



# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council  
Executive Committee  
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, May 11, 2015  
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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### **ATTENDEES:**

#### Voting Members:

Olive Yonge	Chair (Delegate), President
Lisa Collins	Member, Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Duncan Elliott	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Roger Epp	Member (Delegate), Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Kaori Kabata	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Anita Molzahn	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Norma Nocente	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Fahim Rahman	Member, Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union
Sean Robertson	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Wendy Rodgers	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Harsh Thaker	Member, President of the Graduate Students' Association, President, Graduate Students' Association
Mirko van der Baan	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC

#### Presenter(s):

Olive Yonge	Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee
Bobbi Schiestel	Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the President
Mazi Shirvani	Vice-Provost and Dean, Graduate Studies and Research
Martin Ferguson-Pell	Senior Advisor to the President
Andrea Patrick	Assistant Secretary to GFC, University Governance
Kate Peters	Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

#### Staff:

Meg Brolley, General Faculties Council (GFC) Secretary and Manager of GFC Operations  
Marion Haggarty-France, University Secretary  
Andrea Patrick, Scribe

### **OPENING SESSION**

#### 1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Olive Yonge, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

*Discussion:*

The Chair noted that the agenda would be reordered to accommodate the schedule of a presenter.

Motion: Rodgers/Robertson

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Agenda, as amended.

**CARRIED**

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of April 13, 2015

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Olive Yonge, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Motion: Molzahn/Nocente

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Minutes of April 13, 2015.

**CARRIED**

3. Comments from the Chair

The Chair invited Ms Meg Brolley, new Secretary to GFC, to introduce herself to members.

The Chair invited Ms Collins to provide members with an update in regards to the recent activities of the GFC Executive Committee's *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the GFC Discussion Period. Members discussed a formal 'Call for Items' and the composition of the group who would select the discussion topics. Ms Collins noted that she would discuss this with Dr Turpin and would report back to members.

The Chair commented on the Report of the GFC Nominating Committee on the GFC Agenda of June 1, 2015, noting that the Report would be verbally announced.

The Chair suggested that GFC should discuss GFC's history at some point.

The Chair provided a number of additional relevant comments to members.

**ACTION ITEMS**

4. Draft Agenda for the June 1, 2015 Meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Olive Yonge, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

*Purpose of the Proposal:* To approve the Agenda for the GFC meeting to be held on Monday, June 1, 2015.

*Discussion:*

The Chair invited members to provide comments in regards to the draft agenda for the June 1, 2015 meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC).

During the discussion in regards to this item, members provided a number of comments and questions, including, but not limited to: a suggestion to include a specific notation on the GFC Agenda in regards to the GFC Nominating Committee; whether the Professional and Career Development Strategic Plan for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows should be included on the June 1 or September 2015 GFC agenda; whether there is going to be a tribute to President Samarasekera, as it is her last meeting as President and Chair of GFC; that graduate students expressed disappointment at the March 9, 2015 meeting in regards to discussion timing of the graduate education item.

Motion: Collins/Rodgers

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Agenda for the June 1, 2015 meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC) as set forth in Attachment 1.

**CARRIED**

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### 5. The Professional and Career Development Strategic Plan for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Mazi Shirvani, Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

*Purpose of the Proposal:* For information/discussion.

*Discussion:*

Dr Shirvani provided members with a synopsis of the proposal, adding that other universities are undertaking similar initiatives to address professional development for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. He explained that this subject is broad and includes the development of skills acquired outside of the laboratory setting, including the development of a proper *Curriculum Vitae* (CV), and other skills such as conflict resolution and being an effective team member.

Dr Shirvani reported that the Strategic Plan specifically identifies which issues will be addressed, and that these issues were developed over the course of several years, adding that there are 19 recommendations within the Plan. He provided members with a timeline for these recommendations.

He noted that increasingly, Governments are interested in this area, and that \$6.5 million was pledged by the Provincial Government of Alberta to the University of Alberta to develop this proposal. He added that President-Elect Turpin is also interested in this initiative.

Dr Shirvani explained that additional consultation is ongoing towards implementation of this proposal, and that additionally, there may need to be a cultural change at the academy to successfully integrate this type of initiative.

During the discussion in regards to this item, members expressed a number of comments and questions, including, but not limited to: support for this initiative; clarification regarding delivery of courses; clarification regarding how existing electronic modules can be incorporated into this program; a suggestion for increased preliminary communication between students and supervisors in regards to professional development; a suggestion to include CAPS in this endeavor; clarification about how this initiative could be introduced to the new Provincial Government; whether there is a tracking system being planned in relation

to this proposal; a request for an update in regards to recommendation 19 in the Strategic Plan; whether this proposal will be formally presented at future meetings.

## 6. President's Visiting Committee

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter:* Martin Ferguson-Pell, Senior Advisor to the President; Bobbi Schiestel, Portfolio Initiatives Manager, Office of the President

*Purpose of the Proposal:* For information/discussion.

