



General Faculties Council
Executive Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, November 15, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Bill Flanagan, Chair
Ghalia Aamer
Jason Acker
J Nelson Amaral
Heather Coleman
Steven Dew
Anastasia Elias

Kathy Haddadkar
Nat Kav
Pierre-Yves Mocquais
Abner Monterio
Melissa Padfield
Jerine Pegg
Moin Yahya

non-voting:
Brad Hamdon
Kate Peters

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)

Discussion:

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair made the following territorial acknowledgement:

The University of Alberta resides on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. This territory is a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples whose histories, languages and cultures continue to influence our community. To acknowledge the territory is to recognize the longer history of these lands. The acknowledgement signifies our commitment to working in Good Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as we engage in our institutional work, uplifting the whole people, for the University for Tomorrow.

The Chair noted that the committee was continuing to use the new section for items on the GFC Agenda and acknowledged that one of the items, the Final Report of the Academic Leaders Task Group had been posted earlier that day and would be discussed by the GFC Academic Planning Committee later in the week. He observed that a question submitted by the Vice-President (Academic) of the Students' Union had been posted earlier that day as well. The Chair informed members that he would need to leave the meeting at 3:00 p.m. so would be turning the chair role over to the Vice-Chair at that time.

A member noted that he had no opportunity to review the materials that were posted that morning and that must be taken into consideration.

Motion: Mocquais/Acker

THAT 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 noted that the Chair of the *ad hoc* Committee for the Formal Review of the Consultations and Action Processes for Academic Restructuring in the Fall of 2020, Heather Coleman, was ready to provide an update.

Dr Coleman noted that the *ad hoc* committee met on October 22 and November 5, 2021. She explained that the committee's work may be delayed because two members had to withdraw and those vacancies needed to be filled. Dr Coleman noted that the work to date was focused on reviewing publicly available materials related to the University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT) initiative and that the committee had also requested meeting materials from the Academic Restructuring Working Group (ARWG). She noted that the committee planned to take stock at the end of fall term to see if they needed more information and then would conduct interviews to gain insight on how consultations were used, how decisions were made, and what those individuals close to the proposals had learned from the process. Dr Coleman remarked that March 2022 was the reporting date indicated in the terms of reference for the *ad hoc* committee and that they hoped to be finished their work by March 1.

The Chair spoke about the winter term return to campus and noted the expectation that 90% of courses would be in-person with 10% online to continue to accommodate COVID-19 related issues. He also indicated that the university was expecting a phased return to work for non-teaching staff by the end of January.

The Chair reminded members to provide their feedback on the Indigenous Institutional Strategic Plan (IISP) before December 17, 2021. GFC Secretary Kate Peters shared the link to the feedback form with members.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Seconder: Padfield/Kav

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of October 4, 2021

THAT GFC Executive Committee approve the open session minutes of October 4, 2021

CARRIED

4. Proposed Changes to Composition of Arts Faculty Council

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from the General Faculties Council, proposed changes to the composition of the Council of the Faculty of Arts as set forth in Attachment 1, submitted by the Faculty of Arts, to take effect upon final approval.

CARRIED

5. Proposed Changes to the Dean Selection Committee Composition: Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the proposed changes to the Dean Selection Committee Composition for the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation, as proposed by the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation and as contained in Attachment 1, to be effective upon approval.

CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

6. Approval of the Academic Schedule

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar

Discussion:

Ms Padfield noted that the draft schedule was fairly predictable and complied with policy and procedure. She made note of the following:

- New student orientation was scheduled for August 31st to accommodate fall reading break;
- Fall term start was September 1, 2022 - before Labour Day;
- Truth and Reconciliation Day was included in the schedule; and
- The Academic Schedule dates were July 1 2022 to August 2023 to align with the *University Calendar*.

There was no discussion.

Motion: Dew/Kav

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Academic Schedule for 2022-2023 (submitted by the Vice-Provost and University Registrar and as set forth in Attachment 7) and, in doing so, empower the Registrar to make any editorial changes as needed as long as the changes do not have the force of policy, to be effective upon final approval.

CARRIED

7. Notice of Motion: Proposed General Faculties Council (GFC) Standing Committee on Governance and Procedural Oversight

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Carolyn Sale, Associate Professor, Elected Faculty Member of GFC

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee because at the October 25, 2021 meeting of GFC, a notice of motion for debate at the next GFC meeting was made pursuant to rule 8.7 of the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules. GFC Executive Committee is asked to recommend on the substance of this motion to create a new standing committee of GFC on governance and procedural oversight and to place the motion on the proposed GFC agenda.

