

General Faculties Council (GFC)
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, March 20, 2023
Council Chamber
2:00 PM - 4:55 PM

OPENING SESSION

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair made the following territorial acknowledgement:

We are located on Treaty 6 territory. We are privileged to reside on lands in Treaties 6, 7, 8 and the homeland of the Metis. To respect these agreements and to honour our relations with these Nations, we recognise this territory as we convene today.

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 GFC

Discussion:

Elected student member H Ali made a motion from the floor to add a motion to the agenda for GFC to recommend to the Board of Governors on tuition.

The Chair explained that as per GFC Meeting Procedural Rules section 6.3, adding a motion to the agenda with no notice of motion requires a two-thirds majority vote.

The proponents spoke about the increased financial pressures on students and noted that the Board would vote on the proposal to increase tuition at the end of the week. They expressed that it was important for GFC to make a recommendation now.

The motion to add this item was put to a vote and was carried.

The Chair noted that the additional motion would be considered as Item 7.

Elected student member M Regmi made a motion from the floor to add a motion to the agenda for GFC to recommend to the Board of Governors to include a condition on the use of any budget surplus. The motion was put to a vote and was defeated.

The motion was moved and seconded

Motion from the floor:

To add a motion to the Agenda to make a recommendation to the Board of Governors about tuition increases.

CARRIED

The motion was moved and seconded

Motion from the floor:

To add a motion to the Agenda to make a recommendation to the Board of Governors to include a condition on the use of any budget surplus.

DEFEATED

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT General Faculties Council approve the agenda, as amended.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

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

Discussion:

In his comments the Chair made note of the following:

- The International Journée de la Francophonie, and recognition of Campus Saint-Jean's contribution and leadership;
- Congratulations to the newly elected executives of the University of Alberta Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association;
- The call for nominations for the GFC Nominee to the Board of Governors and thanks to D Vethanayagam for serving in the role for the past three years; and
- An update on the search for the University Secretary.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of February 27, 2023

THAT General Faculties Council approve the open session minutes of February 27, 2023

CARRIED

4. New Members of GFC

TO APPOINT:

The following NASA President to serve on GFC for a term commencing March 8, 2023 and extending for the duration of the appointment:

Quinn Benders

CARRIED

TO RECEIVE:

The following statutory academic staff members who have been elected by their Faculty, to serve on GFC for a term of office beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2023:

Tracy Howlett, Native Studies

CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

5. Undergraduate Embedded Certificate Framework

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Kathryn Todd, Deputy Provost (Academic); Janice Causgrove Dunn, Vice-Provost (Programs)

Discussion:

K Todd spoke about the proposed framework and noted the importance of aligning the University's offerings to ensure that they were of value to students and that there was a clear understanding of their purpose.

J Causgrove Dunn provided an overview of the work and consultation that had gone into the development of the proposal. She noted that only four percent of University of Alberta students obtain embedded certificates, and that many certificates have very low or no enrolment. She expressed that the current approach was not serving students and that the framework would provide for more cohesive design and purpose.

A member asked about the number of students that must be enrolled in order to make a certificate viable and whether there would be a threshold established and, heard that there was no threshold proposed but that there were examples of certificates that had no enrolment for five to ten years.

A member expressed that there had been insufficient consultation with the Associate Chairs of the Departments who administered the certificates that would either have to be revised or suspended, and made a motion from the floor to table the proposal until such consultation could take place. The motion was seconded and put to a vote. The motion was defeated and the discussion continued.

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

- That a capstone requirement was great in principle but that it was difficult to provide that opportunity to students;
- Some of the issues with low enrolment certificates including difficulty getting into courses, overlap between certificate and course requirements that made the certificate redundant, and high credit requirements that made them difficult to complete;
- That the working group had compared low enrolment and high enrolment certificates and surveyed students about their experiences before developing the Framework;
- Whether the low enrolment certificates were diluting the value of embedded certificates or if it was more a matter of poor communication and advertising;
- That a fall 2024 implementation meant Faculty-level approval by September 2023 and that the timelines were too rushed;
- That the interdisciplinary aspect would make it difficult to deliver embedded certificates;
- That there should be a rationale and clarity of requirements rather than a restrictive framework; and
- That there should be more direct consultation with those offering the certificates.

The proponent withdrew the motion and committed to further consultation.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the GFC Programs Committee recommend that the General Faculties Council approve the proposed Undergraduate Embedded Certificate Framework, as set forth in Attachment 1 to take effect Fall 2024.

WITHDRAWN

The motion was moved and seconded.

Motion from the floor:

To table the proposal until the Associate Chairs of the Departments offering certificates that do not fit into the framework are consulted.

DEFEATED

6. Budget Model Principles

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Todd Gilchrist, Vice-President (University Services and Finance)

Discussion:

T Gilchrist spoke about the budget model planning that was in progress, the feedback that was received from GFC on the principles and the resulting change from "fairness" to "equity", and updated context in the document.

