



General Faculties Council  
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, January 31, 2022  
Zoom Virtual Meeting  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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**ATTENDEES:**

**Statutory Members:**

**Ex-Officio:**

Bill Flanagan, Chair  
Simaan AbouRizk  
Chris Andersen  
Dale Askey  
Barbara Billingsley  
Stanford Blade  
Greta Cummings  
Steven Dew  
Todd Gilchrist  
Tammy Hopper  
Christine Hughes  
Shanthi Johnson  
Elan MacDonald  
Brooke Milne  
Pierre-Yves Mocquais  
Kyle Murray  
Melissa Padfield  
Steve Patten  
Aminah Robinson Fayek  
Wendy Rodgers  
Andrew Sharman  
Demetres  
Tryphonopoulos  
Jennifer Tupper  
Frederick West

**Elected Faculty:**

Jason Acker  
J Nelson Amaral  
Nicholas Beier  
Jennifer Branch-Mueller  
Marie Carrière  
Heather Coleman  
Michael Dyck  
Anastasia Elias  
Jaymie Heilman  
Michael Hendzel  
Peter Hurd  
Nat Kav  
Jessica Kolopenuk  
Vadim Kravchinsky

Hollis Lai  
Jacqueline Leighton  
Pierre Lemelin  
Kathleen Lowrey  
Derek MacKenzie  
Al Meldrum  
Sourayan Mookerjea  
Sarah Moore  
Weimin Mou  
Mario Nascimento  
Jerine Pegg  
Sujata Persad  
Frances Plane  
Elena Posse de Chaves  
Keith Rourke  
Victoria Ruetalo  
Carolyn Sale  
Laura Stovel  
Alan Underhill  
Mani Vaidyanathan  
Shauna Wilton  
Richard Wozniak  
Moin Yahya  
Yan Yuan  
Nese Yuksel

**Students:**

Talia Dixon  
Kathy Haddadkar  
Abner Monteiro

**Appointed Members:**

Ghalia Aamer  
Ashmeen Aneja  
Heba Aref  
Susan Babcock  
Samar Barazesh  
Chris Beasley  
Vaughn Beaulieu-  
Mercredi  
Marsha Boyd  
Heather Bruce  
Chiara Concini  
Devin Doherty  
Joseph Doucet

Ryan Dunch  
Anas Fassih  
Levi Flaman  
Shawn Flynn  
Kyle Foster  
Tahmid Al Hafiz  
Jill Hall  
Emily Holden  
Matina Kalcounis-  
Rueppell  
Gurleen Kaur  
Simran Kaur Dhillon  
Rokhand Khademi  
Georgia Korfeh  
Valentina Kozlova  
Jesse Lafontaine  
Devshri Lala  
Jenny Lam  
Rowan Ley  
Maggie Lin  
Andrew Locke  
Angie Mandeville  
Tim Mills  
Adekunle Mofolasayo  
Emily Motoska  
Mary Olukotun  
Sanhita Pal  
Laura Reifferscheid  
Sarah Severson  
Sophie Shi  
Chanpreet Singh  
Allison Sivak  
Shubham Soni  
Cindy Sun  
Andrei Tabirca  
Frederick Tappenden  
Helen Vallianatos  
Dilini Vethanayagam  
Adrian Wattamaniuk  
Kyle Whitlock  
Adrienne Wright  
**REGRETS:**  
Nikita Adekar

Sandeep Agrawal  
Saadet Andrews  
Andrew Batycki  
Ahmed Bouferguene  
Robert Burrell  
Nicole de Grano  
Maddie Dempsey  
Andy Deprato  
Gary Eitzen  
Lisa Glock  
Brenda Hemmelgarn  
Carol Hodgson Birkman  
Nick Holt  
Harnoor Kalra  
Mohit Kumar  
Shashi Kumar  
Diane Kunyk  
Runjuan Liu  
Tia Marko  
Reagan Morris  
Yusuf Oliya  
Dan Romanyk  
Khandaker Akib Shahriar  
Aadhavya Sivakumaran  
John Spence  
Rama Taha  
Siddharth Thakur  
Amy Tse  
Kristof Van Assche  
Phillip Vandevalk  
Julia Villosio  
Akanksha Yeola  
Shuce Zhang  
**Staff:**  
Brad Hamdon, General  
Counsel and University  
Secretary  
Kate Peters, GFC  
Secretary  
Heather Richholt, Scribe  
**University Governance:**  
Edyta McLoughlin  
Laura Riley

## **OPENING SESSION**

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

We are located on Treaty 6 territory. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

### 1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

Motion: Haddadkar/Mocquais

THAT General Faculties Council approve the agenda.

