



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Executive Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, March 14, 2022
Zoom Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Bill Flanagan, Chair
J Nelson Amaral
Heather Coleman
Steven Dew
Anastasia Elias
Kathy Haddadkar
Nat Kav

Pierre-Yves Mocquais
Abner Monteiro
Melissa Padfield
Jerine Pegg
Moin Yahya
non-voting:
Brad Hamdon
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Jason Acker
Ghalia Aamer

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Scribe

OPENING SESSION

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.

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/Dew

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:

In his comments, the Chair spoke about:

- The conflict in Ukraine:
 - the university's ties to Ukraine and the Ukrainian-Canadian Community;
 - the university's support for students and colleagues who were affected;
 - efforts dedicated to responding and supporting those affected; and
 - some of the services and supports that were available;

- The Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta's (AASUA) new collective agreement with the Board of Governors; and
- Congratulations to Abner Monteiro on his election as President of the University of Alberta Student Union.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Seconder: Kav/Dew

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of January 10, February 14, and March 8, 2022

THAT GFC Executive Committee approve the open session minutes of January 10, February 14, and March 8, 2022.

CARRIED

4. General Appeals Committee (GAC) Annual Report to General Faculties Council (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021)

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal (annual report) is before the committee because it is a requirement of GFC.

5. Annual Report of Appeals and Compliance Officer 2020-2021

Purpose of the Proposal: To provide committee members with an annual report of statistical information on discipline cases, as required by GFC policy.

6. Exploration Credits Policy and Changes to the Academic Schedule

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is to adopt an Exploration Credits policy at the University of Alberta.

THAT GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Exploration Credits deadlines for inclusion into the 2022-2023 Academic Schedule, as set forth in the attached documents, to be effective for Fall Term 2022, on the condition that the General Faculties Council approves the proposed Exploration Credits policy.

CARRIED

7. Proposal to add BUEC 311 – Business Economics, Organizations and Management to the List of Courses with Consolidated Exams

Purpose of the Proposal: To add BUEC 311 to the list of courses for which consolidated exams are scheduled.

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, with delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the addition of BUEC 311 – Business Economics, Organizations and Management, to the list of courses with consolidated final examinations, as submitted by the Faculty of Business, to take effect 2022-23.

CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

8. Proposed Changes to the General Faculties Council 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: To rescind proposed revisions to the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules as recommended on October 4, 2022 and to recommend that GFC approve a revised packaged with proposed changes to the GFC Principles for committee composition, the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules, and the GFC Roles and Responsibilities Document.

Discussion:

The Chair noted that the proposed changes were coming back to the committee with some revisions based on conversations at the committee meetings in January and February.

B Hamdon briefly outlined the five motions in the package, including the motion to rescind the previous recommendation, and the motions to recommend approval of each document in turn. He explained that this approach would likely be more effective at GFC with the expectation of proposed amendments. B Hamdon also pointed to the additional feedback received and included in the package.

A member asked about the rules for a motion to rescind, what was required to ensure that notice of motion was given, and whether the rules were different for a motion to rescind brought forward by administration and one brought forward by a member.

B Hamdon pointed to section 9.4 in the meeting procedural rules and members discussed the proposed language to clarify that notice of motion could be provided in the meeting materials. GFC Secretary Kate Peters explained that the different voting thresholds were meant to ensure that the gravitas of a motion to rescind was considered and the proposed language was meant to clarify what constituted notice of motion.

Members discussed whether a notice of motion could be arbitrarily placed in the meeting materials by administration a week in advance of a meeting and it was noted that GFC Executive Committee would have to discuss any such motion that was going to GFC. Members discussed the different processes for materials that were submitted to the GFC Secretary by members of administration and those that were submitted by elected members of GFC.

A member suggested an editorial change to the added language in 2.3 of the Meeting Procedural Rules for clarity. B Hamdon agreed to make that friendly amendment.

Motion: Padfield/Coleman

THAT GFC Executive Committee rescind their recommendation of the proposed changes to the GFC Guiding Documents as recommended on October 4, 2021.

CARRIED

Motion: Mover/Seconder

THAT GFC Executive Committee recommend that General Faculties Council approve the proposed changes to the Principles for GFC Standing Committee Composition as set out in tracked changes in Attachment 1 to take effect upon approval.

