

General Faculties Council
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, May 27, 2024
Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall
2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

OPENING SESSION

The Chair began by acknowledging the territory and welcoming new student members. Members were invited to test the voting tool.

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, General Faculties Council (GFC)

Discussion: The Chair pointed members' attention to a Notice of Motion circulated by the Governance team related to a request by GFC member G Swaters to modify the agenda as per the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules section 6.3. Once the motion to approve the agenda was on the floor, he invited G Swaters to make a motion to amend the agenda. He further noted the placement of Question Period as Item 6 to allow for discussion on encampments.

The motion was moved and seconded.

Motion from the Floor:

THAT General Faculties Council add the submitted GFC Motion asking for a thorough third-party independent investigation to the agenda.

CARRIED

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT General Faculties Council approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Report from the President (no documents)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

Discussion: The Chair began by acknowledging that this has been a very difficult time for the University and that calling the policy had caused hurt and harm, especially for members from Black, Indigenous and Palestinian communities. He expressed regret for the harm caused to these individuals and acknowledged there were many members of the University community who do not accept his decision to take action to involve the Edmonton Policy Service (EPS) and clear the encampment.

He spoke to his intentions moving forward, including the ongoing conversations with different groups, especially student members, and the assembly of a working group to address the specific demands that came from the student movement. He asked L Glock and R Kamran to speak to this work which will be guided by student leaders with the support of M Padfield, C Smith, R Sanghera and T Raivio.

He emphasized there would be no disciplinary actions related to encampment activities for students, faculty or staff and expressed regret for the miscommunication. He noted the ongoing communication with the Academic and Non-academic Staff associations. He reiterated his commitment to Freedom of Expression and stated that he welcomes debate and ongoing critique including protest.

He noted the concerns about items that were left when the encampment was empty and invited T Gilchrist to provide an update on the work to return objects. He recognized the concerns about the forthcoming Convocation ceremonies and invited M Padfield to provide an update on plans for a successful ceremony.

He then invited Board Chair K Chisholm to speak to the Notice of Motion. K Chisholm emphasized the support of the Board of Governors for Freedom of Expression and expressed her deep regret for the impact of the recent events and or students, faculty and staff who were feeling traumatized. She explained the Board's perspective on the need to ensure a safe situation on Campus, especially the need to take reasonable steps to maintain safety. She explained that members of the Board of Governors are responsible for taking reasonable steps to prevent injuries on Campus and that the University does not have adequate resources to intervene in the case of violent situations. She noted the difference between registered events held at the University and the encampments and observed that subsequent protests have been held without incident. She noted that both the President and herself support the EPS Serious Incident Report and that the Board is already taking steps to ensure that an independent third party review of the events.

The Chair asked members to hold their questions until Item 6.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

- 3 Approval of the Open Session Minutes of April 29, 2024
- 4 New Members of GFC
5. Proposed Changes to Thesis Requirements for Graduate Students (GPS)

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

THAT General Faculties Council approve the items in the consent agenda
--

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. Question Period

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

Discussion:

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

- A question for Board Chair K Chisholm on how the independent investigation would be implemented;

- A suggestion that it would be appropriate for the independent investigator to be selected by consensus through a process similar to the choice of arbiter in collective agreement negotiations to increase transparency and buy-in by the overall university community;
- A comment that a consensus-based selection process would add further transparency and support to the process;
- A question about whether the review will have any impact on the Presidential Review Committee's decision-making and the timelines for the decision by the Board;
- A suggestion that the independent review process should include community consultations;
- A comment that the ability for students to debate was core to the University and a question about how the University would ensure this foundational value would be protected in light of recent events; and
- A concern about Israel's actions of May 26th and whether the President would be willing to make a statement about these events.

ACTION ITEMS

7. GFC Motion asking for a thorough third-party independent investigation

Presenter(s): Gordon Swaters, President of the AASUA

Discussion: G Swaters pointed members to the distributed Notice of Motion and thanked the President and Board chair for their comments.

A member proposed that the document be amended to ensure that the harms to the Palestinian community be recognised in the motion. After a discussion about the need to reflect harms to both Israeli and Palestinian communities, it was decided that language would be included in the preambles as recognition of this discussion and that the language would closely align with the President's comments in his Quad post.

A member asked how the motion might be used to hold the University to account for any findings of the process.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT It is therefore resolved that the General Faculties Council at the University of Alberta respectfully recommends to the Board of Governors that a thorough third-party independent investigation be held into the events and decisions made by the administration at the University of Alberta, and any others as warranted, associated with the decision to remove the protest encampment in the Quad by police action, which occurred on May 11, 2024, and that the full and final report associated with that thorough third-party independent investigation be released to the university community.

CARRIED

8. University Policy Development Oversight

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Brad Hamdon, General Counsel; John Lemieux, University Secretary;

Discussion: B Hamdon pointed members to the Governance Outline for details on the motion and emphasized the rationale for moving forward.

There was no discussion.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the General Faculties Council recommend that the Board of Governors approve the Policy Development Policy.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

9. The People Strategy

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Provost & Vice-President (Academic); Todd Gilchrist, Vice-President (University Services and Finance) and Acting Vice-President (Facilities and Operations)

Discussion: The Chair noted that the People Strategy had come to GFC several times over the past year and the importance of GFC's oversight of high level strategic matters.