Discussion:

The Chair explained that this item was before the committee because GFC Executive (EXEC) held delegated authority from GFC to recommend on changes to meeting procedures, terms of reference, and matters related to governance procedural oversight, as well as to place Dr Sale's motion on the GFC agenda as per section 8.7 in the Meeting Procedural Rules. The Chair also pointed to the context in the supplementary notes section of the Governance Executive summary for this item.

Dr Sale noted that the governance of GFC and its subsidiary bodies resided with GFC and that any committee on governance procedural oversight should be a standing committee that reported directly to GFC. For this reason, Dr Sale noted that authority should be withdrawn from EXEC.

During the discussion, members asked questions and expressed comments including but not limited to:

- agreement that GFC ultimately held authority over its governance and procedural oversight but that there should be a standing committee in charge of this;
- that EXEC did hold this authority at present and had not sub-delegated any authority but only created a subcommittee to streamline the work;

- that the current composition of EXEC was very similar to that of the proposed committee in attachment 1;
- agreement that it was very important that EXEC and GFC consider delegations of authority as well as how GFC uses its time;
- whether approving this motion would retroactively withdraw any authority from EXEC;
- an observation that on the process side this new committee would remove delegated authority from a standing committee and that the last time GFC did this it spent about two years on consultation and development;
- an opinion that making changes "on the fly" like this, without sufficient consultation, was bad governance;
- that EXEC 's role related to approving GFC agendas required oversight or sightlines over procedures and pulling those two responsibilities apart did not make sense;
- that GFC gave EXEC authority related to governance and procedural oversight in 2019 as recommended by the GFC ad hoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority in 2017;
- that EXEC should hold this authority because of their role as the executive body of GFC and their responsibility to follow processes and ensure that items are properly vetted before they advance to GFC;
- that there had been no argument made that EXEC had not done their work and that if the subcommittee needed some additional membership that could be suggested;
- that EXEC was moving down a path that GFC had decided in 2017;
- that the GFC agenda process and governance procedural oversight were aligned and belonged together; and
- that if GFC decided to re-evaluate its processes and delegations it had the authority to do so.

Members asked for clarity on the motion that was before them.

A member expressed that it was important that the explanation of EXEC 's decision was shared with GFC.

Motion: Acker/Kav

THAT the GFC Executive Committee recommend that General Faculties Council create a standing committee on governance and procedural oversight with the responsibilities and composition set out in Attachment 1.

DEFEATED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. Path Forward for the Review of the GFC Guiding Documents

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Brad Hamdon, General Counsel and University Secretary

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to ask for direction on the path forward for the proposed changes to the GFC Guiding Documents.

Discussion:

The Chair thanked the members of the *ad hoc* Governance Procedural Review Committee who did the work to prepare these proposed changes and expressed that while the changes were important, they were not urgent. He noted that EXEC should consider how they could support effective engagement of GFC on these matters and ensure that GFC had the time needed to do that.

Mr Hamdon spoke about EXEC's role and the work of the *ad hoc* committee in spring 2021. He agreed with the Chair that this was not urgent and that it was more important that it was done correctly. He noted that he would like some guidance from EXEC on a path forward and asked members to consider:

- How to ensure that decision making on this item was inclusive to students;
- Whether GFC should consider these proposals for approval before student terms turned over at the end of April;
- How to use the GFC's time effectively;
- GFC meetings were scheduled for November 29, January 31, February 28, and March 21; and
- Whether it was appropriate for EXEC to limit the scope of changes to a review rather than a rewrite of the rules as it was not looking to take on the same scope of work that the *ad hoc* Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority took on in 2016-2017.

During the discussion, members asked questions and expressed comments including but not limited to:

- the importance of considering the goal when something went to GFC for discussion or consultation;
- that open discussion was very difficult with such a large body;
- that at minimum, members should be given opportunities to provide input;
- that strategic structure should be provided for debate and conversation;
- the importance of understanding the history of how these documents were developed;
- whether items could be brought forward in stages;
- that GFC was too large for wordsmithing on the floor and a draft should be brought forward for discussion and then for decision;
- an observation that the *ad hoc* committee's review in spring 2021 was a good process, had balanced perspectives, and that a lot of the points that had been brought up were debated extensively in that process;
- that there was not enough time in a GFC meeting for nine different amendments to be debated;
- that consultation was the key and that this was not about amendments;
- whether a special meeting of GFC was needed to do this work; and
- that GFC needed to be given instructions for the structure of the discussion and then a way to connect back after.

