

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

Thursday, March 21, 2024  
South Academic Building (SAB) 2-31  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

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**ATTENDEES:**

Verna Yiu, Chair	Adrian Lam	Taylor Good
Christian Fotang (Vice Chair)	Brendan Pham	Malijha Moyan
Hussain Alhussainy	Ravina Sanghera	Jennifer Passey
Sarah Ejekwuipe	Mikael Schmidtke	Norma Rodenburg
John Hu	Prabhnoor Singh	<i>non-voting:</i>
Saad Iqbal	Tuesday Young	John Lemieux
Rija Kamran		Kate Peters
Keith King	<b>REGRETS:</b>	

**OPENING SESSION**

1. Approval of the Agenda

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

The Chair welcomed members and observers.

The motion was moved and seconded

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the agenda.

**CARRIED**

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of January 25, 2024

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

The motion was moved and seconded

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the open session minutes of January 25, 2024.

**CARRIED**

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

- Presidential Review Committee

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

*Discussion:*

In her comments, the Chair noted the new Chancellor Nizar Somji, the Provincial Budget, where to find updates on the ongoing bargaining processes, and a new resource from the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programs and Research) on the Sweetgrass Teachings.

J Lemieux noted that the President's Review Committee had been struck and would be meeting soon. He shared that there would be opportunities for students to provide feedback and that a website would soon be live with updates on the committee's work.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

4. 3-in-24 hour Exam Reschedule Procedure

- University of Alberta Students' Union (UASU) Submission (submitted by C Fotang)

*Presenter(s):* Anna Hughes, Associate Registrar, Enrolment Management; Jesse Luyendyk, Assistant Registrar, Enrolment Services

*Discussion:*

The Chair noted that the GFC Executive Committee had approved the 2024-2025 Academic Schedule which for the first time, includes three exams per day. She reminded members of their authority to discuss initiatives related to teaching and learning and that COSA members' feedback was sought on a new policy proposed by the Office of the Registrar. A Hughes presented the proposal noting in particular with thanks the engagement of students with the policy and how their feedback was being integrated to increase their agency. She concluded by noting that this was the first time this would be implemented and that the Registrar was committed to monitoring implementation and making improvements as required.

A member shared their personal experience writing a deferred exam one month after the exam when the resources had disappeared from eClass and the Library. The UASU expressed their support and noted that how to pedagogically set students up for success in cases where they are writing multiple exams was their priority.

Members asked about:

- Scheduling for five or six exams in consecutive time slots and how students would be supported in these cases;
- The definition of "exam" and how final exams may conflict other forms of assessment and activities during the exam period;
- How student mental health can be impacted by exam scheduling; and
- Openness to seeing these changes implemented at a later date;

C Fotang recognised the collaborative spirit between the Office of the Registrar and the UASU, and in particular the work of P Almeida on the proposal. P Almeida thanked A Hughes and J Luyendyk for their work to understand the students' perspectives and to find solutions in the policy language. He expressed support for moving forward with the policy as drafted with a commitment to monitor implementation. He suggested that COSA should review implementation in the Fall when data has been gathered on policy enactment.

5. Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) Implementation Update (no documents)

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

*Discussion:* M Padfield and S Wolgemuth reminded members about the collective commitment to support the Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) and the role of COSA in monitoring the living implementation. They described the work since the launch, especially the communication of shared accountability for the plan. They noted that 7 of the more than 50 actions set out in the plan and that many of the goals will not ever be fully achieved but emphasized the progress in implementation. She noted the example of Zero Textbook Costs class sections, a new web resource for finances, funding and support; increased cleaning standards in student learning spaces; the launch of My Schedule Builder; and renovations in Tory building. She spoke in particular to the Accessibility Enhancement Project which seeks to address concerns around accessibility around campus. Proactive academic advising was also noted as a key initiative to support student success. In conclusion, she noted a trend towards units across Campus seeking to make decisions using student-centred data.

Members noted how difficult it can be to get students to engage in events, the complexity for students to represent the views of their colleagues, and the ongoing issues with food insecurity.

6. Learning Management System (Canvas) Implementation Update (no documents)

*Presenter(s):* Karsten Mündel, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives)

*Discussion:* K Mundel presented an overview of the new Learning Management System (LMS) system implementation. He noted in particular the intention to stage how courses are being brought online. He asked students to provide feedback on how students could learn about the new system and how to facilitate the situation for student who may be simultaneously working on eClass and Moodle. In addition, he asked about how to support Graduate Teaching Assistants who are also using the new LMS.

Students asked questions about:

- Language resources and programs in Canvas and how the platform could facilitate language learning;
- Whether students could maintain access to resources after the change to Canvas;
- That students are not well informed about what to expect in the coming years and in particular how Canvas implementation may impact them;
- How accessible Canvas is for students with disabilities especially when it comes to screen readers, but also with diverse other software that students use;
- How instructors will be supported by the vendor and IST, and that there needs to be thoughtful scaffolding of learning for instructors;
- The need to streamline processes and to ensure consistency for students in the transition time to ensure they can navigate the new platform;
- How moving to the new system may impact Graduate Teaching Assistants who are often brought in late without much time to prepare their courses;
- How the new budget model may be impacting TAs who are increasingly experiencing short lead times to be brought in on contracts;
- Whether the milestones will include opportunities for student feedback;
- The value of videos to communicate how to navigate the system;
- Whether the new LMS could serve as a link to resources on the old platform; and
- That instructors may need more than one year of support and mentorship to integrate existing platforms and communication tools into the platform;

7. Student Update (no documents)

*Presenter(s):* Rija Kamran, Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association (GSA); Christian Fotang, President, University of Alberta Students' Union (UASU)

*Discussion:* P Almeida spoke to the work to transition new student leadership and encouraged students to come to observe the tuition decision-making at the Board at an event organised by the Students' Union. R Kamran noted the work to communicate their support for the PhD Minimum Funding Operating Standard and the creation of a Vice-President (Indigenous Relations) as a part of the GSA Executive. She announced the reelection results were now available. In conclusion, she noted the ongoing work with the Office of the Dean of Students to support student mental health

8. Question Period

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

*Discussion:* Members shared feedback concerning supervisor-student conflicts being managed by Offices of Advocacy and Wellness in faculties across the University. She noted a trend that students are being advised they should withdraw from their programs rather than seek other resolutions. T Raivio and R Sanghera committed to following up.

In addition, members shared feedback on the new My Schedule Builder including some site crashes. Students noted some potential issues with Canvas implementation especially related to languages and expressed thanks for the work to anticipate the needs of students. Members also expressed thanks for the support of the Office of the Dean of Students and the work to improve safety on Campus. A member expressed concerns about the recent large-scale event on NATO that prevented some students from accessing their labs and the impact on students who were wrapping up their capstones.

**CLOSING SESSION**

9. Adjournment

- Next meeting of COSA: September 19, 2024
- Next meeting of GFC: April 29, 2024