



General Faculties Council
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, March 22, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Statutory Members:

Ex-Officio:

Bill Flanagan, Chair
Chris Andersen
Stanford Blade
Neal Davies
Steven Dew
Walter Dixon
Joseph Doucet
Fraser Forbes
Todd Gilchrist
Robert Haennel
Brenda Hemmelgarn
Shanathi Johnson
Matina Kalcounis-Rueppell
Elan MacDonald
Maria Mayan
Brooke Milne
Pierre-Yves Mocquais
Kerry Mummery
Melissa Padfield
Steve Patten
Andrew Sharman
Demetres Tryphonopoulos
Jennifer Tupper

Elected Faculty:

Jason Acker
W. Ted Allison
J Nelson Amaral
Nicholas Beier
Pamela Brett-MacLean
Robert Burrell
Heather Coleman
Piet Defraeye
Gary Eitzen
Anastasia Elias
Mary Forhan
Christine Hughes
Peter Hurd
Marianne Jacquet
Nat Kav
Jessica Kolopenuk
Hollis Lai
Kathleen Lowrey

Susanne Luhmann
Derek MacKenzie
Pirkko Markula
Al Meldrum
Sue-Ann Mok
Roger Moore
Sarah Moore
Sujata Persad
Frances Plane
Elena Posse de Chaves
Cheryl Poth
Christina Rinaldi
Dan Romanyk
Victoria Ruetalo
Carolyn Sale
Susan Sommerfeldt
Eleni Stroulia
Kisha Supernant
Alan Underhill
Mani Vaidyanathan
Jonathan White
Lynne Wiltse
Moin Yahya
Minn-Nyoung Yoon
Yan Yuan

Students:

David Draper
Katie Kidd
Sachiketha Reddy

Appointed Members:

Ricardo Acuna
Joel Agarwal
Susan Babcock
Samar Barazesh
Paramita Chaudhuri Basu
Chris Beasley
Dhir Bid
Daniela Carbajal
Meijun Chen
André Costopoulos
Nicole de Grano
Talia Dixon
Eric Einarson

Shannon Erichsen
Jennifer Fang
Shawn Flynn
Christian Fotang
Makboolee Fyith
Simran Ghoman
Shivani Gupta
Jill Hall
Purna Hariharan
Zaryab Khan
Emily Kimani
David Konrad
Janice Kung
Devshri Lala
Sharonne Lee
Christopher Lupke
Habba Mahal
Angie Mandeville
Adekunle Mofolasayo
Abner Monteiro
Emily Motoska
Ana Oliveira
Jacob Park
Nicole Patrie
Liam Pearce
David Ren
Sarah Severson
Khandaker Akib Shahriar
Catrina Shellenberg
Aadhavya Sivakumaran
Lee Smith
Andrei Tabirca
Shahed Taghian
Dehaghani
Frederick Tappenden
Edward Tiet
Dilini Vethanayagam
Marc Waddingham
Adan Wang
Akiko Watanabe
Adrian Wattamaniuk
Donna Wilson
Adrienne Wright
Ding Xu

REGRETS:

Dale Askey
Adarsh Badesha
Barbara Billingsley
Amlan Bose
Karl Buchanan
Marwan Burhani
Ashley Cardinal
Yiming Chen
Megan Ciocchetto
Greta Cummings
Michael Dyck
Bill Foster
Michael Frishkopf
Basil Hubbard
Simran Kaur Dhillon
Harnoor Kochar
Rahul Korde
Pierre Lemelin
Lucas Marques
Sean McMurtry
Gaser Nagah
Yusuf Oliya
Keith Rourke
Tyler Saretzky
Amy Tse
Kristof Van Assche
Mansimran Virk
Xinxin Zhang
Francine (Yuheng) Zhou

Staff:

Brad Hamdon, General
Counsel and University
Secretary
Kate Peters, GFC
Secretary
Heather Richholt, Scribe
University Governance:
Ann Hodgson
Edyta McLoughlin
Laura Riley

OPENING SESSION

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair read 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.

