



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Executive Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, March 04, 2013
2-31 SAB, South Academic Building
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Martin Ferguson-Pell (Delegate)	Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee
Colleen Skidmore (Delegate)	Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)
Gerry Kendal	Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Dustin Chelen	Students' Union Vice-President (Academic)
Colin More (Delegate)	Graduate Student Association Vice-President (Academic)
Lise Gotell	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Norma Nocente	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Wendy Rodgers	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Duncan Saunders	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Kaori Kabata	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Adam Woods	Undergraduate Student, Member of GFC

Presenter(s):

Dustin Chelen	Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Bill Connor	Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee
Richard Fedorak	Associate Vice-President (Research)
Martin Ferguson-Pell	Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee
Ada Ness	Associate Registrar (Enrolment Services), Office of the Registrar
Catherine Swindlehurst	Special Advisor to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Rory Tighe	Past President, Students' Union
Colten Yamagishi	President, Students' Union

Staff:

Garry Bodnar	Director, General Faculties Council (GFC) Services and Secretary to GFC
Marion Haggarty-France	University Secretary
Andrea Patrick	Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Discussion:

Mr Chelen sought to place a Motion on the floor to amend the agenda for today's meeting of the GFC Executive Committee—he indicated he wished to discuss at this meeting of the GFC Executive Committee and, in turn, have the Committee forward on to GFC (with no comment) the proposal from the Students' Union (SU) for a 'Green and Gold Week (Fall Term Reading Week)', and he began to outline the merits of the proposal. The Coordinator noted that, because the Motion to Amend put forward by Mr Chelen (and seconded by Professor Saunders) was now being considered by members, it was not appropriate to discuss the substance of the proposal, itself, at this point in the meeting.

A member enquired about the difference between 'Action Items' and 'Discussion Items' at both GFC Executive Committee and GFC meetings.

Dr Ferguson-Pell explained that, as Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic), he is the 'Approver' of any amendments to the 'Academic Schedule Procedure' set out in the University of Alberta Policies and Procedures On-Line (UAPPOL). (Amendments to this procedure would be required to accommodate the introduction into the University's Academic Schedule of a Fall Term reading week.) He added that, as an advisory step within his decision-making process, consistent with past practice, he had asked the Deans for feedback on the proposal. He explained that as Chair of the GFC Executive Committee, tasked with the standard responsibility of setting agendas for the Committee's meetings, it would be premature to vet the SU's Fall Term Reading Week proposal through an institutional governance process due to widespread and unresolved concerns stemming from his consultation on this issue with the Deans. He also cited the fact that today's meeting of the GFC Executive Committee preceded the next Deans' Council meeting, scheduled for March 6, 2013, emphasizing that he would like further consultation with the Deans on the proposal before moving it forward to any other committee for review.

Members, during the ensuing discussion, expressed comments and questions in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: clarification about the 'Motion to Amend' the GFC Executive Committee agenda with an 'Action Item' *versus* a 'Discussion Item'; that there have been communication issues between the Acting Provost and the Students' Union (SU) Executives on this issue; clarification about the so-called "Amrhein Protocol"; comment on the GFC Executive Committee's Terms of Reference allowing members to forward items to GFC and allowing for items to be placed on the Council's agendas to coincide with the end of the Students' Union Executive terms; support for the proposal to be discussed at this GFC Executive Committee meeting and the upcoming GFC meeting; and clarification about the advisory role of the Deans in terms of the Acting Provost's 'Approver' status on amendments to the 'Academic Schedule Procedure' in UAPPOL.

Following a brief discussion regarding the formal process to introduce Motions within the GFC Executive Committee meeting as well as at GFC, Mr Bodnar clarified that two Motions would need to be made – one to amend the Agenda to add the proposal onto the GFC Executive Committee meeting Agenda as a 'Discussion Item', and the other to either forward the item with no comment to GFC or to add the item onto the draft GFC Agenda as a 'Discussion Item' for the Council meeting of March 14, 2013. In doing so, the Coordinator cited the Terms of Reference for the GFC Executive Committee.

Mr Chelen clarified that his Motion would be to amend the Agenda of the GFC Executive Committee to include the SU's Fall Term Reading Week proposal as a 'Discussion Item'.

Motion to Amend: Chelen/Saunders

THAT the GFC Executive Committee amend the Agenda for March 4, 2013 meeting of the GFC Executive Committee to include the proposal regarding a 'Green and Gold Week (Fall Term Reading Week)' as a 'Discussion Item' and that the discussion on this matter take place before the approval of the draft Agenda for the General Faculties Council meeting of March 14, 2013.

