



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Academic Planning Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Wednesday, November 17, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Steven Dew, Chair
Chris Andersen
Peter Berg
Martin Coutts (delegate)
Shannon Erichsen
Anas Fassih
Vadim Kravchinsky
Jacqueline Leighton
Rowan Ley

Runjuan Liu
Melissa Padfield
Sanhita Pal
Aminah Robinson Fayek
Yan Yuan

Heather Bruce
Todd Gilchrist
Brad Hamdon
Jelena Holovati
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Sandeep Agrawal
Chris Beasley

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC)

Discussion:

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair made the following territorial acknowledgement:

The University of Alberta resides on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. To acknowledge the territory is to recognize the longer history of these lands and signifies our commitment to working in Good Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as we engage in our institutional work.

Motion: Leighton/Andersen

THAT the GFC Academic Planning Committee approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of APC

Discussion:

In his comments, the Chair noted that the university was working with other Alberta institutions on a joint submission regarding Institutional Management Agreements (IMAs) and that the government had indicated this input should be received by November 29, 2021.

CONSENT AGENDA

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Second: Padfield/Ericksen

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of November 3, 2021

THAT the GFC Academic Planning Committee approve the open session minutes of November 3, 2021.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. College Strategic Plans

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of APC; Matina Kalcounis-Rueppell, Interim College Dean, College of Natural and Applied Sciences; Greta Cummings, Interim College Dean, College of Health Sciences; Joseph Doucet, Interim College Dean, College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to share the draft Colleges Strategic Plans, including metrics, with the committee for input and feedback.

Discussion:

The Chair provided some context on the item, pointing to the Board of Governors Road Map of strategic priorities in Appendix A, and noting that the Colleges would present their initial plans to the Board of Governors at their December 2021 meeting. He noted that the Colleges planned to launch a community consultation process in January 2022. He explained that while this was a Board of Governors driven document, APC's feedback was important because of the long term academic and research planning involved. The Chair went over the Vision 2026 document and the highlighted areas where the Colleges would play a key role.

The College Deans spoke about:

- the Board of Governors Road Map and the Vision 2026 document, and the alignment of the College Strategic Plans;
- where the Colleges had a primary role to play and College accountabilities;
- how the goals in the materials tied in to the operating model for the University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT) initiatives;
- that these initial plans were high-level and that College specific priorities would be developed through consultation;
- that the title was a bit misleading because this was just the start of the process; and
- plans for internal and external, relevant and meaningful, consultation and initiatives in 2022.

During the discussion, members and presenters asked questions and expressed comments including but not limited to:

- concern about the changing format of student service;
- how specific student services would be handled at the Faculty and College level and the role of the graduate student offices in the Colleges;
- an observation that current services varied widely across Departments and Faculties and harmonizing services for consistency and excellence would benefit students;
- the UAT Operating Model and the working groups that were addressing these processes;
- how the UAT transformation was addressing challenges and opportunities in a way that was purposeful and forward looking;
- the goals of cost effectiveness and improved services;

- how the Uniform benchmarking would provide both high-level and detail-level data, and that the Service Excellence Transformation (SET) was how that data was put to use;
- that the goal was not to reduce services but to reorganize, change the ratio from Faculty to College, and make services more effective;
- the value of feedback from an academic lens at this point in process;
- the IMA performance metric and directive that within three years, 100% of students have the opportunity for a work-integrated or experiential learning experience in their program;
- questions about the five-year fundraising and enrollment goals in the Vision 2026 document;
- the UAT principle that the university was making these changes in order to be able to re-invest in key teaching and research;
- that the role of the Colleges was to ensure that the university was using its resources more effectively and efficiently;
- concern with timing and ensuring that changeover to new structures would allow for support staff to transition into new roles without being left behind and without work being dropped;
- that academic programming support and decision-making would still be held at the Department and Faculty level but that the administrative support could be moved to the College level where possible;
- the goal that the best pieces of the current system not be lost with the transformation and the benefits to be had from collaboration;
- the importance of acknowledging that there was increased demand in some areas and decreased demand in others and that the university needed to be willing to make appropriate changes and disassemble some things that were not working;
- the eighteen-month review of the model that was built into the Board's motion to approve the Colleges;
- that the Colleges were in the process of costing out the services that the Faculties would pay for;
- the added difficulties of making substantive changes in a time of budget uncertainty;
- transparency around reversing decisions that did not make sense or did not work;
- the goal of securing a place in the top 100 universities globally, and the multifaceted nature of rankings; and
- the importance of the university's reputation and branding.

5. Final Report of the Academic Leaders Task Group (ALTG)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of APC

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to share information about the work of the Academic Leaders Task Group, a group charged with undertaking a review of academic leadership roles in the context of the U of A's new academic structure to understand how to best deploy one of the university's most critical resources: our professors.

Discussion:

The Chair spoke about GFC's authority and mandate with respect to the academic mission of the university and the Board of Governor's authority and mandate with respect to the academic leadership of the university. He went over the ALTG principles and objectives and explained that the report was a summary of the work of the task group, which looked at the current organizational structure and the varied roles of academic leaders across the institution. He noted that the report was not suggesting a specific path forward but did provide an analysis and some options for reducing the number of academic leaders, which would inform the final decision.

During the discussion, members asked questions and expressed comments including but not limited to:

- whether moving academic leaders from operational to strategic positions would be detrimental to the delivery of excellent programs;
- whether these changes could be reversed later if they were not successful;

- that administrative support staff could be hired for some operational positions while professors would be directed more toward teaching;
- that Associate Dean positions were not all equal as some had teaching releases and some did not;
- the nature of academic leadership and an opinion that some academic leaders were not skilled at the strategic level;
- the importance of onboarding and training, and aligning the expectations of strategic leadership roles; and
- whether these changes would have an impact on Faculty Evaluation Committees (FECs) or the way they were supported.

6. Budget Update (standing item)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair of APC; Martin Coutts, Associate Vice-President Finance, Procurement and Planning

Discussion:

Mr Coutts said that, as the Chair had noted in his comments, the university was working on communications with government about the IMAs. He also indicated that the proposals for extraordinary tuition increases had been approved by the Board of Governors and sent to the government for consideration.

CLOSING SESSION

7. Adjournment

- Next Meeting of APC: December 8, 2021
- Next Meeting of GFC: November 29, 2021

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.