
General Faculties Council
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, October 16, 2023
Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

OPENING SESSION

The Chair began with a land acknowledgement:

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

1. Approval of the Agenda

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

Discussion:

The Chair noted several considerations for the approval of the agenda discussed by the GFC Executive Committee including the placement of Question Period and a change to the item concerning the Notice of Motion.

There were no questions.

Motion: The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT General Faculties Council approve the agenda.
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CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

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

Discussion: The Chair made and invited comments on the following:

- University Teaching Award Winners;
- A learning management system (LMS);
- Nominations for the next Chancellor;
- A recent visit of the Minister of Advanced Education;
- The launch of the Options Navigation Network; and
- A search process for the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

V Yiu noted that more teaching awards would be launched over the next year and K Mündel provided an update on engagement sessions for the LMS.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of September 18, 2023

The motion to approve the items in the consent agenda was moved and seconded.

THAT General Faculties Council approve the open session minutes of September 18, 2023.

CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

4 New Members of GFC

To Appoint:

The following undergraduate student representatives to serve on GFC for terms commencing immediately and ending April 30, 2024:

Bailey Dickie, Faculty of Agricultural, Life, and Environmental Sciences
Layla Alhussainy, Faculty of Arts
Reagan Tremblay, Faculty of Arts
Hal Kohestani, Faculty of Arts
Paige Boyer, Faculty of Business
Julia Kloet, Faculty of Business
Josh Boissonnault, Faculty of Education
Spencer Hoppe, Faculty of Education
Carter Watt, Faculty of Education
Aditya Tutika, Faculty of Engineering
Gavin Clark, Faculty of Engineering
Liam Watt, Faculty of Engineering
Madison Villiger, Faculty of Science
Gabriel Ayoku, Faculty of Science
Nole Kjemhus, Faculty of Science
Liam Richardson, Faculty of Science

CARRIED

5. Consideration of a Clean Air/Smoke-Free Policy at the University of Alberta A. Clean Air Strategy/Smoke-Free Policy

Presenter(s): Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations); Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean, Health and Wellness

Discussion:

The chair noted that the motion was before GFC because of a 2018 request from a member of GFC that a Clean Air Strategy be developed to make campuses smoke free. He clarified that if approved, the motion would signal to the Board of Governors that GFC would like to see smoking prohibited on all university campuses. He pointed members to a supplementary document for GFC's consideration submitted by the University of Alberta Students' Union and invited the President of the Indigenous Students' Union (ISU), M. Moyan to present.

A Sharman and K Friese described the development of the proposal and the polemic nature of the discussion. M Moyan presented on behalf of the ISU Executive Team and Indigenous students on Campus. She described consultations and presented a statement on the proposal pointing members to the item in their materials. She expressed a hope that members would consider the impact on Indigenous students in enforcing a ban, and the symbolic importance of tobacco for Indigenous communities. She reminded members about the approval of *Braiding Past, Present and Future, the University of Alberta Indigenous Strategic Plan (Braiding)* and the goal to

make safe spaces for Faculty, Staff and Community members and expressed an opinion that the proposal did not contribute to harm reduction or Reconciliation.

Members discussed:

- How a ban on students might impact Indigenous students who are using tobacco in symbolic ways;
- The impact on students who are immunocompromised;
- The Equity and Vaping Report, which shows evidence that students support the status quo;
- That the proposal originated with GFC and that the University had changed dramatically since 2018;
- That practices like Smudging are not protected by policy, and other implementation considerations;
- The lack of capacity within University of Alberta Police Service (UAPS) to enforce this policy and the ability for the university implement a ban;
- The health concerns of students;
- The possible impacts on Indigenous students on Campus;
- That the Graduate Students Association (GSA) does not support a full ban on smoking;
- Support for smoke free policies from the perspective of public health;
- That the motion before GFC was not a policy that was finalised but an opportunity to explore and develop the regulation and the possibility of being guided by *Braiding* and using a decolonised lens to support development;
- That co-creating a policy in the face of such a massive disagreement between faculty and students is problematic;
- An opinion that differentiating between commercial and ceremonial use of tobacco could be accomplished through education and a question of whether the UASU had consulted with Elders;
- The well documented harm of long-term use of tobacco and the impact on members in the University community have asthmas and other long-term or chronic illnesses;
- A clarification that any policy developed would intentionally differentiate between ceremonial and commercial use of tobacco;
- The conflict with principles set out in the Scarborough Charter signed by the University of Alberta;
- Precedents from other smoke free universities that include details on accommodations for persons with disabilities and ceremonial use of tobacco products;
- That while universities may have implemented policies, doing so at the University would disregard the feelings of students and an opinion that this would not constitute leadership;
- That the motion was only a recommendation to the Board and that GFC could shape the policy;
- A consideration of the possible impact on the surrounding communities given there are few possible locations for designated smoking areas that avoid pathways and ventilation intakes on Campus;
- That we would only be accommodating 8% of the population if we don't approve a policy and that 92% of the population are experiencing harm;
- A consideration of differentiating Vaping which doesn't have the same impact on air quality;
- That implementing the ban would take important resources away from other initiatives;
- Impacts on staff smokers who will need to leave campus and whether it would be necessary to extend break times;
- A question of whether there was evidence that a smoking ban will reduce harm and an opinion that a policy that can't be implemented is not a policy at all;
- That the policy may be intended to promote harm reduction but that it would constitute a danger to smokers with mobility restraints who may potentially encounter obstacles leaving campus;
- An opinion that a ban would stigmatize people who smoke;
- A question of equity given that cannabis users have access to designated areas to protect non-smokers, and a comment that we treating one group differently; and
- Considerations for Augustana Campus where there are only two spaces for smokers.

