TERMS OF REFERENCE

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Approved October 2022

Mandate

The SLIS Academic Council discusses and makes decisions and recommendations (as appropriate) about program and curriculum development, as well as students, facilities, timetabling, and other issues and matters arising from within the School and brought to the Academic Council by the School Chair or by way of a SLIS standing committee.

Process

Academic Council will consider a pre-distributed agenda prepared by the Secretary, which shall be distributed in a timely manner. In addition to any new or arising business Academic Council meetings hear and discuss the reports of SLIS standing committees and ad hoc committees as appropriate and will provide feedback and direction for the committees. Decisions approved by Academic Council may require additional approvals through appropriate channels, most particularly the SLIS School Council but also including the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and from time to time General Faculties Council (and its various Committees such as the Academic Planning Committee) or the Education Faculty Council.

Composition

The Chair of SLIS shall be the Chair of Academic Council (ex officio). Academic Council will include all full-time academic staff at SLIS, including those on leave, plus the SLIS Assistant Chair or equivalent. Full-time academic staff is interpreted to mean all continuing academic staff in Category A1.0 (GFC 28 NOV 1988) (EXEC 19 MAR 1998).

Guests may be invited to join meetings to speak about issues that will affect the MLIS program or the institutional environment at the University of Alberta. Guests are not eligible to vote.

Officers

Academic Council’s Officers shall be the School’s Chair, who shall chair the Academic Council, and the SLIS Assistant Chair, who will provide an appropriate level of administrative support and designate the role of Academic Council Secretary.
Quorum

The quorum for the SLIS Academic Council meetings shall be more than half of the voting members.

Meetings

Meetings of the Academic Council shall be generally held on a monthly basis. The dates of Academic Council meetings shall be once per month, if sufficient agenda items are received, during the period September through April. In cases of insufficient agenda items, meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the Chair. Meetings may be scheduled during the months of May, June, July, and August at the discretion of the Chair.

An exceptional meeting of the Academic Council can be called by the Chair to consider an urgent item of business. Provisions governing exceptional meetings are the same as for regular meetings except that the agenda is restricted to the item of business for which the meeting was called.

Meetings are normally held in-person on the University of Alberta North Campus. Members are expected to attend in-person whenever possible. In circumstances where participants are not able to physically attend virtual participation is permitted. Wholly virtual meetings may be held if deemed necessary for operational or practical purposes. Members may join meetings by means of teleconference, videoconference or other accessible virtual platforms. Members who participate in a meeting by such means are deemed to be present at the meeting.

Responsibilities

Approve, to be forwarded to the SLIS School Council, curriculum and program changes, including the addition and deletion of courses.

And, in addition, will:

- Review regularly the mandate, mission, goals, and objectives of SLIS and the MLIS program;
- Provide advice and guidance to the Chair on issues relating to SLIS;
- Develop and draft policy as necessary on internal School matters consistent with Faculty and University policy;
- Establish and develop terms of reference for each Standing, Ad Hoc Committee or Subcommittees and receive reports from committees, and take action as deemed appropriate;
- Receive reports from standing committees and their subcommittees and from the SLIS Associate Chair and Graduate Coordinator and act as appropriate;
Submit curriculum changes requiring governance approval to University Governance as appropriate;

Set agendas for faculty retreats and strategic planning meetings; and

Determine the rules and regulations for governing the procedures of the Academic Council.

Procedures

Meetings of the SLIS Academic Council shall be conducted in accordance with the Bylaws of Procedure adopted by the SLIS Academic Council. The Bylaws shall be approved by the Academic Council.

Approvals


Bylaws of Procedure for SLIS Academic Council

SLIS Academic Council procedures are based on those established by General Faculties Council (GFC). GFC voted against adopting Robert’s Rules of Order. GFC is governed, instead, by precedent and, in situations not covered by precedent, GFC is guided by the Chair, whose rulings are subject to challenge. Relevant sections of GFC policy concerning rules of meetings and adapted for the use of the SLIS Academic Council are identified below (see GFC 28 OCT 1974).

1. Chair

The Chair of the School shall chair the SLIS Academic Council.

2. Meetings

Meetings of the Academic Council are open to members and specific guests.

