



Introduction

In response to a recommendation from the February 8, 2021 Committee of the Whole of General Faculties Council (GFC) that GFC and the Board of Governors develop joint committees to discuss areas of overlap, the GFC Executive Committee (Exec) and the Board Governance Committee (BGC) met on March 25, 2021, May 13, 2021 and September 13, 2021.

At these meetings, BGC and Exec members discussed:

- the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, which guides both bodies in this matter and which requires that
 - members of the Board of Governors' (BG) act in the best interests of the university [s. 16(5)] (including those BG members that are cross-appointed with GFC);
 - General Faculties Council's (GFC) recommendations on academic matters "must be considered" by the BG [ss. 19, 26]; and
 - the President transmit to the Board any recommendations from GFC (s. 26(2)).
- amendments made both by GFC and the Board of Governors (Board) to an Academic Restructuring Proposal in December of 2020 and the processes which were followed to arrive at those amendments;
- suggestions for improved communications between GFC and the Board; and
- how to improve shared governance in the case of a decision by GFC that the President does not support.

At their meeting of September 13, 2021, the two committees agreed on a set of recommendations (as follows) for significant matters of both academic and administrative importance where additional measures might be needed to improve communications and effective functioning of shared governance at the University of Alberta.

1. Identifying Significant Matters

A recommendation by GFC to the Board concerning a matter with both academic¹ and administrative aspects will be deemed 'significant' by the GFC Executive Committee when it includes one or more of the following criteria:

- a. The matter has both academic and administrative aspects of material importance to the university;
- b. The matter relates to the long-term direction of the university;
- c. There are time constraints on the Board relating to the above matters.
- d. The President advises the GFC Exec that the President does not support a GFC recommendation to the Board.

2. Recommendations to Improve Communications

Measures to improve communication and understanding between GFC and the Board regarding any recommendation by GFC to the Board concerning a matter of "significant" (See S. 1 above) academic and administrative importance and where additional measures might be needed to improve communications and effective functioning of shared governance at the University of Alberta include:

¹ GFC's statutory role as it relates to academic matters is subject to Board oversight of all matters as provided for in the PSLA.



- a. At the request of GFC, the Board Chair (or their designate) will explain to GFC the context in which the Board will receive the GFC recommendation, including details regarding any particular concerns and/or objectives of the Board in respect of the subject matter of the GFC recommendation.
- b. The GFC Exec will be given a reasonable opportunity to review and provide input into the information package supporting a recommendation by GFC to the Board
- c. In circumstances where there are time constraints on the Board, GFC Exec will work to find ways to allow GFC to provide feedback while respecting those timelines.

3. Implementation specific to Section 1d when the President does not support a GFC recommendation

In the event that the President advises GFC or the GFC Exec that the President does not support a GFC recommendation to the Board, the GFC will select a different individual to present / speak in favour of the GFC motion at the Board meeting where the motion is considered.

- a. On behalf of GFC, the GFC Exec will approve a brief on the summary of discussions at GFC, that will be distributed for information to GFC.
- b. If GFC Exec deems it necessary, they will nominate a member of GFC to present the brief to the Board in addition to the President who will transmit GFC's decision as per the requirement in the *PSLA*.
 - o GFC will be given an opportunity to nominate a different individual than the person chosen by Exec to present the brief. If required, the matter will be put to an electronic vote by members of GFC. The cross-appointed GFC-Board members will not be eligible to provide this service.
 - o The individual will present the brief after the President has transmitted the decision of GFC. The individual may respond to clarification questions on the brief, but will not be asked to speak on behalf of GFC.
- c. It is understood that in circumstances when the Board has time constraints for making its decision, these steps may need to be expedited and votes may need to be conducted electronically and within reduced time-frames.
- d. Although the Board will endeavour to provide the GFC a reasonable period in which to elect an individual to present the recommendation to the Board, the Board will not be required to delay its decision making processes to accommodate this GFC process when such delay would not be in the best interests of the university. In such a case, the brief on the summary of discussions at GFC will be distributed to the Board.

These guidelines will be kept for reference on the University Governance website.