

General Faculties Council
Council on Students Affairs (COSA)
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, November 03, 2022
Students' Union Building (SUB) 2-725
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Verna Yiu, Chair
Abdul Abbasi
Bishoi Aziz
Dhir Bid
Daniela Carbajal
Andre Costopoulos
Keith King

Lionel Liu
Precious Majekodunmi
Abner Monteiro
Subrat Sharma
Ali Shiri
Pien Steinbusch
Adrian Wattamaniuk
Tuesday Young

REGRETS:

Chantel Akinneah
Brad Hamdon
Ariane Lamoureux
Jennifer Passey
Kate Peters
Norma Rodenburg
Srivathsan Shanmuganathan

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Coordinator

OPENING SESSION

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair made the following 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): 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 agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of September 15, 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 open session minutes of September 15, 2022.

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 noted that since the agenda was very full she would not share any comments.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Updates on unprecedented demand at the Campus Food Bank

Presenter(s): Erin O'Neil, Executive Director, Campus Food Bank; Kevin Friese, Assistant Dean of Students

Discussion:

The Chair thanked E O'Neil for providing a tour of the Campus Food Bank for members before the meeting.

E O'Neil shared some information on recent activities of the Campus Food Bank noting that the demand had been much more than anticipated with expenditures rising from an average of twenty thousand dollars per year to ten thousand dollars per month.

K Friese spoke about the space needs of the Campus Food Bank as well as issues of housing and food insecurity, financial hardship, and mental health impacts.

Members discussed: rising food costs and whether anyone who sought help was leaving empty handed; fundraising efforts and funding from Food Bank Canada; increasing tuition, rental, and food costs; and the disproportionate expenses and risk experienced by international students.

5. Online and Continuing Education (no documents)

Presenter(s): Jessica Butts Scott, Associate Vice-President (Online and Continuing Education)

Discussion:

J Butts Scott gave a presentation on the U of A Online and Continuing Education HUB noting the new unit's goals to:

- develop innovative, engaging, purpose-built online learning;
- incorporate a learner centered design approach;
- provide a seamless and consistent online experience for students;
- collaborate with Faculties to enable growth through online learning;
- increase access and provide increased flexibility for students; and
- ground online learning in rigorous quality assurance, accessibility, Indigenization, and inclusivity.

Members asked about timelines, whether this unit would be able to help international students access programming if they are not able to be on campus due to study permit delays, and whether it would be working to support hybrid delivery of courses. Members heard that online development would be initially directed at high enrollment first year courses but that the unit was also having conversations with the Centre for Teaching and Learning about how to support hybrid delivery.

Members discussed the importance of student consultation and keeping learner experience at the center of development. Members also discussed evolving pedagogies, different ways to assess online learners, ethical considerations of technological approaches in teaching/learning, and the policy shifts that were needed in order to move beyond the institutional barriers we have created.

A member expressed concern that the Humanities were being left behind and asked whether the university could avoid being driven by the market only. The Chair noted that the university was cognizant of the importance of the Humanities and that this issue would fit into the strategic plan conversation.

6. Tuition Proposal

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Students and Enrolment)

Discussion:

M Padfield presented the consultation pathway for the tuition proposals that would come forward for approval in the spring, and spoke about policies around predictable tuition for incoming International students, and the government's Tuition Fee Regulation and Alberta Tuition Framework.

Members discussed:

- opportunities for consultation beyond the Tuition Budget Advisory Committee including with the International Students' Association;
- conversations around advocating for increases in Band funding for Indigenous students to keep pace with higher tuition and expenses;
- information about how the U of A's tuition compares to that of comparator institutions;
- the drivers behind increasing tuition and fees;
- how the U of A determines the proposed increase that will go forward for approval;
- whether a student consultation summary could be provided to governance committees;
- affordability and accessibility and the increasing demand for post-secondary education;
- pressures resulting from the rising costs for basic needs;
- tuition offset that is directed into need-based entry funding and support; and
- the work of the Student Financial Support office in the Student Access Centre.

7. Student Financial Support Annual Report To Our Community and Accompanying Overview

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Students and Enrolment)

Discussion:

M Padfield presented the Student Financial Support Annual Report and highlighted the amount of funding that was administered by the Office of the Registrar and the breakdown in need and merit-based funding across undergraduate and graduate groups. She acknowledged that there was little information on merit-based funding for graduate students in the report since most of those funds were administered by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

Members discussed: sources of funding for International students and how much of the International student tuition offset was directed to recruitment; restrictions around government funding being used to support International students; equity in disbursement of funds; and an opinion that teaching assistant and research assistant positions needed to be more inclusive of International students.

8. Early consultation on development of the University Strategic Plan (USP)

Presenter(s): Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair of COSA; Logan Mardhani-Bayne, Strategic Development Manager, Office of the Provost

Discussion:

The Chair noted that the development of the USP had begun and noted that the November 2nd Townhall was recorded and is available on the USP website. She explained that student input is needed and that there are

plans for round table discussions and internal and external conversations in the coming months. She noted that all members of the community are invited to submit questions and comments via the website.

Members discussed alternatives to government funding and the plans for consultation.

9. Student Updates (no documents)

Discussion:

Members provided updates on events happening through U of A fraternities and the International Students' Association, and campus events offering admission by donation to the Campus Foodbank.

10. Question Period

Item was deferred.

CLOSING SESSION

11. Adjournment

- Next meeting of COSA: January 26, 2023
- Next meeting of GFC: November 14, 2022