

The following Motions and Documents were considered by the GFC Executive Committee at its Thursday, March 19, 2020 meeting:

Agenda Title: **Emergency Academic Governance Protocols**

- Recommendations from the PHRT Subcommittee on Academic Impacts

CARRIED MOTION:

THAT General Faculties Council Executive, acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council delegate to the President and Vice-Chancellor, the ability to amend the Academic Schedule for the Winter 2020 term to facilitate necessary changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

CARRIED MOTION:

THAT General Faculties Council Executive, acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council sub-delegate the authority to the Dean of each Faculty of the University of Alberta to modify Academic Standing Regulations subject to the following constraints:

That each Deans must communicate the changes to students of their respective Faculty no later than April 1, 2020

CARRIED MOTION:

THAT General Faculties Council Executive, acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council mandate that all course outlines for courses delivered in the Winter 2020 semester are modified in the following ways no later than March 27, 2020, subject to the following constraints:

- the grading scheme for all University of Alberta courses for Winter 2020 has been modified to award one of the following grades: CR (credit) or NC (non-credit) as indicated in the University Calendar and will carry no weight in calculating the grade point average. Exemptions to this grading scheme may be established by the Deans of programs whose students have accreditation or licensure requirements.;
- if applicable, how in-person final examinations were modified and how weighting was modified as a result of the change. Final assessments should not require the use of paid remote proctoring services, in cases where this is necessary these exceptions must be approved by the Dean or delegate of the Faculty offering the course by no later than March 27, 2020.
- In the event that the University of Alberta must cease all activities, Credit (CR) and Noncredit (NC) grades will be determined for all Winter 2020 courses based on whether or not the student has demonstrated achievement of the majority of the course learning objectives

CARRIED MOTION:

THAT General Faculties Council Executive, acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council approve an addendum to the 2019-20 University Calendar that states "Given the 2020 COVID 19 Pandemic, all Central Academic Records will be modified. This information will be reflected on the University of Alberta transcript issued by the Office of the Registrar and bearing the signature of the Registrar."

FINAL Item 3

FINAL Item No. 3

**Governance Executive Summary
Action Item**

Agenda Title	Emergency Academic Governance Protocols – Recommendations from University of Alberta’s COVID-19 Public Health Response Team (PHRT) Sub-committee on Academic Impacts
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Motion

<p>THAT General Faculties Council Executive, acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council delegate to the President and Vice-Chancellor, the ability to amend the Academic Schedule for the Winter 2020 term to facilitate necessary changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>THAT General Faculties Council Executive, acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council sub-delegate the authority to the Dean of each Faculty of the University of Alberta to modify Academic Standing Regulations subject to the following constraints:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That each Deans must communicate the changes to students of their respective Faculty no later than April 1, 2020</p> <p>THAT General Faculties Council Executive, acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council mandate that all course outlines for courses delivered in the Winter 2020 semester are modified in the following ways no later than March 27, 2020, subject to the following constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the grading scheme for all University of Alberta courses for Winter 2020 has been modified to award one of the following grades: CR (credit) or NC (non-credit) as indicated in the <i>University Calendar</i> and will carry no weight in calculating the grade point average. Exemptions to this grading scheme may be established by the Deans of programs whose students have accreditation or licensure requirements.; ○ if applicable, how in-person final examinations were modified and how weighting was modified as a result of the change. Final assessments should not require the use of paid remote proctoring services, in cases where this is necessary these exceptions must be approved by the Dean or delegate of the Faculty offering the course by no later than March 27, 2020. ○ In the event that the University of Alberta must cease all activities, Credit (CR) and Non-credit (NC) grades will be determined for all Winter 2020 courses based on whether or not the student has demonstrated achievement of the majority of the course learning objectives <p>THAT General Faculties Council Executive, acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council approve an addendum to the 2019-20 <i>University Calendar</i> that states “Given the 2020 COVID 19 Pandemic, all Central Academic Records will be modified. This information will be reflected on the University of Alberta transcript issued by the Office of the Registrar and bearing the signature of the Registrar.”</p>
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Item

