



# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council  
Executive Committee  
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, September 14, 2020  
Virtual Meeting  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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**ATTENDEES:**

Bill Flanagan, Chair  
Steven Dew  
David Draper  
Anastasia Elias  
Mary Forhan  
Christopher Lupke  
Sean McMurtry

Pierre-Yves Mocquais  
Roger Moore  
Melissa Padfield  
Sachiketha Reddy  
Eleni Stroulia  
*non-voting:*  
Brad Hamdon  
Kate Peters

**REGRETS:**

Adarsh Badesha

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Scribe

**OPENING SESSION**

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, Chair of GFC Executive Committee (Exec)

Motion: Mocquais/Padfield

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Agenda.

**CARRIED**

2. Comments from the Chair

*Presenter(s):* Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, Chair of Exec

*Discussion:*

The Chair welcomed members to the first Executive Committee meeting of the 2020-2021 Academic year. He spoke about the memo he had shared covering some of the key points in the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules and asked for feedback. He noted that the rules set out clear guidance for good governance practice, and that he meant to use them quite explicitly to ensure that GFC meetings were effective.

A member noted that there had been some confusion around the rules in the past and thanked the Chair for his memo.

Members discussed:

- limits on speaking time at GFC;
- that a motion to extend would be required if a meeting needed to go over the scheduled time;
- clarification around amendments to the motion and motions from the floor;
- clarification around a request to add an item to the agenda; and
- the procedure for extending a meeting.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

In response to a question, Dr Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and Chair of the GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) explained that items 4 and 5 were recommendations from APC to GFC and they were included here to give Exec the information needed to approve the GFC Agenda.

Consent Agenda Mover and Second: Mocquais/McMurtry

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of June 15, 2020

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Open Session Minutes of June 15, 2020.

**CARRIED**

4. To Receive for Information from GFC APC: Proposed Suspension of Bachelor of Arts Majors in Biology, Chemistry, Computing Science, Mathematics and Physics, and Sociology, and Bachelor of Science Majors in Mathematics and Physics, and Psychology, Augustana Faculty

5. To Receive for Information from GFC APC: Proposal for the Termination of the Bachelor of Education, Adult Education Route

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

6. GFC Committee Orientation

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Brad Hamdon, General Counsel and University Secretary; Kate Peters, GFC Secretary and Manager, GFC Services

*Purpose of the Proposal:* The proposal is before the committee to provide governance orientation to committee members.

*Discussion:*

Mr Hamdon and Ms Peters provided a brief governance orientation, which touched on the following points:

- the committee's responsibility over preparation of the GFC agenda;
- the committee's responsibility over governance procedural matters;
- balancing the urgency of the decision making around Academic Restructuring with the responsibility to ensure the GFC agenda allows for full engagement of members;
- deciding on items to be added to the GFC agenda;
- GFC's authority, as legislated in the *Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)* over the academic affairs of the University, subject to the authority of the Board of Governors; and
- that within the area of academic affairs, GFC could recommend to the Board on any matters they considered to be of interest to the University.

There were no questions.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

7. Proposed Rescission of GFC Policy 37

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Brad Hamdon, General Counsel and University Secretary; Kate Peters, GFC Secretary and Manager, GFC Services

*Purpose of the Proposal:* The proposal to rescind GFC Policy 37 is the final step in the reorganization of program approval processes.

*Discussion:*

Mr Hamdon explained the history of the GFC Policy Manual and the project to rescind the policies, which had been slowly proceeding since the mid-2000s. He noted that there would be additional sections coming forward for rescission in the coming months.

Ms Peters gave a brief overview of the recent changes to program approval pathways at the University, the final step of which was the rescission of the outdated GFC Policy 37. She noted that the sections of the policy were comprised of guidance and references to decisions that GFC had made over the years and that rescinding the policy manual did not rescind those decisions. She pointed to the second attachment, which indicated where relevant information was available in other policies, terms of reference, and the University *Calendar*.

Members discussed how best to avoid conflicts between new policy, outdated policy, and terms of reference.

Motion: Moore/Mocquais

THAT the GFC Executive Committee recommend that General Faculties Council rescind GFC Policy 37.

**CARRIED**

8. Duolingo English Test: Extension of Short-term Use

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar

*Purpose of the Proposal:* To extend the acceptance of the Duolingo English Test (DET) for all applicants to undergraduate and graduate programs as an additional option to demonstrate English Language Proficiency for Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2022 admission.

