



General Faculties Council
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, April 20, 2020
Virtual Meeting by Video/Phone
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Statutory Members:

Ex-Officio:

David Turpin, Chair
Chris Andersen
Dale Askey
Stanford Blade
Lesley Cormack
Greta Cummings
Neal Davies
Steven Dew
Joseph Doucet
Brenda Hemmelgarn
Shanthy Johnson
Matina Kalcounis-
Rueppell
Gitta Kulczycki
Brooke Milne
John Misiaszek
(delegate)
Pierre-Yves Mocquais
Kerry Mummery
Melissa Padfield
Matthias Ruth
Andrew Sharman
Kelly Spencer
Catherine Swindlehurst
Demetres
Tryphonopoulos
Jennifer Tupper

Elected Faculty:

Jason Acker
Cathy Adams
J Nelson Amaral
Nicholas Beier
Heather Coleman
Piet Defraeye
Gary Eitzen
Tarek El-Bialy
Anastasia Elias
Duncan Elliott
Nadir Erbilgin

Fay Fletcher
Mary Forhan
Bill Foster
Michael Frishkopf
Pierre Lemelin
Kathleen Lowrey
Pirkko Markula
Lynn McMullen
Sean McMurtry
Al Meldrum
Sue-Ann Mok
Roger Moore
Sarah Moore
Christina Rinaldi
Dan Romanyk
Victoria Ruetalo
Carolyn Sale
Richard Schulz
John Seubert
Susan Sommerfeldt
Eleni Stroulia
Kisha Supernant
Amy Tse
Alan Underhill
Kristof Van Assche
Dilini Vethanayagam
Akiko Watanabe
Lynne Wiltse
Minn-Nyoung Yoon
Yan Yuan

Students:

Joel Agarwal
Jared Larsen
Dylan Ashley

Appointed Members:

Matthew Barnett
Akanksha Bhatnagar
Katherine Binhammer
Meijun Chen
Melinda Chisholm

André Costopoulos
Natalie Diether
David Draper
Fahed Elian
Shannon Erichsen
Shawn Flynn
Jill Hall
Peter Johnson
Kevin Kane
Alana Krahn
Rajesh Kumar
Janice Kung
Christopher Lupke
Habba Mahal
Milad Nazarahari
Alesha Reed
Lindy Schaffrick
Sarah Severson
Andrei Tabirca
Shahed Taghian
Dehaghani
Frederick Tappenden
Janet Williamson
Donna Wilson
Adrienne Wright
Ding Xu
Larry Zhong

REGRETS:

Ayman Adwan
W. Ted Allison
Adarsh Badesha
Amlan Bose
Yiming Chen
Fraser Forbes
Paul Gareau
Ian Gatera
Tahra Haddouche
Robert Haennel
Olivia Harris
Osman Hojanepesov

Basil Hubbard
Peter Hurd
Abigail Isaac
Simran Kaur Dhillon
Nat Kav
Eva Lemaire
Rowan Ley
Susanne Luhmann
Maria Mayan
Stephanie McKenzie
Rojin McVea
Vivian Mushahwar
Anthony Nguyen
Shannon O'Byrne
David Percy
Amber Sayed
Georg Schmolzer
Dhanvanth Soora
Samantha Tse
Jonathan White
Ian Winship

Guest:

Bill Flanagan, President-
Elect

Staff:

Marion Haggarty-France,
University Secretary
Yimmie Sonuga, GFC
Secretary
Heather Richholt,
Assistant GFC Secretary
Ann Hodgson, University
Governance
Laura Riley, University
Governance
Edyta McLoughlin
University Governance
Brad Hamdon, General
Counsel

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): David Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of GFC

Motion: Stroulia/Elliott

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): David Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of GFC

Discussion:

The Chair thanked the members of the Governance team together with representatives from eClass and Information Services & Technology who had worked together to support the transition to virtual governance meetings.

The Chair acknowledged that this was the final meeting for GFC student members and thanked them, especially the Presidents of the Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association, for their contributions over the past year.

The Chair noted that as the COVID-19 pandemic was expected to persist for a significant period, the University of Alberta announced on April 6th that spring and summer 2020 courses would be delivered through remote delivery. The Chair also reminded members of GFC that under the emergency orders delegated to him by the Board in emergency/extraordinary circumstances, he also made the decision to suspend classes and move to remote delivery for the remainder of the Winter term. He noted that these decisions are being tracked in the COVID 19 Governance Decision Tracker which will be discussed later in the agenda.

The Chair spoke about the negotiation of a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with NASA regarding temporary layoffs of support staff for up to 120 days. He pointed out that this would also ensure that affected support staff had access to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

The Chair noted the significant cuts to the university's budget that totaled over 110 million dollars and that over 1000 staff positions had to be cut as well.