THAT the General Faculties Council recommend that the Board of Governors direct university administration to develop a policy that prohibits smoking and vaping of all products on all university campuses with limited exceptions for ceremonial and medical use and that will designate spaces to accommodate those who live in campus residences.

FAILED

6. Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Name Change

Presenter(s): Roger Epp, Interim Vice-Provost and Dean of FGSR

Discussion: R Epp presented the proposal and provided an explanation of the rationale behind it, namely a unit review where external reviewers had flagged the incongruence with the name of the faculty, given the services offered to post-doctoral students. He noted the proposed name change will make visible the important contribution of post-doctoral students and the role of the faculty in supporting them.

There was no discussion.

Motion: The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the General Faculties Council approve, as recommended by the GFC Academic Planning Committee, the change of name from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to take effect upon final approval.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. Update from the Vice-Provost of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (no documents)

Presenter(s): Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)

8. Council on Systemic Ableism (no documents)

Presenter(s): Hussain Alhussainy, Elected Student Member, Faculty of Arts; Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion); Danielle Peers, Associate Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation

H Alhussainy expressed his thanks to members of the Executive of the University of Alberta Students Union for their support and the members of the Council on Systemic Ableism. He introduced himself as a fourth-year political sciences student in the Faculty of Arts and indicated that his research was focused on academic ableism. He began by observing that several groups are sidelined in the conversation on equity, diversity and inclusion. He reminded members that all universities are built on the foundation of eugenics and ableism and that the historical foundation of the university could be described as serving a function that was the exact opposite of an asylum, as it sought to exclude undesirable people from education. He stated that if the University is truly committed to inclusion, it must involve those students in the conversation and in the campus.

He highlighted four points that the University needed to address to counter systemic ableism:

1) Accommodations

He noted that the University's current system for processing accommodations removes the autonomy from the student by placing it within the Academic Success Centre. He provided additional context noting that a restricted list of disabilities is available and that students have to choose the accommodation that best describes their situation. He provided his own example, noting that for the past three years, he had requested a scribe and been denied for various reasons. These included various justifications ranging

from protecting academic integrity, which he described as disrespectful to budgetary constraints, which conflict with the University's Duty to Accommodate. He noted that it was not until he met the current Dean of Students, that some of his needs began to be addressed but that in order for that to happen, he had to meet with a series of increasingly senior officials.

2) Access

Access is not just about student services but also the built environment including our facilities and buildings. He expressed a sense of sadness and shame that University infrastructure is not built to accommodate all students. He expressed support for efforts to retrofit buildings to fix issues that were created in the past but noted these fixes often can't solve the problem. He provided examples including steep inclines, small elevators, missing railings, and elevators without auditory services. He pointed to universal design elements which may not meet the needs of all communities, but are a good place to start. He concluded by emphasizing that consultation is essential to ensure that we do not implement retrofits that won't work for the unique needs of unique individuals.

3) Working on eliminating the ableist concerns on Campus and overall disability awareness:

He described the need to raise awareness of ableist exclusion for example, in events educating groups organising events in University spaces. He described the need to raise awareness of disabilities which is still viewed as a problem or medical abnormality that needs to be fixed when there is nothing wrong with individuals with disabilities. He emphasized the need to use a critical disabilities studies as a lens to change perspectives and provided some ideas such as incorporating content in course work or organising weeks to focus on disabilities. He encouraged groups on Campus that integrate ideas on feminism, critical race theory, or gender equality, to incorporate disability ways of thinking. He called upon GFC to and members of the University Community to expand the discussion and make room for individuals with lived experience to offer their unique perspectives rather than channeling a mainstream perception of what a human is or should be expected to do.

In conclusion, he called for a commitment from every faculty council, the Graduates' Students Association, the University of Alberta Students' Union, and the General Faculties Council to take into account accessibility concerns and the unconscious ableist policies that may still plague our campus. He called for a hub or a central group to lead coordination but reminded members that we all have the responsibility to make sure that our campuses are accessible. He expressed a hope that this would be the beginning of many campus initiatives.

D Peers noted that the experience of H. Alhussainy resonates with her experience but also with empirical research. She noted that the accommodation processes at the University lack transparency and a right-size approach, that requests are not dealt with in a timely manner and faculty and students are openly discouraged by faculty and staff to access supports. She reminded members that accommodations are not a service or a favour, but should be seen as a loophole for the University to continue to function with barriers in place for members of the community. She clarified that instead, the University must move towards a process that removes barriers and pointed to the work of research councils who are putting in place accountability mechanisms to encourage universities to put in place better systems. She described the work of the Council which is hoping to put in place a more proactive and systemic approach to consulting people as the university moves forward with initiatives.

