



# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

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### General Faculties Council Approved Minutes

Monday, November 28, 2011  
3-15, UHALL  
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

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#### **ATTENDEES:**

Ex Officio (27): President Indira Samarasekera (Chair), Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Carl Amrhein, Vice-President (University Relations) Debra Pozega Osburn, Vice-President (Research) Lorne Babiuk, Vice-President (Finance and Administration) Phyllis Clark, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) Don Hickey, Chief Advancement Officer O'Neil Outar, Vice-Provost and University Registrar Gerry Kendal, Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Mazi Shirvani, Vice-Provost (Learning Services) and Interim Director, Library and Information Studies, Ernie Ingles; Deans and Directors: Lesley Cormack, James Kehrer, John Kennelly, Nathalie Kermoal, Lory Laing, Kerry Mummery, Fern Snart, Gregory Taylor, Verna Yiu

Students (3): Emerson Csorba, Colten Yamagishi

Faculty--elected (54): Deanna Williamson, Mikael Adolphson, Lise Gotell, Roger Graves, Steven Harris, Jack Ives, Serra Tinic, Roxanne Harde, Ian Gellatly, Linda Phillips, Christina Rinaldi, Sushanta Mitra, Mary Beckie, Ed Blackburn, Joanna Harrington, Brenda Clark, Pierre Lemelin, Rachel Milner, Rhonda Rosychuk, Elaine Yacyshyn, Patricia McCormack, Pirkko Markula, Duncan Saunders, Bob Luth, Jeremy Richards

#### **ATTENDEES (Appointed):**

Graduate Students at-Large (14): Nathan Andrews, Erika Anne Elves, John Meston, Nikki Nosworthy, Andy Rathbone, Hillary Sparkes, Minhao Zeng, Michal Zielinski

Undergraduate Students (40): Emily Fung, Ann Gordon, Nikolas Kalantzis, Brit Luimes, Lyndon Crone, Heidi Johnson, Saadiq Sumar, Jeffry Kochikuzhyi, Su Su Liang, Nicholas Monfries, Michael Parkes

Board of Governors Representatives (6): Robert Campenot, Roy Coulthard, Tanya Martelle, Rory Tighe

Non-Academic Staff, NASA (2): Russell Eccles

APOs and/or FSOs (2): n/a

Academic Staff Representing Sessional Staff (2): n/a

Vice-Provost and Dean of Students (1): Frank Robinson

#### **GOVERNANCE STAFF:**

Garry Bodnar, Secretary to General Faculties Council  
Emily Paulsen, Scribe

#### **PRESENTERS AND GUESTS:**

Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Ed Blackburn, Chair, GFC Nominating Committee

Garry Bodnar, Secretary to General Faculties Council and Coordinator, GFC Replenishment Committee

Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Bob Campenot, Academic Staff Representative on the Board of Governors

Tamara Korassa, Vice-President (Labour) and Executive Vice-President, Graduate Students' Association

Roy Coulthard, President, Graduate Students' Association

Indira Samarasekera, President and Chair, General Faculties Council

Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)

Rory Tighe, President, Students' Union

## **OPENING SESSION**

### 1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Cormack/Shirvani

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the Agenda.

**CARRIED**

### 2. Approval of the Minutes of October 31, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Joneson/Phillips

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the Minutes of October 31, 2011

**CARRIED**

### 3. Comments from the Acting President

Since she was not able to attend, President Samarasekera commented on the last GFC meeting which involved Dr Gwyn Morgan as the guest speaker. Dr Samarasekera noted that Dr Morgan is an influential voice in both the media and Canadian business circles and, therefore, it was important for him to hear from GFC and *vice versa*. She understood Dr Morgan had suggested that the purpose of a university is as a means to a career but that he did not contemplate creative thinking which is something, Dr Samarasekera stated, she values and is why she favours a breadth of knowledge in both the sciences and the arts. The President also noted that Canadian universities have been short-changed in terms of investment in recent years which has not allowed for any significant increases in faculty while, at the same time, student enrolments continue to rise.

The President recognized the 'Celebration of Service' held in the week previous. She congratulated GFC members Vice-Provost and Dean of Students Frank Robinson for 25 years of services; Dean David Lynch for his 30 years of service; and Professor Ed Blackburn for 40 years with the University of Alberta. She acknowledged, as well, Ms Ann Hodgson, University Governance, for her 25 years of service with the University. The President also recognized the success of the recent 'Festival of Ideas' and the Students' Union's Undergraduate Research Initiative launch and spoke to the honorary degrees presented at Fall Convocation 2011 to Michael Kirby, Rick Hansen, and Larry Wang.

