



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Academic Planning Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, March 08, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

ATTENDEES:

Steven Dew, Chair
Joel Agarwal
Chris Andersen
Amlan Bose
Walter Dixon
Shannon Erichsen
Todd Gilchrist
Jelena Holovati
Susanne Luhmann

Pirkko Markula
Melissa Padfield
Jerine Pegg
Susan Sommerfeldt
Kisha Supernant
Marc Waddingham
Ding Xu
non-voting:
Brad Hamdon
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Sheena Wilson
Yan Yuan

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Scribe

OPENING SESSION**1. Approval of the Agenda**

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC)

Motion: Sommerfeldt/Agarwal

THAT the GFC Academic Planning Committee approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of APC

Discussion:

The Chair observed that it was International Women's Day and noted that one of APC's members, Dr Luhmann, was one of the eight researchers featured on the university's webpage for their important work.

The Chair thanked members for making time for this special meeting to recommend a revised budget proposal. He noted that the provincial budget was released on March 25 with a total cut of 11%, and since the budget APC recommended on March 24 was built around the expected cut of 9.7%, a revised budget was required.

The Chair noted that the Board Finance and Property Committee (BFPC) discussed APC's comments regarding tuition, fees, and student financial supports. He noted his commitment to revisit that discussion in the fall when APC discussed the Annual Report on Student Financial Support.

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

- the disproportionate cuts to the University of Alberta (UofA) of 50% across the Post-Secondary sector when the UofA only had 25% of the students and normally 22% of the funding;
- comments about the provincial government's rationale for why the UofA should shoulder such a disproportionate cut in funding;
- the potential for faculty and students to protest the cuts;
- the focus on creating space in a growing system to accommodate an expected demographic surge;
- an estimated 20 to 25% increase of undergraduate students over the next five to seven years;
- building a positive strategy for the province and the UofA through the common goal of supporting Alberta's youth;
- UofA's work to reach out to other areas of Alberta for community connection and support;
- that growth would happen in the areas where UA had the resources and demand to make it happen;
- that there were areas of scholarship where government funding was necessary in order to expand without damaging quality of education;
- concern about students leaving the province for Post-Secondary studies or after graduation for opportunities elsewhere; and
- the hope that the 2030 report would be released soon and would give a better sense of what would come.

ACTION ITEMS

Dr Dew stepped out of the Chair and Dr Markula assumed the role.

3. University of Alberta 2021-2022 Budget

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of APC; Todd Gilchrist, Vice-President (University Services and Finance)

Purpose of the Proposal: To propose a revised version of the University of Alberta 2021-22 Budget and Capital Plan for recommendation to the Board of Governors.

Discussion:

Dr Dew provided an overview of the proposed motions.

Mr Gilchrist explained that the consolidated budget had been revised to account for the additional cuts in the provincial budget, but that a conservative approach to budget planning meant that drastic changes were not needed. He noted that the Infrastructure Maintenance Program (IMP) grant was increased and that would help with deferred maintenance costs. Mr Gilchrist spoke about the extent of the unprecedented cuts to the post-secondary sector and noted that the university had to remain focused on the University of Alberta for Tomorrow initiative in order to manage the cuts and find a path forward.

Members discussed the legacy of the cuts in the 1990s under the Klein government and spoke about the extent of the job losses and damage to the community then and now.

Motion: Dew/Luhmann

THAT the Academic Planning Committee rescind the following motion, originally approved at its meeting on February 24, 2021:

THAT the Academic Planning Committee, with delegated authority from the General Faculties Council, recommend that the Board of Governors approve the 2021-22 consolidated budget as set forth in Attachment 2 [of the original meeting material].

CARRIED

Motion: Gilchrist/Dew

THAT the Academic Planning Committee, with delegated authority from the General Faculties Council, recommend that the Board of Governors approve the revised 2021-22 Consolidated Budget as set forth in Attachment 1 [of this document].

CARRIED

2 opposed (J Agarwal, M Waddingham)

CLOSING SESSION

Dr Markula stepped out of the Chair and Dr Dew resumed the role.

4. Adjournment

- Next Meeting of APC: March 17, 2021
- Next Meeting of GFC: March 22, 2021

Discussion:

The Chair noted that the revised agenda would go to BFPC the following day and to the Board of Governors for approval on March 12.

Members engaged in a discussion about the significance of the post-secondary cuts including but not limited to:

- the impact on faculty, including changes to workload and lack of tenure opportunities;
- the loss of academic opportunities and non-academic staff positions;
- concerns about "brain drain" and students opting to apply outside of Alberta for Post-Secondary studies or leaving after graduation;
- concerns about raising tuition and how to address higher student financial need;
- concern that the negative impact on women and those with care responsibilities would be much higher;
- concern that the university would lose valuable people if workloads became untenable; and
- the impact on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in the university's academic staff population.

Wendy Rodgers, Deputy Provost, noted that Faculty Relations was aware of these concerns and investigating the impacts of COVID-19 and the budget cuts on academic careers. She observed that they were looking for creative and flexible solutions to mitigate impacts and asked members to reach out to her with their ideas.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:00 a.m.