Mr Hamdon thanked members for their feedback and suggested that he provide an update to GFC in November and explain that EXEC was discussing the matter and working on a path forward. He proposed that this discussion continue at the December meeting of EXEC to develop a strategy of how best to use the next meetings of GFC.

A member asked whether the Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight should take this matter on. GFC Secretary Kate Peters noted that the *ad hoc* committee had done the work to develop these changes in the spring and that next steps should be up to EXEC and GFC.

At 3:00 p.m., midway through the discussion, President Flanagan stepped out of the chair and left the meeting, and Dr Elias assumed the role.

PREPARATION OF THE GFC AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

9. Residence Community Standards Policy

There was no discussion.

10. Exploration Credits

There was no discussion.

11. Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Policy

There was no discussion.

12. Future of Continuing Professional Education

There was no discussion.

13. Final Report on the Academic leaders task group

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

Discussion:

A member noted that since materials for this item were posted earlier that day, there had not been sufficient time to review the documents and asked what EXEC's role was. Provost Dew replied that this item was coming to the GFC Academic Planning Committee and to GFC for their review and feedback.

A member asked what the next steps would be. Provost Dew noted that there were many unknowns but this was one of the pathways for consultation and information gathering.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

14. Question Period

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Anastasia Elias, Professor and Elected Faculty Member of GFC, and Vice-Chair of GFC Executive Committee (EXEC)

Discussion:

The Vice-Chair noted that the Vice-President (Academic) of the Students' Union Abner Monteiro had submitted questions related to the Sexual Violence Policy and that those questions had been posted with meeting materials earlier that day.

GFC Secretary Kate Peters noted that the questions would also be submitted to GFC for a written response.

Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Steven Dew, and General Counsel and University Secretary Brad Hamdon, noted that these were important and complex questions related to how Policy and Procedure interacts with collective agreements and that a response would be provided.

In response to a question about whether he only wanted a response or if he wanted to start a process or conversation in another venue, Mr Monteiro noted that he wanted a response to his questions but also wanted to initiate a process to review the Sexual Violence Policy and this was a starting point.

ACTION ITEMS

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

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Anastasia Elias, Professor and Elected Faculty Member of GFC, and Vice-Chair of EXEC

Discussion:

Members discussed the draft agenda and agreed that there was not enough time to discuss all of the items listed. They discussed appropriate timing of the agenda and asked the proponents whether some of the items could be deferred to another meeting or shared as information items with a request for feedback.

A member asked if a special meeting of GFC would be needed. GFC Secretary Kate Peters noted that EXEC would need to talk about special meetings and when and why they should be used. She noted concerns about equity, the proposed changes to the Meeting Procedural Rules, and the timing pressure for items to meet the deadlines for the March cycle of the Board of Governors.

A member asked about GFC's role related to the Final Report on the Academic Leaders Task Group and whether GFC would be asked to make a decision. Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Steven Dew replied that he would like GFC to provide their thoughts and perspectives but there were no decisions for GFC to make at this point. He noted that some of the options noted in the report would involve structural changes and if those options were chosen, GFC would be involved in the decision-making according to their authority but that moving authorities around inside Faculties would be a Faculty Dean/Organizational Chart decision.

A member asked what information would be provided regarding EXEC's decision not to recommend the motion to create a new standing committee of GFC on governance and procedural oversight. Ms Peters replied that she would add information to the supplementary notes section of the Governance Executive Summary and note the following points:

- Recognition that GFC decided a path in 2017 and EXEC was following that path.
- Agreement that GFC has the authority to reconsider and to change the path if that is needed.
- Concern about process and adequate consultation for changes of this magnitude.
- Concern with overlap of authority between Exec and a new committee since preparing the GFC agenda and governance procedural oversight align.

Motion: Kav/Amaral

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Agenda for the November 29, 2021 meeting of General Faculties Council, as set forth in Attachment 1, as amended.

CARRIED

CLOSING SESSION

16. Adjournment
- Next Meeting of EXEC: December 6, 2021
 - Next Meeting of GFC: November 29, 2021

The Vice-Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.