

General Faculties Council
Council on Students Affairs (COSA)
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, March 30, 2023
Student Union Building - Orion Room
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Verna Yiu, Chair
Bishoi Aziz
Dhir Bid
Ariane Lamoureux
Lionel Liu
Abner Monteiro
Jennifer Passey
Norma Rodenburg
Helen Vallianatos

Adrian Wattamaniuk
Tuesday Young
non-voting:
Kate Peters

REGRETS:

Chantel Akinneah
Daniela Carbajal
Roger Epp

Brad Hamdon
Keith King
Precious Majekodunmi
Srivathsan Shanmuganathan
Subrat Sharma
Pien Steinbusch

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Coordinator

OPENING SESSION

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair acknowledged:

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 our commitment to working in Good Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

1 Approval of the Agenda

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of COSA

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of January 26, 2023

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of COSA

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the open session minutes of January 26, 2023.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of COSA

Discussion:

In her comments, the Chair thanked members of COSA for their service noting it was the last meeting of the academic year. She congratulated the incoming University of Alberta Students' Union (UASU) and Graduate Students' Association (GSA) executive and encouraged student members to apply for GFC standing committee vacancies.

The Chair shared that one outcome of the consultations with students on tuition would be the creation of an advisory working group to review the Moderate Standard of Living calculation that is used in considering student financial need. She noted that the working group will include student members and will report to COSA and to the Board.

Members asked about how the working group might approach communications with students. The Chair committed to integrating communications into the terms of reference. Members asked how many students applied for funding opportunities and how they accessed these supports. They discussed the differences between applications and qualifications for merit and need-based awards. Deputy Provost (Students and Enrolment) Melissa Padfield spoke to work in the Office of the Registrar to connect students with the supports they need. The Chair committed to having the working group look at supports as well.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Student Experience Action Plan

Presenter(s): Abner Monteiro, President, UASU; Monisha Vinod, Vice-President (Student Services), GSA; Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Students and Enrolment)

Discussion:

The co-creators presented the plan, the draft commitment statement, and the principles that had been articulated.

Members discussed:

- Links to *Braiding Past, Present and Future, the University of Alberta Indigenous Strategic Plan*;
- Support for the student-driven approach used to develop the plan;
- The methodology used to analyse the more than 1200 responses received and how the themes were prioritized;
- That transparency and affordable costs are important for students;
- The survey being sent to two-thirds of the undergraduate and graduate students to validate the preliminary findings of the strategy;
- How the students are being sampled and how to mitigate bias;
- That the consultation process may not catch all student groups and that the survey may help to catch students who have not yet engaged;
- How the survey will overlap with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) distribution; and
- How the process will help to address the issues with accessibility including with the University's aging infrastructure.

The Chair asked about continuity and the committee heard that student leaders would continue to support the work. She encouraged the members to share the process and results in a written report.

5. Student Survey - Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (no documents)

Presenter(s): Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion); Deborah Williams, Associate Vice-President and Chief Analytics Officer

Discussion:

C Smith and D Williams provided an overview of the student survey report and noted that it would be available to the public in the coming weeks.

Members discussed:

- Demographics of respondents and the timeframe for data collection;
- Student employment data and reliance on financial aid and supports, and whether there was a correlation;
- Impacts of financial wellbeing on student progression; and
- Whether there was data on Indigenous students funded by their Band and their specific financial needs at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

6. Update on Council on Systemic Ableism (no documents)

Presenter(s): Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)

Discussion:

C Smith reminded members that she had presented to COSA in the fall and was here to provide an update on the launch of the Council on Systemic Ableism. She noted the intention to amplify the longstanding work of grassroots activism to address structural ableism. She committed to bringing back terms of reference and documentation from the Council and noted that she would co-chair, alongside Danielle Peers, a scholar from the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation. She remarked that the committee included undergraduate and graduate students, and two Canada Research Chairs with expertise on accessibility and ableism. She explained that the Council is taking the time to get to know each other and working at a pace that allows for all individuals to participate equally. She noted that the committee was inclusive of individuals with lived experience in these matters and that this had been intentional. Finally, she noted that all three campuses were represented.

Members discussed:

- The hope that the work of the Council would lead to practical solutions for students;
- Whether the Council's work was limited to addressing physical ableism or if mental ableism would be addressed as well;
- How impairments might be defined;
- That neurodivergence, and a host of other impairments and disabilities would be included;
- That the Council employs an inclusive approach and sees itself as a learning community; and
- How students can get involved and support the Council.

The Chair asked if there was an opportunity for collaboration between the Student Experience Action Plan and the Council. She also asked about connections between the Council's work and the responsibilities of the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) portfolio. The Chair thanked C Smith and committed to further discussions at COSA in the following year.

7. Reporting Student Perspectives of Teaching (SPOT) Results (no documents)

Presenter(s): Karsten Mundel, Acting Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives)

Discussion:

K Mundel presented on the mechanisms for reporting on SPOT results. He emphasized that the information he was presenting would be applied in the next academic year and reminded members that 18 new questions were recently approved by GFC. He noted that the Student Input Procedure sets out how information is gathered and

reported back out. The information is important to students, faculty and administrators who use SPOT results in different ways. In particular, he noted how important the information is to instructors who use the information to support continuous improvement of teaching. He gave committee members the opportunity to see how the data will be presented.

Members asked whether the website where the data is currently housed would be updated and timelines for the renewal of the data. They discussed what the different categories refer to and in particular, what class climate means. It was explained that this does not refer to the physical environment, since that is beyond the instructor's control, but to the way the instructional practices influence the student experience.

The Chair asked K Mundel to return to a future meeting of COSA once he has some results from the new questions.

8. Student Updates (no documents)

Discussion:

UASU President A Montiero, and GSA President B Aziz, spoke about the student protest organised in response to tuition increases. They noted impacts of the protest including commitments to support the Campus Food Bank. The Chair acknowledged that the protest was orderly and safe and thanked the UASU and GSA for their excellent oversight.

A Montiero spoke about the UASU's work to support students getting out to vote in provincial elections and to recruit students to serve on GFC.

B Aziz described the GSA's advocacy work lobbying the government regarding immigration streams for international students

9. Question Period

A member asked about the potential for a fraternity to apply for a city permit for a chicken coop.

A member asked about the University's support for the Campus Food Bank.

INFORMATION REPORTS

10. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings
- Campus Food Bank, and Involvement and Volunteerism

CLOSING SESSION

11. Adjournment
- Next meeting of COSA: September 14, 2023
- Next meeting of GFC: April 17, 2023