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

- A caution on the tone of the statement that "units and faculties have come to rely on the funding they have been given, and feel entitled to this funding";
- Objections to the principles because they are too vague and do not provide any specifics relating to practice and decision making;
- That the trend is to focus on the University as an engine of job creation and that approving these principles gives administration too much power;
- That the principles could be interpreted in many ways so that they could be used to justify anything;
- A question as to who had the authority to approve Budget Model 2.0;
- How the principle of transparency could be measured and whether the information could be made simple enough for the average person to understand;
- That these were the high-level principles being used to put Budget Model 2.0 together; and
- That the Budget Model should be aligned with the University Strategic Plan.

T Gilchrist observed that the principles are more clearly defined now than they ever were before, and pointed to the documents that are publicly available. He also noted that the intention is for the funds to follow and support activity and that the University Strategic Plan would provide direction.

V Yiu explained that Budget Model 2.0 would be more transparent so that the Deans have what they need to make data-informed decisions. She also noted that the high-level principles would be used as a lens for decision-making and ongoing iterative and more formal evaluations of the Model.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the General Faculties Council recommend the Board of Governors approve the Budget Model Principles, as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect upon final approval, for Budget Model 2.0.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

11. College Model Review

This item was discussed out of agenda sequence.

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Dru Marshall, Former Provost and Vice-President (Academic), University of Calgary (Review author)

Discussion:

V Yiu provided some background noting that the 18-month review was a requirement of the Board motions that created the College Model and that D Marshall had been engaged to do this work in fall 2022.

D Marshall noted that many people in the post-secondary space were watching the University of Alberta's College Model with interest. She also noted her appreciation of the engagement and candor of those with whom she had connected. She spoke about the challenges of implementing the College Model and the Service Excellence Transformation (SET) under such tight timelines and the general agreement that while this was not the optimal way to enact such a transformation, a reduction of 222 million dollars in funding means that you cannot continue to do things the same way. She observed that the restructuring was not without issue but that all things considered, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the resilience of the University of Alberta is remarkable and that there are strengths and opportunities to build on and toward including: a new leadership culture, efficiencies in administrative processes, coordination of strategic priorities, opportunities for collaboration, and enhanced student experience.

Members discussed:

- The implementation of the recommendations in the report;
- Changing the title of the College Deans to clarify the role;
- The example of embedded certificates and standardization to make these opportunities better for our students;
- The importance of innovation in teaching and learning and program offerings, including laddering certificates into degrees;
- Why there was no consideration of cost savings in the report since that was the main reason for the restructure;
- Whether targeting University rankings should be a focus or whether it prevents us from doing what is needed to improve ourselves;
- The negative effects of the restructuring process on student services so far; and
- The engagement of all members of the University in the strategic planning process.

Members asked about the lack of consultation with support staff members, student members, and General Faculties Council members, and heard that there were consultation sessions scheduled but there was very little engagement.

During the discussion a motion from the floor to extend the meeting was moved, seconded, and carried.

The motion was moved and seconded.

Motion from the floor:

THAT the General Faculties Council extend the meeting until 4:45 p.m.

CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

7. Recommendation from General Faculties Council on Tuition (no documents)

Presenter(s): Haruun Ali, Elected Undergraduate Student Member; Telisa Courtney, Elected Graduate Student Member

Discussion:

During the presentation on the item, the proponents spoke about the pressures on students to pay increasingly high tuition alongside financial pressures such as high inflation and pandemic related job losses. They spoke about the unprecedented use of the Campus Food Bank and the difficulty accessing student financial supports, especially for international students. They acknowledged the high cuts to provincial operating support grant funding and argued that it was unacceptable for the University to expect students to pay for the deficit in the operating budget and that it was up to the senior leaders to resolve the budget deficit.

The Chair opened the floor and in response to a question, the Vice-President (University Services and Finance) explained that there were two primary streams of funding for the University, the operating grant from the provincial government and student tuition. He noted that the model for the distribution of funds to the Faculties has been to this point maintained as it was designed in Budget Model 1.0, but the cuts to provincial funding have now impacted the fundamentals of that model.

During the discussion, members expressed comments including but not limited to:

- That increasing tuition did not equate to increased or even equal student services as many services had suffered due to the SET restructuring;
- That restructuring was financially necessary and it would take time for the new structure to be fully effective;
- That the motion was addressing systemic barriers since higher tuition was making post-secondary education less accessible;
- Tuition has never been adequate to cover the costs of teaching on its own and Faculties have always received funding from the Operating and Program Support Grant to support teaching and student supports;
- That the University needed to continue to push back against the reductions to provincial funding;
- That minimum wage was not increasing along with tuition and inflation and students were struggling to pay for basic needs including food, shelter, and medication;
- That this motion would be a demonstration of GFC's moral responsibility to students;
- That the President and the Board did not fight against the provincial budget cuts;
- That students were going hungry while senior executives were earning high salaries;
- That the message needed to be sent that GFC was not supportive of operating the University like a corporation; and
- That in the experience of one member, the Board does not care about the burden on students.

