

General Faculties Council
Council on Students Affairs (COSA)
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, September 07, 2023
South Academic Building (SAB) 2-31
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Verna Yiu, Chair
Christian Fotang (Vice Chair)
Hussain Alhussainy
Sarah Ejekwupe
Roger Epp
Jun Hu
Saad Iqbal
Rija Kamran
Adrian Lam

Malijha Moyan
Jennifer Passey
Brendan Pham
Norma Rodenburg
Ravina Sanghera
Michael Schmidtke
Prabhnoor Singh
Tuesday Young
non-voting:
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Taylor Good
Keith King
John Lemieux

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Coordinator

OPENING SESSION

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair acknowledged:

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 our commitment to working in Good Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of COSA

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the academic year and asked members to begin with a round table.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of March 30, 2023

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of COSA

The Chair noted that members who had not been present, could still vote on the motion. Their vote signified that they had confidence in the process.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the open session minutes of March 30, 2023.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of COSA

Discussion:

The Chair thanked Christian Fotang, the President of the University of Alberta Students' Union (UASU) who would act as Vice-Chair of the committee. She introduced several new leaders in the University including the new Vice-Provost and Dean of Students, Ravina Sanghera.

Acting Registrar, Norma Rodenburg gave an update on the Advisory Working Group on Moderate Standard of Living and Bursary Applications, and provided some anticipated timelines for communication of recommendations. She thanked students for their input and noted that the amount of funding had been increased for the academic year which should result in a change for many students.

4. GFC Committee Orientation

Presenter(s): Kate Peters, Secretary to General Faculties Council (GFC) and Manager GFC Services; Heather Richholt, Associate Secretary to GFC

Discussion:

K Peters and H Richholt provided a committee orientation about the legal framework and principles under which GFC operates, the committee's mandate and terms of reference, and meeting procedures and roles and responsibilities of members.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Consideration of a Clean Air/Smoke-Free Policy

Presenter(s): Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations); Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean, Health and Wellness

Discussion:

A Sharman presented the historic context on the Clean Air Strategy, an item that had originated through a motion from the General Faculties Council in 2018. He noted that there had been several discussions at GFC without consensus on how to move forward. He emphasised that ceremonial uses of tobacco were excluded from the strategy and explained that he had been asked to come back to GFC in October for their decision. He provided an overview of the three options that had been provided to GFC:

- 1) Status Quo - smoking and vaping being permitted only in designated locations on each campus;
- 2) Increasing efforts ensure compliance with smoking allowed in designated locations;
- 3) Total ban.

K Friese provided an overview of the 2018-2019 consultation process and student engagement as a part of the process. He summarised the different viewpoints that the working group had encountered as a part of their engagement.

The Chair clarified that the proposed next step would be to seek GFC's approval of a motion to ban smoking and vaping on our campuses.

Members discussed the options and made comments, asked questions and heard answers including:

- The difficulty inherent in imposing a total ban;
- The position of the Indigenous Students' Council on the proposed strategy;

- Whether there had been Indigenous student members, smokers, or members from equity denied groups on the working group;
- Whether Augustana Campus, Campus Saint-Jean, South Campus and Enterprise Square had been included in the consultation;
- Why General Faculties Council was discussing the matter;
- How provisions for ceremonial use of tobacco are managed on Campus;
- The possibility of students smoking on the peripheries on Campus and a question about signage;
- What supports are available for smoking cessation on Campus;
- That other campuses had reported that total bans were effective and viewed positively and a comment that student perspectives may not be reflected in these testimonials;
- That student associations consulted in peer institutions had expressed an opinion that these policies tended to be in name only;
- That marginalised students could be unfairly targeted through enforcement and policing;
- That the community may have opinions on the impact of students pushed off campus to smoke in neighbouring residential areas;
- That the UASU was conducting a survey to gauge students' opinions;
- Whether medical cannabis was included in the original consultations; and
- Whether residences and residence associations had been consulted and what their position was.

