficient for the new framework;
- That there needs to be further conversations on transfers;
- What the labour market is looking for and whether minors were adapted to what was sought from employers;
- That the quality assurance process of cyclical reviews of academic programs investigates the employability of graduates and the curricula for each individual program;
- That flexibility and transferability paired with the need for minors will make it important to think through student pathways so that students are informed about their range of options in a timely manner;
- That the *University Calendar* will be key and that the Faculty is working closely with the editor; and
- That transfers in some cases will be simple because of program alignment, but in other cases due to enrolment pressures, will be more difficult.

6. Budget Update (standing item)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of APC; Martin Coutts, delegate for Vice-President (University Services and Finance)

Discussion:

Mr Coutts reported that the sale of Newton Place had given a larger than expected gain of sale which allowed for some strategic investment including moving forward with plans for demolition of Michener Park. He also noted there had been some gains in research revenues due to COVID-related research funding and matching funding for Federal CFI that will eventually translate into research revenues in the financial statements. He further noted that enrolment is strong and should translate into tuition revenues; however, the descriptive statistical analysis is not yet complete for the second quarter. Looking forward to next year, Mr Coutts reminded APC members that the University is still expecting an 11% cut which works out to over \$54 million. The Capital maintenance and renewal grant was higher last year (\$48 million) as a part of economic stimulus funding for deferred maintenance and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic but that amount will likely fall back to pre-COVID levels of about \$35 million, which will be a concern. In addition, he informed members that the University continues to closely monitor inflation levels and the possible impact on expenditures, in particular non-salary and benefit expenditures, which will be of impact primarily in the upcoming fiscal year.

7. Question Period

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of APC

Discussion:

Members asked about college metrics and the report that was provided to GFC, in particular, the metrics for administrative costs and the discrepancy between the approved documents from GFC and the Board, and the report that has been submitted. The Chair thanked APC for their work on this. He reminded new members that the Board had included the development of metrics as a part of their final approval of academic restructuring, and

that GFC had asked to be involved in this development, especially related to the quality of shared services and measures of interdisciplinary programs and research.

The Provost reminded members that the final approval contained minimum details for the shared services metric implementation and that the current report aligned with what was approved. The Provost recognized there had been significant changes to the financial metric, especially regarding the annualized cost of changes to positions and explained that the Board has been tracking restructuring changes using a dashboard and accounting mechanisms. He noted that their methodology is different in terms of accounting methods and because of the difference between the academic and the financial year. In addition, the Board was asking for College Strategic Plans with integrated metrics on efficiency. There were, as a result, three possible ways of measuring the financial changes for the college model.

The Chair noted that he hoped that the report as presented to GFC with one of the three methods would satisfy both the Board and GFC and concluded by explaining the implications of growth that needs to be separated from the implications of the changes stemming from the college model.

Members asked for this rationale in writing and requested that it be distributed to APC.

CLOSING SESSION

10. Adjournment
 - Next Meeting of APC: January 12, 2022
 - Next Meeting of GFC: January 31, 2022

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.