V Yiu noted that with T Gilchrist, they had made the decision to pause the decision on the People Strategy in light of recent events. She emphasized that this in no way a pause of implementation or reflective of the lack of importance of the People Strategy.

There were no questions.

10. Integrated EDI Action Plan - What We Heard

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

Discussion: C Smith presented the *What We Heard Document* which reflects the information collected from the 750 contributors to the consultation process.

Members asked about other opportunities to engage in the EDI Action Plan other than the upcoming Roundtable discussion.

11. Space Management Policy Revisions

Presenter(s): Todd Gilchrist, Vice-President (University Services and Finance) and Acting Vice-President (Facilities and Operations); Ashley Bhatia, Associate Vice-President, Integrated Planning & Partnerships;

Discussion: T Gilchrist provided rationale and high-level overview of timelines. A Bhatia explained the goals for the initiative. She emphasized the importance of space to all members of the University Community which explains the long timelines to develop and approve the policy suite changes. She noted that there would be several committees supporting the initiatives.

Members made comments about:

- The composition of the committees;
- How the changes would take into account the need of students, faculty and staff with disabilities and the University's commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion and to accommodate students and staff;
- How elevator functioning can impact disabled members of the community;
- That the University formerly managed emergency planning and that the system of staff support was no longer in place;
- Where the accountability for the Space Management Policy lies and how the policy intersects with Budget Model 2.0;
- How labs, classrooms and utilities will be managed differently than office space;
- Whether there were plans to accommodate student faculty associations in the review;
- A request for additional information on how the process will consult the individuals on Campus who are responsible for space planning;

12. UniForum Service Effectiveness Survey Results

Presenter(s): Todd Gilchrist, Vice-President (University Services and Finance) and Acting Vice-President (Facilities and Operations); Deborah Williams, Associate Vice-President (Institutional REport and Chief Administrative Office, Performance, Analytics, and Institutional Research);

Discussion: T Gilchrist pointed members to the Quad post on the Uniform Survey results and emphasized that the information represented honest feedback from members. He explained that within the realm of respecting confidentiality, he welcomed questions from members.

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

12. Report of the GFC Executive Committee

13. Report of the GFC Academic Planning Committee

14. Report of the GFC Programs Committee

15. GFC Nominations and Elections

16. Information Items:

A. Centres and Institutes Annual Report

17. Information Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings- -

CLOSING SESSION

18. Adjournment

- Next Meeting of General Faculties Council: September 23, 2024

ATTENDEES		REGRETS	GOVERNANCE STAFF
Bill Flanagan, Chair Verna Yiu, Vice-Chair Simaan M AbouRizk Layla Alhussainy Declan Ali James Allen (delegate) Pedro Almeida Renson Alva Chris Andersen Bilal Ashgar Jill Bagwe Quinn Benders Barbara Billingsley Stanford Blade Angelina Botros Ahmed Bouferguene Marsha Boyd Jennifer Branch-Mueller Heather Bruce Jessica Butts Scott Cameron Carlyle Susan Chatwood Odile Cisneros Chetan Dave Stephanie Dickie Ryan Dunch Duncan Elliott Darren Fast (delegate) Carlos Fernandez-Patron Shawn Flynn Kyle Foster Kenneth Gariepy Julianne Gibbs-Davis Todd Gilchrist Douglas Gingrich Eva Glancy Lisa Glock Nate Goetz Lise Gotell Jodi Harding-Kuriger Brenda Hemmelgarn Michael Hendzel Carol Hodgson Birkman Jelena Holovati Tammy Hopper Christine Hughes Asha Jama	Jeff Johnson Matina Kalcounis-Rueppell Rija Kamran Esther Kim Ibrahim Khodabocus Tim Klassen Valentina Kozlova Denise LaFitte Adrian Lam Corrine Langinier Pierre Lemelin Liran Levin Jinfeng Liu Elan MacDonald Derek MacKenzie Nikolai Malykhin Madiha Maroof Andrew McGee Vikas Mehrotra John Misiaszek (delegate) Weimin Mou Elsie Osei Simran Panesar Jennifer Passey Pauline Paul Nathan Perez Elena Posse de Chaves Kyra Pyke Hannan Sandhu Mikael Schmidtke Shannon Scott Patricia Sherbaniuk Ali Shiri (delegate) Allison Sivak Tom Stelfox Gordon Swaters Frederick S Tappenden Nathan Thiessen Demetres Tryphonopoulos Manan Upadhyaya John Ussher Dilini Vethanayagam Marvin Washington Shauna Wilton Robert Wood	Adetola Adesida Sandeep Agrawal Saadet Andrews Haseeb Arshad Rebeca Avila Malik Awan Jason Carey Fardeen Chowdhury Pierre Chue Bipro Dhar Selina Fan Richard Field Zachary Friggstad Aitazaz Hassan Tracy Howlett Vadim Kravchinsky Christopher Lupke Mohit Makhija Graham Pearson Sujata Persad Spencer Proctor Christian Reyns-Chikuma Aminah Robinson Fayek Dan Romanyk Ravina Sanghera Sophie Shi John Spence Chris Sprysak Katherine Tamsett Jennifer Tupper Yifeng Wei Lindsey Westover Richard Wozniak Minn-Nyoung Yoon	John Lemieux, University Secretary Kate Peters, GFC Secretary Carley Roth Erin Plume Laura Riley Juli Zinken