**CARRIED**

### 2. Report from the President- COVID Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

#### *Discussion:*

The Chair asked Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) and Executive Lead of the COVID-19 Public Health Response Team (PHRT) to provide an update. Mr Sharman spoke about current projections, and the need to consider both the safety of the community and teaching and research priorities. He confirmed that return to campus was planned for February 28.

In his comments, the Chair noted:

- Deconsolidation of the university's financial statements with Alberta's public accounts was advancing and would lead to increased autonomy with regard to financial affairs;
- The university was engaging with government and seeking support for enrollment growth;
- Dr Jason Carey was appointed as the Dean of Faculté Saint-Jean and Executive Officer of Campus Saint-Jean effective July 1, 2022; and
- Deborah Eerkes was appointed as the University of Alberta's first Sexual Violence Response Coordinator.

The Chair invited Sean McMurtry, Chair of the GFC Nominating Committee to speak. Dr McMurtry spoke about the upcoming replenishment of GFC and GFC standing committees and encouraged members to put their names forward for anticipated vacancies, and to reach out to their students and colleagues and encourage them to apply for positions on GFC.

The Chair asked Heather Coleman, Chair of the GFC ad hoc Committee for the Formal Review of the Consultations and Action Processes for Academic Restructuring in the fall of 2020 to provide an update. Dr Coleman outlined the work of the committee to date and noted that they were working toward recommendations.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Consent Agenda Mover and Seconder: Haddadkar/Mocquais

3. Approval of the Open Session Minutes  
A. October 25, 2021  
B. November 29, 2021  
C. December 6, 2021

The minutes from December 6, 2021 were removed from the package for review upon the request of a member.  
THAT General Faculties Council approve the open session minutes of October 25, 2021 and November 29, 2021.

**CARRIED**

4. New Members of GFC

**TO APPOINT:**

The following representative from Chair's Council to serve on GFC for a term commencing January 31, 2022 and ending June 30, 2022:

Ryan Dunch, Arts

The following representative elected from the Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta – Academic Teaching Staff for a term commencing January 31, 2022 and ending June 30, 2024:

Valentina Kozlova, Arts

**CARRIED**

5. Proposed Change to AGPA Calculations for Internal Undergraduate Students

*Purpose of the Proposal:* The proposal is before the committee to adjust what courses are allowed in the AGPA calculation for internal post-secondary transfer students.

THAT General Faculties Council approve, as recommended by GFC Programs Committee, the proposed change to the admissions regulation to allow repeated courses to be used in the calculation of admission grade point average (AGPA) for internal undergraduate students.

**CARRIED**

**ACTION ITEMS**

6. Notice of Motion - Changes to Voting Rules in the General Faculties Council Meeting Procedural Rules

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Andrei Tabirca, NASA Appointee, Board of Governors Representative

*Purpose of the Proposal:* At the November 29, 2021 meeting, a member made a Notice of Motion as set out in 8.7 of the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules for debate at the next meeting of GFC. GFC is asked to revise the GFC meeting Procedural Rules on voting to indicate that votes are tallied on votes cast not members present.

*Discussion:*

The Chair explained that GFC Executive Committee has delegated authority to make recommendations to GFC on changes to meeting procedural rules and that they recommended approval of this motion at their meeting of January 10, 2022.

Mr Tabirca noted that the proposed change would allow for a more logical and fair process.

A member asked for, and received, confirmation that an abstention would no longer count as a no vote.

A member expressed that Executive Committee should have ensured this change was made before now.

Motion: Haddadkar/Mocquais

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the proposed changes to the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules on voting as set out in attachment 1 and to take effect upon approval.

**CARRIED**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### 7. Question Period

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

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

#### *Discussion:*

A member referenced the recent University of Alberta Students' Union (SU) survey of students regarding online learning and asked why the Faculty of Engineering was continuing to use remote proctored exams without Decanal approval despite the recommendations of the Provost's Taskforce on Remote Teaching and Learning. Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Steven Dew spoke about the expectation that final exams would be held in person and the policy to avoid remote proctored exams unless necessary. He noted that he would follow up with the Faculty.

A member noted an opinion that the university was unable to provide adequate support to students and instructors and asked how they could trust that Exceptional Tuition Increases (ETIs) would be better for programs. Provost Dew noted that he did not see the link between ETIs and the response to COVID-19 and expressed that everyone was working above and beyond to support students.

A member spoke about the over 1000 responses to the SU's survey regarding online learning and expressed that the survey results indicated many of the same concerns that were in evidence 2 years earlier, that many students wanted to come back to in person, and that many students wanted to remain online and asked what the university would do to keep students safe. Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) Sharman noted that masking would remain and the university would continue to monitor the public health restrictions and global trends for successful strategies. Provost Dew noted that the SU survey results illustrated some of the challenges that the university was managing with the division in responses. He noted that the university was committed to returning to in person learning as safely as possible and that they had reserved 10% of courses in an online mode for those students who wanted to remain online.

