



# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

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### General Faculties Council Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, January 21, 2013  
L1-490, Edmonton Clinic Health Academy  
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

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#### **ATTENDEES:**

##### Voting Members:

Amaral, J Nelson	Science
Andrews, Nathan	Graduate Council of Students
Arbuckle, Kathryn	Acting Chief Librarian
Ashworth, Nigel	Medicine and Dentistry
Auger, Joanna	Sessional Staff
Babiuk, Lorne	Vice-President (Research)
Becker, Bart (Delegate)	Vice-President (Facilities and Operations)
Belosevic, Mike	GFC Appointee to the Board of Governors
Blackburn, Ed	Faculté Saint-Jean
Bouchard, Alice	Non-Academic Staff
Brown, Cary	Rehabilitation Medicine
Brown, Norman	Arts
Bryden, Philip	Dean, Law
Chen, Chris	Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Clark, Brenda	Medicine and Dentistry
Clark, Phyllis	Vice-President (Finance and Administration)
Cormack, Lesley	Dean, Arts
Coulthard, Roy	Graduate Student at-Large
Crone, Lyndon	Engineering
De Gara, Chris	Medicine and Dentistry
Eccles, Russell	President (NASA)
Ferguson-Pell, Martin	Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Goble, Erika	Graduate Student at-Large
Gordon, Ann	Arts
Gotell, Lise	Arts
Harrington, Joanna	Law
Harris, John	Arts
Hodgson, Cory	Science
Hokowhitu, Brendan	Dean, Native Studies
Ives, Jack	Arts
Jensen, Louise	Nursing
Joseph, Sam	Arts
Kehrer, James	Dean, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Kelly, Brent	Students' Union (SU) Appointee to the Board of Governors

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Kendal, Gerry	Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Kennelly, John	Dean, Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Kochikuzhyi, Jeffry	Science
Konkin, Jill	Medicine and Dentistry
Laing, Lory	Interim Dean, School of Public Health
Lemelin, Pierre	Medicine and Dentistry
MacFarlane, Kelly	Sessional Staff
McGetrick, Jennifer	Graduate Student at-Large
Meston, John	Graduate Student at-Large
Mildenberger, Adam	Medicine and Dentistry
Mills, Kelsey	Arts
Milner, Rachel	Medicine and Dentistry
Molzahn, Anita	Dean, Nursing
Mummery, Kerry	Dean, Physical Education and Recreation
Nocente, Norma	Education
Osburn, Debra Pozega	Vice-President (University Relations)
Outar, O'Neil	Vice-President (Advancement)
Patterson, Ray	Business
Pu, Christopher	NASA Appointee to the Board of Governors
Renke, Wayne	AASUA Appointee to the Board of Governors
Richards, Jeremy	Science
Rinaldi, Christina	Education
Robertson, Sean	Native Studies
Rodgers, Wendy	Physical Education and Recreation
Samarasekera, Indira	President (Chair)
Schaeffer, Jonathan	Dean, Science
Shchepetkina, Alina	Graduate Student at-Large
Snart, Fern	Dean, Education
Sturdy, Christopher	Science
Sumar, Saadiq	Student Nominated by the Undergraduate Council of Students
Tardif, Guillaume	Arts
Tinic, Serra	Arts
Willows, Noreen	Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Wilson, Donna	President (AASUA)
Woods, Adam	Arts
Yamagishi, Colten	Students' Union President
Zhang, Hao	Engineering
Zielinski, Michal	Graduate Student at-Large

Presenters/Proposers:

Ed Blackburn	Chair, GFC Nominating Committee
Mike Belosevic	Academic Staff Representative on the Board of Governors
Garry Bodnar	Secretary to General Faculties Council and Coordinator, GFC Replenishment Committee
Phyllis Clark	Vice-President (Finance and Administration)
Martin Ferguson-Pell	Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee
Kris Fowler	Helping Individuals at Risk Coordinator, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights
Wade King	Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Advisor, Office of Safe Disclosure and

Lory Laing  
Indira Samarasekera

Human Rights  
Interim Dean, School of Public Health  
President and Chair, General Faculties Council

Staff:

Garry Bodnar  
Marion Haggarty-France  
Andrea Patrick

Director of GFC Services and Secretary to GFC  
University Secretary  
Scribe

**OPENING SESSION**

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Amaral/Kennelly

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the Agenda.

