



# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council  
Council on Students Affairs  
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, November 04, 2021  
Zoom Virtual Meeting  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

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### **ATTENDEES:**

Steven Dew, Chair  
Ghalia Aamer  
Chiara Concini  
André Costopoulos  
Maddie Dempsey  
Devin Doherty  
Anastasia Elias  
Anas Fassih  
Keith King  
Mohit Kumar

Jesse Lafontaine  
Rowan Ley  
Maggie Lin  
Melissa Padfield  
Chanpreet Singh  
Alan Underhill  
Adrian Wattamaniuk  
Non-Voting  
Kate Peters

### **REGRETS**

Steven Dew  
Brad Hamdon  
Kathy Haddakar  
Cindy Sun

### **OPENING SESSION**

The Vice-Chair began by introducing herself as a member of the committee and noting that she was acting as Chair in the absence of Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

The Vice-Chair began with a territorial acknowledgement:

The University of Alberta resides on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis.

This territory is a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples whose histories, languages and cultures continue to influence our community.

To acknowledge the territory is to recognize the longer history of these lands.

The acknowledgement signifies our commitment to working in Good Relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as we engage in our institutional work, uplifting the whole people, for the University for Tomorrow.

#### 1 Approval of the Agenda

*Presenter(s)*: Anastasia Elias, Associate Professor, Chemical & Materials, Engineering, Vice-Chair, COSA

Motion: Wattamaniuk/Padfield

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the Open Session agenda of November 4, 2021.

**CARRIED.**

#### 2 Approval of the open session minutes of September 9, 2021

*Presenter(s)*: Anastasia Elias, Associate Professor, Chemical & Materials, Engineering, Vice-Chair, COSA

Motion: Underhill/King

THAT the Council on Student Affairs (COSA) approve the Open Session Minutes of September 9, 2021.

**CARRIED.**

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### 3. Indigenous Institutional Strategic Plan

*Presenter(s):* Florence Glanfield, Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming & Research)

*Purpose of the Proposal:* because it touches upon COSA's responsibility to review and recommend to the GFC standing committees and GFC on policies.

*Discussion:* Dr Glanfield described the rationale for the plan, especially the Calls to Action as set out in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; the goals articulated in *For the Public Good*, the Institutional Strategic Plan, and the expectations that have been set out for the University by students, faculty, staff and external stakeholders.

Dr Glanfield articulated the need for a long term vision that will be set out in the Indigenous Institutional Strategic Plan (IISP) and the hope that it would be inclusive so that every member of the University community can see the role they have to play. She emphasized the importance of humility in what will be a learning journey expressing a hope that the plan will set out objectives that go beyond cultural sensitization workshops, towards deep engagement with issues and practical solutions for Indigenous Initiatives across the University.

She articulated the importance of Indigenization for student success, especially the value of Indigenous knowledge and the importance of correcting inaccurate and harmful misrepresentations of Indigenous histories and ways of knowing. She offered suggestions for what this might mean for engaged leaders at the University of Alberta, especially acknowledging the truth and working to integrate the understanding of the colonial histories at the University. She invited members to consider which core issues were important to COSA for the Indigenization process.

Members asked questions and discussed the responses by the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programs and Research) including:

- Indigenous Initiatives at the graduate level, especially in professional programs in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry;
- Citizenship and academic integrity training offered by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) that will include content on Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous Canada;
- How to embrace the work of scholars in Indigenisation of medical curricula including the consideration of patient care, integrating Indigenous knowledge and experience; and how to move from theory to practice;
- The need for identifiable space for Indigenous faculty, staff and students, and that acts as a gathering place for Indigenous students in the University.
- The impact of the Academic Citizenship training offered by FGSR and whether it was sufficient to support the learning of graduate students at the University;
- The goal that every program at the University of Alberta would include content that supports learning on Indigenous knowledge, practice and history; and
- The need to unlearn colonialisation, both individually and collectively, and that each individual act contributes to the collective work of the IISP.

In closing, Dr Glanfield invited members to contribute feedback to using a consultation form.

#### 5. Annual Report on Student Financial Support and Accompanying Overview

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

*Purpose of the Proposal:* To provide the Annual Report on Student Financial Support and Accompanying Overview for information. In the attached report, the RO provides a snapshot of the current state of undergraduate and graduate financial supports issued by the Office of the Registrar (RO) in the 2020/21 fiscal year.

*Discussion:* Ms Padfield situated the presentation of the Report by explaining that the report was required by the University of Alberta Student Financial Support (SFS) Policy Suite and that SFS are a shared responsibility between the University, Government and the student. The Report articulates SFS as a service that is holistically integrated with other student services aligns with institutional objectives. She noted that the report highlights how SFS continue to evolve including the increased number of hybrid awards for incoming students, Work-Integrated Learning awards, Indigenous Initiatives and equity, diversity and inclusion, and competitive funding awards that are emerging as priorities.

She also emphasized the new additions to the report including the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, data on unfunded financial shortfall, the domestic tuition offset funding, and information on supports to Indigenous students and learners.