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 General Faculties Council (GFC)

Discussion:

The Chair noted that he had received a request to reorder the agenda in order to discuss fall 2021 planning as the first discussion item, and as this was front of mind for many, that he was happy to do so.

Motion: Sharman/Draper

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the agenda as amended.

CARRIED

2. Report from the President

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

Discussion:

In his comments, the Chair made note of the following:

- the government of Alberta's 2021 budget and the eleven percent cut to the university's provincial funding;
- the revised University of Alberta budget which was approved by the Board of Governors on March 12, 2021;
- recognition of the one year anniversary of the move to remote delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- the Board/GFC/Senate Summit scheduled for March 26, 2021 with the topic: University of Alberta by 2030; and
- the search for the new Vice-President (Research and Innovation).

Members discussed the university's response to the budget cuts and the need for additional provincial funding in order to grow enrolment in the future.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Seconder: Underhill/Dew

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of February 22, 2021

Item was deferred.

4. 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 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

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. COVID Update (no documents)
- Fall 2021

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

Presenter(s): Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations), and Executive Lead of the University's COVID-19 Response; Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar; John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives)

Discussion:

Mr Sharman gave a presentation on the current state of emergency, fall 2021 planning complexities, and remaining uncertainties for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Ms Padfield spoke about the planning approach for the fall 2021 schedule, the current assumptions, next steps, and timeline for student registration.

Dr Nychka updated members about the work of the Provost's Taskforce on Remote Teaching and Learning with respect to remote proctoring of exams, participation grades, and recording of lectures.

Provost Dew spoke about his recent meeting with the Provosts of the other U15 institutions. He noted that universities were generally planning for more face-to-face instruction while also providing support for those students who would not be able to be in attendance due to travel restrictions or health concerns, and for the instructors who were continuing to be stretched to accommodate diverse student needs.

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

- concerns regarding those who choose not to vaccinate and those who cannot safely receive a COVID-19 vaccination;
- compliance with public health directives;
- availability of vaccines;
- the university's responsibility for contact tracing;
- whether de-densifying and using space more effectively would change the business hours that instructors were required to teach;
- whether instructors would be required to provide both in-person and remote instruction or a hybrid delivery format;
- why some instructors were unable or unwilling to record lectures and creative strategies to make learning more accessible;
- University of British Columbia's partial ban on online proctoring;
- whether the deadline for submitting grades could be changed given the heavier workload of instructors;
- that there was more involved in a hybrid delivery format than simply recording lectures;

- that a hybrid delivery format essentially meant delivery of two courses;
- that instructors had finite resources and that women were disproportionately affected by the increase in workload; and
- that the continuing demands on instructors were not reasonable or sustainable.

EARLY CONSULTATION

6. Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation Policy

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

Presenter(s): Wendy Rodgers, Deputy Provost; 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 Rodgers explained that the development of this policy related to student feedback on teaching and the need for multifaceted evaluation of teaching. She also noted that GFC Policy 111 was outdated and the new policy suite would be moved to the University of Alberta Policies and Procedures Online (UAPPOL).

Dr Nychka gave a presentation on the work to date on the new policy suite, the current development and consultations that were underway, the projection for rescission of GFC Policy 111, and for the approval and implementation of the new UAPPOL policy suite.

Members asked questions and expressed opinions including but not limited to:

- the use of Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRIs) and whether negative responses were addressed with the instructor;
- supports available for instructors to improve their teaching through the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL);
- research on bias in USRIs and that the university should not use biased responses for employment evaluation;
- a reminder that the GFC has discussed teaching and learning evaluation tools and passed a motion in 2016 requiring that CLE report on the use of student rating mechanisms of instruction;
- a suggestion for a forum with a panel of external experts on the bias in USRI data; and
- that USRIs were the only way for students to evaluate their instructors and that they should be maintained in some way.

Dr Nychka responded that there was work being done on the USRI questions to make them respond to the instructor's teaching and not to the person. He observed that Faculty Evaluation Committees (FECs) were responsible for deciding how to operate and noted that USRI data was best used for formative assessment rather than summative assessment.