**CARRIED**

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of November 26, 2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Discussion:*

Mr Woods and Mr Sumar suggested minor amendments to the Minutes of November 26, 2012.

Motion: Cormack/Molzahn

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the Minutes of November 26, 2012, as amended.

**CARRIED**

3. Comments from the President

The Chair noted this was the 387<sup>th</sup> meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC). President Samarasekera reported:

- On the recent student mental health initiative that brings \$3 million of Provincial Government funding to the University of Alberta to expand mental health services to students. She expressed her thanks to all of the University staff whose leadership was instrumental to the creation of the program and noted that Dr Donna Cave, Director, University Health Centre, provided exceptional direction with regard to the program's development. Dr Samarasekera stated that she was excited to see the program's impact as it provides assistance to students.
- On the Provincial Budget. She stated that due to recent issues within the oil and gas industry, the Province of Alberta is 'revenue challenged', which has created uncertainty with respect to the Provincial Budget. The President reported that her team continues to work on the institutional budget for 2013-2014 and that she continues to meet with representatives of the Provincial Government to emphasize how critical the 2% funding previously committed is to the University of Alberta.
- On the Board of Governors' upcoming strategic retreat, planned for April, 2013. She reported that

she recently met with Mr Douglas Goss, Chair, Board of Governors, and was pleased with his vision of reviewing strategic planning for the University of Alberta. She added that with all of the changes and current challenges within higher education, it is a good time for the Board of Governors to hold such a retreat. She stated that Mr Goss will be meeting with Deans, students, staff, and other key stakeholders to obtain their feedback before the retreat and encouraged all members to contact him with any engaging ideas or issues they may have in relation to strategic planning/directions for the University of Alberta.

- On a letter from undergraduate student members of GFC regarding student involvement at GFC and GFC Standing Committee meetings. She stated that she recently met with Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Martin Ferguson-Pell, University Secretary Marion Haggarty-France, and Secretary to GFC Garry Bodnar regarding a plan to re-energize GFC. She added that two of her ideas include changing the location of GFC from Room L1-490 ECHA and examining ways that members' time can be best utilized at GFC meetings, including reviewing what items come before GFC for its consideration and discussion. Dr Samarasekera stated these ideas will be discussed with members of the GFC Executive Committee. She pledged that a written response to the letter from these students would be provided in due course.
- On her 'State of the University' address. She noted that her address will take place on February 28, 2013, at 12:30 p.m., in Room L1-490, ECHA. She remarked that she will address a number of issues including invigorating GFC and her remaining goals before her term as President concludes.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### 4. New Members of GFC

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Indira Samarasekera, President and Chair, GFC

Discussion: There was no discussion.

Motion: Molzahn/Sumar

#### **TO APPOINT/REAPPOINT**

The following non-academic staff member elected by the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) for a term concurrent with his term of appointment on the Board of Governors (November 28, 2012 to November 27, 2015):

Christopher Pu

Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry

**CARRIED**

### 5. Proposal for Non-Departmentalized Status for the University of Alberta's School of Public Health

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Lory Laing, Interim Dean, School of Public Health

*Discussion:*

Dr Laing introduced her proposal by explaining that the School of Public Health is the newest Faculty on

campus, created from the combination of the Department of Public Health Sciences and the Centre for Health Promotions Studies. It has been in existence since 2006. The School was recently accredited as the first public health school in Canada. In 2012, the School underwent an academic unit review, and, based on that review, it was recommended at that time that the School become non-departmentalized. Dr Laing noted that the School is highly collaborative and that the existing separation of the two units was stifling research and collaboration on its academic programming and other educative functions.

