



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Executive Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, March 08, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Bill Flanagan, Chair
Steven Dew
David Draper
Anastasia Elias
Nat Kav
Christopher Lupke
Sean McMurtry

Pierre-Yves Mocquais
Roger Moore
Melissa Padfield
Eleni Stroulia
non-voting:
Brad Hamdon
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Adarsh Badesha
Mary Forhan
Sachiketha Reddy

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of GFC Executive Committee (EXEC)

Motion: Mocquais/Kav

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of EXEC

Discussion:

The Chair gave an update on the disproportionate cuts to the University of Alberta's provincial grant. He noted that 25 percent of Alberta's post-secondary students attended the University of Alberta, yet the province had required us to bear nearly 50 percent of the reduction in provincial funding. He further noted that the University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT) was not just about cost cutting, that the university also needed to grow and needed the government to support that growth.

Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) and Executive Lead of the University's COVID-19 Public Health Response Team gave an update on vaccines, the public health guidelines and planning for fall 2021. He noted concerns regarding international students and quarantined entry, and explained that fall 2021 registration had been delayed until May to allow more time for planning.

The Chair noted that the Board/GFC/Senate Summit was scheduled for March 26 and the topic would be the vision for the University in 2030.

The Chair reported that the Advisory Search Committee for the Vice-President (Research and Innovation) had its second meeting at the end of February, and he would continue to provide updates as the search progressed.

The Chair also noted that it was International Women's Day as well as the launch of the University's Pride Week.

A member asked if instructors would be expected to provide both online and in person teaching for fall 2021.

Mr Sharman noted that they were hoping to know more in time for the discussion on fall planning at the GFC meeting of March 22.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Seconder: Padfield/Mocquais

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of February 10, 2021

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the open session minutes of February 10, 2021.

CARRIED

4. Workforce Census Results: Summary Report

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee for the summary report to be provided to General Faculties Council for information at its meeting of March 22.

5. Proposed Changes to Graduate Admissions Regulations, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to include additional language in the calendar regarding graduate program admissions and the policy around deferrals, previously stated funding offers, revised admission start dates, and the conditions thereof for graduate students.

THAT GFC Executive Committee recommend that General Faculties Council approve the changes to the Graduate Admissions language and policy around deferrals, previously stated funding offers, and revised admission start dates, for immediate implementation.

CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

6. Proposal from the Faculty of Science to add CHEM 103 and CHEM 105, Introductory University Chemistry I & II, to the List of Courses with Consolidated Exams

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Alex Brown, Professor, Department of Chemistry

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to add CHEM 103 and 105 to the list of courses for which consolidated final exams are scheduled.

Discussion:

Dr Brown noted that these courses were introductory Chemistry for Engineering students and the request for consolidated exams came out of their accreditation review with an aim to provide consistency across all first year required courses.

There were no questions.

Motion: Moore/Elias

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the addition of CHEM 103 and CHEM 105, Introductory University Chemistry I and II, to the list of courses with Consolidated Final Examinations, as submitted by the Faculty of Science, to take effect 2021-2022.

CARRIED

EARLY CONSULTATION

7. Delegated Authority of the Undergraduate Awards and Bursaries Committee (UABC)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Brad Hamdon, General Counsel and University Secretary; Kate Peters, Secretary to General Faculties Council (GFC)

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee because University Governance has reviewed the legislative authority of the task-based committees identified by the Adhoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority, including the Undergraduate Awards and Bursaries Committee (UABC). The analysis by University Governance found that the responsibilities and tasks identified in the Terms of Reference for the UABC exceed the authority of the General Faculties Council (GFC) over “rules and regulations respecting academic awards”. They recommend that this authority be revisited and recommend moving the delegated authority to a different standing committee.

Discussion:

Mr Hamdon and Ms Peters explained that University Governance had reviewed GFC's authority regarding academic awards as set forth in the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) in relation to the work of the GFC Undergraduate Awards and Bursaries Committee (UABC). They noted that the recommendation was that individual award terms did not require approval by GFC, that UABC be disbanded, and that the delegated authority related to academic awards be moved to another standing committee.

A member asked about student involvement in whatever new process was developed if this change went forward.

8. Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation Policy

Materials and presentation before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives)

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to advance discussions related to the Teaching Policy for the University of Alberta.

Discussion:

Dr Nychka gave a presentation on the Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation Policy including the work that had been done to revise GFC Policy 111 since 2017, the current development and consultations, and the proposed path toward approval and implementation of a new policy.

Members discussed:

- the issues and biases involved with use of Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRIs);

- the work of the Taskforce on Student Experience of Teaching and Learning (SETL) to address issues with USRIs;
- the importance of closing the loop with students by showing them how USRI data was used;
- the framework for effective teaching; and
- other elements needed to provide a multifaceted evaluation of teaching.

