

General Faculties Council
Executive Committee
Approved Minutes

Monday, November 07, 2011
3-15, UHALL
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

ATTENDEES:

Carl Amrhein – Chair, Colleen Skidmore, Gerry Kendal, Emerson Csorba, Nima Yousefi Moghaddam, Ed Blackburn, Lee Livingstone, Ingrid Johnston, Chris de Gara, Anita Molzahn, Duncan Saunders, Garry Bodnar (Coordinator and Scribe)

PRESENTERS:

Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee
Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Bill Connor, Interim Vice-Provost (Academic) and Co-Chair, GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
Renée Elio, Associate Vice-President (Research)
Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)

OBSERVER:

Marion Haggarty-France, University Secretary

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Molzahn/Johnston

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Minutes of October 3, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: de Gara/Blackburn

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Minutes of October 3, 2011.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Given the business before members on this occasion, the Chair chose to forego his comments.

ACTION ITEMS

4. Negotiated (Proposed) Changes to the Administrative and Professional Officer (APO) Agreement – Article 12 (Probation and Continuing Appointment)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Purpose of the Proposal: The Association of Academic Staff – University of Alberta (AASUA) and the University Administration reached agreement on amendments to Article 12 (Probation and Continuing Appointment) of the Administrative Professional Officer (APO) Agreement during 2010-2011 compensation negotiations. The amendments were ratified by AASUA in August, 2011. The amendments were presented to members in a side-by-side comparative format (against current provisions) and require ratification by the Board of Governors.

Discussion:

Dr Amrhein presented to members the proposed amendments to Article 12 of the APO Agreement and provided a brief rationale for the revisions. He also reiterated for members the role General Faculties Council (GFC) (or its delegate body) plays in considering and recommending to the Board of Governors procedures regarding the appointment, promotion, and dismissal of academic staff members (as set out, in part, in the powers of GFC enumerated in Section 26 of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)*).

During the ensuing discussion, Dr Amrhein addressed questions and comments from members regarding the following: the perceived lack of flexibility afforded supervising staff in the proposed language incorporated into Article 12 and restrictions that may be unwittingly placed on APOs who, for a variety of reasons, move from one unit to the other. In response to these concerns, Dr Amrhein noted that other institutional policies and procedures, including other existing provisions in the APO Agreement, would preclude unintended adverse circumstances from prevailing in such cases.

Motion: Livingstone/Molzahn

THAT the GFC Executive Committee, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, recommend to the Board of Governors the (proposed) negotiated changes to the Administrative and Professional Officer (APO) Agreement – Article 12 (Probation and Continuing Appointment), as submitted by Faculty Relations (Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)) and as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect retroactively to August 8, 2011.

CARRIED

5. Access to Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic); Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: To clarify which members of the University community have access to the paper summaries of Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) data and the on-line summaries of USRI data.

Discussion:

Dr Skidmore introduced the item by providing the historic context for the proposed changes before members and the rationale underlying these revisions. She noted that the impact of the proposal is limited to those non-students who may have made a practice of accessing USRI data online in the past and who will now no longer have access to that information. In turn, Dr Skidmore reviewed the proposed amendments to current GFC-approved USRI policy in some detail.

During the ensuing discussion, Dr Skidmore addressed questions and comments from members regarding the following: clarification on which USRI results would be posted, the length of time they are made available for review, the method by which access is physically controlled, and when data is considered to begin to lose its value; whether the data would be available to Faculty Evaluation Committees (FECs) and, if so, by what means; whether the data would be available to those bodies with responsibility for reviewing the performance of sessional lecturers and like staff members; the ability of students to access USRI data for individual instructors that stretches back for a five-year period *versus* the ability of FECs to review data for the same instructors for the most recent past year only; and whether or not the Administration has given thought to multi-year reviews/evaluations of academic staff.

Motion: Csorba/Molzahn

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, proposed revisions to Section 111.3 (Teaching and Learning and Teaching Evaluation/Universal Student Ratings of Instruction) of the GFC Policy Manual, as recommended by the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) and as set forth in Attachment 1, to be effective upon final approval.

CARRIED

6. Proposed Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching Procedure (UAPPOL)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic); Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: To propose a new procedure under the Awards for Teaching Excellence Policy to recognize those individuals who have demonstrated excellence in teaching at the graduate level.