The Interim Dean continued by explaining that she had struck a Task Force in the Summer of 2012 to review this issue further, and this group consulted widely across all members of the School, with a goal to formulate a plan. This process included focus groups, interviews, online participation, and a Town Hall meeting. As information was gathered, it was shared across the School's community so that the process would be transparent and open. In November, 2012, the Task Force recommended non-departmentalization. She added that the proposal was presented at a School of Public Health Council meeting in late November, 2012 and, subsequently, by means of an electronic vote in which all Council members were participant, was passed by a clear majority. She noted that students as well as alumni are supportive of the proposal.

Dr Samarasekera stated that she supported this endeavor and congratulated the School of Public Health on their recent accreditation as well as their many successes.

There was no further discussion.

Motion: Laing/Belosevic

THAT General Faculties Council recommend to the Board of Governors the proposal for a non-departmentalized structure for the University of Alberta's School of Public Health, as submitted by the Interim Dean of the School of Public Health (on behalf of the School) and as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect upon final approval.

**CARRIED**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### 6. Graduate Studies at the University of Alberta

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Martin Ferguson-Pell, Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee

#### *Discussion:*

Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Ferguson-Pell clarified that this ongoing project relates more to the University's graduate education in a broader sense rather than a discussion specifically centred on the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. He added that the goal of the review was to improve educational experiences for all graduate students and, as a result, should not be limited to a singular focus.

He explained that the University of Toronto and the University of Waterloo assisted in relation to this project and that, following visits to each institution, it was clear that their respective electronic management of graduate education administration and commitment to student funding set them apart as leaders in these areas. He added that the initial draft report with regard to this project, authored by Dr Catherine

Swindlehurst, Special Advisor to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), was submitted immediately before the University's recent holiday closure and, upon his review, warranted further fine-tuning. Dr Ferguson-Pell announced that the final report will be accompanied by a proposed action plan outlining recommendations from Administration on how to move forward. He commented that this proposed action plan was meant to foster additional discussion and collaboration across the University's campuses on this issue. He added that it would be released in advance of the next GFC meeting scheduled for March 18, 2013.

Members expressed several comments and concerns in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: how major differences, notably in relation to teaching assistantships and recruitment, between the University of Toronto, the University of Waterloo, and the University of Alberta might preclude effective modelling for proposed changes within graduate studies at the University of Alberta; whether the proposed action plan would include a clear path for actions arising; if an amended timeline for action could be made available; if there would be an opportunity outside of the next GFC meeting to discuss the report and proposed action plan; if the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council would have an opportunity to review the report and proposed action plan; and if there has been response from Administration regarding concerns brought forward by the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), alleging lack of consultation. The Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) responded, in turn, to each of the points raised by members.

Dr Samarasekera thanked members for their continued attention to this matter and added that, as graduate education continues to be a large and important item for review, she and the Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) will continue to provide updates on the issue.

## 7. The Visioning Committee Report

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenters:* Indira Samarasekera, President and Chair, GFC, and Martin Ferguson-Pell, Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee

### *Discussion:*

Dr Samarasekera explained that as a way to be proactive about the emerging global trend within higher education towards incorporating online learning initiatives into traditional teaching methods, she had requested Dr Jonathan Schaeffer, in his previous role as Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Information Technology), and Ms Jennifer Chesney, Associate Vice-President (University Digital Strategy), form a committee to discuss how the University of Alberta could initially respond to the idea. She explained that the Visioning Committee was therefore struck; the issues were discussed and investigated thoroughly; and the Committee subsequently produced and provided a report to the President, which she is now sharing with the wider University community.

