

General Faculties Council  
Executive Committee  
APPROVED Open Session Minutes

Monday, October 02, 2023  
South Academic Building (SAB) 2-31  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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**ATTENDEES:**

Bill Flanagan  
Jelena Holovati  
Pedro Almeida  
Ryan Dunch  
Kyle Foster  
Julianne Gibbs-Davis  
Rija Kamran  
Danielle Gardiner-Milln

Sujata Persad  
Spencer Proctor  
Norma Rodenburg  
Dan Romanyk  
Verna Yiu  
*non-voting:*  
John Lemieux  
Kate Peters

**REGRETS:**

Robert Wood  
Aiman Saif  
  
Staff:  
Faiza Billo

**OPENING SESSION**

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair acknowledged that the University of Alberta resides on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. He emphasized that this acknowledgement is particularly important in having just completed a week of activities recognising Survivors of Residential Schools.

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 EXEC

*Discussion:*

Members requested that Item 8 - A Clean Air Strategy / Smoke-free Policy, be discussed as a part of the preparation of the GFC agenda. Members were informed that Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) would be there to answer a question about the new Learning Management System during Item 9, Question Period.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT GFC Executive Committee approve the agenda.
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**CARRIED**

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

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

*Discussion:*

In his comments the Chair spoke about:

- The launch of *Shape*, the new University Strategic Plan;

- Activities organized to commemorate Residential School Survivors and the children lost;
- The University Report to Community on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action; and
- The visit of Minister Sawhney.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of September 11, 2023

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

THAT GFC Executive Committee approve the open session minutes of September 11, 2023.

**CARRIED**

4. Changes to Composition and Quorum for the School of Public Health

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from the General Faculties Council, proposed changes to the composition of the Council of the School of Public Health, as set forth in Attachment 1 to take effect upon final approval.

**CARRIED**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

5. Academic Schedule 2024-2025

*Presenter(s):* Norma Rodenburg, Acting Vice-Provost and University Registrar, Office of the Registrar

*Discussion:* N Rodenburg presented a high level overview of the academic schedule to accommodate the required number of teaching days, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and public holidays. She noted that there was an anticipated shortage of exam days and that the proposed solution was to schedule three exams per day throughout the exam period, a common practice across the U15. The exams would be scheduled at 9:00, 1:00, and 5:00 p.m. She further noted that scheduling will continue to prioritize a conflict free schedule for students and that this practice would help to ease pressures related to increased enrolment. She provided some additional context including other solutions that the Office of the Registrar had explored and provided the committee with an update on a forthcoming framework that will set in policy requirements to prevent students from having to write three exams on one day.

Members asked questions and raised concerns including:

- Whether a four-day academic week had been considered to accommodate instructor preferences for a four-day work week;
- The number of holiday-Mondays and how the Academic Schedule accommodates them;
- Whether the three exam per day schedule was anticipated to lead to other challenges and how those issues would be mitigated for students;
- A question of whether aligning the Fall Reading Week to the existing Thanksgiving holiday in October might be better for instructors;
- An opinion that the intention behind reading week is to provide students with a break in class time and that having it later in the semester is better for student mental health;

- The number of exam slots that are currently missing and the number of days currently allocated for exams;
- Whether GFC should be informed about the change, particularly the timing of exams; and
- How to manage deferred exams under a new policy preventing students from having to write three exams in one day.

N Rodenburg committed to consulting on the idea of combining the Thanksgiving holiday and the Fall Reading Week.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Academic Schedule for 2024-2025 as set forth in Attachment 6 and, in doing so, empower the Registrar to make any editorial changes as needed as long as the changes do not have the force of policy, to be effective upon final approval.

**CARRIED**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### 6. Student Academic Integrity Policy Suite

*Presenter(s):* Ravina Sanghera, Vice Provost and Dean of Students; Chris Hackett, Discipline Officer, Student Services,

*Discussion:* R Sanghera and C Hackett provided context and background information on the need to develop a new policy suite and rescind the Code of Student Behaviour (CoSB). They outlined the rationale for changes, especially the desire to mitigate unintended consequences to students, reduce stress on students and faculty members, increase timeliness and transparency in academic integrity processes; take advantage of existing and emerging technologies to support academic integrity; and other issues that have been identified in the past decade. The proponents presented information on how they anticipate rolling out revised processes including the role of the Offices of Education in the Colleges, the move to a written appeal process; training for staff; tools for tracking decisions; and new resources that will be put in place for a September 1, 2024 roll-out.

Members discussed:

- Support for the intent and principles underpinning the policy suite;
- The lack of resources in faculties to manage non-academic processes;
- That a high volume of academic appeals processes are concentrated in some programs which are understaffed and that inserting remedial processes where they don't already exist will be costly;
- A question of whether there was a possibility of streamlining processes to make better use of faculty and staff;
- The status of the position of the Student Conduct Officers compared to the position of Discipline Officer enshrined in the CoSB;
- The role of the Education Offices in the Colleges and a question of whether the College model will change how this policy will be implemented;
- Examples of cases where non-disciplinary processes would be appropriate in the new policy framework and how decisions would be made in alternative non-adjudicative processes; and
- How a more consistent approach can be put in place across the University while retaining aspects of disciplinary cultures and allowing for creativity to create effective and responsive processes.