Discussion:

Dr Skidmore introduced the item. She noted that this new award had been suggested initially by a professor in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, a unit which engages only in the teaching of students in graduate-level academic programming. Ms Brough indicated that the proposed procedure before members had been modelled closely after the existing procedures for other University-level teaching excellence awards and was intended to address an existing gap in the current award offerings; she commented that the proposal had gone through a thorough consultation process and had been recommended to the GFC Executive Committee by the GFC University Teaching Awards Committee (UTAC).

During the ensuing discussion, the Vice-President (Academic) for the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), Mr Moghaddam, thanked the presenters for introducing this award, noting that his Association was strongly supportive of this initiative given that there will now be formal recognition of excellent graduate-level teaching. He asked if it would be possible to have two graduate students serving on GFC UTAC, rather than the current single graduate student representative, in order to participate in the adjudication of

this and the other teaching awards. He also noted that he would favour having added to the new award's criteria an element that addresses those professors who encourage graduate students to teach and who actively work to assist such students with their teaching responsibilities, when undertaken. Dr Skidmore thanked Mr Moghaddam for his comments and questions and noted that the matter of composition of GFC UTAC was one that was outside the scope of this particular discussion but the issue would be taken by her Office under advisement; as for the possibility of altering the criteria upon which nominations for this new award were based, she stated that, after the first cycle of nominations were completed, she (in cooperation with GFC UTAC, which would have responsibility for the adjudication of this award) would review processes and outcomes to determine if changes to the criteria were warranted and appropriate.

Dr Amrhein noted that, in time, there may be some inclination to provide for a specific honorific naming of this award.

Motion: Skidmore/Moghaddam

THAT the GFC Executive Committee recommend to General Faculties Council the new (proposed) Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching Procedure (and accompanying checklist), as recommended by the GFC University Teaching Awards Committee (UTAC) and as set forth in Attachment 1, to be effective upon final approval.

CARRIED

7. Proposed Revisions to the UAPPOL Centres and Institutes Policy and Associated Procedures

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic); Kathleen Brough, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: To approve changes to the UAPPOL Centres and Institutes Policy and its associated Procedures. Many of the changes are editorial. Some of the more substantial changes include revisions related to regular review and renewal and to review associated with perceived risk.

Discussion:

Ms Brough spoke to the consultative process through which the changes before members have moved. She stated that Dr Murray Gray, Incoming Vice-Provost (Academic), will likely initiate, upon the assumption of his vice-provostial role in January, 2012, further changes to the Centres and Institutes Policy suite and begin a larger discussion on the roles of centres and institutes at the University of Alberta. Ms Brough also referenced the legislative process through which the current proposal would move prior to all aspects of this policy suite receiving final approval.

During the ensuing discussion, the Chair described the general characteristics and touched upon specific examples of those centres and institutes that present for the University of Alberta some institutional risk; these are typically units, he noted, that have a reach and substance that are beyond the 'normal' bounds of the academy. He cited as his examples the China Institute, the National Institute of Nanotechnology (NINT), the Kule Institute for Advanced Studies (KIAS), and the Centre for Oil Sands Innovation (COSI). The presenters then addressed questions and comments from members regarding the following: clarification on what the differences were, if any, between the 'small-letter' and 'capital-letter' institutes and centres noted throughout the policy suite; and clarification on the following sentence noted on page 5 of the material before members: "All academic centres and institutes operating existing but not approved by APC shall come into compliance immediately or be considered for closure."

Motion: Blackburn/Molzahn

THAT the GFC Executive Committee, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, recommend to the Board of Governors proposed changes to the UAPPOL Centres and Institutes Policy and approve proposed changes to the Academic Centres and Institutes Establishment Procedure, the Academic Centres and Institutes Operation Procedure, and the Academic Centres and Institutes Termination Procedure, as submitted by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and as set forth in Attachment 1, with proposed changes to the Centres and Institutes Policy to take effect upon final approval by the Board of Governors and with proposed changes to the aforementioned Procedures to take effect upon final approval by the GFC Executive Committee.

CARRIED

8. Draft Agenda for the November 28, 2011 Meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC) (to be distributed)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Discussion:

The Chair initiated discussion on the draft Agenda for the November 28, 2011 meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC) by asking members for their thoughts on having guest speakers at Council meetings. Members responded by noting the following: students were generally agreeable to having speakers at meetings of GFC; future speakers should assist the University is moving forward strategically; and some thought may be given to making these events larger in scope so that members of the public could attend and participate in whatever discussion resulted from guest speakers' presentations.