At the President's invitation, Dr Ferguson-Pell highlighted for members the "Summary of Recommendations" contained within the Report and provided brief commentary on the collective:

1. Aspire to offer the highest quality digital learning environment within our comprehensive learning offerings to enhance in-class experience and create a strong online learning presence.
2. Create a central collaborative research and teaching service unit responsible for defining, operating, facilitating, and promoting the University of Alberta's advanced digital learning environment.
3. Partner with other universities and/or digital learning organizations to offer common courses, innovative certificates, and unique learning opportunities.

4. Consolidate existing teaching and learning resources.
5. Commit to a long-term funding strategy.
6. Broaden the integration of appropriate technologies in the classroom to support enhanced teaching and learning.
7. Offer certain online courses for free.
8. Create live learning events.
9. Encourage entrepreneurialism both in the learning environment and in research that has commercial viability.

Members expressed several questions and comments in relation to Report, including, but not limited to: what evidence exists for Recommendation 6 in relation to the pedagogical value of blended courses; how Recommendation 2 might fiscally impact the University of Alberta at a time of severe budget challenges; that the expense of the initiative might hinder its launch; that an alternative approach could be that the University of Alberta not participate in the digitization of learning initiatives and could instead continue to focus on personalized, one-on-one teaching methods; identification of the challenges in establishing digital learning strategies on campus; what the next steps are in regards to this project; what the governance route would be for approving related initiatives; that the Report and discussion around the Report have been helpful to those professors and instructors on campus already augmenting traditional teaching methods with online learning initiatives; and how the incorporation of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and other online initiatives might impact student and course fees.

Dr Samarasekera provided commentary on the points raised by members and, in turn, thanked them for their participation in the discussion. She added that the findings contained with this report would continue to be discussed within the academy and, potentially, at future meetings of GFC.

#### 8. Helping Individuals at Risk and Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Activity Report 2011-2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenters:* Phyllis Clark, Vice-President (Finance and Administration), Wade King, Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Advisor, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights, and Kris Fowler, Helping Individuals at Risk Coordinator, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights

*Discussion:*

Vice-President (Finance and Administration) Clark introduced this item by stating the contents of the Helping Individuals at Risk and Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Activity Report 2011-2012 emphasize the crucial role of the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights on campus.

Mr King highlighted several key areas from the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Report, including:

- There were 98 cases of disclosure during the reporting period.
- The Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights focused on cross-institutional training and educational efforts including the "Delete Bullying" course and worked to increase awareness throughout the University of the policies and procedures overseen and services provided by this unit.
- The Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights has hired a Communication Coordinator.

Ms Kris Fowler highlighted several key areas from the Helping Individuals at Risk Report, including:

- There were 214 reports about 153 perceived 'Individuals at Risk' during the reporting period, reflecting

a 18% increase in reports and 33% increase in the number of perceived 'Individuals at Risk' from the previous year. The majority of cases were undergraduate students.

- The focus will be to encourage reporting for anyone perceived to be "at risk," including staff and faculty members.
- Reports seem to come in "clusters" over the year.
- Ms Fowler's position has become full-time, and this will encourage a strong focus on increasing awareness on the University's campuses.

Members expressed several comments and questions in relation to these reports, including, but not limited to: whether or not the increase in reports from and about undergraduate students represents a trend; and whether or not there is a break-down of data between undergraduate *versus* graduate students.

Dr Samarasekera thanked Mr King and Ms Fowler for their hard work and dedication.

#### 9. Question Period

Dr Samarasekera noted that there have been recent discussions regarding GFC and its procedures. She clarified that debate is not the intended purpose of 'Question Period'; yet, she stated that there are important issues that do warrant debate and that she, in consultation with others, will be determined where and how this can occur. She stated that 'Question Period' is about sharing information between individuals on campus. She added that she is happy to address all questions, but some answers require time to prepare and may be delivered at a later date as a result. In addition, the President noted that she reserved the right to interrupt members delivering lengthy prepared statements or to recommend that a reply in writing be provided at another date, if necessary.