Members discussed concerns regarding International student financial supports:

- The number of International students who qualify for bursaries and that the unmet need for financial support for International students is not increasing, proportional to the number of students; in fact it is returning to pre-pandemic levels;
- The creation of a \$1,000 grant for International students during pandemic was intended to support them at a time when they were facing a number of challenges and increased expenses.
- That the University will continue to balance the needs of incoming and continuing students both international and domestic to support and the particular situation of International students who have to demonstrate different thresholds for financial support to be offered admission to the University
- An opinion that while we needed to make university affordable for new students, it should not be supported by current students;
- That the experience of students of the University is one component of attracting students, and that financial supports are an important vector for the recruitment strategy of the University;
- The pool of funds for international students, the use of those funds for current students; and the proposed use of tuition offset funds that could be used in thoughtful ways for need-based and merit-based awards.
- That every international student who applies to the University pays a \$1,000 tuition deposit that has been used since the beginning of COVID to support students and goes to support their overall tuition costs;
- That the additional 7.55% tuition has been negotiated as the total amount to be used for funding international SFS and that the additional tuition will continue to be a contribution to enhancing the student experience and programs;
- Efforts to minimize unmet need and that the unfunded shortfall is a calculation of the students available revenues and that the University may not be able to fully meet these needs with awards and bursaries;
- That these are shared responsibilities between the University, the international student, and other sources of funding;
- Whether faculties would be able to access carry-forward dollars in the future and why they would not necessarily be available to international students in the future;
- That the pool of money available to international students continues to grow and provides opportunities for more needs-based opportunities.

Members also asked questions and discussed other aspects of the report including

- The unmet need of domestic students especially in professional programs and ideas for supporting students in programs like dentistry where there are exceptional tuition increases that will be coming online in the coming months;
- The overrepresentation of students from Medicine and Dentistry and other professional faculties in the number of students with unmet needs and the ongoing work to manage these issues and support students including better communication about other pools of money, and faculty-specific awards;

- The commitment to EDI in SFS and the low number of students from under-represented groups and the sometimes important needs of students with lived experiences from these populations;
- The use of data to help better address the needs of these students including collecting information from applicants such as the presence of dependents, being a descendent of or a survivor of Residential schools;
- The new student survey data that will support and inform future work to support students from equity-seeking groups.

6. Exploration Credits

*Presenter(s)*: Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar, Office of the Registrar and Rowan Ley, President, UA Students' Union, 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 emphasized that this item was before COSA for consultation and that they were looking for feedback from members. She asked President Ley to present on this item. Mr Ley provided context for the proposal including the desire to support students taking academic risks because they fear the courses will have a negative impact on their GPA and that this was common practice in other U15 institutions. The proposal will be uniquely suited to UAlberta students.

Members asked questions and discussed responses including:

- The impact of a no-credit for students, especially for students in professional programs, and how students will be informed about the potential impacts;
- Whether there were other ways for students to achieve these objectives such as non-credit certificates, rather than through credit courses;
- The high-barrier to entry for interdisciplinary learning and the need for a mechanism for students to explore different disciplines, and that coursework was a logical choice;
- That sticking to “safe electives” where grades are not a concern can impede a student’s ability to grow intellectually;
- How faculties are preparing to accept students from outside their discipline and what opportunities are being presented especially in professional faculties, where it may be hard for students to navigate what may be available;
- How this may integrate with strategies at the College-level to support interdisciplinarity;
- The particular value for students who are in honours programs or specialisations where GPA is monitored;
- Broad support for aligning the deadlines for for submitting a request for CR/NC to the required to withdrawal deadline.

7. Updates (no documents)

A. Students' Union

*Presenter(s)*: Rowan Ley, President, UA Students' Union, Students' Union,

*Discussion*: Mr Ley related ongoing discussions with government through a variety of venues. He reported on the recent Student Representative Associations' summit at the University of Alberta where faculty associations, the Aboriginal Students' Council, and the International Students Association gather annually. He provided an update on the renovation of the Myer Horowitz theatre which is making good progress and also on the positive impact of community gathering spaces in the Students' Union Building (SUB). He presented plans for Black History Month recognition events and an Indigenous celebration Week event for next semester.

B. Graduate Students' Association

*Presenter(s):* Anas Fassih, President, Graduate Students' Association, University of Alberta

*Discussion:* Mr Fassih noted the work of the GSA on the Exceptional Tuition Increase proposals. The GSA is currently organising the advocacy week after a successful support of federal and municipal campaigns. The GSA is collaborating with other student associations to put together a proposal to advocate for additional supports for graduate students and international graduate students that will support the overall student experience in particular, mental health.

In addition, the GSA is working hard to support students as the pandemic continues.

#### 8. Question Period

*Discussion:*

A member asked about the calendar for academic appeals and the timelines for mediation and assessment and an impression that there were not strict rules for timing.

The Dean of Students noted that there were two kinds of processes: Informal resolution and resolution through the University Appeals Board process.

There was a follow-up question on whether there were frameworks for the appeals process and Ms Padfield noted that the process was articulated in the Code of Student Behaviour and UAPPOL policies. She explained efforts by the University to support faculties in better articulating the timelines for how these processes work, especially when it comes to procedural fairness and adhering to the basic rules.

A member inquired about the management of Indigenous Identity and whether the University was working to put in place a process for documentation of identity of faculty and staff.

The Dean of Students noted that the Dean of the Faculty of Native Studies has spoken on the processes being put in place at the University of Alberta in the media and a link was shared. The Registrar reported that currently, the GFC Committee on the Documentation of Indigeneity does not hold authority over these matters because their scope is limited to student awards and admission criteria

A member asked about the current COVID restrictions and when changes were anticipated to student events for Winter semester.

The Dean of Students reported that for now, size limitations are going to be maintained including for the Winter semester. However, the Office of the Dean of Students is moving ahead with delegating authority to have students approve their own COVID mitigation plans. If the event is going to be more than 100 participants, it will continue to require approval by the Public Health Response Team. With regards to travel, the University is now anticipating starting to approve a broader range of events but they continue to monitor conditions.

### **CLOSING SESSION**

#### 9. Adjournment

- Next meeting: January 13, 2021
- Next meeting of GFC: November 28, 2021

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 p.m.