Further, the President noted: the need to ensure the new Premier of the Province of Alberta was made well aware of the University's financial strains and stresses; the collaboration with the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia on preparing a proposal for the Canada India Fund; attempts to better strike an appropriate gender balance with regard to fulfillment of Canada Research Chairs (CRC); and Dr Amrhein's upcoming sabbatical during which Dr Martin Ferguson-Pell, currently Dean of the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, will take over as Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### 4. New Members of GFC

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Indira Samarasekera, President and Chair, General Faculties Council

*Discussion:*

There was no discussion.

Motion I: TO APPOINT/REAPPOINT (Amrhein/Shirvani)

The following academic staff member to represent sessional staff (contract academic staff), for a term beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2012:

Joanne Clair	Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
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The following non-academic staff representative nominated by the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) for a term beginning November 21, 2011 and ending June 30, 2014:

Alice Bouchard	Financial Services
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**CARRIED**

Motion II: TO RECEIVE (Cormack/Elves)

The following *ex officio* member to serve on GFC for a term beginning July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2013:

Martin Ferguson-Pell	Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
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The following *ex officio* member to serve on GFC for a term beginning July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2013:

Robert Haennel	Acting Dean, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine
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The following statutory faculty members who has been elected or re-elected by their Faculty to serve on GFC for a term beginning November 15, 2011 and ending June 30, 2014:

Nigel Ashworth	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Nicola Cherry	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Konrad Fassbender	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Jill Konkin	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Bernard Lemire	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Irvin Mayers	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry

**CARRIED**

5. Proposed Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching Procedure (UAPPOL)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenters:* Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee; Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic); Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

*Purpose of the Proposal:* To propose a new procedure under the Awards for Teaching Excellence Policy to recognize those individuals who have demonstrated excellence in teaching at the graduate level.

*Discussion:*

Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Amrhein introduced the proposal and, in doing so, acknowledged the work Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Colleen Skidmore had done to bring this initiative to fruition. He urged GFC to move this item to approval. Dr Skidmore, in turn, provided members with a brief description of the rationale underlying the proposed Procedure.

During the ensuing brief discussion, Dr Skidmore confirmed that this award is focused on faculty who primarily teach classes at a graduate level, noting that there is already in place the means to celebrate those who supervise graduate students.

Motion: Amrhein/Coulthard

THAT General Faculties Council approve the new (proposed) Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching Procedure (and accompanying Nominator's Checklist), as set forth in Attachment 1, to be effective upon final approval.

**CARRIED**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

6. Presentation from the Students' Union (SU): The SU's 2011-2014 Strategic Plan and 2011-2012 Executive Goals

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Rory Tighe, President, Students' Union

*Purpose of the Proposal:* For discussion/information.

*Discussion:*

President of the Student's Union (SU), Rory Tighe, employed a PowerPoint presentation to describe in detail to members the operation and structure of the SU. Mr Tighe explained that eight of their 10 million dollar budget comes from the businesses run through the SU with the rest sourcing from student fees. He outlined the SU's governance structure, including a breakdown of the Students' Council. Recent accomplishments of the SU were noted, including the successful launch of the UPass, the Health and Dental Program (with an opt-out option) made available to undergraduate students, and the continued expansion of 'Week of Welcome' (WOW) events. Mr Tighe noted the creation of a new department within the student organization the purpose of which, in part, is to assist Faculty student associations connect with the SU. He also spoke to student engagement initiatives undertaken by the SU.

Mr Tighe then continued by updating members on this year's Students' Council Executive's 'agenda' which includes: the creation of a Fall Term reading week; the 'Get Out the Vote' campaign; a referendum, possibly in March, 2012, on the introduction of an undergraduate spring/summer UPass; renovation of student space; InfoLink renewal; and the importance of student mental health.

Mr Tighe finished his presentation by acknowledging the great relationship the SU has with the University's Administration, citing this as one of the reasons he believes that the University has one of the best SUs that he has experienced.

A member supported the interactive electronic map portal around campus, noting it would make information more accessible to all students. Another member asked for clarification about the mental health study that Mr Tighe referenced in his presentation (ie, the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey on health issues).

7. Presentation from the Graduate Students' Association (GSA): The GSA and Its Strategic Work Plan (2011-2012)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenters:* Roy Coulthard, President, Graduate Students' Association; Tamara Korassa, Vice-President (Labour) and Executive Vice-President, Graduate Students' Association

*Discussion:*

President Roy Coulthard described the Graduate Students' Association's (GSA) structure and budget to members. He noted the GSA started in 1959 and was formalized in 1972; unlike the Student's Union (SU), the GSA negotiates a collective agreement for the benefit of those graduate students employed by the University of Alberta. The operating budget of the GSA was estimated at around one million dollars. Mr Coulthard reinforced the GSA's dedication to advocate for graduate students through such actions as provincial lobbying with the Alberta Graduate Council. He also encouraged members of GFC to visit the online budget dialogue survey released by the Provincial Government as a way to make the Government better aware of post-secondary as a priority for investment.

