



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Executive Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Wednesday, February 10, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

ATTENDEES:

Bill Flanagan, Chair
Steven Dew
David Draper
Anastasia Elias
Mary Forhan
Christopher Lupke
Sean McMurtry

Pierre-Yves Mocquais
Roger Moore
Melissa Padfield
Sachiketha Reddy
Eleni Stroulia
non-voting:
Brad Hamdon
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Adarsh Badesha
Nat Kav

Staff:

Heather Richholt

OPENING SESSION

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/Padfield

THAT the 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:

The Chair spoke about the GFC Committee of the Whole and the recommendations received by GFC at the February 8th continuation of the January 25th meeting. He explained that the Committee of the Whole had no authority to make decisions, but that the discussion was important and the recommendations represented concrete action that GFC could take to strengthen the governance system. The Chair recommended that an item on Metrics be added to the February 22 agenda and that the remaining recommendations be discussed at the next meeting of the Executive and be brought to GFC in March.

The Chair updated members on planning for the Board/GFC/Senate Summit and noted that an advisory group with members of the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors would be asked to contribute.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Seconder: Moore/McMurtry

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of January 11, 2021

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the open session minutes of January 11, 2021.

CARRIED

4. Proposed Rescission of GFC Policy 37 and Consideration of the GFC Programs Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal to rescind GFC Policy 37 is the final step in the reorganization of program approval processes. GFC Executive Committee recommended the rescission at its meeting of September 14, 2020.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Remote Learning

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Wendy Rodgers, Deputy Provost; John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives); Helen Vallianatos, Associate Dean of Students;

Discussion:

Dr Dew noted that he was grateful to the students for raising their concerns at the GFC meeting on January 25th. He noted that while many individuals and offices had been involved in the preparation of resources and supports since the beginning of the pandemic, it was clear that there were students who continued to have challenges, and that his office was committed to working with students and instructors to solve these issues. He announced that he had formed a Task Force on Remote Teaching and Learning to work on reducing these challenges and eliminating them wherever possible.

Dr Rodgers, Dr Nychka, and Dr Vallianatos spoke about the task force, which will work with students and instructors to first address the most immediate and severe concerns, and then longer-term strategies. They explained that the task force working group would meet regularly to find solutions and that there was also a consultant group which would advise and provide feedback to the working group.

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

- the composition of the taskforce working group and consultant group;
- that pedagogies in the health sciences and other professional programs were often determined by accreditation requirements;
- the student concerns related to synchronous learning and assessment given challenges of time zones, family responsibilities, privacy issues, and variable internet connectivity;
- the importance of finding the right balance and establishing reasonable accommodation without compromising the quality of education;
- that if remote proctoring was not an option for assessment, other tools would have to be made available;
- the importance of finding strategies to support and lessen the burden on instructors;
- the need for skills development related to new ways of teaching and learning;
- questions regarding the campus-wide communication of student and instructor concerns and supports available;
- the COVID-19 Public Health Response Academic Impacts Team, the Office of the Dean of Students, and the Centre for Teaching and Learning's ongoing efforts to provide supports and training for students and instructors since the initial move to remote learning in March 2020;
- the power imbalance between students and instructors and the popularity of the anonymous form which signaled that many students were reluctant to reach out to instructors and leadership for help; and

- the university's legal and policy framework that had implications to remote learning and would need to inform the work of the taskforce and any recommendations from GFC.

University Secretary and General Counsel provided an overview of the policy framework and legal requirements that the University must navigate when implementing decisions on remote teaching and learning. His comments included, but were not limited to:

- a description of the University's Duty to accommodate as set out in the UAPPOL Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy suite;
- the protections of academic freedom set out in the University's collective agreements
- the need to protect privacy and personal information of students and instructors as set out in the UAPPOL Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy suite;
- the requirements and provisions for course syllabi set out in Evaluation and Grading Procedure in the *University Calendar*;
- the copyright protections in instructor course content as set out in the UAPPOL Use of Copyright Materials Policy suite;
- the need to comply with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation.