Regarding the response to Question 7.2 (2) about how many faculty members have received a vaccine directive deferral, Dr Lowrey noted that she was not looking for a list of names but only a number. Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) Sharman and General Counsel and University Secretary Brad Hamdon replied that the number was likely too small to disclose according to best privacy practice and that they would follow up.

A member noted that 42% of university lectures and 72% of Campus Saint-Jean lectures were not being recorded and asked if the university could better support instructors to record their lectures. Provost Dew replied that the tools to record lectures were in place and that he would follow up with Deans' Council.

A member asked about research practicums that should be in person but have not happened. Provost Dew replied that some research practicums were not on university grounds but that they were looking at the delays on a case-by-case basis.

A member expressed an opinion that the university was providing a poor quality of education and that students were not getting what they had paid for nor what they had been promised. Provost Dew replied that instructors were working hard to support students and appreciated the challenges everyone was facing. He also noted that the university was keeping pace with its U15 peers, retention rates were good, and learning outcomes were being met.

A member noted that COVID-19 had exacerbated the issues for students with disabilities and asked what the university was doing in response. Acting Dean of Students Vallianatos replied that changes were ongoing and they were working to support students and instructors and improving technology-based solutions.

A member expressed an opinion that in person midterm exams were not acceptable for students who had been attending class online. Provost Dew replied that some exams had face-to-face components and that students were to receive at least two weeks' notice for in person exams.

A member asked about the Academic Leaders Task Group (ALTG) report and whether GFC or Faculty Councils would receive more information or be consulted on plans. Provost Dew replied that the Faculty Deans were working on plans to implement changes, that it was up to the Deans and Chairs how much they involved their Faculty Councils in their development, and that the community could expect to see changes in July.

A member noted that students were having trouble accessing student space in Engineering and the Libraries even though they were paying full tuition and asked what would happen in February with the return to campus. Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) Sharman replied that he would follow up with the Dean of Engineering and the Chief Librarian, and that the university could expect normal operating hours as of February 28.

A member asked about students who had residence agreements for the winter term but would only need to live there for March and April and whether flexible fees were possible. Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) Sharman confirmed that fees would be adjusted for those students.

A member noted that there were some instructors teaching online courses that refused to record their lectures and asked what the point and benefit of the Provost's Task Force on Remote Teaching and Learning was. Provost Dew and Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) John Nychka answered that the Task Force provided support and best practices for instructors and students but that instructors could not be forced to record their lectures.

Elected faculty member J Nelson Amaral made a notice of motion for debate at the next meeting of GFC as set out in the GFC Meeting Procedural Rules (8.7).

Notice of Motion: The total number of elected faculty members to be on the general faculties council shall be twice the number of all persons who are members of the general faculties council by virtue of their offices, including members that were appointed by GFC to be in GFC by virtue of their offices. The Secretary of GFC shall conduct a reapportionment of GFC based on this motion before the end of the current academic year.
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A member expressed that communications were unclear and last minute and that both instructors and students felt unsupported. He asked what the university was doing to improve communications. Provost Dew acknowledged that these were challenging times and that the university was working hard to communicate information and respond to questions in a timely and accurate manner.

A member asked for some clarification around the University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT) metrics including the rationale for the timing of reports and who would have access to the data. Provost Dew and Vice-President (Research and Innovation) Aminah Robinson replied that the information was public, that interdisciplinarity was difficult to quantify, that there were large initiatives underway, that interdisciplinarity was one goal, and that information would be updated as it was received.

A member asked about uncertainty around student practicums. Provost Dew replied that the university was responding as best it could but that outside organization policies were also a factor.

A member asked about student mental health issues and long-term impacts due to COVID-19. Acting Dean of Students Vallianatos noted that supports were available for students through her office.

A member asked if refunds would be given if students were unable to have access to their experiential learning components. Provost Dew replied that these components would be delivered.

A member expressed an opinion that two weeks notice was not sufficient for an in person exam if a student had been attending classes online and was not living in Edmonton and asked if financial aid would be available to help with travel and accommodation expenses. Provost Dew replied that only those students who were signed up for in person learning would be expected to attend in person exams. Vice-Provost and Registrar Melissa Padfield replied that any students experiencing financial shortfall could apply to the supplementary bursary program.

#### 8. Path Forward for the Review of the GFC Guiding Documents

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Brad Hamdon, General Counsel and University Secretary

*Purpose of the Proposal:* GFC Executive Committee (GFC Executive) would like GFC to discuss the proposed changes to the GFC Guiding Documents as recommended on October 4, 2021 and the proposed amendments and feedback provided by members of GFC. To allow for a full discussion, GFC Executive requests feedback at this meeting on the following:

- Proposed changes to Question Period and Deletion of the Question Period Procedure (5.2 & 6.5);
- Adding items to the agenda (8.4)
- Debate (10.2)
- Roles and Responsibilities Document – Guiding Principles.