Ms Korassa then provided members with an overview on GSA services. This included its comprehensive health and dental plan, reference to the spring/summer UPass, and available counselling services. Ms Korassa noted that a big priority is educating students about the collective body of the GSA so that the GSA, in turn, can properly and appropriately serve graduate students.

Mr Coulthard then completed the presentation by outlining the GSA's strategic plan for the year, many goals of which he noted would take longer than one year to accomplish (eg, improving graduate student supervision and graduate student funding).

There were no questions.

8. Guest Speakers at Meetings of General Faculties Council (GFC)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

*Purpose of the Proposal:* For discussion/information.

*Discussion:*

Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Amrhein introduced the above-noted issue to members. He reassured GFC that having Dr Gwyn Morgan as a guest speaker at Council's October 31, 2011 meeting did not imply an endorsement of what Dr Morgan said at that time. He added that the views represented by the guest speaker are similar to those expressed by others and, although it is different from the stance that the University takes, it is important to be exposed to these different and sometimes controversial views. Dr

Amrhein asked GFC to comment on whether they would like more guest speakers at future meetings of Council.

A member stated that if guest speakers spark debates, GFC should be cautious on how they conduct themselves and engage in such debate, with an attempt to focus on common interests. Another member spoke up in agreement, stating that while it is important to have opinions expressed that make one think, members must ensure they are sufficiently prepared in order to avoid emotional defensive responses. A member discussed how it was important to go outside the University community to be challenged by different opinions and ideas than those commonly encountered within the academy.

The President noted that while Canadian universities have attempted to submit their opinions and views on issues such as those raised by Dr Morgan to publications like *The Globe and Mail*, they are not being published and, as a result, the academic community must continue to try to make their voices heard.

The President of the Students' Union (SU), while he supported guest speakers at meetings, voiced concern that the regular occurrence of such contributors might detract from the original purpose of GFC.

A member expressed the view that there is not a lot of support for the academic community within certain quarters of the Federal Government and added that the academy should be trying as much as it can to influence those with opposing and detrimental points of view. Another member suggested that we not just tell these guest speakers about the University but clearly demonstrate what we have to offer, as well.

The President of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) noted that universities are not getting their stories out to publicly counter these negative opinions of universities.

A member suggested that after a GFC meeting at which a guest speaker has been in attendance, there be a summary document where GFC members could record their opinions.

The Provost concluded the discussion by asking members to send in their opinions on this matter to his attention. He noted that it was likely there would only be one speaker *per* term. He recognized how Dr Morgan, during his presentation at the October meeting of GFC, frequently used the power of the anecdote in his argument so it would be beneficial, he felt, to have counter stories to reinforce the successes of individuals at and because of the University of Alberta. He stated that he would bring the issue of guest speakers at GFC meetings back to the GFC Executive Committee for further review.

## 9. Question Period

9.1Q Question from GFC Graduate Student Member Andrew Rathbone Regarding Support for International Students Attending the University of Alberta

9.1R Response from the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) and University of Alberta International (UAI) to the Question Posed by Mr. Rathbone

Mr Rathbone added to his written inquiry, stating that it is important for the University, in its strategic planning, to have the necessary resources for success available before international students come to the University.

A member asked the Provost to set the record straight with regard to a quotation recently printed in *The Gateway* with respect to the institutional budget and the effect negotiations with the staff associations had had on that budget. The Provost, in response, spoke to the operating budget of the University, noting that

the Campus Alberta Operating Grant from the Provincial Government makes up the majority of the funding available to the institution, while a considerable amount of the rest of the funding comes from tuition. He noted that tuition increases over the past several years have been virtually flat. He stated that while the Provincial Government has not cut funding, it has not been increasing enough to match rising expenses. Dr Amrhein indicated that the turnover savings from the retirement of faculty available, in turn, for hiring new faculty was no longer applicable and is putting strain on the institutional budget. He noted that it is necessary to remain competitive with compensation but that the employment base has been shrinking. The President added that a moderate wage settlement had been negotiated with academic staff and that the Government should respect that.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

10. GFC Executive Committee Minutes of October 3, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

There was no discussion.

11. Report of the Board of Governors of October 21, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

There were no reports.

12. E-Mail Reports of the GFC Nominating Committee

There were no reports.

13. E-Mail Report of the GFC Replenishment Committee

There were no reports.

14. Information Items Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings

Message from the Provost Regarding the October 31, 2011 Meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC) - Presentation by Dr. Gwyn Morgan (E-Mailed to Members on October 26, 2011)

15. Reports

There were no reports.

### **CLOSING SESSION**

16. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.