
General Faculties Council
Approved Minutes

Monday, October 31, 2011
2-1, UHALL, Council Chamber
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

ATTENDEES:

Ex Officio (27): Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Carl Amrhein (Acting Chair-Delegate), Vice-Provost (Academic) Bill Connor (Delegate), Vice-President (University Relations) Debra Pozega Osburn, Vice-President (Research) Lorne Babiuk, Vice-President (Finance and Administration) Phyllis Clark, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) Don Hickey, Chief Advancement Officer O'Neil Outar, Vice-Provost and University Registrar Gerry Kendal, Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Mazi Shirvani; Deans and Directors: John Kennelly, Lesley Cormack, Fern Snart, David Lynch, Katy Campbell, Vern Yiu, Nathalie Kermaal, Anita Molzahn, James Kehrer, Kerry Mummery, Cam Wild (Delegate), Martin Ferguson-Pell

Students (3): Nima Yousefi Moghaddan, Emerson Csorba, Colten Yamagishi

Faculty--elected (54): Deanna Williamson, Noreen Willows, Mikael Adolphson, Michael Frishkopf, Lise Gotell, Roger Graves, Steven Harris, Lee Livingstone, Lynn Penrod, Serra Tinic, Roxanne Harde, Ian Gellatly, Andrew Luchak, Ingrid Johnston, Linda Phillips, Christina Rinaldi, Mary Beckie, Ed Blackburn, Brenda Clark, Chris De Gara, Pierre Lemelin, Ron McElhaney, Rachel Milner, Jutta Preiksaitis, Elaine Yacyshyn, Pirkko Markula, Duncan Saunders, Cary Brown, J Nelson Amaral, Bob Luth, Jeremy Richards, Jonathan Veinot, Hao Zhang

ATTENDEES (Appointed):

Graduate Students at-Large (14):

Rahul Agrawal, Nathan Andrews, Behman Berahman, Maggie Danko, Erika Anne Elves, Tamara Korassa, Sagar Lunawat, John Meston, Nesrine Mostafa, Hillary Sparkes, Alkarim Velji, Minhao Zeng, Michal Zielinski

Undergraduate Students (40): Ann Gordon, David He, Nikolas Kalantzis, Heidi Johnson, Darren Joneson, Nikolas Kalantzis, Jeffry Kochikuzhyi, Petros Kusmu, Brianne Lovstrom, Brit Luimes, Su Su Liang, Scott Nicol, Michael Parkes

Board of Governors Representatives (6): Robert Campenot, Roy Coulthard, Raphael Lepage Fortin, Rory Tighe

Non-Academic Staff, NASA (2): Russell Eccles

APOs and/or FSOs (2): Tracy Hetman

Library Academic Staff (3): Kathryn Arbuckle, Sharon Farnel, Lindsay Johnston

Academic Staff Representing Sessional Staff (2): Kelly MacFarlane

GOVERNANCE STAFF:

Garry Bodnar, Secretary to General Faculties Council
Lindsey Hornland, Scribe
Marion Haggarty-France, University Secretary

PRESENTERS AND GUESTS:

Carl Amrhein, Acting President and Acting Chair, General Faculties Council; Provost and Vice-President (Academic); and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Ed Blackburn, Chair, GFC Nominating Committee
Garry Bodnar, Secretary to General Faculties Council and Coordinator, GFC Replenishment Committee
Robert Campenot, Academic Staff Representative on the Board of Governors
Doug Weins, Professor, Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences
Gwyn Morgan, Chairman, SNC-Lavalin Group Inc
Mazi Shirvani, Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)
Rory Tighe, President, Students' Union

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Shirvani/Amaral

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Minutes of September 19, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Discussion:

Lesley Cormack, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, requested her name be added to the attendance list for the September 19, 2011 meeting.

Motion: Amaral/Hetman

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the Minutes of September 19, 2011, as amended.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Acting President (no documents)

The Acting President and Acting Chair of GFC, Carl Amrhein, reminded guests and members of the upcoming 'Festival of Ideas' hosted by the University of Alberta. This year's keynote speaker will be Michael Ondaatje, author of *The English Patient*.

ACTION ITEMS

4. New Members of GFC

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Carl Amrhein, Acting President and Acting Chair, General Faculties Council; Provost and Vice-President (Academic); and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Discussion:

There was no discussion.

Motion I: TO APPOINT/REAPPOINT (Shirvani/Molzahn)

The following undergraduate student representatives, for terms beginning immediately and ending April 30, 2012:

David He	Faculty of Arts
Samuel Whittleton	Augustana Faculty
Darren Joneson	Medicine and Dentistry
Alkarim Velji	Medicine and Dentistry
Brianne Lovstrom	Native Studies
Maggie Danko	Nursing

The following representative of St Joseph's College, for a term beginning immediately and extending for the duration of his Presidency:

Terry Kersch	President, St Joseph's College
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CARRIED

Motion II: TO RECEIVE

There were no statutory members to receive on this occasion.

5. Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences – Termination of the Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Mazi Shirvani, Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR); Doug Weins, Professor, Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences

Purpose of the Proposal: To terminate the existing Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics program. The enrolment in this program has been very low and, to date, no student has completed it. Furthermore, the Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences made changes to the existing course-based Master of Science (MSc) degree in Statistics which enables students to finish the course-based MSc degree within one year. The course-based MSc program can be used for accreditation as an Associate Statistician by the Statistical Society of Canada. This is an important qualification which opens attractive job opportunities to University of Alberta students. The Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics is a one-year program in statistics, as well; however, it does not lead to an accreditation by the Statistical Society. As noted, the option of a one-year program in Statistics is now covered through the aforementioned course-based MSc program, and the Postgraduate Diploma is obsolete.

Discussion:

Dr Shirvani provided the reasoning behind why the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, in cooperation with the Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, has proposed the aforementioned program be terminated. He noted that this had been a case of trial and error and that the program simply had not worked. He acknowledged there is a more appropriate alternative program, the MSc, in which students can enrol.

Motion: Penrod/Shirvani

THAT General Faculties Council approve the proposal submitted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) in co-operation with the Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences for the termination of the existing Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics program, as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect upon final approval.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. “If universities were in business, they’d be out of business”: Presentation from Dr Gwyn Morgan

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenters: Carl Amrhein, Acting President and Acting Chair, General Faculties Council; Provost and Vice-President (Academic); and Chair, GFC Executive Committee; Gwyn Morgan, Chairman, SNC-Lavalin Group Inc

Purpose of the Proposal: To provide GFC with an opportunity to hear from Dr Gwyn Morgan, current Chairman of the SNC-Lavalin Group Inc, on the following topic—“If universities were in business, they’d be out of business.”

Discussion:

The Provost introduced Dr Gwyn Morgan and his topic for presentation and discussion. He spoke to the reasons for inviting Dr Morgan to GFC which included Dr Morgan’s influence on policy-makers and government, particularly on topics and issues related to Canadian post-secondary education, and on the mindsets of many people with interest in this arena. Dr Amrhein then provided members with a brief biographical sketch of Dr Morgan, noting, in particular, that he was both a graduate of and honorary degree holder from the University of Alberta and that he was to receive the Order of Canada at the end of the week.

Before the presentation began, Dr Amrhein urged the student members, in particular, to engage in the discussion and to ask critical questions.

Dr Morgan began by speaking to his first article before members entitled “If universities were in business, they’d be out of business.” He noted his reasoning for penning the article was due to his concern for our current educational system. He stated that he believes Canada is wealthy as a country because of the value we are able to extend to the global economy and that this valuable output is possible because of the quality of education we receive. Dr Morgan noted that, as a resource-rich country with strong ties to growing economies in Asia, there is need for the young people in our country to help continue building our momentum and bring us into the future. He spoke to out-dated resources he believes are currently being used in classrooms and what he viewed as the ‘minimal-effort’ type of teaching occurring therein. Dr Morgan acknowledged the differing receptions the article had received in the Canadian business realm *versus* those garnered from Canadian universities.

In his presentation, Dr Morgan referred to a series of personal antidotes, a number of which on which he based his arguments. He also gave mention to various supporting statistics and reviews from relevant articles and publications.

Dr Morgan then moved on to his second article entitled “Universities turning out graduates with the wrong skills.” At this point in his presentation, Dr Morgan centred his arguments on the productivity of the nation’s graduates and their employability. He felt that there has been a lack of appropriate skills training carried out

by universities. He made reference to an article that stated that recent university graduates will actually go on to colleges after their degrees to gain the necessary employable skills. A secondary concern Dr Morgan expressed was in regard to Faculties where students are taught employable and in-demand skills (such as in Medicine and Engineering)—he stated he felt not enough students are being accepted into these programs. He believes the solution to this problem requires a transfer of resources between Faculties. In his article and presentation, he suggested that “programs with low job prospects, such as visual and performing arts, humanities and social work” are some of the areas from which funding should be transferred. If this is done, he believes it will allow more resources to be allocated to skill-producing Faculties, thereby ensuring greater enrolment. Dr Morgan acknowledged that not everyone agrees with his perspective on these issues and that some argue that the goal of a liberal arts education is to teach people how to think and not how to strictly get a job.

A Faculty in which he believes the opposite problem is occurring is in Faculties of Education; in his opinion, there are too many Education graduates and not enough work to accommodate them. With fewer teachers retiring than those graduating, Dr Morgan viewed the graduate output of these Faculties as demonstration of a waste of resources and of taxpayers’ dollars.

Dr Morgan concluded by encouraging members to see this as a positive opportunity for change. He noted that he believes that Canadian universities need to become leaders of change in the realm of post-secondary education internationally.