Matina Kalcounis-Rueppell, Dean of the Faculty of Science spoke about the Department of Chemistry's work to provide hand sanitizer to Edmonton Police Services, and noted that approximately 500 Science students voted in the recent poll that was launched to find a name for the plesiosaur skeleton in the CCIS building. The winning name was "Dr Dino Hinshaw" in tribute to Dr Deena Hinshaw the current Chief Medical Officer of Health for the province of Alberta.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Seconder: Stroulia/Elliott

3. Approval of the Minutes of March 30, 2020

Discussion:

A member suggested that some changes be made to the draft minutes. The Chair noted that they would be pulled from the Consent Agenda and brought back for approval at the next meeting of GFC.

4. New Members of GFC

TO APPOINT/REAPPOINT:

The following undergraduate student representatives to serve on GFC for terms commencing May 1, 2020 and ending April 30, 2021:

Lucas Marques Faculty of Arts
Xinxin Zhang Faculty of Arts
Yiming Chen Faculty of Arts
Talia Dixon Faculty of Arts
Chris Beasley Faculty of Arts
Harnoor Kochar Faculty of Arts
Nicole de Grano Faculty of Arts
Ana Oliveira Faculty of Arts
Daniela Carbajal Augustana Faculty
Marwan Burhani Faculty of Business
Tyler Saretzky Faculty of Business
Purna Hariharan Faculty of Engineering
Zaryab Khan Faculty of Engineering
Amlan Bose Faculty of Engineering
Dhir Bid Faculty of Engineering
Karl Buchanan Faculty of Law
Jacob Park Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Abner Monteiro Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport & Recreation
Eric Einarson Faculté Saint-Jean
Samar Barazesh Faculty of Science
Emily Kimani Faculty of Science
Adarsh Badesha Faculty of Science
Rahul Korde Faculty of Science
Simran Dhillon Faculty of Science
Christian Fotang Faculty of Science
Devshri Lala Faculty of Science

The following undergraduate student members elected by the Students' Union to the Board of Governors and appointed to GFC for a term that is concurrent with terms on the Board (May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021):

Joel Agarwal President, Students' Union
David Konrad Student Appointee (Board of Governors Representative)

The following graduate student representatives at-large to serve on GFC for terms commencing May 1, 2020 and ending April 30, 2021:

Adekunle Mofolasayo Civil & Environmental Engineering
Ananya Sarkar Argicultural, Food & Nutritonal Science
Khandaker Akib Shahriar Chemistry

Meijun Chen Music
Sharonne Lee Business - MBA
Ding Xu Political Science
Habba Mahal Biological Sciences
Ji Kai (Adan) Wang Electrical & Computer Engineering
Lee Smith Education Policy Studies
Nicole Patrie Educational Policy Studies
Shivani Gupta Business - MBA
Shahed Taghain Dehaghani Mechanical Engineering
Simran Ghoman Medical Sciences
Paramita Chaudhuri Basu Business - MBA

The following graduate student member elected by the Graduate Students' Association to the Board of Governors and appointed to GFC for a term that is concurrent with a term on the Board (May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021):

Marc Waddingham President, Graduate Students' Association

CARRIED

TO RECEIVE:

The following statutory undergraduate student members nominated by the Students' Union to serve on GFC for terms beginning May 1, 2020 and ending April 30, 2021:

David Draper Students' Union Nominee
Katie Kidd Students' Union Nominee

The following statutory graduate student member nominated by the Graduate Students' Association to serve on GFC for a term beginning May 1, 2020 and ending April 30, 2021:

Sachikethan Reddy Graduate Students' Association Nominee

CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

5. University of Alberta Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Akanksha Bhatnagar, Students' Union President; Fahed Elian, Graduate Students' Association President

Purpose of the Proposal: Following extensive consultations with the University of Alberta Community, the Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities is before the General Faculties Council to secure its endorsement.

Discussion:

Ms Bhatnagar and Mr Elian spoke about how the document was meant to help students connect to important information about their rights and responsibilities. Members expressed general support of the charter document.

Motion: Stroulia/Elliott

THAT General Faculties Council endorse the implementation of the University of Alberta Charter on Student Rights and Responsibilities, as recommended by the GFC Executive Committee and as set forth in attachment 1.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. Academic Governance Emergency Protocols (Standing Item)

Presenter(s): David Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of GFC; Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations); Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar; Yimmie Sonuga, Secretary to GFC

A. Report of the GFC Executive Committee

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Discussion:

The Chair spoke about the decisions that were made by GFC Executive acting with delegated authority from GFC, the authority given to Exec through its Terms of Reference, and the Principles for General Faculties Council Delegation of Authority.

