



General Faculties Council
Council on Student Affairs
DRAFT Open Session Minutes

Thursday, January 14, 2021
 Virtual Meeting by Zoom
 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Steven Dew, Chair
 Joel Agarwal
 Paramita Chaudhuri Basu
 Chris Beasley
 Dhir Bid
 André Costopoulos
 Simran Dhillon
 Anastasia Elias
 Jennifer Fang
 Katie Kidd

Melissa Padfield
 Sachiketha Reddy
 Khandaker Shahriar
 Chanpreet Singh
 Teanna Winsor-Carruthers
 Alan Underhill

Non-Voting
 Brad Hamdon
 Kate Peters

REGRETS
 Karl Buchanan
 Samantha Roan

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): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and Chair of the Council on Student Affairs (CoSA)

Motion: Underhill/Chaudhuri Basu

Discussion:

The Chair welcomed committee members, guests and observers and noted that in addition to the agenda circulated last week, members received a notice of motion for three items submitted by Appointed Member, Mr Chanpreet Singh (President, International Students' Association (ISA)) on behalf of the ISA. In light of new documents and combined with a number of contributing attendance factors, the Chair suggested a reorder of the agenda to provide optimal opportunity for availability and discussion among members.

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the amended agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

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

Discussion:

In his opening remarks, the Chair highlighted the following recent items:

- COVID-19 and the 2021 Winter term -
 - The Crisis Management Team (CMT) remains active. Campus activities, including research-related, remain limited due to public health regulation, however University members in research capacities may be exempted if approved through a central mechanism.
 - New variants of the virus are present in Alberta. U of A experienced its first two positive cases in residence and saw three transmissions in research labs.
 - International Travel measures – new changes to overseas travel require any individual travelling abroad to present a valid negative Covid-19 Test result. This measure may impact new international students joining the U of A for winter term.
- New Remote Learning Award - in acknowledgement of the extraordinary measures undertaken by faculty and instructors to transition to a remote environment in Winter and Fall terms, a “2020 University of Alberta COVID-19 Remote Teaching Award” has been established. Nomination details are available on the Office of the Provost website.
- Remote Delivery and Assessment - a discussion item regarding remote delivery and assessment has been placed on the GFC Agenda for the meeting of January 25, 2021.
- Academic Restructuring:
 - The Board of Governors met on December 11th and approved three proposed motions recommended by GFC on December 7th. First two motions included the establishment of a college model and the formation of three colleges. A third motion relevant to the management and leadership structure was amended by the Board to include a College Dean within the structure to work collaboratively with the Faculty Deans in a Council of Deans for each of the Colleges implementation.
 - Since the approval in December, the appointment of the three Interim College Deans was announced: Effective July 1, 2021, Greta Cummings (College of Health Sciences), Matina Kalcounis-Rueppell (College of Natural and Applied Sciences), and Joseph Doucet (Social Sciences and Humanities) will assume new roles. Three Acting Dean positions (Faculty of Nursing, Faculty of Science and the Alberta School of Business) will be filled for a July 1st start.

A member inquired as to why the U of A diverted away from its U-15 counterparts, particularly the University of Calgary, in the protocols for campus reopening. The Chair responded that while the University has worked closely with Public Health to coordinate a response to the health and safety requirements, other jurisdictions may have opted to respond differently given demographical impacts. The Chair committed to providing an update on campus plans for COVID in Fall 2021.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of November 5, 2020

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

Motion: Underhill/Padfield

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the Open Session Minutes of November 5, 2020.

CARRIED

EARLY CONSULTATION

4. Rescission of Housing and Food Services GFC Policy 65

Presenter(s): Katherine Huising, Associate Vice President Ancillary Services

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to because the policy is specific to students living in residence, and as such, support from the Council of Student Affairs is critical before taking the proposed rescission of GFC Policy 65 forward to the General Faculties Council (GFC).

Discussion:

The Chair provided background about the GFC Policy Manual (GFC PM) and the ongoing process guided by University Governance over a span of close to a fifteen years to decommission these policy manual documents and migrate the appropriate policy and procedures over to UAPPOL. The Chair explained that the GFC PM consists of policies approved by GFC over the course of its history and noted that there are twelve sections left, including Section 65. He added that offices of administrative authority have been working with University Governance to rescind sections given that content has either been approved elsewhere or has become outdated.

