



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Academic Planning Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Wednesday, April 07, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Steven Dew
Chris Andersen
Martin Coutts
Walter Dixon
Shannon Erichsen
Jelena Holovati
Susanne Luhmann

Pirkko Markula
Melissa Padfield
Jerine Pegg
Susan Sommerfeldt
Kisha Supernant
Marc Waddingham
Ding Xu
non-voting:
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Amlan Bose
Brad Hamdon
Sheena Wilson
Yan Yuan

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Assistant
Secretary to GFC

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and Chair of GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC)

Motion: Andersen/Xu

THAT the GFC Academic Planning Committee approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and Chair of GFC APC

The Chair thanked members for accommodating the request for a special meeting noting that the work on metrics and the outstanding agenda items for March 17th as the rationale.

The Chair made comments on:

- Changes to public health regulation and the potential impact on Fall 2021 planning;
- The increasing levels of anxiety and stress related to both the pandemic and the approaching exam period encouraging members to access resources available if necessary;
- The Joint GFC-Board of Governors-Senate Summit on March 26th and a recent joint meeting of the GFC Executive Committee and the Board Governance Committee;
- Appointments of Dr. Tammy Hopper, Dr. Nick Holt, and Dr. Simaan AbouRizk as Interim Deans in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation, and Faculty of Engineering, respectively.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Development of a GFC position on metrics associated with academic restructuring

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

Discussion:

The Chair reminded members that APC was asked to determine a process for developing its position on metrics by GFC at their February 22 meeting and that after a preliminary discussion at the March 17, 2021, APC had convened a working group who subsequently met on March 29th.

The Chair thanked members of the Working Group for their time. He reported that after their first meeting, the Working Group had discussed the possibility that APC provide feedback on financial metrics and metrics for quality assurance of shared services to GFC for approval in the short term, in the hopes they could be provided to the Board in June. The Chair also summarized the discussion on metrics relating to interdisciplinarity and their conclusion that APC would need for more time to provide advice on metrics.

The Chair also noted that he had spoken with members of the Board and they appreciate APC taking an active role in this work and would value the advice of GFC to shape academic metrics for the college model. He also confirmed that in principle, the Board would be amenable to receiving this feedback in the Fall.

The Chair explained that he hoped a framework for metrics including specific advice on the financial and shared service metrics could be discussed at the April 14th meeting.

Members made comments, asked questions and discussed:

- The need to consider how the restructuring is impacting equity seeking groups and whether the quality assurance metric should include a requirement for robust Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) planning for the colleges.
- The special consideration given to some areas and units in restructuring based on an EDI argument including exceptions for smaller faculties, and the continued emphasis on EDI in recruitment.
- Timelines and the clarification of the task to develop a document outlining relatively specific feedback on financial metrics and guidance for shared service metrics before the meeting of APC on April 14.
- Whether the financial metric could use the consolidated financial statements as a benchmark and whether Service Excellence Transformation (SET) indicators could be used to calculate savings on a month-by-month basis.
- Whether quantitative financial metrics could adequately describe the success of the college model in the 18-month review and whether qualitative, narrative, or outcome-based feedback may be necessary to speak to progress.
- The opportunity for APC and GFC to define what success looks like for the colleges as an academic unit using strategic metrics related to targeted outcomes, such as EDI.
- To what extent the role of College Deans and their vision for the Colleges should be measured, whether this was in the purview of GFC, and the need to build a metrics framework that can balance the intersecting authorities of College and Faculty deans and of Central Administration.
- Shifting workloads that could be attributed to SET, the implementation of the College model, and the overall changes to administrative structures and the hope that metrics would contribute to continuous improvement of administration.
- The possibility that a storytelling or narrative lens may help the Board, GFC, and the University Community understand the Colleges and what they are trying to accomplish, and that the type of evidence or narrative needed may vary based on the stakeholder group.

Members discussed at length the problems, complexities and issues related with metrics that measure interdisciplinarity. Specifically, they noted:

- Interdisciplinarity is not necessarily a good measure of success

- There may be higher costs to interdisciplinary research and teaching
- That celebrating impactful research, whether led by solo, inter, multi or trans-disciplinary researchers should continue to be the goal.
- That measuring impact is difficult and that formative information and stories rather than numbers alone will be critical as buy in for the Colleges are built.

The Chair concluded that the APC Working Group on Metrics would reconvene on Friday, April 9th and would aim to provide a draft document for review by APC on April 14, 2021.

4. 2021-22 Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs) Annual Report

Presenter(s): Wendy Rodgers Deputy Provost, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Discussion:

The Chair asked the Deputy Provost to provide a brief introduction. She noted that each year at about this time, APC receives the Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Annual Report for discussion and that MNIF funding has been frozen since 2015. The Deputy Provost reminded members of the role of the Student's Union and the Graduate Students Association in the Oversight Committee. She explained that the report reflects the framework of the Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs) reporting structure.

Members asked questions and made comments, including but not limited to:

- Whether the restructuring of administrative units in the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation (KSR) would impact the MNIFs and the funding levels for the University.
- The role of the Oversight committee to monitor use of the fees and implementation of the agreement including cost-indexing, extra-ordinary changes to fees, and annual reporting.
- The importance of quality control for the services.
- Whether additional fees are paid by students for services.

The Deputy Provost responded that:

- there are no anticipated impacts on MNIFs related to the changes to administrative structures in the Faculty of KSR;
- students are not required to pay additional fees for services covered by the MNIFs and that the services have costs associated with them;
- there are quality assurance processes for administrative units on a cyclical basis including the Dean of Students which was reviewed in 2019; and that
- the ongoing quality control for student services is a priority for the University.

5. Budget Update (no documents)

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

The Chair noted that the final 2020-2021 numbers are being finalized and that most indicators and projections point to a balanced budget.

The Chair answered a question about deconsolidation and explained the efforts to advocate for the deconsolidation of the University budget from the Alberta Budget. He explained the impact of this policy on the University including restrictions on spending and revenue generation. Members further inquired why this had not been changed in the past and whether UAlberta was the only institution where this was the case. The Chair explained that the Government had implemented the policy relatively recently and that the Alberta research-intensive universities are collaborating to advocate for changes to the legislation.

6. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

7. Items Approved by GFC Academic Planning Committee by email ballots
There were no items.

8. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings
There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

9. Adjournment
 - Next Meeting of APC: April 14, 2021
 - Next Meeting of GFC: April 26, 2021

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.