



General Faculties Council  
Council on Student Affairs  
**DRAFT** Open Session Minutes

Thursday, November 05, 2020  
Virtual Meeting by Zoom  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

**ATTENDEES:**

Melissa Padfield, Acting Chair  
Joel Agarwal  
Dhir Bid  
Karl Buchanan  
Paramita Chaudhuri Basu  
André Costopoulos  
Anastasia Elias  
Jennifer Fang  
Katie Kidd  
Sachiketha Reddy

Samantha Roan  
Khandaker Shahriar  
Chanpreet Singh  
Teanna Winsor-Carruthers  
Alan Underhill

Non-Voting  
Brad Hamdon-regrets  
Kate Peters

**REGRETS**

Steven Dew, Chair  
Chris Beasley  
Simran Dhillon

COSA Coordinator/Scribe  
Ann Hodgson

**OPENING SESSION**

1. Approval of the Amended Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Melissa Padfield, Acting Chair (COSA) and Vice-Provost and University Registrar

*Discussion:*

Ms Melissa Padfield, serving as Acting Chair, opened the meeting and explained that due to an unexpected change in the availability of Dr Steve Dew, COSA Chair and Provost/VP Academic, he was unable to attend the COSA meeting. Relatedly, the regular verbal update (provided by the Provost) on *Academic Restructuring* was struck from the agenda.

The Acting Chair welcomed newly-elected member, Jennifer Fang (Undergraduate Student/GFC Member from the Faculty of Nursing) and indicated that COSA's membership composition is almost a full capacity with only two outstanding student vacancies.

In her opening remarks, the Acting Chair noted that the agenda was recently amended to include several questions raised by Appointed Member, Mr Chanpreet Singh (President, International Students' Association) on behalf of the ISA. Under Question Period, items 6.1 to 6.3 have been included with a copy of the written questions shared in advance with members for early consideration.

Motion: Underhill/Agarwal

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the amended agenda.

**CARRIED**

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

*Presenter(s)*: Melissa Padfield, Acting Chair (COSA) and Vice-Provost and University Registrar

*Discussion*:

The Acting Chair indicated that there would be no new comments from the Chair given the Provost's absence and that regular updates from Ex-Officio members would come forward as planned under agenda item 5.0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of September 10, 2020

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Melissa Padfield, Acting Chair (COSA) and Vice-Provost and University Registrar

Motion: Elias/Underhill

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the Open Session Minutes of September 10, 2020.
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**CARRIED**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

4. Student Financial Support Annual Report

*Presenter(s)*: Melissa Padfield, Acting Chair (COSA) and Vice-Provost and University Registrar

*Discussion*:

Vice-Provost and University Registrar, Ms Melissa Padfield, provided a detailed overview of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual *Student Financial Support Annual Report*. In her introduction, Ms Padfield noted that the report primarily reflects undergraduate financial supports administered by the RO. She indicated that while the scope isn't fully comprehensive for all financial supports to all students, it is beginning to form a solid base of information about the pattern of usage of different kinds of merit and need-based supports that undergraduate students are utilizing, including loan usage for financial support. Ms Padfield indicated that a new addition to this year's report includes need-based supports to Graduate students from the Government administered by the RO. She noted increased funding allocations to students through government merit-based supports and University need-based supports.

The 2019-2020 report highlighted several areas of student funding supports:

*Undergraduate Students -*

- 44% of undergraduate student population are accessing student loan supports
- \$32 million in funding was administered to 9,403 undergraduate students reflecting a 6.6% increase over the previous year
- 36% of students who receive supports from "need-based" sources are also receiving supports from merit based sources -- an increase from 32% in the previous year
- 34% of domestic undergraduate students were accessing "income based grants" from the Federal Government. The RO is anticipating continued growth in this area given the increase in funding that the Federal Governance has attached.

*Indigenous Students -*

- 67% of self-identified indigenous students are accessing and receiving financial supports from the U of A
- RO is working with the First Peoples House and Dean of Students Office to advise students on financial literacy and helping to connect students with the right financial supports to best fit their funding needs.