The Chair invited Associate Vice-President Ancillary Services, Katherine Huising, to provide an overview of GFC PM (Section 65.3). Ms Huising noted that the policy has been actively reviewed over the past two years. She recognized the collaboration with UASU and GSA members and acknowledged the efforts of Ms Katie Kidd (VP Student Life, UASA) who reviewed UAPPOL for relevant university policies in existence which govern processes and procedures associated with student residences.

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

- whether rescission of Section 65.3 would make student consultation in residence decision-making optional;
- the value of hearing perspectives from other key university student stakeholder during residence consultations
- the value of the Student Participation Handbook to guide student consultations.

Dr Andre Costopoulos noted that a *Joint Residence Oversight Committee* was struck as a result of a Residence Life Experience Task Force and is made up of students, staff, and faculty. All residence decisions are brought forward for discussion to this committee with feedback and advice provided to administration.

Ms Huising indicated that a possible consultation path includes a meeting with the SU Caucus and based on feedback may return to CoSA in March and followed by GFC Executive Committee and GFC for final approval.

ACTION ITEMS

5. Election of Vice-Chair to COSA

Presenter(s): Steven Dew; Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Kate Peters, GFC Secretary and Manager, GFC Services

Discussion:

The Chair explained that a procedural step in CoSA Terms of Reference called for the appointment of a Vice-Chair and that one of the current-serving faculty members/GFC representatives, Professors Anastasia Elias had accepted to take on the role. With full support of the committee, the Chair declared Professor Anastasia Elias as Vice-Chair by acclamation for a term effective immediately and ending June 30, 2022 and thanked Dr Elias for assuming this role.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. Synchronous and Online Proctoring in Winter 2021 (no documents)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew; Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Wendy Rodgers, Deputy Provost, and John Nychka, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) and Chair GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

Discussion:

The Chair asked guests Deputy Provost, Dr Wendy Rodgers and Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives), Dr John Nychka to provide an update regarding Synchronous and Online Proctoring and outline steps being taken by the University in response to concerns. Key highlights from their detailed report included, but were not limited to:

- the goal of the University to make sure that students and instructors in need of support have access to supports from the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Office of the Dean of Students;
- the creation of an anonymous electronic form by the International Students' Association (ISA) in coordination with the Dean of Students for students experiencing online learning difficulties;
- the role of the Dean of Students in actively monitoring and responding to issues on a case-by-case basis;
- the complexity of variables and potential issues presented in an online learning environment including Duty to accommodate, policy on evaluation and grading, privacy, copyright and collective agreements;
- the importance of this topic and its placement on the GFC agenda.

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

- the ongoing issues for those students challenged by distant time zones that are creating unhealthy implications on mental health and quality of academic experience;
- that having a conversation at GFC is a step in the right direction, along with the available reporting form;
- the need for swift action to manage issues in this semester to become effective;
- that all student needs should be considered, including new/first year who may be unaware to seek out supports - a large audience of students may fall through cracks over the short and long term;
- whether the "online issues reporting form" can reach all students; and
- issues with lecture recording including privacy; pedagogical value; intellectual property; infrastructure and technical issues.

ACTION ITEMS

7. Synchronous Online learning

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Chanpreet Singh, Appointed Student Representative to CoSA from International Students' Association (ISA)

Purpose of the Proposal: COSA was provided with three proposed motions to support students. The first motion seeks to address the needs of international/out-of-province students who are severely suffering mentally and academically due to lack of adequate sleep caused as a result of live lectures not being recorded; the second relates to the impact of the participation grades based on synchronous attendance; and finally, a proposal to ensure the General Faculties Council (GFC) explore alternatives and resolve the concerns/issues related to the synchronous online learning.

Discussion:

The Chair thanked Mr Chanpreet Singh for the documents prepared for CoSA's consideration and for the ISA's effort to help provide the Office of the Dean of Students with important information sources.

To help guide the discussion, the Chair outlined how CoSA, in accordance with its terms of reference, may put forward recommendations and what happens if there are motions that conflict with the collective agreement or legislation. Ms Kate Peters described a potential governance pathway to decision-making. Ms Peters advised that CoSA does not hold delegated authority from GFC, but does have responsibility to recommend to GFC. She noted that if approved, these proposed motions would be reviewed by GFC Executive Committee (EXEC) on February 8th, who in turn, have the authority to recommend items for the agenda of General Faculties Council (GFC) on February 22.