### *Discussion:*

Dr Ferguson-Pell provided members with a report on the President's Visiting Committee (PVC). He stated that PVC was part of the Change Agenda, approved by the Board of Governors on April 18, 2013, under the pillar of evidence-based academic transformation. He added that the PVC serves many purposes, including the recognition of excellence, reviewing progress against strategic objectives, and reform. He emphasized that the PVC is an advisory body.

Dr Ferguson-Pell noted that the PVC is different from other reviews for various reasons, including that it is strategic in focus, includes a unique membership composition, maintains a multi-activity focus, and ensures ongoing monitoring and progress, post-review.

In regards to the two pilot PVCs, he reported that the Alberta School of Business and the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation have completed the PVC recently. He explained that following the PVC, the Faculties were provided with a Summary of Recommendations, and subsequently, the Deans produced an Implementation Report in response. He noted that these reports were presented across several GFC Standing Committees as well as the Board of Governors.

Dr Ferguson-Pell stated that there were several positive outcomes to the pilot PVCs, including the utilization of the Acorn Institutional Data Warehouse, and the positive, ongoing relationship between the Faculty and the PVC. He reported that going forward, PVCs will be scheduled throughout the year and that alignment with other institutions reviews will be addressed.

During the discussion in regards to this item, members provided a number of comments and questions, including, but not limited to: whether this has been presented at Deans' Council; whether the PVC will replace Unit Reviews; whether the same data set was used for both Faculties involved in the pilot; that the PVC should afford Deans the option to identify Faculty-specific data during the PVC process; that the PVC presentation should be reviewed by the two Deans involved in the pilot; that Deans' Council should review this report; clarification regarding the composition of membership of the PVC; a suggestion to further clarify the process around the PVC Final Report and the PVC Portfolio and support for including data from the Faculty at the onset of the PVC; that the Final Report should include a response from the Dean, and that this could be more clear within the Procedures and Guidelines; clarification about the role of the Chair of the PVC in relation to proper management of the process; clarification regarding the frequency and timing of the PVC in relation to decanal reviews; that the PVC should not impact other review outcomes; clarification regarding the impact of the PVC on external accreditation cycles; whether undergraduate satisfaction data would be incorporated into the PVC in the future; clarification regarding the establishment of the number of members of PVCs and whether the longevity of the process was a factor in selection; that the Dean Implementation Report is not included within the Guidelines; clarification on who is authorized to use the Acorn Data Warehouse; caution against including this on the June 1, 2015 GFC Agenda; that this discussion should occur first at Deans' Council; clarification regarding the previous discussion at GFC

APC; that the two presentations have been different in content and aim; that there are critical questions which need answers before this proposal should go forward; clarification regarding the governance process and timeline of this proposal as well as which office would develop and host this policy; clarification regarding future audits of the University of Alberta, in relation to Quality Council; whether this item would be added as a Discussion Item on the GFC Agenda.

7. Governance Pathway for Approval of Certificates

There were no documents.

*Presenter(s):* Kate Peters, Portfolio Initiatives Manager; Andrea Patrick, Assistant Secretary of GFC

*Purpose of the Proposal:* For information/discussion.

*Discussion:*

Ms Peters reported that during the March 9, 2015 meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC), members had engaged in discussion in regards to the approval of the embedded certificates as part of the Peter Lougheed Leadership College (PLLC), adding that in response, Dr Brenda Leskiw as Chair of the GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC), engaged GFC ASC in discussion in relation to the history of the delegated authority over certificates at the University of Alberta at the April 2015 meeting. She reported that on that occasion, Dr Leskiw had pointed out the Minutes of the April 27, 2005 GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC), in which members had identified GFC ASC as the most appropriate GFC Standing Committee to approve certificates, as members were extremely knowledgeable regarding courses, admission/transfer and academic standing criteria.

Ms Patrick provided members with the history of certificate approval at the University of Alberta, adding that in 2005, the Vice-Provost and Chair of GFC ASC, Dr Gretchen Hess, had proposed that GFC ASC be the appropriate approving body for certificates, under delegated authority from GFC. She stated that the proposal included changes to the Terms of Reference for both GFC ASC and GFC APC, and that certificates which required additional funding, space and/or governmental approval should remain within GFC APC's purview. She reported that this proposal was approved by GFC ASC, GFC APC, GFC Executive Committee, and received final approval at GFC in the spring of 2005. She stated that it is rare for a proposal to move through several GFC Standing Committees as well as full GFC and that at that time, the proposal was widely supported throughout the governance process by members of the academy.

Members, during the discussion in relation to this item, expressed a number of comments and questions, including, but not limited to: clarification surrounding the delegated authority of the GFC Executive Committee to approve urgent and/or routine items on behalf of GFC; a suggestion to include brief, oral updates from GFC Standing Committees at each GFC meeting; that the concerns raised at the March 9, 2015 GFC meeting were more about the PLLC's establishment as an administrative unit and less about GFC ASC's role in approving certificates.

8. Question Period

There were no questions.

**INFORMATION REPORTS**

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

There were no items.

10. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

**CLOSING SESSION**

11. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.