2.1. Guests

Specific guests may be invited by the Chair to attend and speak to certain agenda items. Members who wish a guest to be invited for a given agenda item shall inform the Chair well in advance of the meeting date and in time for this to be recorded in the agenda. Non-participating observers may attend meetings subject to the will of the Academic Council and the discretion of the Chair. (CFGSR 1991/3/15)

2.2. In Camera

In camera may be used to describe a closed meeting (non-members not permitted), which covers information not reflected in the action summary and not
available to the public. Such sessions may discuss personnel, financial or other sensitive decisions that must be kept secret (for example, a strategic change which the faculty does not yet want the public to know about). (EFC Feb 2 2010)

2.3. Duration

The agenda for Academic Council meetings shall be set in the expectation that the meeting will not exceed three hours in length. If this time is exceeded, the meeting shall be immediately adjourned unless the Chair and a majority vote of members present agree to an extension. (CFGSR 1991/3/15)

3. Voting

3.1. Proxy Voting

Proxy voting is not permitted for meetings of the Academic Council.

3.2. Electronic Voting

Electronic voting by email, Google Form, or other means is permitted as required. Voting on motions during a meeting shall take place as described in §3.3 “Voting Procedures.” Electronic voting conducted after a meeting is adjourned must be completed, within a reasonable timeframe, before the next scheduled meeting.

3.3. Voting Procedures

When every member who wishes to speak on a motion has done so, the Chair shall call for a vote. Voting during meetings shall normally be conducted by a show of hands and/or voice unless some other method is decided upon by motion. This procedure applies regardless of in-person or virtual attendance.

Voting shall be by majority vote except on a ‘Motion to Rescind’ without previous notice, when a two-thirds vote of those present is required. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

Each voting member of the SLIS Academic Council shall have one vote.

3.4. Members

Voting members may participate in discussions and may move, second and vote on motions (EFC Jun 8 2010). Voting members on leave shall retain all voting rights and membership responsibilities pertaining to Academic Council while on leave from SLIS.
3.5. **Chair**

The Chair shall normally vote only in the instance of a tie vote. When there is a tie vote, the motion is lost if the Chair abstains. The motion is adopted if the Chair votes in the affirmative and is defeated if the Chair votes in the negative. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

3.6. **Guests**

Guests may be invited to attend a particular meeting and to participate in discussion related to a specific item they were invited to address. Guests cannot move, second or vote on motions. (EFC Jun 8 2010).

3.7. **Voting Results**

The results of all votes taken at meetings shall be announced by the Secretary. The results of votes (i.e., exact number of votes in favour, opposed, or abstained) shall not be recorded in the Action Summary. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

3.8. **Voting Responsibilities**

All voting members of the SLIS Academic Council are responsible for thoroughly examining issues before meetings and voting as they judge fit on such issues. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

4. **Agenda**

4.1. **Responsibility for the Agenda**

The authority to decide which items are to appear on an Academic Council resides with the Chair.

Agenda items, including the wording of proposed motions (if applicable) shall be submitted in written form and delivered to the Secretary of the Council no later than seven (7) working days in advance of the meeting for which the item is being submitted.

4.2. **Order of Business**

At least the following business shall be observed by the Chair as necessary at regular meetings:

a. Approval of the Agenda;

b. Approval of Action Summaries;

c. New Business;
d. Reports from Standing Committees as necessary;
e. Business Arising;
f. Associate Chair and Graduate Coordinator’s Report;
g. Chair’s Report;
h. Other business.

4.3. Agenda Approval

Approval of the agenda requires a majority vote.

When the Agenda is being approved, the Chair will entertain a request to change the order, for specified reasons. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

New items cannot be introduced at Academic Council meetings except by a two-thirds vote of those present. In cases where the Chair or Secretary has been informed in advance of a request to add a new item, the proposal shall be circulated, time permitting, to members. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

4.4. Agenda Distribution

The Agenda and supporting documents for all meetings shall be distributed by electronic means at least five (5) working days before the meeting is to be held.

5. Action Summaries

Action Summaries of the previous Academic Council meetings shall be approved as submitted or approved as amended by a motion. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

Action Summaries imply that recorded are only matters raised and the actions taken but not what was said. Action Summaries shall include the date of the meeting and names of members present.