6. Synchronous Online Learning

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Chanpreet Singh, President of the International Students' Association (ISA) and Appointed Student Representative on COSA

Discussion:

The Chair observed that the motions, as recommended by the Council on Student Affairs (COSA), set out recommendations that GFC "make appropriate provision for alternative delivery" and "have an appropriate alternative way of completing course content". He explained that if GFC approved these motions on February 22nd, they would be approving a principle that these appropriate solutions be provided to students who were experiencing accessibility issues so that they could complete their coursework. He further indicated that whatever GFC approved, the solutions would need to be implemented in full consideration of the University's obligations respecting the collective agreements, privacy legislation, and university policy.

Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of COSA, noted that COSA had discussed the issues a number of times and had also discussed the constraints of the legal requirements and policy framework. He confirmed that there was broad agreement among members that these were important issues that needed to be addressed.

Mr Singh presented the recommendations from COSA and noted that the intent was not to force instructors to do anything differently in their teaching, but to ask that they made accommodations to help students who were struggling. He also noted that students identified 199 unique courses in the ISA's anonymous survey.

Members discussed the specifics of the motions, the legal framework, and the importance of affirming these respectful ideals regarding the accommodation of students while also allowing instructors the latitude to address the issues in a way that made sense for their work and preserved the quality of education.

ACTION ITEMS

7. Executive ad hoc Governance Procedural Review Committee

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Brad Hamdon, General Counsel and University Secretary; Kate Peters, GFC Secretary and Manager, GFC Services

Purpose of the Proposal: To establish an *ad hoc* committee to review:

- Principles for General Faculties Council Delegation of Authority
- Principles for General Faculties Council Standing Committee Composition
- Roles and Responsibilities of Members
- Meeting Procedural Rules
- Question Period Procedure

Discussion:

Mr Hamdon and Ms Peters gave some background on GFC's Principles Documents and the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority. They noted that the scope of work for this new *ad hoc* committee was focused around a review of the GFC Guiding Documents. They also noted that the committee would be asked to provide advice on the development of a process to review the GFC standing committee terms of reference and GFC delegations of authority.

Members discussed the proposed membership, student engagement, and the need to address the cultural problem with how faculty and administration interact.

Motion: McMurtry/Padfield

THAT the GFC Executive Committee establish the Executive ad hoc Governance Procedural Review Committee ad hoc Committee and approve the Terms of Reference as set forth in Attachment 1.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. Voting Protocols at General Faculties Council

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Kate Peters, GFC Secretary and Manager, GFC Services

Discussion:

Ms Peters spoke about the review of the functionality of the eClicker voting tool at GFC as well as the limitations of the Zoom polling function. She spoke about her method for establishing the number of voting members in the Zoom room in order to establish the majority threshold for approval of motions at GFC and asked members for their feedback.

Members discussed the pros and cons of the eClicker tool, the Zoom polling tool, and the potential use of Google Forms.

9. Question Period

There were no questions.

ACTION ITEMS

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

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

Discussion:

The Chair reminded members that he proposed to add an item regarding metrics as recommended by GFC's Committee of the Whole on February 8th and suggested that it be added toward the end of the agenda because GFC had some items to address that had been deferred from previous meetings.

Members discussed the plan to address the remaining recommendations of the GFC Committee of the Whole as well as the potential for a GFC member to propose a motion to extend the meeting if more time was needed on February 22nd.

Motion: Stroulia/Moore

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Agenda for the February 22, 2021 meeting of General Faculties Council, as set forth in Attachment 1, as amended.

CARRIED

INFORMATION REPORTS

11. Items Approved by the GFC Executive Committee by email ballots

There were no items.

12. Information Items Forwarded to GFC Executive Committee between Meetings

There were no items.

13. Annual Report on Undergraduate Enrolment 2020-21

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

CLOSING SESSION

14. Adjournment

- Next Meeting of EXEC: March 8, 2021
- Next Meeting of GFC: February 22, 2021

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.