CARRIED

Motion: Mover/Seconder

THAT GFC Executive Committee recommend that General Faculties Council approve the Principles for GFC
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Delegation of Authority as originally approved on April 21, 2017 and as set out in Attachment 2.

CARRIED

Motion: Mover/Second

THAT GFC Executive Committee recommend that General Faculties Council approve the proposed changes to the Roles and Responsibilities of Members as set out in tracked changes in Attachment 3 to take effect upon approval.

CARRIED

Motion: Mover/Second

THAT GFC Executive Committee recommend that General Faculties Council approve the proposed changes to the Meeting Procedural Rules as set out in tracked changes in Attachment 4, as amended, and the concurrent rescission of the GFC Question Period Procedures as set out in attachment 5 to take effect upon approval.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

9. Report of the GFC Ad Hoc Committee for the Formal Review of Academic Restructuring

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Heather Coleman and Sue-Ann Mok, Co-Chairs of the GFC Ad Hoc Committee for the Formal Review of Academic Restructuring in the Fall of 2020

Purpose of the Proposal: To discuss the Report of the GFC Ad Hoc Committee for the Formal Review of Academic Restructuring

Discussion:

The Chair thanked the co-chairs and members of the committee for their work on this report.

H Coleman spoke about the ad hoc committee's work and report, and asked for advice as to how to ensure a productive discussion at GFC. She offered thanks to all those who shared materials and discussed their experience and to the members of the ad hoc committee. She noted that there was a need to better articulate the key role of GFC in large, strategic decisions, and hoped that GFC would use this report to shape the future of GFC's work and processes.

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

- many expressions of thanks to the ad hoc committee for their important work;
- an observation that most items came to Executive and GFC with senior administration as proponents and that it was much more difficult for change to come from the members of the academic staff;
- an observation that the restructuring process was difficult for everyone;
- that the separation of Academic Restructuring (AR) and the Service Excellence Transformation (SET) was especially difficult because so many aspects of the two initiatives were interwoven
- the difference between GFC working groups and the existing GFC standing committee structure;
- whether working groups would provide more transparency in the process or whether standing committees could serve that function;
- how the recommendations in the report could be operationalized;
- that it was important that this report be acted on, not forgotten;

- whether Executive's Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight (GPO) could help to develop a plan for that;
- a reminder that the terms of reference for the Executive Committee and the General Faculties Council were up for review in the fall and that the recommendations could be considered as a part of that process; and
- that it was important for GFC to have an opportunity to review and discuss the report.

Members agreed to communicate the following to GFC in the supplementary notes for the governance executive summary for this item:

During their conversation on this item, members of Executive Committee expressed a desire to ensure that the recommendations were operationalized in a way that is tangible. They specifically discussed the need for the Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight (GPO) to review the report and to report back to Executive Committee on a plan to move forward on the recommendations. That plan could then be presented back to GFC.

10. Question Period

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

Discussion:

A member asked for the rationale for the decision to remove the mask mandate on campus. She noted that the Students' Union survey showed that most students were in favour of keeping masks, that masks were still required on transit and in courtrooms, and that university classrooms were as crowded as those spaces. The Chair replied that the province and the city removed the mask mandate and the Minister of Advanced Education made it clear that Universities were expected to comply. He also noted that the university continued to encourage people to wear masks and that he would continue to wear a mask as well.

A member asked about the university's risk of liability related to the removal of the mask mandate. General Counsel and University Secretary Brad Hamdon replied that university liability was unlikely because of the province's removal of the mandate.

A member asked if the removal of the mask mandate applied to everyone across the University. The Chair replied that masks were still required in Alberta Health Services settings and for clinical delivery.

A member asked whether the university had any plans to help scholars who were fleeing Ukraine and expressed concern for the university's Russian students and Russian institutional relationships. The Chair acknowledged the work of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and thanked them for their leadership. He noted that there were active conversations about what the university could do to help. The Chair also expressed that the university's Russian students continued to be welcomed and are members of the university community and that there was help available for those who were unable to access their financial resources from home. Provost and Vice President (Academic) Steven Dew noted that his office was working with the Institute for International Education and that the Tri-Council had issued some programs and direction as well. Vice-Provost and Registrar Melissa Padfield noted that her office had reached out to Ukrainian and Russian students to let them know about emergency funding and supports for those affected by conflict and geopolitical instability.