To adopt a subscore requirement, in addition to an overall score, to achieve a more nuanced assessment of an applicant's English Language Proficiency

*Discussion:*

Ms Padfield went over the rationale for the proposal to extend the use of the Duolingo English Test (DET) for applicants to meet English language proficiency requirements. She explained that the original approval was made in March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of many traditional test centers, and that since circumstances had not improved, there was a need to extend the use of the test. Ms Padfield observed that the test was more accessible and less expensive than traditional tests but they would have limited performance data until students admitted with this test had results available. She further noted that Duolingo's recent introduction of a subscore option, which could be calibrated with other more traditional ELP tests, would add to the usefulness of the test and the data collection. She indicated that her office would continue to monitor the data in part to determine if the DET could be a viable test for use in the future.

Members discussed the lack of performance data on the DET and potential risk to the institution if students admitted with this test did not perform well.

Motion: Draper/Moore

THAT the GFC Executive Committee recommend that General Faculties Council approve the proposed temporary change to Undergraduate and Graduate English Language Proficiency requirements, as submitted by the Office of the Registrar and as set forth in attachment 1, to take effect for Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2022 admissions.

**CARRIED**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### 9. Academic Governance Emergency Protocols (Standing Item)

#### A. COVID-19 Governance Decision Tracker

*Presenter(s):* Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, Chair of Exec

*Discussion:*

There was no discussion.

### 10. University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT) (no documents)

*Presenter(s):* Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, Chair of Exec; Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Gitta Kulczycki, Vice-President (Finance and Administration)

*Discussion:*

The Chair gave a few highlights of the presentation for GFC including projected timelines for consultation and approval.

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

- concerns about academic advising in the new structure and the importance of the student experience;
- the results of restructuring at the University of Sydney and concerns that the University of Alberta would follow the same path;
- concerns about the Service Excellence Transformation (SET) proposed service hubs;
- concerns that smaller programs will be cut;
- the importance of clear communication including an overview of the entire process;
- the report and information that would be released the following week;
- that GFC's mandate was Academic Restructuring rather than SET but that SET details would be shared and discussed as well;
- the goal of expanded enrollment and how that would look in the short and long term;
- the importance of keeping the vision and mission of the university at the forefront of the process and not allowing it to take a back seat to efficiency;
- the general anxiety level in the community which was heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- the push in the Faculty of Arts to reduce the number of departments; and
- the engagement of the GFC Academic Planning Committee on Academic Restructuring.

### 11. Consultation on Use of Thoughtexchange (no documents)

*Presenter(s):* Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, Chair of Exec

*Discussion:*

The Chair explained that he wanted to engage the committee for their thoughts on the use of Thoughtexchange and polling at GFC.

Members discussed:

- that it was difficult to keep up with the use of multiple platforms in a large meeting;
- that elected members of GFC should not be commenting anonymously but should own their comments;
- that students may feel intimidated in a GFC meeting;
- that members who were not able to type quickly would have trouble participating;
- that it may be more useful after the meeting to collect informal feedback; and
- the potential to use eClass discussions or to collect questions from the floor in another format.

12. Question Period

There were no questions.

**ACTION ITEMS**

13. Draft Agenda for the Next Meeting of General Faculties Council

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, Chair of Exec

*Purpose of the Proposal:* To approve the Agenda for the GFC meeting to be held on Monday, September 28, 2020.

*Discussion:*

Members discussed:

- the inclusion of an indigenous welcome or teaching;
- GFC's Meeting Procedural Rules;
- moving the UAT item to the beginning of the meeting;
- including SET in the UAT discussion item; and
- the time limit for the UAT discussion item.

Motion: Stroulia/Moore

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the Agenda for the September 28, 2020 meeting of General Faculties Council, as set forth in Attachment 1, as amended.

**CARRIED**

**INFORMATION REPORTS**

14. Items Approved by the GFC Executive Committee by email ballots

There were no items.

15. Information Items Forwarded to GFC Executive Committee between Meetings

There were no items.

**CLOSING SESSION**

16. Adjournment  
- Next meeting of GFC Executive Committee, October 5, 2020  
- Next meeting of GFC, September 28, 2020

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Motion: Mocquais/Forhan

THAT the Executive Committee adjourn the meeting.

**CARRIED**