*International Students -*

- 1,227 international students (25% of undergraduate student population) are receiving financial supports reflecting an increase of approximately \$1.5 million in funding on international student financial supports

*Graduate Students:*

- RO administered \$17 million in funding to 1,500 graduate students, primarily on need-based supports with a majority going to graduate students in PhD programs, and even distribution of the remaining 58% to graduate students in Master based thesis and course based programs.

U of A Registrar, Melissa Padfield responded to members' questions which included:

- Donor Supports/Funding: what impacts to donor funded awards (endowments, annual awards) are we experiencing due to the implications of COVID and the current economy?
- Are we able to determine if donor supports and donations are being allocated to specific groups or into a general pool?
- 1<sup>st</sup> year international students have strict guidelines to receive funding: with COVID impacts, have first year funding requirement been relaxed?

Ms Padfield added that this year, in response to COVID implications, the U of A provided financial support to new, international students through the creation of an award for a student who registered for classes in September and attended those classes (ie. retained the registration past add/drop date). The student received \$1000 in scholarship funding which came in the form of refunding their tuition deposit to help offset some of the costs associated with being an international student. The "International Undergraduate Bursary" (managed by UAI) has doubled applications, increasing from 35 to 70 students that demonstrated significant needs. The U of A added more operating dollars to the pool this year.

5. Business Arising from Last Meeting [Verbal Updates from Ex-Officio Members (no documents)]

- SU Update

*Presenter(s):* Joel Agarwal, President, UA Students' Union, University of Alberta

*Discussion:*

Mr Agarwal reported on several key internal and external projects within the UASU's purview:

- UASU and GSA Presidents are very engaged in the *U of A for Tomorrow (UAT)* consultation process for academic and administrative restructuring. Mr Agarwal and Mr Marc Waddingham (GSA) serve as the two student representatives to the Academic Restructuring Working Group (ARWG).
- On November 23, 2020, the UASU and GSA will jointly host a UAT town hall to receive further student feedback and to provide input for ARWG purposes.
- VP Student-Life, Ms Katie Kidd, is leading a majority of Campus Sexual Violence initiatives. UASU continues to generate creative ideas for the hiring of a Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator.

- As a member of CAUS (Council of Alberta University Students), UASU will participate in a (letter-writing) campaign to raise awareness about the importance of university education on Alberta's economy and future.
- In response to the Government of Alberta's Post-Secondary Review, UASU has recently submitted recommendations by way of the "UASU Alberta 2030" document that has been shared publicly. VP External, Mr Rowan Ley and Mr Agarwal have been part of McKinsey round-table discussions.
- VP Academic, David Draper continues his efforts related to OERs (Open Educational Resources), online proctoring of examinations, and working with the U of A to help remove existing barriers for students.
- UASU is working with the City of Edmonton on U-PASS negotiations and is nearing conclusion.
- UASU is currently in the planning phase for the renovations of the Myer Horowitz Theatre. Leadership in the sustainability area is a key priority and central goal of this shared space utilized by students. The design development phase, pending approval by SU Council, will be hopefully going forward soon.

- GSA Update

*Presenter(s):* Sachiketha Reddy, Vice-President (Academic), University of Alberta

*Discussion:*

Mr Reddy highlighted the following initiatives within the GSA purview:

- GSA is hosting many online events to reach out to the graduate student body, promote engagement and increase opportunities to build connections among graduate students in this remote environment.
- Similar to the UASU and other portfolios, the GSA is actively serving on the ARWG and providing perspectives and key information regarding graduate student programs into the consultation process.
- GSA Annual General Elections are coming up in February and the GSA is working hard to raise awareness about the GSA role and executive positions, and to increase student awareness and participation.

The Acting Chair recognized the SU and GSA efforts this year amid the COVID pandemic and thanked both Mr Joel Agarwal and Mr Sachiketha Reddy for their informative reports to COSA, their work at the University during these exceptional times, and serving as great representatives for their students.

- COVID-19 Update: Fall Term 2020/Winter Term 2021

*Presenter(s):* Melissa Padfield, Acting Chair (COSA) and Vice-Provost and University Registrar

*Discussion:*

Ms Melissa Padfield reported that the institutional review for 'in-person' classes for 20-21 has been a significant focus of the Oversight Committee. An announcement is expected early next week about the precise in-person classes that have been approved. To ensure transparency and to assist in their academic scheduling, students will be able to login to their Bear Tracks (Campus Solutions) and view which of their classes will have an in-person and/or a remote delivery component. Priorities for in-class delivery is whether the learning component is considered as essential to a student's program progression and completion (ie. labs, studio courses requiring "hands on" instruction).

