

General Faculties Council  
Council on Students Affairs  
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, September 15, 2022  
South Academic Building (SAB) 2-31  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

**ATTENDEES:**

Verna Yiu, Chair  
Chantel Akinneah  
Bishoi Aziz  
Dhir Bid  
Gurleen Kaur (delegate)  
Keith King  
Lionel Liu  
Precious Majekodunmi  
Brooke Milne

Jennifer Passey  
Norma Rodenburg  
Ravina Sanghera (delegate)  
Srivathsan Shanmuganathan  
Pien Steinbusch  
Adrian Wattamaniuk  
Tuesday Young  
*non-voting:*  
Kate Peters

**REGRETS:**

Abdul Abbasi  
Daniela Carbajal  
André Costopoulos  
Brad Hamdon  
Ariane Lamoureux  
Abner Monteiro  
  
Staff:  
Heather Richholt, Coordinator

**OPENING SESSION****1 Approval of the Agenda**

*Presenter(s):* Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of the Council on Student Affairs (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 March 3, 2022**

*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 March 3, 2022 minutes.

**CARRIED**

**3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)**

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

***Discussion:***

The Chair began by expressing her thanks to students for their support of COSA and relating her background in student affairs. She acknowledged the successful Week of Welcome activities but recognised that this is also a difficult time for many students and that mental health supports are available.

The Chair related some changes to the Office of the Provost's leadership team including the appointment of a Deputy Provost (Academic) and a Deputy Provost (Students and Enrolment).

The Chair thanked Bishoi Aziz, Vice-President (Academic) of the Graduate Students' Association, for agreeing to serve as Vice-Chair of COSA for the 2022-2023 academic year.

#### 4. Committee Orientation

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Kate Peters, Secretary to General Faculties Council (GFC); Heather Richholt, Committee Coordinator

##### *Discussion:*

Committee orientation included discussion about the history of the committee, its role within the structure of GFC, and the composition of the committee. Members were informed about the value of their comments and questions to shape proposals and were encouraged to read the Indigenous Strategic Plan and use it as a lens when reviewing items before the committee.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### 5. Revisions to Sexual Violence Policy and new Student Conduct Policy (to replace non-academic portions of the Code of Student Behaviour)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Deborah Eerkes, Sexual Violence Response Coordinator

##### *Discussion:*

The committee discussed the changes that had been proposed to the Sexual Violence Policy and the creation of a new Student Conduct Policy suite. Members were also informed about the proposed rescissions of the non academic sections of the Code of Student Behaviour. D Eerkes also spoke about the principles that underpinned her work as well as the extensive consultation that had been undertaken to bring the suite forward. The importance of the changes and the required shift in practices was noted as was the consensus in support of the principles behind the changes.

Members were supportive of the changes and expressed an interest in the supports available for LGBTQ2+ members and engagement with groups on Campus. The committee discussed the importance of implementation and how to put in place practices that align with the framework set out in the policy. They emphasized how important the response was and that it could be preventative.

#### 6. Exam Procedures and Deferred Exams

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s)*: Norma Rodenburg, Interim Vice-Provost and University Registrar

##### *Discussion:*

The need to review the policies in the Calendar in light of the changes to practice in response to the pandemic were reviewed and members were invited to provide feedback on the proposal. Members asked about the possibility of opening a conversation on use of handwritten exams.

## 7. Exploration Credits Update

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Norma Rodenburg, Interim Vice-Provost and University Registrar

### *Discussion:*

After providing a high level update on the rationale behind the proposal and the need for the clarification of the language, members discussed the value of the policy. Members expressed concerns that large numbers of exclusions would limit the impact of the policy. The value of this kind of policy for graduate students was discussed and members asked if there were plans for a similar policy for graduate students. Members heard that there were different needs for graduate students and that any policy would need to accommodate program requirements. Members expressed concerns that an omnibus proposal to exclude large numbers of courses would come forward and heard that Faculties would need to go through multiple levels of approval. It was noted that the policy sets out some parameters for what would be eligible and that Faculties would need to provide rationale for any proposals. Members suggested that in the future, Faculties may want to develop courses that were intended to be exploration courses that would allow students to test the waters and explore different disciplines and programs.