FOR PLACEMENT ON THE GFC AGENDA - ACTION ITEM

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

11. Proposed Exploration Credits Policy

There was no discussion.

12. Termination of the ALES Specialization in the Master of Engineering

There was no discussion.

13. Proposed Core Graduate Student Academic Requirements, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

There was no discussion.

14. Proposed Changes to Graduate Student Residence Requirements, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

There was no discussion.

15. Proposed Alternate Criteria for English Language Proficiency, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

There was no discussion.

A member asked why the three items from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) were on the consent agenda. GFC Secretary Kate Peters explained that the three proposals were not contentious, were supported by the Graduate Students' Association and had been well received by both FGSR Council, and the GFC Programs Committee. She noted that the GFC Programs Committee did not have delegated authority to approve changes to FGSR Regulations because they applied to all graduate students across the university so GFC approval was required. A member asked if members of GFC could ask to remove items from the consent agenda. K Peters replied that any member of GFC could request that an item be removed from the consent agenda and pointed to the relevant wording in the agenda which read as follows: "If a member has a question or feels that an item should be discussed, they should notify the Secretary to GFC, in writing, two business days or more in advance of the meeting so that the relevant expert can be invited to attend."

FOR PLACEMENT ON THE GFC AGENDA - DISCUSSION ITEM

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

16. Indigenous Institutional Strategic Plan (IISP)

There was no discussion.

FOR PLACEMENT ON THE GFC AGENDA - INFORMATION ITEM

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

17. Proposed Changes to the Collective Agreement: appointment, promotion and dismissal procedures

There was no discussion.

INFORMATION REPORTS

18. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

-For approval by Friday - eVote on the GFC Proposed Agenda

-Request for a Special Meeting - GFC Executive Committee March 87:30 AM

ACTION ITEMS

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

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 21, 2022.

Discussion:

GFC Secretary Kate Paters spoke about meeting format for GFC and GFC Standing Committees. She noted the potential for in person, remote, or hybrid meetings going forward and discussed some of the pros and cons with technology limitations and access. She noted that her recommendation was to hold hybrid meetings for the May and June meetings of GFC when the agendas should be lighter and then return to the discussion in September.

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

- that these challenges were exactly what instructors were dealing with and that those online in a hybrid format had a lesser experience;
- that GFC should stay online because of the removal of the mask mandate and trajectory of the pandemic;
- an agreement that online was safest but that sent a terrible message to those who had no choice;
- that an online or hybrid option would make it easier for students to join in the summer months when they were not necessarily on campus;
- that members needed to be given some notice so they could plan their schedules accordingly;
- a reminder that at the beginning of the pandemic, Executive Committee had approved the ability for GFC and GFC Standing Committee meetings to include virtual attendance and participation of members, and delegated the details of implementation to the GFC Secretary;
- that if meetings were held in a hybrid format, members should be encouraged to come in person whenever possible and warned that the online experience was not as good in hybrid;
- reflections on the hybrid experience of the Council on Student Affairs (COSA) meeting of March 3rd and that it was important for members to introduce themselves, speak slowly, and enunciate;
- that there were no resources available at the present time for upgrading the technology for hybrid meetings; and
- an observation that the university needed to decide if it would operate in person or hybrid and that resourcing needed to be a part of that decision.

The Chair proposed an amendment to the draft agenda to move the Indigenous Institutional Strategic Plan (IISP) earlier in the agenda, as item 9, to ensure that this important discussion was given the attention it warranted. The members were in agreement.

Regarding the action item, Proposed Changes to the General Faculties Council Guiding Documents, General Counsel and University Secretary Brad Hamdon noted that this item was recommended by Executive and while he was happy to introduce the item and speak to the recommendations, he hoped that members of Executive would speak to them as well. He asked for the support of a member of Executive Committee to bring remarks on behalf of the committee. The Chair noted that amendments were expected and that he proposed to deal with each amendment in turn and there would be an opportunity for an Exec member to speak to each recommendation in response and then GFC would decide with a vote.

Motion: Kav/Mocquais

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the

Agenda for the March 21, 2022 meeting of General Faculties Council, as set forth in Attachment 1, as amended.

CARRIED

CLOSING SESSION

20. Adjournment

- Next Meeting of Exec: April 11, 2022
- Next Meeting of GFC: March 21, 2022

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.