



# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council  
Council on Student Affairs  
DRAFT Open Session Minutes

Thursday, September 10, 2020  
Virtual Meeting by Zoom  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

### **ATTENDEES:**

Steven Dew, Chair  
Joel Agarwal  
Chris Beasley  
Dhir Bid  
Karl Buchanan  
Paramita Chaudhuri Basu  
André Costopoulos  
Anastasia Elias  
Simran Dhillon  
Katie Kidd

Melissa Padfield  
Sachiketha Reddy  
Samantha Roan  
Chanpreet Singh  
Teanna Winsor-Carruthers  
Alan Underhill  
  
Non-Voting  
Brad Hamdon  
Kate Peters

### **REGRETS**

Khandaker Shahriar

### COSA Coordinator/Scribe

Ann Hodgson

### **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 (COSA)

*Motion:* Underhill/Elias

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the agenda.

**CARRIED**

#### 2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

*Presenter(s):* Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair (COSA)

#### *Discussion:*

The Chair gave a brief overview of virtual meeting procedures in place to promote a positive and collaborative online meeting experience for all attendees. He welcomed new and returning COSA members to their first regular meeting in the 2020-21 Academic year. He noted that COSA is still a relatively new standing committee of GFC and initiated a round-table of introductions.

In his opening comments, the chair highlighted:

- Fall Semester: all facets of University life are adjusting due to ongoing implications due to COVID-19, particularly as remote working and distance learning continue. The 2020 fall term consists of a mix of both online and face-to-face activities, with a majority of lecture and instructional components delivered remotely, while in-person delivery is supporting the experiential learning as it relates to labs, clinics and performance arts.

- Outage for eClass: First day of classes experienced system-wide eClass outages due to heavy online traffic demand at five times its normal capacity. IST and eCLASS teams were able to resolve the issue by appropriately upscaling the bandwidth to ensure the system was stable and operational for next day.
- Recognition of WoW activities by SU and Orientation by GSA: the Chair thanked the SU and GSA teams for their creative orientation efforts and novel ways to welcome new students to the University, and expressed appreciation for their leadership in helping to guide peers and colleagues into a new and unique environment.

3. Welcome and Committee Member Development and Orientation

*Presenter(s)*: Brad Hamdon, General Counsel and University Secretary; Kate Peters, GFC Secretary/Manager, GFC Services; Ann Hodgson, COSA Coordinator/Manager, Governance Operations

*Discussion*:

Mr Hamdon, Ms Peters and Ms Hodgson engaged COSA members in a committee orientation that included:

- a brief summary of COSA's progressive development under new Terms of Reference approved in 2019;
- a review of COSA roles and responsibilities;
- a review of COSA's mandate and delegation of authority

Key highlights of the discussion included:

- Further to the "*Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority*", a decision was made by GFC to create COSA as a consultative body to inform the work of GFC.
- COSA's decision making is limited to providing feedback to GFC and GFC's standing committees on issues.
- COSA's role is to give considered input to ensure proposals and policies coming forward to GFC are reviewed through the lens of impact on student academic affairs
- COSA has the broadest oversight responsibility: it can weigh in on teaching and learning, academic programs, research, student financial support, student accessibility, the academic schedule, student conduct, and even facilities and the learning environment.
- To promote and achieve COSA's mandate, members were encouraged to stay informed and involved in the development of proposals that are brought before GFC through their respective faculty and department level student associations, student groups, the SU and the GSA, and through open fora for consultation.

The Chair encouraged members to reach out with any points to explore around COSA's terms of reference or with ideas to build in future learning and development opportunities.

**ACTION ITEMS**

4. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of June 12, 2020

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair (COSA)

Motion: Padfield/Elias

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the Open Session Minutes of June 12, 2020.

**CARRIED**

## **EARLY CONSULTATION**

### 5. Protection and Recourse for Students in Experiential Learning

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* David Draper, Vice-President (Academic), UA Students' Union; Joel Agarwal, President, UA Students' Union; Katie Kidd, Vice-President (Student Life), UA Students' Union

#### *Discussion:*

The Chair indicated that the *Protection and Recourse for Students in Experiential Learning* item was originally placed on the June 12, 2020 COSA agenda. However, due to time constraints, there was agreement to postpone an early discussion of the item until September. The Chair thanked the SU for their patience and welcomed David Draper, Katie Kidd and Joel Agarwal to present.