6. Pursuing an Academic Materials Program

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Students and Enrolment); Katherine Husing, Associate Vice President, Facilities & Operations; Adam Medaglia, Manager of the University of Alberta Bookstore.

Discussion:

M Padfield, K Husing and A Medaglia presented rationale and background for the proposal to assess one flat fee to all undergraduate students enabling access to their course materials, principally in digital format. They explained how the program would work by pooling undergraduate fees and exercising the university's economies of scale, and that if a student prefers to obtain course materials on their own, they are free to opt out. They clarified that the program is being designed for undergraduate students and that it would not cover graduate or course-based master's programs.

Members asked about:

- accessibility of materials;
- potential impact on the the University Bookstore and its student employees;
- how the fee would be assessed and how participation may impact fees;
- whether instructors could obtain whatever they need for their courses;
- the model of ancillary services and how the university would invest profits;
- the threshold of student opt-in required to ensure that it would be economical and sustainable for the Bookstore; and
- concerns about web-based tools, given the cost of reliable internet access, and students who may experience barriers.

7. Student Academic Integrity Policy Suite

Presenter(s): Ravina Sanghera, Vice-Provost and Dean of Students; Chris Hackett Director, Student Conduct & Accountability

Discussion:

R Sanghera and C Hackett spoke about the next step in the evolution of the Code of Student Behaviour (COSB) with a new policy suite that aims to present timely, transparent processes for student academic offences. They noted that the current quasi-judicial processes are frequently problematic for students and that the university wanted to do better. They explained that ministerial directives the previous year had resulted in revisions to the Sexual and Gender-based Violence Policy and the creation of a Student Conduct Policy suite to address student non-academic offences that were previously housed in the COSB. They noted that this new policy suite would coincide with the rescission of the remaining pieces of the COSB and emphasised that the new processes will favour restorative practices and ensure that students remain academically engaged. They asked COSA for feedback on the drafts and for suggestions of who else they should consult with.

Members discussed:

- How Artificial Intelligence (AI) might be managed within the new policy framework;
- Whether Campus Saint-Jean students could access services in French;
- If there were other linguistic minority communities who could access services in other languages;
- How different the proposed suite is from the COSB and whether there was a comparison document that was available;
- Whether the restorative justice approach would provide education and supports for students;
- How the separation of the policy suite will change the way the adjudication is implemented across the University and how Faculty practices will align;
- To what extent international student needs are being considered and how processes could be improved to better support them; and
- A request that COSA receive a report on what the working group hears in their consultations.

8. Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP)

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Students and Enrolment); Sarah Wolgemuth, Project Director, Student Experience Action Plan

Discussion:

M Padfield and S Wolgemuth described the co-creation approach and the opportunities for student participation. They explained the rationale for the approach, especially the need to ensure broad buy-in from members of the university community in a time of growth for the university. They provided a snapshot of the project including development, principles, and accountabilities.

They presented questions to COSA concerning the living implementation of the plan where initiatives could launch continually in alignment with the student lifecycle. They asked about barriers to implementation, the roles of students and feelings of co-accountability for student experience across the university.

Members asked questions and made comments including:

- How engagements had been conducted to present;
- Whether responses to engagement were aligning to the student equity census;
- The impact of “tabling” where SEAP staff are available to answer questions;
- The role of senior leaders in implementing SEAP and how students at Augustana Campus could be better included;
- That it was important to keep documents brief with clear connections to issues that matter to students;
- What resources SEAP had access to in order to ensure the goals that were being put in place;
- That continuity of staff was a priority;
- That full accountability needs to come from a large group of leaders across the University and they will be supported through tangible investments; and

- The value of a co-created initiative to ensure that students have a positive student experience and that in order to succeed, co-creation will be necessary.

9. Student Updates (no documents)

Item deferred

10. Question Period

Item deferred

CLOSING SESSION

11. Adjournment

- Next meeting of COSA: November 2, 2023
- Next meeting of GFC: September 18, 2023