The record of discussion shall reflect fully the basis of decisions. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

Action Summaries of Academic Council meetings shall indicate what further action may be called for on any matter discussed.

Original agendas and supporting material are archived for historical reference. SLIS Academic Council agendas, Action Summaries and memberships shall be made available to the public. (EFC Feb 2 2010)
6. **Motions**

A motion is a formal proposal that the assembly take certain action. To make a motion, a member must obtain the floor, that is, the member must be recognized by the Chair. (In the interest of clarity, it is advisable to write out a motion in advance; giving a copy to the Secretary usually expedites business.) The person making a motion will be invited by the Chair to speak first in any ensuing debate. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A motion must be seconded. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the motion. If no seconder is found, the motion is dead and the meeting moves on to other business. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

6.1. **Notice of Motion**

A Notice of Motion is a method of informing the membership in advance of the intention to make a specific motion. When Notice of Motion has first been given at an Academic Council meeting, the Chair will decide whether it is appropriate that such a motion be placed on the Agenda of the next meeting. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

6.2. **Amendment to a Motion**

An amendment is a subsidiary motion. It is used to modify the wording - and within certain limits the meaning - of a pending motion before the pending motion itself is voted upon. Its adoption does not adopt the motion thereby amended, and its rejection leaves the pending motion unaltered. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

The amendment must be germane; that is, it must be closely related to or have bearing on the subject of the motion. No new subject can be introduced under the pretext of being an amendment. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

An amendment must be seconded and is debatable. Such debate must be confined to the desirability of the amendment and must not extend to the merits of the motion to be amended, except as may be necessary to determine whether the amendment is advisable. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

An amendment can be amended, by a motion to amend the amendment. A majority vote is required. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

The mover with the consent of the seconder may incorporate a ‘friendly’ amendment into the main motion if the mover and seconder of the amendment are agreeable. The Chair has discretion to adjudicate challenges to the status of the friendly amendment. (EFC Feb 2 2010)
6.3. Motion to Table

A Motion to Table enables the Academic Council to lay aside the pending question until some future time. A Motion to Table must be seconded, cannot be debated and requires a majority vote. The mover may make a brief statement on what information they believe would be necessary to lift an item from the table, followed by the proposer of the original item, who may make a brief comment to the Academic Council on the impact of tabling the motion. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

6.4. Motion to Take From Table

A Motion to Take from the Table is a motion to bring back before the Academic Council the matter laid aside. Such a motion must be seconded, cannot be debated and requires a majority vote. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

6.5. Motion to Reconsider

A Motion to Reconsider enables the Academic Council, within a limited time, to bring back for further consideration a motion that has already been voted on. The effect of a Motion to Reconsider is to restore proceedings to the point immediately prior to the vote to which it applies. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Reconsider must be brought forward at the same or next calendar month’s meeting, after which Motion to Rescind procedures must be followed. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Notice of Motion to Reconsider must be provided with at least ten (10) working days' notice if the Motion to Reconsider does not take place at the same meeting. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Reconsider must be seconded and is amendable. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Reconsider is debatable, unless the motion to which it applies was not debatable. Debate may pertain to reasons for reconsideration only. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A simple majority vote is required. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

An approved Motion to Reconsider suspends action on the original motion to which it applies until the original motion has been decided upon. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A motion can be reconsidered only once. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A motion which has already been acted upon cannot be reconsidered. (EFC Feb 2 2010)
6.6. **Motion to Rescind**

A Motion to Rescind is the motion by which a previous act or order can be cancelled or reversed. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Rescind is only used when a Motion to Reconsider is out of time. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Rescind must be seconded, and is amendable. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Rescind is debatable, unless the motion to which it applies was not debatable. Debate may pertain to reasons for reconsideration only. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Rescind requires a Notice of Motion provided to Council membership with at least ten (10) working days notice. A two thirds majority vote of those present is required. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

6.7. **Motion to Adjourn**

A Motion to Adjourn is a motion to close the meeting. It must be seconded, is not debatable or amendable and requires a majority vote. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