Mr David Draper provided a detailed synopsis of the proposal undertaken by the UA Students' Union in this academic year to address a gap identified in U of A policies relevant to the protection of students in work-integrated learning placements and experiential learning opportunities.

Ms. Kidd related some experiences of students affected by uncomfortable or harmful situations during their university placements, and noted a lack of clarity and awareness of the supports and options to protect students. She shared that, in her observation, students felt that by asking for help or complaining it may jeopardize their assessment, grades or future career opportunities.

During a deep discussion, COSA members asked questions and shared opinions, including but not limited, to:

- Is there a standard set of roles and expectations communicated to external employers?
- To what extent does the U of A collect data on student placements, and how are exit interviews carried out? Outcomes may help to inform a framework for identifying employers for training opportunities.
- Are there other models of employers with strong structures in place who may already have guidelines internally for placement experiences, supervisory experiences?
- SU is reviewing similar policies across U15 institutions looking for examples of strong, wholesome policies.
- A working group (joint advisory committee) including representation from the Dean of Students, SU, GSA and HRS has recently been formed with oversight to help combat these issues and to ensure the community needs are being met.
- The SU is working with peers, colleagues and administration to support the U of A's leadership in work-integrated and experiential learning, and to maintain a strong institutional commitment to protecting students and creating a safe, positive student experience.

### 6. Examination Guidelines

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives); Tammy Hopper, Vice-Provost (Programs), Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

#### *Discussion:*

The Chair indicated that at the June meeting of COSA, there was some context setting and early comments brought forward and invited Drs Nychka and Hopper to elaborate at the September meeting of COSA.

Dr Hopper indicated that the material before members provided an high level overview for the proposed review of the Evaluation and Grading Procedure in the *University Calendar*, noting that there will be future consultative opportunities regarding other sections. Dr Hopper explained that the first portion of focus (under Exams) is "conduct" of examinations.

Working groups, as part of the *Academic Impact sub-committee of the Public Health Response* team, noted that the conduct of the exam section only had content that pertained to “in person” examinations. Due to COVID, there is a timely need to include reference to online examinations and online and remote assessment. Dr Hopper clarified that this would be the only revision made to the regulations reflecting the current environment, with no substantive changes to evaluation procedures or to the way that grades or GPA are calculated.

The working group has created and published an administrative guidance document on the CTL website for two main reasons: to provide guidance to instructors and students around “conduct of exams” in an online/remote environment, and to promote future opportunities for consultation of the guidelines with stakeholder groups.

During a detailed discussion, COSA members asked questions and made comments, including but not limited, to:

- What considerations are given to online proctoring, especially the larger undergraduate classes?
- How do we assess learning early to get support through “online proctoring”?
- What are some alternatives to synchronous learning?
- What are achievable and feasible solutions for implementation (ie IST, eCLASS technologies)? Are current these solutions available timely enough if there are possible suspected incidents for misconduct, academic fraud?

Dr Nychka added that current research and literature indicates that the invasive solutions (required to mitigate academic fraud) are extra stressors that elevate anxiety levels of students during online learning and assessments.

The Chair encouraged COSA to share additional thoughts and comments with Drs Hopper and Nychka, adding that he looks forward to seeing how any further thinking around assessment evolves.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### 7. Business Arising from Last Meeting [Verbal Updates from Ex-Officio Members (no documents)]

#### - Beginning a new Academic Year in times of COVID-19 - Fall/Winter Update

*Presenter(s):* Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair (COSA); Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar

#### *Discussion:*

Steve Invited Dr M Padfield to provide an update regarding the academic year and the impacts of COVID-19. Dr Padfield shared several key highlights on behalf of the Registrar’s Office (RO) including:

- U of A has seen increased demands by students to attend online: over spring/summer semesters enrollment was 15% above what is typical for those semester; fall term is above the number of students anticipated by about 5%.
- The (RO) is taking steps to ensure clarity throughout student enrollment by:
  - communicating with both instructors teaching in-person classes and students taking in person classes to ensure successful navigation of “in person” components that represents about 12% of the student population (6500 students), noting that not all on campus same day or location
  - ensuring students living in the UofA residence community have readily available information to access in person supports as well as online supports (residences have about 6% of regular occupancy)
  - developing a communication plan for the Winter 2021 Term for release in the near future to assist the U of A with planning purposes.