9.1Q/9.1R Question from GFC Member Mr Saadiq Sumar (Students' Union Vice-President (Student Life)) Regarding Changes at Lister Residences and Response from Vice-Provost and Dean of Students Frank Robinson to Question Raised by Mr Sumar

9.2Q/9.2R Question from GFC Member Mr Dustin Chelen (Students' Union Vice-President (Academic)) Regarding Changes at Lister Residences and Response from Vice-Provost and Dean of Students Frank Robinson to Question Raised by Mr Chelen

Mr Sumar thanked the Chair for the response before members and stated that he will direct a question towards Vice-Provost and Dean of Students Frank Robinson for the next GFC meeting (as Dr Robinson was absent from the current meeting). Dr Samarasekera requested that he submit the question in writing before the next meeting of Council.

Mr Woods noted that he had submitted a written question for this meeting of GFC but acknowledged that, having done so so shortly before the meeting, he had not expected a written response at this time. The Chair invited him to state his question, which he did by noting that, recently, there was an incident in which Residence Services lodged a complaint to University of Alberta Protective Services regarding a student who, in his view, had respectfully spoken out about the eviction of a fellow student. He commented that he believed this letter was an attempt by a student to state their opinion regarding the treatment of a peer by the University and entirely relates to rules and regulations overseen by General Faculties Council, specifically the Residence Code. Despite this student's attempt to contribute to the collegiality of the institution, University staff resorted to what some may call intimidation tactics with the use of its own security. Mr Woods asked why University staff responded to student concerns through such means?

Dr Samarasekera replied that she will review the matter and that the Administration will provide a written reply. She added that students should be free to voice their opinions and that a break-down in collegiality



should be avoided.

Mr Yamagishi stated that it is sometimes difficult for students to address Council in 'Question Period' without reading from prepared materials, particularly given the presence of members of the Senior Administration (eg, Deans). He added that it is easier for students to read a prepared question in order to properly present their concerns. Dr Samarasekera replied that she welcomes questions, but that sometimes prepared statements detract from the intention of 'Question Period', which is to answer questions across the academy, not to state platforms of opinion. She added that students can read from prepared papers if they are most comfortable doing so but, if it is too lengthy or contains a platform of opinion, she may choose to interrupt to ask that the questioner provide their question in a more concise manner.

Mr Coulthard stated that he has noticed a considerable number of professors from MacEwan University were being featured within local media as resident experts on a range of issues and asked why this might be occurring with such frequency. In response, Vice-President (University Relations) Pozega Osburn stated she would review this matter and provide a response for the next meeting of GFC.

### **INFORMATION REPORTS**

#### 10. GFC Executive Committee Minutes of December 3, 2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Discussion:*

There was no discussion.

#### 11. Reports of the Board of Governors of December 14, 2012

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Discussion:*

There was no discussion.

#### 12. E-Mail Report of the GFC Nominating Committee (January 7, 2013)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Discussion:*

Dr Blackburn reminded members that it is replenishment time again for GFC standing committees and other bodies to which GFC elects individuals and invited members to submit names for participation. He noted that the deadline for applications from interested students is March 4, 2013 and, for interested staff, the deadline is set for March 28, 2013. He instructed members to reference the University Governance website ([www.governance.ualberta.ca](http://www.governance.ualberta.ca)) for more information.

#### 13. E-Mail Report of the GFC Replenishment Committee

There was no report to date.

#### 14. Information Items Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings

There were no items to date.

15. Reports

- Annual Report to General Faculties Council (GFC) from the Appeals Coordinator (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012)
- University of Alberta Museums Annual Report to General Faculties Council (GFC) for the Period July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012
- Office of Student Judicial Affairs (OSJA) 2011/12 Annual Report and Statistics

*Discussion:*

There was no discussion.

**CLOSING SESSION**

16. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:50 pm.