

General Faculties Council
Academic Planning Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Wednesday, May 17, 2023
SAB 2-31
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Heather Bruce (Vice-Chair)
Bishoi Aziz
Zengtao Chen
Chetan Dave
Todd Gilchrist
Tammy Hopper
Vadim Kravchinsky
Adrian Lam

Jacqueline Leighton
Heather Seyl Miyashita
Aminah Robinson Fayek
Norma Rodenburg
Chris Sprysak

Non-voting members
Kate Peters

Regrets
Verna Yiu
Sandeep Agrawal
Christian Fotang
Ola Mabrouk
Kent Rondeau
Brad Hamdon
Staff
Heather Richholt
Faiza Billo

OPENING SESSION

The Chair began by acknowledging the territory:

The University of Alberta resides on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. To acknowledge the territory is to recognize the longer history of these lands and signifies our commitment to working in Good Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as we engage in our institutional work.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Heather Bruce, Professor and Vice-Chair, APC

Discussion: The Vice-Chair introduced herself as a member of the Board of Governors and GFC. A member noted the agenda was full of very weighty items and suggested that the committee may want to defer items. The Vice-Chair suggested the committee work through items and that any items that required further discussion could be deferred to the June meeting of APC. Members agreed to take this approach.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the GFC Academic Planning Committee approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Heather Bruce, Professor and Vice-Chair, APC

The Vice Chair provided updates on the reappointment of the Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian, the search for the Vice-Provost and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion learning modules that had been made available. The GFC Secretary committed to distributing by email the information on the training modules.

The Vice-Chair invited the Vice-President (University Services and Finance) T Gilchrist to provide an update on the Investment Management Agreement targets required by the Ministry. He noted that in addition to the metrics included in the 2022-2025 IMA, two new funding metrics had been added: Research Commercialization and Administrative Expense Ratio. He explained the targets would be coming forward for approval by the Board of Governors and committed to distributing the documents after the meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

3. Revised Consolidated Budget Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Presenter(s): Todd Gilchrist, Vice-President (University Services and Finance)

Discussion: T Gilchrist reminded members that as part of the February 2023 Provincial Budget communication, the Government of Alberta has permitted the University to spend operating reserves of up to 15% of its unrestricted balance for a total of \$39.362M. The proposed changes to the consolidated budget approved in March 2023 will allow the University to prioritize additional initiatives that have been submitted to the Ministry for approval. He noted that this proposal will move on to the Board Finance and Property Committee for eVote directly after APC recommends on the proposal.

Members asked questions about the documents provided and whether would be publicly available. They suggested that the summary of the use of the carry-forward funds could provide a more detailed summary of the impact of using the funds when they are published on the University website. They further discussed the possibility of breaking down how the budget was approved in March and the impact of the additional carry-forward funds.

The feedback was received with thanks and D Dancause provided additional information on the decision before members noting that it was not a correction to the original motion, rather, a new budget was being approved that integrated the use of carry-forward funds.

The Vice-Chair invited T Gilchrist to provide additional context on the information that will be included in the annual financial statements which will likely include a robust note describing the additional funds.

Members asked for more information on where the funds will be spent, in particular, a list of initiatives that would be contemplated.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee recommend that the Board of Governors approve an amended 2023-24 Consolidated Budget, with changes to reflect one-time approval to access \$39.362M in operating reserves ("carryforward funds"), as set forth in Attachment 1.
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CARRIED

4. Water Research Centre

Presenter(s): Mohamed Gamal El-Din Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Discussion: The proponents presented the plans for the Water Research Centre (WRC) including the structural model, the revenue sources, and the alignment with Braiding Past, Present and Future, the University of Alberta Indigenous Strategic Plan.

Members asked questions and made suggestions to improve the proposal, including:

- Revenue sources and the dependence on the sponsorship of Epcor;

- How the WRC will take advantage of the interdisciplinary resources within the College of Natural and Applied Sciences;
- Collaboration with other partners corporate or otherwise;
- Whether academic Centres and Institutes should fall under the purview of a faculty or whether they could be overseen at a College level; and
- The lack of consultation with the Faculty of Native Studies or the Office of the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programs and Research).

Members discussed whether the proposal could move forward without consultation of Indigenous colleagues to ensure that alignment with Braiding was appropriate. They heard that the proponents had not been informed about the need to consult, and they indicated they planned to undertake consultation once the Centre was approved. A member asked whether the GFC APC could require the consultation as a part of the proposal development.