- Specific to undergraduate enrollment, the RO's goal for domestic student admission head-count was at 26,900 with current projections showing 28,300 domestic side; while the admission head-count for international students was at 4,480 with current projections at 4,800.

- Academic Restructuring - Update (Standing Item)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair (COSA)

*Discussion:*

The Chair provided an overview of what to expect in the developing scenarios and highlighted the following aspects:

- The *Academic Restructuring Working Group (ARWG)* has been working to bring options forward by means of three scenarios of "faculty" structures with plans to bring the options forward for discussion at GFC on September 28. Idea is to bring three approaches to the broader community for feedback and mid-course guidance.
- Approaching changes are at a faculty level while offering all current programs under potentially different units.
- Interest is in the decoupling of administrative components from the academic components as currently integrated within Faculties. By consolidating and concentrating into high-level organizations, the focus is on the academic elements of the Units particularly on the delivery of programs, teaching and research.
- Three small faculties: Campus Saint-Jean, Augustana and Native Studies have a strong community focus with unique missions and communities that need to remain represented and autonomous.

The Chair added that he appreciated the recent opportunity to meet with the GSA and SU Councils and the ongoing participation of students on a number of consultation forums and the working group as well.

- Service Excellence Transformation (SET) Program Initiatives - Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair (COSA); Gitta Kulczycki, Vice-President (Finance and Administration), Rob Munro, Executive Lead, Service Excellence Transformation

*Discussion:*

Ms Gitta Kulczycki gave an initial overview of the SET initiatives and introduced Mr Rob Munro to engage COSA members in a detailed discussion about the possible implications of SET on the student experience. Mr Munro explained that SET initiatives strive to ensure high quality client-focused administrative service and approaches within the University's current funding reality and has three key streams: Administrative systems; Procurement systems; and Space and Facilities. SET is considering different operating models and associated frameworks while working closely with senior leadership to determine an appropriate model with a framework that includes:

- Service partners – individuals that are expert in their areas that embedded in their faculties
- Transaction HUB – transaction type of business on an ongoing basis
- Service Centres

He added that, throughout the comprehensive reviews, consideration is given to "process Improvements" in order to address issues to resolve immediately or in the short term and identified several potential impacts on the student experience that included:

- all process are client focused and removed of duplications
- improving consistencies of student services and consolidating services
- framed to make the journey of the student easier

During a detailed discussion, COSA members asked questions and made comments, including but not limited, to:

- ensuring that the final model of Academic Restructuring keeps academic advising as an key priority to help students navigate through the university system
- in relation to professional programs, there are certain staff services (within a faculty) that are essential for developing and maintaining relationships with alumni association and other professional associations, and important to maintaining the quality of education delivery and support by these private entities in the delivery of services

- GSA Update

*Presenter(s):* Sachiketha Reddy, Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association

*Discussion:*

Mr. Reddy reported that the GSA continues to work virtually in online learning environment and remains actively involved in the *Academic Restructuring Working Group (ARWG)*.

- SU Update

*Presenter(s):* Joel Agarwal, President, UA Students' Union

*Discussion:*

Mr Agarwal reported that the UASU has finalized and publicly released the *Alberta 2030* submission to Government that outlines some of the key student priorities. The Chair asked that members receive the navigational link to view the online publication for information purposes. Mr Agarwal invited COSA to reach out with any questions or comments pertaining to *Alberta 2030*.

8. Question Period

A member expressed concern with the timeline of academic restructuring against COSA's regular meeting schedule, indicating that COSA's next meeting is November 5 and felt that by then the final proposal will be moving through an approval path. The Chair agreed to arrange for further consultation and additional input before the November 5 meeting, and agreed to work with University Governance to plan accordingly.

**INFORMATION REPORTS**

9. Items Approved by the Committee by email Ballots (non-debatable) (no items to date)

10. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings (no items to date)

- Item 6.0. [Examination Guidelines](#): online reference provided by John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives)
- Item 7.0. [Alberta 2030](#): online reference provided by President Joel Agarwal (UA Students' Union)

**CLOSING SESSION**

11. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.