7. **Debate Procedures**

7.1. **Interrupting a Speaker**

A member who has the floor may not normally be interrupted. However, the Chair may interrupt a speaker if the speaker is out of order by using unacceptable language, is abusive of other members, or is not speaking to the motion. If the Chair does not do so, a member may raise this as a point of order. A speaker may not be interrupted because the listener does not agree with what is being said. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

7.2. **Calling the Question**

Calls of “Question!” by members from their seats are informal expressions of individual members’ desires to proceed to a vote on the matter under discussion. (Such calls are disorderly if made while another member is speaking.) Upon hearing such a call, the Chair will ask members if they are ready to vote on the motion being discussed. If there appears to be opposition to closing the debate, the Chair may ask for a motion to close debate. If seconded, eligible members will then vote on this motion and proceed accordingly. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

7.3. **Challenging the Chair**
The Chair may allow debate on a point of order before making a ruling. The Chair should state the basis on which such a ruling is made and no debate thereon is permitted. When the Chair rules on a question of procedure, any member may rise and state to the Chair, "I respectfully appeal to the SLIS Academic Council from your ruling."

The Chair will respond by stating, “The Council has heard the ruling of the Chair. The question is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?” This issue is then put to a vote. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

7.4. Committee of the Whole

Debate should be either for or against a motion. However, an issue may arise which is not so clear-cut or for which the rules may seem to be a hindrance. In such a case, a motion that Academic Council resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole may be made. If carried, the visitors are asked to leave the Chamber, the Chair steps down and another Chair is appointed or elected for the duration of the meeting of the Committee of the Whole. Minutes are not taken and members may speak more freely and informally. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A motion need not be seconded in order to be discussed. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

When the Committee of the Whole reaches agreement, a motion is made “that the Chair rise and report,” upon the adoption of which motion the Committee of the Whole is dissolved, the Chair of Academic Council resumes the Chair and the Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports to the Chair of Academic Council the action taken by the Committee of the Whole. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

7.5. Special Debate

Special debate can be declared by the Chair in cases where there is very active debate that is monopolized by a few speakers, but multiple participants wish to speak. In a special debate, no member may speak for a second time until the Chair is satisfied that all those wishing to speak for the first time have done so. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

7.6. Point of Order

It is the right of every member who notices a breach of the rules of Council to insist on their enforcement. If the Chair fails to notice such a breach, any member may make the appropriate Point of Order, calling on the Chair for a ruling. If the Chair, being in doubt, refers the point of order to the judgement of Council, it thereby becomes debatable. (EFC Feb 2 2010)
A Point of Order is the only time when a member is allowed to interrupt a speaker who has the floor. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Point of Order does not require a seconder, it is not debatable (except in the circumstance noted above), it is not amendable, and cannot be reconsidered. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Point of Order should not be raised which has nothing to do with procedure and is merely a tactic to say something which would not normally be allowed. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

8. Committees

The SLIS Academic Council may delegate authority to its committees or their subcommittees, but these shall be responsible to the Academic Council. Unless otherwise approved by the Academic Council, subcommittees shall report to committees. Any decisions made by subcommittees shall be reported to the Academic Council, and are then brought forward to the SLIS School Council by the Chair as appropriate.

9. Secretary of SLIS Academic Council

The Secretary of the SLIS Academic Council shall be a non-academic staff member designated by the SLIS Assistant Chair. The Secretary shall be a non-voting member of Council.

The following are the main duties of the Secretary of the SLIS Academic Council:

- To serve the SLIS Academic Council as Secretary by arranging all meetings, preparing agendas, and ensuring that comprehensive documentation, including an outline of the issues, is distributed;
- To ensure that Action Summaries concerning all meetings of the SLIS Academic Council are available;
- To provide advice and support pertaining to governance matters, as required.

10. Amendments

10.1. Amendments of Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the SLIS Academic Council by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

10.2. Amendment of Terms of Reference
SLIS Academic Council terms of reference may be amended at any regular meeting by a majority of those present and voting, prior to which there has been five (5) working days notice of the proposed amendment before the meeting.

10.3. **Review of Terms of Reference**

Terms of reference for the SLIS Academic Council will be reviewed every three years or sooner, as required.

11. **Impeachment**

No member of the SLIS Academic Council can be impeached. (EFC Feb 2 2010)