CARRIED

Motion: Kendal/Skidmore

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Agenda, as amended.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of February 4, 2013

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: More/Gotell

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Minutes of February 4, 2013.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair

Dr Ferguson-Pell commented on a number of issues of interest to members.

ACTION ITEMS

4. Proposed Revisions to the University of Alberta's Research Policy (in UAPPOL)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Richard Fedorak, Associate Vice-President (Research)

Purpose of the Proposal: To revise the current Research Policy set out in UAPPOL so that it makes specific reference to research records.

Discussion:

Dr Fedorak explained the history of the proposal, adding that the proposed Research Policy revisions include the addition of a sentence that reflects the concept of the management of research records. He stated that further revisions to update the attendant procedures to the Research Policy will continue and that these changes will come forward as well for discussion and approval once completed.

Members expressed several questions and comments about the revisions, including, but not limited to: retrospective application of these revisions; the process of consultation; and the language used within the proposal.

Motion: Rodgers/Kendal

THAT the GFC Executive Committee recommend to the Board of Governors, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, proposed changes to the UAPPOL Research Policy, as submitted by the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect upon final approval.

CARRIED

5. Course Feedback Prior to Withdrawal Deadlines – Proposed Changes to Section 23.4 (Evaluation Procedures and Grading System) of the University Calendar

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Bill Connor, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction) and Chair, GFC Academic Standards Committee; Ada Ness, Associate Registrar (Enrolment Services), Office of the Registrar

Purpose of the Proposal: To alter existing institutional policy to ensure students receive feedback in their courses prior to stipulated term withdrawal deadlines.

Discussion:

Dr Connor explained that this proposal seeks to make explicit in policy governing the course outline provided by instructors to students a regulation that already exists within UAPPOL policy to provide timely feedback to students prior that term withdrawal deadlines and that the proposed changes have been discussed with a number of Associate Deans as well as with the GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC).

Members expressed several questions and concerns in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: the nature of support for this proposal; clarification on the language used within the proposal; commentary on how this policy represents a cultural shift; and whether or not there is professor/instructor obligation to approach each student to provide feedback.

With the approval of the Mover and Seconder, members agreed to a friendly amendment to add the word "substantive" at the beginning of the proposed sentence being added to existing policy set out in Section 23.4 of the University Calendar.

Motion: Chelen/Saunders

THAT the GFC Executive Committee recommend to General Faculties Council the proposed changes to Section 23.4 (Evaluation Procedures and Grading System) of the University Calendar, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and as set forth in Attachment 1, as amended, to be effective 2013-2014 (Fall Term) and for publication in the 2014-2015 University Calendar.

CARRIED

6. Draft Agenda for the March 14, 2013 Meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Martin Ferguson-Pell, Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Purpose of the Proposal: To approve the Agenda for the March 14, 2013 GFC meeting.

Discussion:

Dr Ferguson-Pell outlined the draft Agenda for the March 14, 2013 General Faculties Council (GFC) meeting.

In the ensuing discussion, members expressed several comments and questions in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: where the Students' Union's (SU's) Fall Term Reading Week proposal would be placed on the Agenda of GFC, if added as a 'Discussion Item'; the presentation format of the Fall Term Reading Week at GFC; clarification about next steps for the Fall Term Reading Week proposal; that the discussion surrounding the Fall Term Reading Week should occur at GFC; and that the conversation surrounding the Fall Term Reading Week should focus on collaboration and not be adversarial in tone. [For further discussion on this issue in relation to the draft Agenda for the March 14 GFC meeting, see Minute 9.]

Motion: Kendal/Rodgers

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Agenda for the March 14, 2013 meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC).

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. Graduate Education at the University of Alberta

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Martin Ferguson-Pell, Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee; Mazi Shirvani, Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research; Catherine Swindlehurst, Special Advisor to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Discussion: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Ferguson-Pell introduced the so-called 'Swindlehurst Report' to members, explaining that it was drafted by Dr Swindlehurst in late 2012 following extensive consultation across the University of Alberta on the subject of improving graduate education at the University of Alberta.

Dr Ferguson-Pell explained that the Report is a separate item from the Action Plan, also before members, and stated that the pivotal part of the Action Plan contains details surrounding the improvement of information technology (IT)/administrative processes and the introduction of individual Faculty Graduate Strategic Management Plans (GSMP), which allow Faculties to tailor graduate education endeavors based on their unique needs and priorities. He noted that items contained within the Action Plan will be implemented in multiple stages depending on resources and priorities. Dean Shirvani and Dr Swindlehurst provided additional commentary and background on the construct of the Action Plan and the Report, respectively.