Dr Nychka noted that this was early consultation only and more information would be coming forward for discussion before a draft policy would be ready to seek approval.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

9. Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Supervisory Initiatives

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Brooke Milne, Vice-Provost and Dean, FGSR

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to discuss three Supervisory initiatives which will build capacity in the Graduate Student experience, support Graduate Student success, and enhance the Graduate Student-Supervisory relationship:

- (1) Supervisory Membership & Training
- (2) Student-Supervisor Guidelines
- (3) Progress Report

Discussion:

Dr Milne spoke about the work and consultation to date on the Supervisory Initiatives. She made note of the electronic versions of the forms with prepopulated data to make filling them out simpler. She also noted how membership would serve to train new faculty members and to support the success of students and supervisors alike.

A member noted that the comments regarding student and supervisor issues were depressing and offensive and asked about the results of the pilot, any issues that arose, and whether it was effective in identifying issues.

Dr Milne responded that the pilot was a low-tech google doc and was useful to identify pressure points in the workflow. She acknowledged that the feedback indicated that the forms were tedious but noted that the final versions with prepopulated data would mitigate that issue. She also acknowledged that the comments regarding extreme breakdowns in the student-supervisor relationship were depressing but that they demonstrated the extreme end of the problems that the university had a responsibility to address.

A member asked how this system would help to address student-supervisor issues.

Dr Milne observed that the origins of many problems could be traced back to misunderstandings and unclear expectations. She noted that these initiatives established and documented clear expectations for both parties from the start.

Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Steven Dew noted that the initiatives would serve as a tool for reinforcing good feedback and resolving issues early, and would also provide objective data evidence for use in extreme cases.

A member asked how the supervisor membership initiatives would change any discipline specific initiatives that were currently being used to good effect in some departments.

Dr Milne noted that these initiatives were not meant to supersede discipline specific initiatives but were meant to provide more general and overarching support for new members of the community as well as an opportunity for them to connect with peers.

Members also discussed: whether the forms would help to address issues or simply add to the burden on faculty; the importance of supporting supervisors and students, and whether the FGSR or the Colleges would be best placed to provide that support.

10. University of Alberta Museums Annual Report: July 2019 – June 2020

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Frannie Blondheim, Interim Executive Director, University of Alberta Museums; Michael Caldwell, Chair, University of Alberta Museums Policy and Planning Committee

Purpose of the Proposal: To file an annual report, as requested, with General Faculties Council.

Discussion:

Ms Blondheim and Dr Caldwell spoke about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the University of Alberta Museums, visitors, and collections access. They also made note of the updated online search portal for the collections.

There were no questions.

ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

11. Recommendations of the Committee of the Whole

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor and Chair of EXEC

Purpose of the Proposal: The purpose of this proposal is to inform GFC on the actions taken as a result of the recommendations of the report of the committee of the whole on February 8, 2021, and to support decision-making as a result of the report.

Discussion:

The Chair gave an update on actions regarding the recommendations of GFC's Committee of the Whole on February 8 and introduced the proposed motion in response to recommendation 5.

A member asked about the member responsibility to understand the distinction between the roles and responsibilities of GFC and the Board of Governors.

Motion: Draper/Padfield

THAT General Faculties Council (GFC) Executive Committee, recommend that GFC reaffirm its commitment for equal participation of its members regardless of their position within the University and reaffirm their ability to raise their concerns within the mandate of GFC, as set out in Attachment 1.
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CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

12. Question Period

Presenter(s): Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of EXEC

Discussion:

During question period members asked questions and expressed opinions including but not limited to:

- the unprecedented cuts to the provincial funding for the university;
- what action administration was taking to push back against the cuts;
- the tight turnaround for the provincial government's requests to develop micro credentials;
- the risk of "brain drain" as post-secondary students were leaving Alberta for school or leaving directly after graduation;
- the importance of reinforcing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across the university;
- the demographic surge and expectation of higher applications to the university;
- that demand had been higher than the university could accommodate for years and that differential was increasing; and
- that financial need supports were low in Alberta compared to other provinces and that the public was not aware.

ACTION ITEMS

13. Draft Agenda for the Next Meeting of General Faculties Council

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of EXEC

Purpose of the Proposal: To approve the Agenda for the General Faculties Council meeting to be held on Monday, March 22, 2021.

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

Motion: Moore/Kav

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Agenda for the March 22, 2021 meeting of General Faculties Council, as set forth in Attachment 1.

CARRIED

INFORMATION REPORTS

14. Items Approved by the GFC Executive Committee by email ballots

There were no items.

15. Information Items Forwarded to GFC Executive Committee between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

16. Adjournment

- Next Meeting of EXEC: April 12, 2021

- Next Meeting of GFC: March 22, 2021

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.