## 7. Authority over Faculty Councils

*Presenter(s)*: John Lemieux, University Secretary, University Governance; Kate Peters, GFC Secretary and Manager, GFC Services, University Governance

*Discussion*:

J Lemieux described the powers of faculty councils set out in the *Post-secondary Learning Act* (PSLA) and the required composition according to statute. He noted that the PSLA states that all powers of a faculty council are subject to any restrictions or conditions imposed by the GFC and that the GFC Executive Committee can supervise decisions made by faculty councils. However, GFC does not have plenary authority over the functions of faculty council or their committees. Notwithstanding this limitation, GFC has made decisions in the past to place conditions and restrictions on Faculty Council composition, for example deciding the Registrar should be an additional appointed member of all faculty councils in 1987. In addition, GFC decided that undergraduate and graduate students should be members of faculty councils. K Peters asked members to advise on the proposed move of the GFC Policy Manual section 55.5 into a new format on the GFC website and asked if Exec wanted to provide any direction to faculty councils on composition and quorum.

Members discussed:

- Student membership on faculty councils and the ability of Exec to make guidelines or rules for selection and composition of student members;
- A survey on faculty-level student engagement that the University of Alberta Students' Union had recently completed that would be shared with Exec;
- Whether a new set of guidelines for faculty council composition and quorum would be appropriate and if that could be shared broadly for reference;
- That Exec would find it useful to compare composition and quorum for faculty councils to discuss some of the additional appointed membership trends such as librarians or quorum considerations;
- A question as to how faculty council jurisdiction fits with the College model and the One University strategy;
- Whether existing language on excluding full-time academic staff members on sabbatical was appropriate and a response that these members are still considered members even if they are on leave;
- The difference between appointment of graduate students by the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and the election of students by undergraduate student faculty associations; and
- A question of whether post-doctoral fellows should be included.

K Peters committed to bringing the question to the Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight for further discussion.

## **PREPARATION OF THE GFC AGENDA**

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

### 8A. Clean Air Strate/Smoke-Free Policy (Action)

#### 8A.1 Supporting Documentation from the UASU - Clean Air Strategy/Smoke Free Policy

*Presenter(s)*: Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations); and Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean (Health & Wellness) Office of the Dean of Students

*Discussion*:

The Chair thanked A Sharman and K Friese for making themselves available to discuss the item coming to Exec. He reminded members that their objective was to ensure that documents were prepared and ready to be placed

before GFC for decision, and that they were not asked at this point to debate the motion concerning a Clean Air Strategy/Smoke-Free Campus Policy. He asked P Almeida, who had requested the discussion, to present his questions and noted that the President of the University Indigenous Students' Council, M Moyan, was available to answer questions.

Members made suggestions and requests for changes including:

- Addition of the information on consultations conducted over the past five years that could give a sense of the frictions within the community;
  - A question about designated areas for smoking Cannabis on Campuses and a clarification that there were no designated smoking areas identified so smokers would need to leave campus if a smoke-free policy were implemented;
  - Whether the literature review, interview data, and additional information on the policy framework including provincial legislation and city bylaws could be provided;
  - A comment that the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) doesn't seem to be a proponent for the proposal and a reminder that the motion originated at GFC, and was not an initiative of the Office of the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations).
  - Clean Air Strategy/Smoke-Free Campus Policy is in response to GFC's request. If GFC was to request a Clean Air Strategy, A Sharman would advance this request through the governance routing path and;
  - A concern that the proposal does not articulate what a smoke-free Campus policy would mean in terms of implementation at all of the five campuses and that members may need the full context to help them make their decision.
8. B. Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Name Change  
C. Notice of Motion - Budget Model 2.0  
D. Update from the Vice-Provost of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Discussion)  
E. Council on Systemic Ableism (Discussion - No Documents)

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### 8. 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:*

Members discussed:

- Question period and the time allocated; and
- Moving the Council on Systemic Ableism to the end of the agenda to ensure that it would benefit from a full amount of time for discussion.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Agenda for the October 16, 2023 meeting of General Faculties Council, as set forth in Attachment 1, as amended.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

9. Question Period  
- Learning Management System

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

*Discussion:* Members asked about the timelines for implementation of a new Learning Management System (LMS) and the rationale behind making a change.

The committee heard:

- That the University of Alberta was the only English-speaking University using Moodle and that a more responsive LMS can support pedagogical innovation;
- How the support of a vendor as opposed to relying on open source software development will ensure a better experience for instructors and students;
- Plans for consultation in alignment with presentations from vendors and in anticipation of the implementation of the chosen LMS;
- The commitment to implement the tool in a way that reduces the impact on instructors; and
- What will be implemented in 2024 and what will be deferred until 2025.

Members provided feedback and made comments, including, but not limited to:

- Anxiety about implementation timelines given the work that has gone into developing tools and resources in eClass;
- The need to consult GFC and instructors before making a decision on the LMS to best support the future transition;
- The timelines for consultation and implementation; and
- The need for clear messaging to instructors on the rationale and the plans to mitigate the impact on classroom teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION REPORTS**

10. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings  
- Request for Consultation - Nomination of a Chancellor

## **CLOSING SESSION**

11. Adjournment  
- Next Meeting of Exec: October 30, 2023  
- Next Meeting of GFC: October 16, 2023