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

- how the university community would grapple with decisions that were made by a delegated body or a governing body that some judged to be "bad decisions";
- whether provisions should be made to allow for emergency meetings of General Faculties Council to be called with 48 hours' notice instead of the current 1 month required as per GFC's Meeting Procedural Rules;
- the importance of trust and collegiality, and that it was more efficient to call a meeting of 20 people than 150 people with short notice;
- section 4.1 of GFC Executive Committee's Terms of Reference and when the committee should have the authority to act for GFC;
- a suggestion for a review of the Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee and the Principles for General Faculties Council Delegation of Authority; and
- a review of the university's pandemic planning and emergency response given the lessons learned in dealing with this crisis.

B. Decision Tracker Document

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Discussion:

Ms Sonuga explained how the tracker document was being used to catalogue the decisions made with delegated authority.

C. Upcoming Considerations for GFC

- Letter Template

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before GFC to seek advice regarding the draft Letter Template and potential support resources to ensure the letter and the resources are meeting the objective for our community without creating undue burden and increased workload during the COVID pandemic.

Discussion:

Ms Padfield presented the draft letter template and draft language for instructors to use as guidance when writing reference letters for students.

During the discussion members raised points including but not limited to:

- that the letter needed to include reference to 2-term courses (fall 2019/winter 2020) as they would also be part of the credit/no-credit grading scheme;
- the replacement of the word "mastery" with "has met the minimum requirements", or "have fulfilled the requirements of the course";
- whether the decision by the GFC Executive Committee to move to the credit/no-credit grading scheme was a "bad decision";
- whether additional template letters could be given to instructors for use in writing reference letters or if suggested language could be provided to help instructors with reference letters;
- whether a template letter tool could be provided in eClass to make it easier for instructors to provide reference letters;
- that reference letters should be provided as they normally were and not be used as a replacement for letter grades;
- confusion in the communications that were made regarding the letter template and letters that would be provided to show where a student was in relation to their peers;
- that other institutions were grappling with these questions as well;
- that communication would be critical whatever decisions were made;
- the importance of not putting University of Alberta students at a disadvantage in relation to those at other universities; and
- that regardless of what communications had been made, General Faculties Council held the authority and should decide on these matters.

The discussion resulted in two carried motions from the floor.

Motion: Stroulia/Elliott

THAT General Faculties Council endorse the Registrar's Letter [a student resource to be downloaded as needed, reflecting the decision made by the University to award either a "CR" (Credit) or "NC" (No Credit) grade for the semester ending with the Winter 2020 term]. This endorsement also included the modification of one sentence in the letter to read "The grade of "CR" indicates that students have fulfilled the requirements of the course." This modification was made so that language more closely aligned with terminology used in official documents such as the degree parchment.

CARRIED

Motion: Amaral/Forhan

THAT General Faculties Council endorse the provision of guidance for instructors wishing to provide commentary on student performance within their courses during the Winter 2020 term and will clearly communicate to the community that it is guidance.

CARRIED

- COVID Scenario Planning Update (no documents)

Mr Sharman spoke about the considerations and planning that were underway regarding potential scenarios for fall 2020. He noted that more information about scenarios would come to GFC in May.

- Engaging GFC and Next Steps (no documents)

The Chair noted that additional meetings would be scheduled beyond the May meeting of GFC.

Ms Padfield shared the notation that would be printed on official transcripts to explain the winter 2020 credit/no-credit grading scheme.

7. Micro Credentials (no documents)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Tammy Hopper, Vice-Provost (Programs)

Discussion:

Dr Dew spoke about the work that was currently underway to develop a framework for micro credentials and non-credit credentials. Dr Hopper noted that the framework would seek GFC's approval in May.

There were no questions.

8. Question Period

- 8.1 Question Received from Elected Member of GFC

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): David Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of GFC

Discussion:

A question was submitted regarding the need for additional meetings of GFC and potential revisions to the 30-day notice required to schedule a special meeting of GFC. The Chair noted that there would be additional meetings of GFC scheduled beyond the May 25th meeting.

A member asked about the university's commitment to host the 2021 Congress of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences and whether this was being revisited in light of the financial commitment required. The Chair noted that funds had been set aside for this purpose 4 years earlier when the commitment was made and it would be going ahead as planned.

INFORMATION REPORTS

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

9. Report of the GFC Academic Planning Committee (no documents)

- The report from the meeting of April 15, 2020 will be available at the next meeting of GFC

10. Report of the GFC Academic Standards Committee (no documents)

- The report from the meeting of April 16, 2020 will be available at the next meeting of GFC

11. GFC Nominations and Elections (no documents)

- Get Involved

15. Information Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings

- Email: Provost Review Feedback

CLOSING SESSION

16. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.