Dr Morgan then responded to questions and comments from members regarding: how the value of students being inspired by the professoriate and the value of face-to-face interactions would be diminished by hosting online classes only; the broad-sweeping notion that all professors are un-inspiring, as implied by his article; whether there were specific subjects to which Dr Morgan was referring when he spoke of the humanities generally; whether Dr Morgan had had the opportunity to teach a course or courses at a post-secondary institution previously; what the reasons should be for a person to choose to attend a university over a college and what the benefits of doing so would be; a suggestion with respect to increasing the number of work experience programs available to students attending universities; whether the use of the ‘sporadic method’ is valuable in increasing student engagement in the classroom; what he considers to be ‘employable knowledge’ and a rewarding career; whether the role of the university is to protect the freedom of knowledge rather than let it be dictated by others; the role the government plays in determining funding for job placements; a request to see concrete statistics to support his conclusions; whether a transfer of resources between Faculties would be as simplistic as it seems; and how student participation rates in specific disciplines can and should be reviewed instead of simply looking at *per-Faculty* funding.

Dr Morgan noted that in his second article, he was not necessarily speaking about unemployment but of skilled jobs that have gone unfilled.

Dr Amrhein and members thanked Dr Morgan for attending the GFC meeting. The Acting Chair, on behalf of Council, inquired as to whether members could e-mail Dr Morgan any further questions or comments. Dr Morgan agreed that he would be interested in further comments and queries. [Members were asked by Dr Amrhein to share their thoughts and/or questions directly with either him or with the Secretary to GFC; in turn, these would be forwarded to Dr Morgan’s attention.]

After Dr Morgan left the room, Dr Amrhein polled members to see if they would be interested in hearing from more guest speakers. A majority of the members present noted they were in favour of this suggestion.

Further to the presentation, members provided additional remarks. One faculty member noted that a considerable number of the recent graduates from the University’s Faculty of Education who did not go

directly into the teaching profession found other rewarding positions and careers. She noted that it was too narrow a focus to simply look at how many teaching placements there were in schools *versus* the number of recent graduates because that was not the only place these individuals were to find employment. Another faculty member noted that simply increasing class sizes in Medicine and Engineering would not solve current issues. He acknowledged that Faculties covering disciplines in the arts/humanities play significant and highly-important roles in the overall educational system.

Dr Amrhein encouraged members to follow-up with Dr Morgan on any additional comments or questions they may have.

7. Presentation from the President of the Students' Union: The SU, Its Strategic Plan, and Goals

There were no documents.

Presenter: Rory Tighe, President, Students' Union

Discussion:

Because of time constraints and with Mr Tighe's agreement, this presentation was deferred to the next meeting of GFC.

8. Question Period

8.1Q Question from GFC Member Jeremy Richards (Faculty of Science) Regarding Staff Ratios of Undergraduate Courses Taught

8.1R Response from the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) to the Question Posed by Professor Richards

8.2Q Question from GFC Member Jeremy Richards (Faculty of Science) Regarding Implementation of the University's Travel Policy Suite

8.2R Response from the Office of the Vice-President (Finance and Administration) to the Question Posed by Professor Richards

Discussion:

Professor Richards indicated he was still uncertain, despite the written response provided, on how the University's new Travel Policy suite was being implemented across campus. In response to this concern, Philip Stack, Associate Vice-President (Risk Management Services), who was in attendance, provided detail on the communications plan that had been employed to roll the Policy out to the wider University community and how a website had been constructed to provide advice and support to those who had queries regarding the Policy's implementation.

Petros Kusmu, undergraduate student representative, posed a further oral question with regard to the level of support provided instructors on the use of the new 'smart classroom' technology being employed at the University of Alberta. Dr Amrhein noted that Academic Information and Communication Technologies (AICT) had contacted each instructor using these facilities and offered individualized on-site support and training; in addition, prior to the start of classes this Fall, AICT had offered a series of drop-in sessions around the institution to demonstrate to teaching staff how to use the new technology. He stated that AICT classroom support continues to provide on-site assistance and individualized support.

INFORMATION ITEMS

9. GFC Executive Committee Minutes of August 29, 2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

There was no discussion.

10. Report of the Board of Governors

There were no reports.

11. E-Mail Reports of the GFC Nominating Committee

There were no reports.

12. E-Mail Report of the GFC Replenishment Committee

There were no reports.

13. Information Items Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings

Provost's PowerPoint Presentation (Provided at the September 19, 2011 GFC Meeting) (E-Mailed to Members on September 27, 2011)

14. Reports

Annual Report on Enrolment from the Vice-Provost and University Registrar

University of Alberta Museums Annual Report to General Faculties Council (GFC) for the Period July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

Waiver of Advertising Requirements: Report to General Faculties Council

There were no questions on the above-noted reports.

CLOSING SESSION

15. Adjournment

The Acting Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.