During the ensuing discussion, members expressed several comments and questions in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: costs of the proposed IT solutions; sources of funding for improvements; whether or not quality measures have been established; how this relates to supervisory activity described within the Annual Reports prepared each year by faculty members; the impact of the Report on the contents of the Action Plan; how new programs would measure quality; how quality measures might impact departments and Faculties; and the lack of discussion surrounding quality supervisors within the Action Plan.

Dr Ferguson-Pell thanked members for their feedback and stated that the Report would be brought back

for discussion as needed.

8. The Umbrella Committee (TUC) Report

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Martin Ferguson-Pell, Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Purpose of the Discussion: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Ferguson-Pell explained that the 'The Umbrella Committee (TUC) Report' represents the final report of this body, adding that the Strategic Initiatives Group (SIG), under the direction of its Chair, Dr Erasmus Okine, will address residual topics not considered by TUC during their meetings.

During the ensuing discussion, members expressed a number of comments and questions in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: clarification on whether or not this is the final report from TUC; the membership of SIG; the mandate of SIG; whether or not SIG will produce a report; and clarification on the activities of the Administrative Innovation and Process Review Task Force.

9. Green and Gold Week (Fall Term Reading Week)

There were no documents.

Presenters: Dustin Chelen, Vice-President (Academic), University of Alberta Students' Union; Colten Yamagishi, President, University of Alberta Students' Union; Rory Tighe, Past President, University of Alberta Students' Union

Purpose of the Discussion: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Ferguson-Pell explained that this item had been circulated to GFC Executive Committee members for their review by a representative of the Students' Union (SU) outside of the meeting without the formal consent of the Acting Chair and added that, since he had not received definitive, positive consensus from the Deans on the Fall Term Reading Week proposal, he had not placed the item on this meeting's agenda for discussion.

At the request of Dr Ferguson-Pell, Dr Skidmore highlighted for members key feedback from the Deans on this proposal, as provided to the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

Mr Yamagishi was invited by the Acting Chair to the table where he introduced himself, as well as Mr Tighe. He noted his disappointment that the item had not been placed on the GFC Executive Committee agenda and added that the feedback from the Deans, outlined by Dr Skidmore, was new information and a surprise to him. He briefed members on the history of the development of the proposal and stated that the latest iteration had been e-mailed to all Deans recently. He added that the development of the proposal has taken years and has been comprehensive in scope.

Mr Tighe explained his role in the development of the proposal when he was President of the University of Alberta's SU. He reported that he had collaborated widely with Deans and students (and others) and had

addressed several concerns including the impact of the proposed break on accreditation requirements faced by certain academic units.

Mr Yamagishi briefed members on the details of the proposal, emphasizing that preserving student mental health is the impetus behind this initiative. He stated that this item in his opinion should be placed in front of GFC, the main legislative body of the academy, for discussion.

Mr Tighe outlined the scheduling details within the proposal.

During the ensuing discussion, members expressed comments and questions in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: concerns that, while the reasons for the proposal are valid, there is not clear consensus within the University community on this proposal; that the proposal should be reviewed by GFC; concerns about the schedule within the proposal; support for the proposal as is; praise for members of the SU for their continued efforts in regards to this proposal; the impact of the withdrawal deadline on this proposal; whether or not an earlier scheduled break might be more advantageous; and commentary suggesting that the SU Executive and Deans could collaborate on the final details of the proposal before implementation.

Following a brief discussion regarding the legislative path of the proposal, Ms Haggarty-France clarified for members that GFC had delegated approval authority to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) for changes to the Academic Schedule Procedure within UAPPOL and that, therefore, the proposal could not proceed to GFC as an 'Action Item' for approval.

Following a brief discussion regarding delegation of authority, Mr Chelen placed a Motion on the floor to add this proposal as a 'Discussion Item' to the draft Agenda for March 14, 2013 meeting of GFC.

Motion: Chelen/Woods

THAT GFC Executive Committee add the "Green and Gold Week (Fall Term Reading Week)" Proposal as a 'Discussion Item' on the draft Agenda of the March 14, 2013 General Faculties Council (GFC) meeting.

CARRIED

10. Question Period

A member enquired about the status of a reply to a letter addressed to the President and Chair of GFC, Dr Indira Samarasekera, regarding student engagement at GFC meetings.

A member enquired about possible cuts in light of the Provincial Budget.

INFORMATION REPORTS

11. Items Approved by the GFC Executive Committee by E-Mail Ballots

There were no items.

12. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

13. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:25 pm.