The Vice-Chair noted that the proposal could be brought back to a future meeting and asked members to discuss. Several members expressed their support for the proposal moving forward on the understand that consultation with Indigenous colleagues would happen in the future.

The motion was moved and seconded.

That the GFC Academic Planning Committee approve, with delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the creation of the Water Research Centre (WRC), effective upon approval.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Budget Model 2.0 Update

Presenter(s): Todd Gilchrist, Vice-President (University Services and Finance)

Discussion: T Gilchrist reminded members of the approval of the Budget Model Principles and reported on the work of the five expert working groups. He explained the groups had been tasked with consultation and summarized their recommendations. He noted the intention to continue consultation with the University community and plans to implement in Winter, 2024 for the 2024-2025 academic financial year.

Members asked questions and made comments concerning:

- the sharing of tuition revenues and differences between for-credit and not for-credit tuition;
- How credit and non-credit were defined; and
- How the recommendations were being tested and piloted.

T Gilchrist committed to keeping the committee informed of the progress on the model and noted he would provide an update at GFC.

6. Quality Assurance (QA) Suite of Activities: 2021-2022 Excerpted QA Reports

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Janice Causgrove Dunn, Vice-Provost (Programs)

Discussion: The Vice-Chair outlined the responsibilities of the committee over quality assurance of academic programs, academic units and over the review process itself. J Causgrove-Dunn noted the high level outcomes of the 2021-2022 reviews, especially the commendations on the quality of programs, faculty and students. She provided some information on the issues identified by reviewers, especially a common report of challenges due to budget cuts.

A member shared their experience working through the review process, especially during a time of change in higher education and the University of Alberta, and suggested that an independent School of Economics was needed.

7. Stories from the Field: Reporting on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Action

Presenter(s): Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)

Discussion: C Smith reminded members about the structure that was presented in the first University of Alberta Strategic plan on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. She explained that this structure had led to a different form of report which they had called "Stories from the Field". She noted in particular the perspectives of community members and that these stories speak to where the University is coming from and provide direction for where we must go. She invited members to consider the way that stories reveal the labour involved in equity, diversity and inclusion work and presented some next steps.

Members asked what were the most pressing challenges facing the university in terms of equity, diversity and inclusion and heard about the important advances in building structures for the work, the risk of burnout, and a hope that there would be more integration into the day to day work of the University.

8. Centres and Institutes 2022 Annual Report to APC

Presenter(s): Andre McDonald, Associate Vice President (Strategic Research Initiatives and Performance)

Discussion: A McDonald recognised the support of the Centres and Institutes Committee and the members who were present at the meeting including K Moore, J Bell, and K Todd. He spoke to the work to review the Centres and Institutes through a Task Force and the intersection of their work with the forthcoming Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation. He emphasized the Task Force's interest in ensuring sustainability of Centres.

Members asked about the role of Centres and Institutes in responding to the needs of the community and whether revenue generation or generation of ideas characterizes academic centres and institutes at the University.

9. Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation (SPRI)

Presenter(s): Aminah Robinson Fayek, Vice-President (Research and Innovation)

Discussion: The Vice-Chair noted the importance of research and research policy to APC's mandate. A Robinson Fayek recognised the role of numerous leaders from across the university to shape the plan and described the two year process to develop the plan in response to the changing research landscape, the trends in higher education research, and the emerging University Strategic Plan. She spoke to the "soft-consultation" in the form of focus groups with industry leaders, community partners, government and partners. She expressed a hope that the plan would reflect the One University Model and the strategic objectives set out in the plan.

She asked members to consider whether this plan will uniquely distinguish the University when compared to other institutions; if the draft highlights and advances the impact of the University and to what extent the goals, objectives and tactics adequately respond to the significant trends, drivers, challenges and opportunities shaping research and innovation in the world today.

Members asked:

- How this vision would differentiate from past plans and strategic priorities;
- How the strategic areas; the interdisciplinary focus of the plan; the restructuring of the university and the introduction of the college model;

- The fundamental changes that the university has undergone have made an impact in how we see the strategic research impacts.

CLOSING SESSION

10. Adjournment
 - Next Meeting of APC: June 21, 2023
 - Next Meeting of GFC: May 29, 2023