Vice-Provost and Dean of Students, Dr Andre Costopoulos, indicated that the Dean of Students Office (DoS) is connecting with university student groups to resume in-person activities. With COVID numbers steadily increasing many student group/in-person activities remain paused. Dr Costopoulos noted that the DoS continues to work

with individual Faculties to ensure faculty-based group activities closely aligned to the academic training of their students are deliverable soon, starting at low capacity and supported by risk management plans.

Following discussion, Ms Padfield and Dr Costopoulos responded to COSA members' questions which included:

- Graduate students using their labs during COVID, given strict set protocols by Faculties are there University regulations that preclude graduate students from using their faculty-allocated office spaces?
- If COVID case counts continues to rise, will the additional in-person classes that are intended for winter term be reverted back to remote delivery?
- Are any updates available regarding International Travel Restrictions?

Dr Costopoulos clarified that Faculties' safety protocols must align with the University's Public Health Response team (PHRT) institutional health and guidelines. The U of A must comply with the Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health's guidance and the University's ability to comply with COVID-19 guidelines in its current structure and in response to potential, future restrictions.

Ms Padfield indicated that in cases of academic programs with in-person instruction components that are deemed an absolute "must" to complete the program requirements (ie. within the Health Sciences field) the U of A will work with the student and department/faculty to explore opportunities for alternatives to help a student to progress and complete in-class program requirements.

Ms Padfield also noted that Canada has lifted travel restrictions and the U of A is listed as an approved institution. However, at present there are a number of barriers and variables such as accessibility to visa offices in some countries that have implications on student study permits. UAI is working closely with Government Relations to connect with RICC (Regulated Immigration Consultants for Canada) and Immigration Canada in this regard.

UASU President, Mr Joel Agarwal, added that CASA (Canadian Alliance of Students Association) has student leaders from across the country calling upon the Federal Government to allow international students to participate in their internships and co-ops under their existing study permits.

#### - Service Excellence Transformation (SET) Initiatives Update

*Presenter(s):* Rob Munro, Executive Lead, Service Excellence Transformation, Melissa Padfield, Acting Chair (COSA) and Vice-Provost and University Registrar, André Costopoulos, Vice-Provost and Dean of Students

#### *- Student Service Centre (SSC)*

##### *Discussion:*

Mr Rob Munro gave a brief overview of the streams that SET has from an administrative standpoint that include: IT, Research, Student Services, Finance, HR and Engagement and noted that all streams are active right now with leaders and co-sponsors in place. Mr Munro indicated that the University Registrar and the Dean of Students, with their respective teams are working collaboratively with the SET team. He invited Ms Melissa Padfield and Dr Andre Costopoulos to provide an update on the Student Services stream.

Dr Costopoulos reported that development of Phase 1 of the SSC is currently underway and involves centralizing a system to address student needs to relevant services and supports. This "front door to all services" navigation system will continue to develop over time and, in Phase 2, see the Student Service Centre assume a greater role in effectively meeting and fulfilling service requests. A transaction hub will connect students to transactional processes more efficiently, and Centres of Excellence with their connectivity to Faculties, will ensure academic program advising/expertise happens in the appropriate place.

Ms Padfield noted that a first draft of a student services catalogue has been created with input from across campus to help inform the work that she and Andre Costopoulos will co-lead. The Student Catalogue is a listing of

administrative codes for activities that fit into the student support category under SET and currently used an internal administrative tool.

Further to discussion, Ms Padfield and Dr Costopoulos responded to questions from members which included:

- Has there been thought with the restructuring to create a separate office for all of the Sexual Violence supports to be worked within, or will they be left in the existing areas?
- What does the first draft of the Student Services Catalogue look like and are details publicly available?
- Is there a more concrete plan in terms of SSC consultation throughout Phase 1 and Phase 2?
- URI (Undergraduate Research Initiatives) – where in the process would these be housed? ie. is there overlap with the VP Research and Innovation Office?
- International Students Association (ISA) is already functioning as a “one stop shop”? Will this be diluted by removing services from international students?