With respect to the presentation provided by Dr Gwyn Morgan at the October 31, 2011 meeting of GFC, members shared the following views: there was the sense many members of GFC were fairly unified in their responses to the points raised by Dr Morgan; there were definite ties between the Morgan presentation and the issue of developing at the University of Alberta specific student attributes and competencies, as outlined in the University Academic Plan, *Dare to Deliver 2011-2015*; the speaker's views were both conservative and radical in tone and nature and, ultimately, represented an interesting reflection on the state of the Canadian post-secondary system; the annoyance some members felt initially to Dr Morgan's presentation eventually gave way to the feeling this was a valuable public debate; and some were surprised more GFC members did not express adverse reactions to the points raised by this guest speaker.

One member queried whether or not the University should look at its own processes to determine if students can and should be educated broadly in a wide variety of disciplines across the academy and noted that the debate resulting from proposed student attributes/competencies will undoubtedly raise fundamental questions on how the University fulfils its mandate with regard to teaching and learning. These points led to some discussion on the varying types, roles, and structures of universities; the roles and responsibilities of the arts and sciences *versus* professional programming; a summary description of Canadian, American, and British university models; accreditation processes associated with engineering programs for a number of Canadian post-secondary institutions, including the University of Alberta; and the nature and complexity of the academic cohorts amongst and between Canadian universities.

The Chair indicated he was surprised at the volume of responses Dr Morgan's presentation incited at the October 31 GFC meeting; he conceded Dr Morgan's presentation could have been more structured; he

expressed disappointment at those who appeared to suggest Council should not be exposed to controversial and/or contentious views/presentation; and he recommended the establishment of a small group responsible for posing questions of speakers that would serve, as well, to organize future presentations at GFC meetings and to vet a list of potential speakers. On this latter point, he shared with members a number of names of individuals who had been identified, in a very preliminary manner only, by a number of GFC members as possible speakers at future Council meetings. Dr Livingstone noted that the Faculty of Arts had done something similarly several years ago; she stated she would attempt to locate more information on this Arts-driven initiative and provide this information to the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

Dr Amrhein agreed that he would summarize the points made during this discussion and present this summary to GFC members for their review and debate at Council's November 28, 2011 meeting. Members concurred that this would be an appropriate agenda item for the upcoming GFC meeting.

Motion: Csorba/de Gara

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the draft agenda, as amended, for the November 28, 2011 meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC), contingent upon the President's review and confirmation.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

9. Academic Chapter of the Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic); Renée Elio, Associate Vice-President (Research)

Purpose of the Proposal: For discussion/information.

Discussion:

This item was introduced to members by Dr Skidmore. She provided a brief description of the Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP), the process associated with both preparing the initial Plan and ensuring its component parts were updated annually, and detail on the Academic Chapter contained therein. In particular, Dr Skidmore emphasized the importance of the CIP's Academic Chapter and the effect its content had had over the past year on the institutional budget. Dr Elio, in turn, spoke to the research-oriented content of the Academic Chapter and its impact on funding. She stated that, as a result of the updates being planned for the chapter this year, the messaging contained in the document would be sharpened, with important, central points being heightened, and the issue of the sustaining and appropriately supporting institutional core facilities made 'front and centre'. She noted the CIP's Academic Chapter would evolve without being "revolutionary." The Chair concluded the presentation of this item to members by speaking to the varying reactions of differing units and individuals within the Provincial Government to the University's CIP.

Dr Skidmore concluded the brief discussion on this item by reminding members of the undergraduate research initiative recently undertaken by the University of Alberta Students' Union (in concert with the University) and the significance of this venture. Dr Elio noted that this endeavour, which was being met with great excitement by and positive support from both students and faculty, was a 'success story' that

grew out of last year's iteration of the CIP's Academic Chapter.

10. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION ITEMS

11. Items Approved by the GFC Executive Committee by E-Mail Ballots

There were no items.

12. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

On-line Access to USRI Scores (E-Mailed to Members on November 2, 2011)

Approved Motions and Final Documents from the GFC Undergraduate Awards and Scholarship Committee (UASC) Meeting of September 20, 2011 (UASC) (E-Mailed to Members on November 2, 2011)

Approved Motions and Final Documents from the GFC Undergraduate Awards and Scholarship Committee (UASC) Meeting of October 11, 2011 (E-Mailed to Members on November 2, 2011)

There was no discussion on the above-noted items.

CLOSING SESSION

13. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:55 pm.