Action Requested	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
Proposed by	President Dave Turpin
Presenter(s)	Melissa Padfield in her capacity as Chair of the University of Alberta’s COVID-19 Public Health Response Team (PHRT) Sub-committee on Academic Impacts

Details

Office of Administrative Responsibility	University Governance
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<p>The Purpose of the Proposal is <i>(please be specific)</i></p>	<p>The proposal is before the committee, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, decisive action is required from General Faculties Council Executive Committee to provide the academy with the requisite authority (latitude) to implement alternatives for the delivery of in-person examinations, assessment and instruction for the remainder of the Winter 2020 term.</p>
<p>Executive Summary <i>(outline the specific item – and remember your audience)</i></p>	<p>Key Considerations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In order to set students up for continued academic success, it is critical that a transparent plan is developed and communicated as soon as possible. 2. If the university continues on with traditional course delivery tenets it will be subject to the following risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unmanageable accommodation requests - Unmanageable exam deferral requests - Inequity between decision making authorities (different instructors or different Faculties) - Significant number of grades of incomplete which will increase work for instructors, Chairs and Deans over the summer and beyond - Anticipation of significant appeals related to comparisons between different evaluative approaches in different courses <p>Recommendation</p> <p>In view of the global pandemic, its effect on all students, faculty, and all the members of our community who support program delivery, and after extensive deliberation, it is recommended that General Faculties Council Executive acting with delegated authority from General Faculties Council approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The change of the last day to withdraw from Winter term course to April 8, 2020. Given the circumstances, students must have time to assess whether it is in their best interest to withdraw from the course and avoid a NC notation, or to complete the course requirements in order to receive CR; <p>Required changes to all course outlines from Winter 2020 using a template provided by the Office of the Registrar and including the following modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all University of Alberta courses for Winter 2020 will award one of the following grades: CR (credit) or NC (no credit) as indicated in the <i>University Calendar</i>. A change to the grading traditional grading scheme to ensure equity for all students; - A modification to the final assessment and how that modification has altered weighting. In cases where an in-person exam was scheduled, the alternative cannot require delivery through a paid remote proctoring system unless approved by the Dean. This is because the technical requirements that cannot be made universally available to students.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At this point, the University is requiring instructors to teach out their courses through online delivery. However, should the situation evolve and due to force majeure, instruction could not continue online, the University will issue credit to all students who have demonstrated achievement on the majority of their course learning objectives.; and <p>2. Provide the Deans of each faculty with the requisite authority to modify Academic Standing Regulations subject to the following constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That Deans must communicate these changes to students to students in their Faculty as soon as possible, but no later than April 1, 2020. <p>More detailed information can be found in attachment 1 (March 18, 2020 – Briefing Note from University of Alberta’s COVID-19 Public Health Response Team (PHRT) Sub-committee on Academic Impacts</p>
Supplementary Notes and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) clearly outlines the authority of the Board of Governors (Board) and GFC. The Board in hiring the President has delegated the President the authority to act in extraordinary and/or emergency circumstances. This delegation of authority occurs through the President’s job description. <p>The excerpt is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Exercises, under delegated authority from the Board of Governors, the authority to act in extraordinary and/or emergency circumstances.</i>

Engagement and Routing (Include meeting dates)

<p>Consultation and Stakeholder Participation (parties who have seen the proposal and in what capacity)</p> <p><For information on the protocol see the Governance Resources section Student Participation Protocol></p>	<p><u>Those who are actively participating:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Alberta’s COVID-19 Public Health Response Team (PHRT) Sub-committee on Academic Impacts
	<p><u>Those who have been consulted:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GFC Exec • Deans’ Council • Academic Standard Committee
	<p><u>Those who have been informed:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Approval Route (Governance) (including meeting dates)	