The motion was passed and the President noted that he would take the recommendation to the Board of Governors meeting of Friday, March 24, 2023. He further noted that he did not support this recommendation and would therefore engage GFC Executive Committee with respect to the protocol developed to communicate recommendations from GFC to the Board.

During the discussion a motion from the floor to extend the meeting was moved, seconded, and carried.

At the close of this item the meeting was adjourned and the remaining items deferred.

The motion was moved and seconded.

Motion from the floor:

THAT the General Faculties Council extend the meeting until 5:00 p.m.

CARRIED

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT General Faculties Council recommends to the Board of Governors that they reject all the tuition hikes proposed for the 23/24 and 24/25 school years in light of increased financial pressures on students.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. Question Period

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Item was deferred.

9. General Faculties Council Terms of Reference and Replenishment Procedure

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Item was deferred.

10. Proposed Revisions to the Awards for Teaching Excellence Policy

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Item was deferred.

INFORMATION REPORTS

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

12. Report of the GFC Executive Committee

13. Report of the GFC Academic Planning Committee

14. Report of the GFC Programs Committee

- *The committee will report on their March 16 meeting next month.*

15. GFC Nominations and Elections

- NC Report to GFC – March 3, 2023
- Anticipated Vacancies
- Recent GFC Elections

16. Information Items:

- A. Update on generative AI in the learning environment

17. Information Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings

- Request for feedback - Items from GFC
- Dropped Zoom Call

CLOSING SESSION

18. Adjournment

- Next Meeting of General Faculties Council: April 17, 2023

ATTENDEES:

Statutory Members:

Ex-Officio:

Bill Flanagan, Chair
Simaan AbouRizk
Dale Askey
Stanford Blade
Jessica Butts Scott
Todd Gilchrist
Brenda Hemmelgarn
Tammy Hopper
Christine Hughes
Shanthi Johnson
Elan MacDonald
Kyle Murray
Kyra Pyke
Aminah Robinson Fayek
Norma Rodenburg
Andrew Sharman
Demetres
Tryphonopoulos
Jennifer Tupper
Frederick West
Verna Yiu

Academic Staff:

Jennifer Branch-Mueller
Marie Carrière
Susan Chatwood
Pierre Chue
Chetan Dave
Melanie Dreyer-Lude
Richard Field
Zachary Friggstad
Douglas Gingrich
Michael Hendzel
Tracy Howlett
Vadim Kravchinsky
Hollis Lai
Jacqueline Leighton
Pierre Lemelin
Liran Levin
Christopher Lupke
Derek MacKenzie

Weimin Mou
Pauline Paul
Graham Pearson
Jerine Pegg
Sujata Persad
Frances Plane
Elena Posse de Chaves
Spencer Proctor
Tracy Raivio
Christian Reyns-
Chikuma
Dan Romanyk
Keith Rourke
Carolyn Sale
John Spence
Chris Sprysak
Mani Vaidyanathan
Mirko van der Baan
Yifeng Wei
Shauna Wilton
Minn-Nyoung Yoon
Nese Yuksel

Students:

Joannie Fogue
Gurleen Kaur

Appointed Members:

Abdul Abbasi
Haruun Ali
Rebecca Avila
Jill Bagwe
Cirila Bartley
Josephine Bolaji
Marsha Boyd
Jayden Brooks
Cary Brown
Heather Bruce
Telisa Courtney
Alexander Dorscheid
Joseph Doucet
Ryan Dunch
Levi Flaman
Shawn Flynn
Kyle Foster

Eva Glancy
Tahmid Al Hafiz
Rachel Hislop-Hook
Emily Holden
Matina Kalcounis-
Rueppell
Valentina Kozlova
Devshri Lala
Warren Leung
Lionel Liu
Angie Mandeville
Adekunle Mofolasayo
Tessa Monaghan
Abner Monteiro
Jennifer Passey
Hubert Piatkowski
Milan Regmi
Marian Sanchez
Patricia Sherbaniuk
Sophie Shi
Chanpreet Singh
Allison Sivak
Gordon Swaters
Andrei Tabirca
Frederick Tappenden
Helen Vallianatos
Dilini Vethanayagam
Adrian Wattamaniuk
Rachel Yang

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Saadet Andrews
Fateh Arslan
Bishoi Aziz
Quinn Benders
Barbara Billingsley
Ahmed Bouferguene
Robert Burrell
Daniela Carbajal
Jason Carey
Greta Cummings
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Bipro Dhar
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Carol Hodgson Birkman
Jelena Holovati
Simran Kaur Dhillon
Nathalie Kermaal
Mobashhir Khan
Mohit Kumar
Diane Kunyk
Ariane Lamoureux
Jinfeng Liu
Precious Majekodunmi
Andrew McGee
Priyanka Mittapelly
Jad-Julian Rachid
Polina Reisbig
Kent Rondeau
Meruja Selvamanikkam
Dweej Shah
Srivathsan
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