The remaining proposed changes to the Guiding Documents will come to the next GFC meeting for discussion, with all of the proposed changes coming back to GFC for approval at a later meeting.

#### *Discussion:*

Mr Hamdon provided some background on the development of the proposed changes to the Guiding Documents and noted that GFC Executive Committee was hoping to get GFC input on four of the proposed changes.

Regarding the proposed changes to question period, members discussed:

- striking the added language in 5.2 of the Meeting Procedural Rules related to narrowing the scope of the question since this discussion could occur on the floor of GFC if necessary;
- what would determine the length of question period if the 30 minute requirement was eliminated;
- when meeting materials were released and whether members would have time to submit written questions in response to an item; and
- whether any member could ask supplementary questions to a submitted question.

A member expressed criticism of the process to amend the guiding documents and the extended process that had unfolded over the past months. She noted that these changes were submitted in the fall and that GFC must be able to discuss and debate the proposed changes and proposed amendments before the student membership turned over in the spring.

Regarding the proposed changes to the procedure for motions from the floor, members discussed:

- continued support from the Executive Committee for a 2/3 majority vote to be required to add a substantive motion to the agenda given the importance of advanced notice and the ability for a member to make a notice of motion for a subsequent meeting of GFC under 8.7 in the Meeting Procedural Rules; and
- an opinion that GFC's rule should not impose a higher hurdle than the normal parliamentary process because it implied that GFC could not be trusted and placed the burden on the addition of the item rather than allowing for debate, deliberation and decision by GFC.

Regarding the proposed changes to the time limit for debate, members discussed:

- the proposed 3 minute limit versus the 10 minute standard in Robert's Rules of Order;
- an opinion that this proposed change was trying to solve a nonexistent problem and that the standard rule should apply;
- that the proposed change did not actually limit speaking time; and
- whether this proposed change would have an impact on GFC's issues with extending meetings.

Regarding the proposed changes to the Roles and Responsibilities of Members document, there was no discussion.

## 9. Exploration Credits

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar; Rowan Ley, President, UA Students' Union

*Purpose of the Proposal:* The proposal is to get advice on the adoption of an Exploration Credits policy at the University of Alberta

### *Discussion:*

Ms Padfield and Mr Ley presented the proposal for Exploration Credits and explained how this policy could encourage interdisciplinary studies by allowing students to explore new fields of study without risk to their grade point average (GPA). The presenters also noted that similar programs had been adopted to varying degrees across most other U15 institutions in Canada and that the proposal had been well received in the consultations to date.

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

- whether adoption of this policy would allow students to "game" their GPAs and effectively devalue a University of Alberta credential;
- that with the proposal as presented, 90% of courses in a student's degree would be graded as normal;
- an observation that Canadian degrees are normally 120 credits over four years of full time study while many other countries have three-year degrees;
- that learning new things and stepping outside of one's comfort zone was beneficial to learning;
- that intellectual curiosity should be embraced;
- consideration of degree programs that did not have open electives and whether they could participate;
- that many programs were overly rigid and should build in opportunity to explore;
- whether a similar option could be made available for graduate students;
- the opportunity to audit courses in a graduate degree;
- whether students could be allowed to select the credit/no credit option after they had received their grades;
- a question about how students who chose this option could be identified for the purpose of assigning group projects; and
- the importance of anonymity to ensure an equal experience for all students.

## **INFORMATION REPORTS**

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

10. Report of the GFC Executive Committee
11. Report of the GFC Academic Planning Committee
12. Report of the GFC Programs Committee
13. GFC Nominations and Elections- Current Vacancies
14. Report of the Board of Governors
15. Information Items:
  - A. Annual Report of the Student Conduct Responses, Dean of Students' Portfolio 2020-2021
  - B. Annual Report of Appeals and Compliance Officer 2020-2021
  - C. Metrics associated with academic restructuring and BN on the Changes to the Report on Metrics associated with academic restructuring
  - D. Apportionment of General Faculties Council
  - E. COVID-19 Governance Decision Tracker
  - F. Work-integrated Learning - Administrative Terminations
  - G. Consensual Personal Relationships and Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Form
16. Information Forwarded to GFC Members Between Meetings
  - SAVE THE DATE | Joint Summit | 21 Jan 2022- RSVP: 5th Annual Joint Summit of the Governors

## **CLOSING SESSION**

17. Adjournment
  - Next Meeting of General Faculties Council: February 28, 2022

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.