During the discussion, members asked questions, offered feedback and suggestions to each of the three proposals and motions including, but not limited to:

- suggestion for students who can't attend synchronously to receive instruction by an alternate way, rather than by the recording of lectures;
- concerns about the scope of issues, the timing of decision-making and the need to balance of concerns and challenges of implementing these motions as drafted;
- definition of a participation grade and whether any synchronous activity should be excluded;
- the need for additional clarity on what constitutes a barrier for time-zones;
- practical issues and logistical difficulties would be presented given the 7800+ course sections managed in the Winter Term, of which a large number would follow a lecture format;
- concerns that some students will want to keep participation grades; and
- whether GFC had the authority to resolve these issues in a way that would be amendable to all of the diverse needs of students and instructors.

The Chair and members worked collectively with the Proponent to arrive at the three motions that would go forward as recommendations by CoSA to the GFC Executive Committee for review and consideration and ultimately proceed to GFC.

Motion: Singh/Beasley

THAT the Council on Student Affairs (COSA) recommend that the General Faculties Council (GFC) make appropriate provision for alternative delivery of lectures accessible to students in courses who cannot attend synchronous components, not including exams, until in-person delivery resume.

Carried.

Motion: Chanpreet/Chaudhuri Basu

THAT Council on Student Affairs (COSA) recommend that the General Faculties Council (GFC) to have an appropriate alternative way of completing the course for students facing synchronous learning accessibility challenges, such as and not limited to, students who parent, studying from a different time zone or having a poor internet connection from the participation grade/weightage based on attendance or activities requiring students to participate synchronously until in-person delivery resume.

CARRIED

Motion: Chanpreet/Kidd

THAT the Council on Student Affairs (COSA) recommend the General Faculties Council (GFC) to explore alternatives and resolve the concerns/issues related to the synchronous online learning.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. Annual Undergraduate Enrolment Report

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar, Office of the Registrar

Discussion:

With respect to time constraints, Ms Padfield agreed to have this item deferred to the March 18, 2021 meeting.

9. Business Arising from Last Meeting - Verbal Updates from Ex-Officio Members [No documents]

- SU Update

Presenter(s): Joel Agarwal, President, UA Students' Union

Discussion:

Mr Agarwal reported on the following initiatives within the UASA purview:

- the UASU continues to be busy working with timely university issues related to Covid-19 and on governmental matters such as "Alberta 2030".
- Ms Katie Kidd was invited by Mr Agarwal to provide an update about the recent decision to hire a U of A Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator (SVPC) after extensive consultation. The initiative was passed unanimously by Students' Council and made possible through the support of students and by an increase in the MNIFs (Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees). Ms Kidd expressed in her view, that students may be disappointed in having to accept a fee increase to fund this new position, however the deep need from the community outweighed the new opportunity to move this important initiative forward.

The Chair expressed his thanks and appreciation of the student leadership shown throughout the undertaking of this endeavor.

- GSA Update

Presenter(s): Sachiketha Reddy, Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association

Discussion:

Mr Reddy highlighted the following initiatives within the GSA purview:

- The GSA continues to discuss the challenges and issues relevant to online proctoring, and have discussed the issues among the GSA caucus. Mr Sachiketha added that graduate students are interested in the opportunity for discussion on this matter at the January 25 meeting of GFC.

- Vice-Provost and Dean of Students Update

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

Discussion:

- Dr Costopoulos had previously indicated a conflicting time commitment and was unable to provide an update upon reaching the extended time on the agenda.

- Vice-Provost and University Registrar Update

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar

Discussion:

- Given time constraints, Ms Padfield deferred her verbal update to the next meeting of CoSA.

10. Question Period

The Chair invited questions and comments by members which included:

- Is it possible that the proposal documents that were prepared by the ISA would benefit from minor grammatical edits prior to reaching the GFC Executive Committee?

The Chair responded that each of the relevant proposal documents submitted to CoSA for discussion are now Governance documents. He asked that, as possible, for the GFC Secretary to work with Mr Singh to make the minor editorial/ grammatical changes and remove any redundancies before proceeding.

- Further to the University announcement of three College Deans, was there student representation during the appointment process for the new College Deans?

The Chair responded that the motion which the Board of Governors approved was that the College Dean is seconded from/by the current faculty deans. As such, the candidate pool consists of the current Deans and the selection process includes those faculty deans identifying who they wish to have in this role.

INFORMATION REPORTS

11. Items Approved by the Committee by email Ballots

There were no items to date.

12. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items to date.

CLOSING SESSION

13. Adjournment

Next Meeting of COSA: March 18, 2021

Next Meeting of General Faculties Council: March 22, 2021

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.