Strategic Alignment

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Alignment with <i>For the Public Good</i>	Please note the Institutional Strategic Plan objective(s)/strategies the proposal supports.	
Alignment with Core Risk Area	Please note below the specific institutional risk(s) this proposal is addressing.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrolment Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty and Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funding and Resource Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IT Services, Software and Hardware <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership and Change <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physical Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relationship with Stakeholders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reputation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research Enterprise <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safety <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Success
Legislative Compliance and jurisdiction	<p>Legal Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pursuant to section 26(1) of the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) - subject to the authority of the board, a general faculties council is responsible for the academic affairs of the university. - Pursuant to section 26(3) a general faculties council may delegate any of its powers duties or functions under [the PSLA]...as it sees fit and may prescribe conditions governing the exercise or performance of any delegated power, duty of function, including the power of sub - delegation. - In accordance with section 4.1 of the GFC Executive Committee Terms of reference GFC EXEC has delegated authority to act on behalf of General Faculties Council on matters that must be decided before the next regularly scheduled GFC meeting and where it is not feasible to call a special meeting of GFC. 	

Attachments

1. Attachment 1 Briefing Note from University of Alberta’s COVID-19 Public Health Response Team (PHRT) Sub-committee on Academic Impacts

Prepared by: Yimmie Sonuga, General Faculties Council Secretary, yimmie.sonuga@ualberta.ca

Briefing Note for General Faculties Council

March 18, 2020

Prepared by: PHRT Sub-Committee on Academic Impacts

Background:

As part of its immediate mandate, the PHRT COVID-19 PHRT Sub-committee on Academic Impacts has been weighing all options related to the continuation of the Winter 2020 academic term and exam period. Through this detailed work, several critical challenges have emerged. Treating the decision to move instruction and exams online as if they were extensions of business as usual presents us with many unintended consequences and risks. Mitigating these risks in the current environment of a global pandemic is complex (i.e., we seat over 100,000 exams per term, students take courses offered by multiple faculties, academic policies are connected and dependent on each other). If we carry on with traditional course delivery tenets, we will experience the following:

- Unmanageable accommodation requests
- Unmanageable exam deferral requests
- Inequity between decision making authorities (different instructors or different Faculties)
- Significant number of grades of incomplete which will increase work for instructors, Chairs and Deans over the summer and beyond
- Anticipation of significant appeals related to comparisons between different evaluative approaches in different courses

Proposed Solution:

In view of the global pandemic, its effect on our students, faculty, and all the members of our community who support program delivery, and after extensive deliberation, it is recommended that:

1) *Revised Grading Schema*

For all undergraduate courses for Winter 2020, the process by which the term marks will be translated into a final letter grade for the course will be replaced to issue one of the following:

- a) CR (credit): completed requirements, no grade point value assigned, credit provided
- b) IN (incomplete): incomplete
- c) NC (no credit): failure, no grade point value assigned, no credit provided

Exemptions to this grading scheme may be established by the Deans for reasons related to accreditation and licensure after appropriate consultation with other impacted Deans (i.e. issues of service teaching).

2) *Final Exams*

- a) It is strongly encouraged by faculties that instructors pursue alternate forms of assessment other than traditional final examinations delivery in a remote format.
- b) It is mandated that all such final assessments and the few required final exams will be delivered remotely and will be held according to the schedule previously published by the Registrar.
- c) Final exams will not be done through a remote proctored assessment unless approved by the Dean (or delegate) for exceptional circumstances.
- d) The choice of format must be announced to students and reflected in a modified course outline that communicates the expectations to students clearly no later than March 27, 2020. This allows for students to make an informed decision before the add/drop date (April 1).

3) *In the Event of Cessation of University Activities*

If a significant disruption requires cessation of all University activities, Credit (CR), Incomplete (IN) and Non-credit (NC) grades will be determined by the student demonstrating achievement of the majority of course learning objectives.