C Smith acknowledged that members of the Council were in the room and observing and thanked them for being there. She described efforts of the Council to advise on policies, programs and structures that have an impact on everyone. She noted that the Council is working on Terms of Reference and working groups and that these groups are welcoming members. She described alignment between the Councils work and the Calls that had been powerfully articulated by H. Alhussainy including development of a Hub to move from an accommodations and

actions approach; provision of access-resources and disability education; and coordination of action and services.

R Sanghera reflected that the approach to removing barriers should be systemic and described the commitment to advance this work and to engage different voices.

The Chair thanked H Al Hussainy for sharing his insights and members asked about translation and American Sign Language interpretation services offered within the community.

9. Question Period
10.1 - Question and Response on Campus Saint-Jean

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

Questions were deferred.

INFORMATION REPORTS

- 11 Report of the GFC Executive Committee
- 12 Report of the GFC Academic Planning Committee
- 13 Report of the GFC Programs Committee
- 14 Report of the GFC University Teaching Awards Committee
- 15 GFC Nominations and Elections- Current Vacancies
- 16 Information Items:
A. Truth and Reconciliation Report to Community (TRC) Dashboard
B. Facilities Update
C. 2024-2025 Academic Schedule
- 17 Information Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings
UAlberta Email - Seeking the next U of A Chancellor!

CLOSING SESSION

- 18 Adjournment
Next Meeting of General Faculties Council: November 20, 2023

<p>ATTENDEES Bill Flanagan (Chair) Verna Yiu (Vice-Chair) Noor Abdelwahab Simaan AbouRizk Seun Akinfolarin Hussain Alhussainy Layla Alhussainy Declan Ali Pedro Almeida Chris Andersen Damon Atwood Bishoi Aziz Jill Bagwe Quinn Benders Barbara Billingsley Stanford Blade Marsha Boyd Jennifer Branch-Mueller Heather Bruce Jessica Butts Scott Jason Carey Susan Chatwood Odile Cisneros Gavin Clark Greta Cummings Chathuranga De Silva Bipro Dhar Stephanie Dickie Ryan Dunch Duncan Elliott Roger Epp Carlos Fernandez-Patron Richard Field Shawn Flynn Kyle Foster Christian Fotang Zachary Friggstad Megan Garbutt Kenneth Gariepy Julianne Gibbs-Davis Todd Gilchrist Douglas Gingrich Eva Glancy Douglas Gleddie Taylor Good Shubham Goswami Goswami Lise Gotell Michael Griffiths Jodi Harding-Kuriger Brenda Hemmelgarn</p>	<p>Michael Hendzel Tammy Hopper Tracy Howlett Jun Hu Christine Hughes Zak Kaal Matina Kalcounis-Rueppell Esther KimTim Klassen Julia Kloet Valentina Kozlova Vadim Kravchinsky Adrian Lam Corrine Langinier Pierre Lemelin Liran Levin Ola Mabrouk Elan MacDonald Nikolai Malykhin Shivani Mandal Andrew McGee Danielle Milln Aamir Mohamed Weimin Mou Jennifer Passey Nathan Perez Sujata Persad Elena Posse de Chaves Spencer Proctor Kyra Pyke Muneeba QaDir Bassem Raad Tracy Raivio Christian Reyns-Chikuma Aminah Robinson Fayek Norma Rodenburg Kent Rondeau Ravina Sanghera Mikael Schmidtke Andrew Sharman Patricia Sherbaniuk Allison Sivak Chris Sprysak Tom Stelfox Gordon Swaters Frederick Tappenden Nathan Thiessen Demetres Tryphonopoulos John Ussher Dilini Vethanayagam Marvin Washington Lindsey Westover</p>	<p>Shauna Wilton Robert Wood Tuesday Young REGRETS: Adetola Adesida Sandeep Agrawal Wajid Ali Saadet Andrews Gabriel Ayoku Angelina Botros Ahmed Bouferguene Marie Carrière Sharon Compton Jency Chhaiya Pierre Chue Chetan Dave Bailey Dickie Carol Hodgson Birkman Maesha Elm Elahi Ivan Fair Magda Grzeszczuk John Hu Jelena Holovati Jeff Johnson Rija Kamran Sandeep Kumar Denise LaFitte Jinfeng Liu Christopher Lupke Vikas Mehrotra Divya Maisuriya Precious Majekodunmi Jun Ming Hu Olena Mykhailenko Pauline Paul Graham Pearson Stephen Raitz Dan Romanyk Aiman Saif Sophie Shi John Spence Reagan Tremblay Aditya Tutika Minn-Nyoung Yoon Yifeng Wei Richard Wozniak Governance Staff: John Lemieux, University Secretary Kate Peters, GFC Secretary, Scribe Faiza Billo Erin Plume Juli Zinkin</p>
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