7. 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 of 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 provided an overview of the FGSR's work on supervisory initiatives since first presented at GFC in November 2019. She spoke about the pilot of the forms, which had good participation but was set back by the COVID-19 pandemic. She also noted that the original low-tech google version of the forms had been refined and set up for delivery via the university's electronic document and records management system (EDRMS). Dr Milne emphasized that the supervisory membership and training initiative could contribute to the success of the student-supervisor relationship and directed members to the responses to common questions in the package.

Provost Dew noted that this initiative had been a top priority for the Graduate Students' Association for years and that the Board of Governors was encouraging its development as well. He explained that while serious problems were not widespread, the university did not presently have a consistent approach or the necessary data to allow for response when there were issues. He further pointed out that this initiative would bring the university up to the level of the rest of the U15 institutions.

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

- support of the initiative and a query about the potential to adopt it for the Postgraduate Medical Education program;
- a question about the efficiency of these forms and whether there was sufficient staff in FGSR to track all the data;
- a concern about the time required to fill out the forms;
- whether instructors could lose their FGSR membership and whether students would be blocked from registration for non-compliance;
- a question about the severity of the cases noted in the materials and whether a form could adequately address that level of problem;
- a suggestion that some issues only come to light when they become severe and that the forms could allow for earlier intervention, before the problem escalates;
- the power imbalance between the student and the supervisor and the importance of setting clear expectations and maintaining communication;
- the severity of consequences to a student's education and career in cases when the relationship breaks down;
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) implications as most of the severe issues of breakdown of the student-supervisory relationship involve women or international students;
- an expression of support from colleagues at the Research Ethics Office who felt that these initiatives could prevent issues and save time and resources overall;
- whether the membership requirement would be an issue when recruiting new faculty members;
- an expression of doubt as to whether these problems could be solved by forms and "best practices";
- an opinion that these initiatives were important and that members should work together to propose improvements so that they could be supported;
- the importance of a positive graduate student experience for recruitment of future graduate students;
- an expression of support because the forms give both students and supervisors an opportunity to express any issues as they arise with oversight by FGSR; and
- an opinion that the forms were too general to be useful and needed to be discipline specific.

During the discussion there was a motion made from the floor to extend the meeting by one hour which was defeated and a motion to extend the meeting by thirty minutes which was carried.

Toward the end of the discussion, the Chair made the decision to close the speakers list. This decision was challenged. The Chair explained that there were remaining items on the agenda which needed to be discussed and noted that the FGSR Supervisory Initiatives would be back at GFC for further discussion before it came forward for a recommendation. The challenge was put to a vote and was defeated.

Dr Milne concluded by stating that the student/supervisor form would meet the current minimum requirement for reporting and would also allow the flexibility for more frequent meeting and reporting if desired. She also noted that the form would not be a paper-based form but would be intuitive and include pre-populated data which would ensure that it was user friendly and not onerous.

Motion: Sale/Vaidyanathan

Motion from the floor:

THAT the General Faculties Council extend the meeting for an additional hour.

DEFEATED

Motion: Vaidyanathan/Babcock

Motion from the floor:

THAT the General Faculties Council extend the meeting for an additional thirty minutes.

CARRIED

Motion: Sale/Vaidyanathan

Motion from the floor:

Challenge to the ruling of the Chair.

DEFEATED

DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

8. 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 GFC

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 related decision-making.

In addition, GFC is asked to reaffirm a statement regarding participation of members. This language will be forwarded to the Executive ad hoc Governance & Procedural Review Committee for inclusion in their review of the GFC Roles and Responsibilities Document.

Discussion:

The Chair explained that the actions coming out of the recommendations of GFC's committee of the whole on February 8, 2021 were being tracked in the Governance Executive Summary in the meeting materials. He noted that the GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) had discussed the first recommendation, regarding metrics, at their meeting of March 17.

Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of APC noted that APC had discussed metrics at their meeting and established a working group to look into metrics further. He observed that there were concerns with the metrics as articulated in the Board's motion of December 11, 2020, especially with regard to metrics on interdisciplinarity. He noted the intention to report back to GFC with more information in April.

The Chair spoke about the second recommendation concerning joint meetings between the Board and GFC and noted that a conversation between the GFC Executive Committee (EXEC) and the Board Governance

Committee had been scheduled to take place on March 25. He indicated that he would report back to GFC in April about that meeting.