- a) Where students have not been able to demonstrate course learning objectives before cessation of University activities, a grade of (IN) will be issued. The modified course outline will be used to determine how credit could be obtained. The time period for completion is still to be determined by GFC or an appropriate authority.
- b) Where students who were previously awarded a (IN) have successfully completed the provisions for credit as outlined in the course syllabus, their grade will be altered to credit (CR).
- c) Academic standing will be modified to take into consideration the impact of COVID-19 on the learning environment for courses in the Winter 2020 term in a process to be determined by ASC. This may include the cessation of academic standing for all students except those requiring it for completion of degree.

4) *Develop a Modified Syllabus Template*

The decisions made above will be captured in a modified syllabus template to be created by the PHRT Sub-Committee on Academic Impacts.

5) *Adjust Withdrawal Deadline*

In order to give students the time they need to make an informed decision about whether or not they should complete their courses (based on the changes to online and assessment practices) we recommend that the withdrawal deadline be pushed back to April 8 (last day of classes for most faculties).

Principles underpinning the proposal:

- 1. The health and safety of our students and staff is our priority.
- 2. We do not want students to feel they need to sacrifice their health in order to complete

their programs.

3. We are near the end of the Winter 2020 semester.
4. Canadian post-secondary institutions are facing unprecedented barriers and disruption to delivery and assessment of learning outcomes, and this situation continues to change rapidly.
5. All academic work across the globe is going to be impacted and there will be a variety of solutions to this unprecedented situation; therefore, the concern that we will be an outlier is inaccurate.
6. Decisive action is required to maintain academic integrity, reputation, maximized transparency to students, and equity.
7. Remote proctoring for the more than 100,000 in-person final exams is not feasible from a resource perspective (financial, human or otherwise).
8. Every student could require accommodation due to the global pandemic, and would qualify (e.g., Falling ill, needing to self-isolate, leaving for home, limited or no access to the technology required for online delivery).
9. Every instructor could require accommodation due to the global pandemic (e.g., Falling ill; caring for children due to school closures; caring for ill family members, friends, and neighbors)
10. Students still have the option to withdraw from a course if they feel that they will be unsuccessful.
11. Many students have already left. Our students live in many areas outside of Edmonton (e.g. International, rural and remote) and are facing significant pressures from their families to return home while they still can.
12. Some accreditation bodies are demonstrating increasing flexibility in light of the pandemic (e.g. CEAB, CARNA)
13. The future applications for jobs and admission to programs outside the University of Alberta will not be negatively impacted because the current global pandemic affects all institutions and the unusual circumstances of this semester will certainly be taken into account in the future. These impacts could be mitigated, for example, through letters of recommendation which provide Instructors with an opportunity to elaborate in detail on a student's performance.

Appendix: Membership of Sub-Committee on Academic Impacts

Public Health Response Team (PHRT) Covid-19 Sub-Committee on Academic Impacts Membership and Leadership Continuity

Unit	Representative
RO	Melissa Padfield (Chair) Vice-Provost and Registrar

PHRT Institutional Lead	Andrew Sharman Vice President, Facilities and Operations
Office of the Provost	John Nychka, Vice Provost (Learning Initiatives) Kate Peters, Portfolio Initiatives Manager
FGSR	Brooke Milne Vice-Provost and Dean, FGSR
Dean of Students	Helen Valliantos Associate Dean of Student
UAI	Doug Weir Executive Director, Student Programs and Services
IST	Jeff Rawlings Director, Digital Learning Environments
University Relations	Jillian Hamilton Issues and Strategic Communications Manager
Governance	Yimmie Sonuga GFC Secretary
Senior Faculty Representatives - from ASC membership, all Associate Deans	Gerda DeVries (Science) Christy Raymond (Nursing) Karsten Mundel (Augustana) Jason Carey (Engineering) Rebecca Nagel (Arts)
Faculty Relations	Maryam Bagheritari Faculty and Staff Relations Officer
Academic Administration (Faculty)	Kerrie Johnston Senior Officer, Administration and Strategic Initiatives- Faculty of Science
Centre for Teaching and Learning	Janice Miller Young Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning
Library	Weiwei Shi Associate University Librarian
Resource members	As needed