## 8. Student Accessibility Assessment Project Report

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

*Presenter(s):* Allen Ball, Associate Dean (Student Programs) and Professor; Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Students & Enrolment)

### *Discussion:*

A Ball explained the two-pronged approach to develop the report which included interviews with 80 stakeholders from across the University and then a large survey that went out to faculty, students, and staff asking for their perspectives on accessibility. He noted that the data from these two sources led to the five recommendations in the report and that, in summary, better coordination of the existing supports in the University was needed.

Dean of Students representatives in attendance, R Sanghera and K Friese, provided additional information on the current projects to address some of the identified gaps and opportunities. The Office of the Dean of Students is eager to see greater collaboration and coordination with services that exist in the Faculties and to improve policies that address accommodation. In addition, there are opportunities to improve training both centrally and in the Faculties. The work on examinations was highlighted and a need for an exam centre where students requiring accommodations can write exams. They concluded by recognising that students are often bounced around when searching for support.

M Padfield provided a broad outline for next steps and emphasized the importance of COSA in informing the work as it moved forward.

Members reflected that they were encouraged to see the concerns of students reflected in the report. They asked about the timelines for implementation of the recommendations, accountabilities for the implementation including central administration, the Colleges, and the Faculties. They heard that work had already begun and that this coordinated approach aligns with the One University Strategy. Members asked about the efforts to centralise services and how students would be served at all levels of the university. They heard that better coordination to deploy services more effectively may mean that more resources are not required. The committee discussed student rights and responsibilities and how students who face barriers needed support to ensure equity. The creation of a new position for a Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity) was noted and the Committee heard that accessibility had been added to that role.

An observer was invited to speak and they asked how students with disabilities will be consulted every step of the way during implementation and how the legal requirements for accommodation will be met. Members asked about how students could be empowered to make requests for accommodation that would best meet their needs, in addition to the University providing broad supports that may or may not fit individual specific needs. Finally, the observer asked how students with disabilities can be made to feel welcome on campus noting the stigma around disability and resulting isolation. They asked how the University could support education to reduce these stigma. The proponents thanked the observer for their questions and expressed deep appreciation for the concerns raised.

Members discussed the barriers presented by buildings on campus when reviewed through an accessibility lens. A suggestion was made to create maps that allow students with accessibility issues to navigate campus through accessible pathways. The need to carefully communicate with students to not set up adversarial relationships between instructors and students was expressed. Members discussed the need to ensure that students and instructors have clear pathways to get advice and support about their rights and responsibilities, and the need for broader conversations about accessibility that go beyond examinations and assessment and speak to other barriers in the learning environment.

#### 9. Question Period

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

*Discussion:*

Members asked about the integration of intersectionality in the accommodation policy work and whether broader inclusivity themes could be addressed. Members asked if an auto caption could be included to make meetings more accessible. Students asked about a merger of student offices in the School of Business and the impact on student services.

#### 10. Updates (no documents)

##### A. Students' Union

*Presenter(s):* Gurleen Kaur, Vice-President (Academic) University of Alberta Students' Union (UASU)

*Discussion:*

G Kaur described the Week of Welcome activities and invited all members of the University Community to participate in the attempt to break the world record for the largest dodgeball game on September 23rd.

##### B. Graduate Students' Association

*Presenter(s):* Bishoi Aziz, Vice-President (Academic) Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

*Discussion:*

B Aziz noted the activities to welcome graduate students and inform them about services offered by the GSA. In addition, he noted that advocacy activities with the Minister of Advanced Education were an opportunity for the GSA to emphasize food insecurity of students.

### **CLOSING SESSION**

#### 11. Adjournment

- Next meeting of COSA: November 3, 2022
- Next meeting of GFC: September 19, 2022