The Chair noted that the third and fourth recommendations had been referred to the Executive ad hoc Review Committee on Governance and Procedure and asked the GFC Secretary to provide an update.

Ms Peters noted that this ad hoc committee had been established on February 10, 2021 by EXEC with a mandate to review the GFC Principles Documents and the Question Period Procedure. She further noted that at their meeting of March 8, EXEC decided that the Executive ad hoc Review Committee should discuss recommendations 3 and 4 and make some suggestions for next steps.

A member raised a point of privilege and asked for more information about the terms of reference for the Executive ad hoc Review Committee. Ms Peters chatted out the link to the final motions for the February 10, 2021 meeting of EXEC which included the approved terms of reference.

The Chair noted that the fifth recommendation was before members as a motion to reaffirm GFC's commitment to equal participation of members and that, if passed, this language would be integrated into GFC's Principles Document: *Roles and Responsibilities of Members* by the Executive ad hoc Review Committee.

Motion: Dew/Draper

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| THAT General Faculties Council (GFC) reaffirm its commitment that, regardless of their membership category, all members of GFC are afforded the same rights to participate within the body. |
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CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

9. Question Period

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

Discussion:

At the beginning of question period there was a motion made from the floor to extend the meeting by thirty minutes which was defeated and a motion to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes which was carried.

Members discussed the provision in the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules that requires that every GFC meeting have a Question Period as a standing item and a member raised a point of order noting that the agenda of GFC was to include one half hour for question period that may be extended.. The Chair explained that GFC meetings were scheduled for two hours and that it was up to GFC to decide whether or not to extend the meetings beyond that time.

A member asked if an interim Dean had been selected for the Faculty of Engineering. Provost Dew answered that his office was working on an appointment and a notification would be shared as soon as possible.

A member asked if there had been any movement on the idea for use of tuition offsets. Provost Dew replied that there was a question raised as to whether additional resources could be directed to student supports if revenues exceeded budgeted amounts and that APC had committed to a review of Student Financial Aid in fall 2021.

A member noted as follow up to question 9.3 regarding materials for GFC that it was important that materials for GFC were adequate and distributed well in advance so that GFC was ready to discuss items at the meetings.

A member asked about the retention numbers in the Undergraduate Enrolment Report and whether the numbers accounted for the extension of academic assessment due to COVID-19. Vice-Provost and Registrar Padfield noted that there was a specific reference to COVID-19 and its influence on all the results in the report.

A member expressed that she had noticed a pattern that written answers provided for submitted questions were too short or not germane to the question asked. The member gave the example of a question regarding training that the Board of Governors received regarding collegial governance and academic freedom which the member felt was replied to with an insufficient sentence referencing orientation and ongoing development opportunities. The member referred to a response on the question about the position descriptions for College Deans from the Board Chair and asked the Chair to speak to the incongruence between the December 11th 2020 Board decision on academic restructuring. She also noted that a question asking for a chronological timeline and list of responses to student concerns about remote learning was given an insufficient response that did not provide the list that was requested. Provost Dew replied that there had been hundreds of emails and meetings across all levels of the university since March 2020 regarding remote learning and the chronological timeline and list that was asked for did not exist. He explained that the response that was provided to the question was an attempt to convey the scope of the response with the information that was available.

Motion: Tabirca/Sale

Motion from the floor:

THAT the General Faculties Council extend the meeting for an additional thirty minutes.

DEFEATED

Motion: Elias/Coleman

Motion from the floor:

THAT the General Faculties Council extend the meeting for an additional fifteen minutes.

CARRIED

INFORMATION REPORTS

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

10. Report of the GFC Executive Committee
11. Report of the GFC Academic Planning Committee
12. Report of the GFC Programs Committee
13. GFC Nominations and Elections
14. Report of the Board of Governors
15. Information Items
 - A. Public Report on the University of Alberta Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Employee Census
 - B. University of Alberta Museums Annual Report
16. Information Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

17. Adjournment
- Next Meeting of General Faculties Council: April 27, 2021

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.