Ms Padfield added that as Phase 2 evolves, increased structured consultations will provide opportunity for engagement from stakeholders in the broader community. Dr Costopoulos noted that the ongoing consultation with UAI and ISS is important to ensure effective and efficient collaboration. He added that as Phase 2 develops, it should feel seamless to access multiple services (from the “front door” navigation) which may be provided from the DoS, RO or ISS and simultaneously meet needs.

#### - Vice-Provost and Dean of Students Update

*Presenter(s):* André Costopoulos, Vice-Provost and Dean of Students

- Review of Sexual Violence Policy

*Discussion:*

Dr Costopoulos reported that the Sexual Violence Policy is currently under review with early discussion being held by the Joint Sexual Violence Advisory Committee. He indicated that proposed revisions will follow a consultation path that ensures a wide diversity of stakeholder feedback, and that COSA will receive the draft document as part of the review process. Dr Costopoulos anticipated bringing proposed changes forward for approval in this academic year. He added that an updated website for the Sexual Violence policy will be launched shortly. Improvements include a robust foundation of information and narratives supported by streamlined navigation to simplify searching for information.

#### - Vice-Provost and University Registrar Update

*Presenter(s):* Melissa Padfield, Acting Chair (COSA) and Vice-Provost and University Registrar

*Discussion:*

Ms Melissa Padfield reported that Undergraduate admission applications opened on October 1<sup>st</sup> and the Registrar's Office is experiencing approximately a 6% increase in application volume compared to last year at this same time. To date, that has been 3,400 direct entry admission offers. Ms Padfield indicated that the RO is in early stages of considering how to best manage the Fall 2021 schedule, and includes academic planning to allow for a maximum ability to be in-person with the maximum amount of risk prevention built in. Planning considers campus density and student movement on campus throughout the day, and categorization of classes.

Following discussion, questions from members included:

- Consolidation of teaching that occurs during a brief period of time during the day, how does RO coordinate students spending the minimum amount of time on campus as possible?
- Is there an “AI” opportunity?

Ms Padfield added that the RO works with departments in alignment with programs and student registrations patterns. RO has compiled extensive data over a number of years that shows how students construct their schedules and how the program schedule functions. *Ad Astra* technology has AI learning functionality built in to help with the “spread” of classes.

## 6. Question Period

Acting Chair, Melissa Padfield, welcomed and introduced the Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives), Dr John Nychka, to provide a response to several written questions submitted by a COSA member on behalf of the ISA and shared in advance with COSA members. Questions related to *Lectures Not Recorded*, *Participation Grade*, and *Proctoring Systems*.

Dr Nychka thanked the ISA for their letter and acknowledged that several elements should be addressed. He explained that academic integrity requires the use of proctoring solutions and reminded COSA members that the University is managing in an emergency response component and not a normal situation. He reflected that had there been a responsive remote delivery system and a digital strategy already in place, the University may have been presented with more options and methods to deal with present issues. Dr Nychka indicated that a number of matters raised are university policy driven and must follow due course for discussion, review and change. He noted that broader factors such as collective staff agreements and academic freedom guide and inform how the learning occurs and how to assess it, and referred to the principles of the Assessment and Grading Policy.

Dr Costopoulos spoke of international student accommodation and ensuring international students are receiving timely and effective guidance and information about requesting and receiving accommodation. He noted the University’s legal obligation to accommodate as an important aspect.

During the discussion, members offered the following feedback:

- With the University’s support and as an alternative to recording lectures, Instructors should have another means to make the instruction and content available to students.
- Students have the ability to ask why does the participation grade link to the learning outcome and course delivery and can their participation be asynchronous.
- Assessment is challenging, as some have to be synchronous. There is difficulty to make all assessments asynchronous as well as the lecture. Fairness also involves giving everyone the opportunity to do an exam, to be fair to the individual and to the group as well.

## **INFORMATION REPORTS**

7. Items Approved by the Committee by email Ballots (non-debatable) (no items to date)
8. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings (no items to date)

## **CLOSING SESSION**

9. Adjournment

The next COSA meeting will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2021. The meeting was adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.