

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

Thursday, January 25, 2024  
South Academic Building (SAB) 2-31  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

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**ATTENDEES:**

Verna Yiu, Chair  
Christian Fotang (Vice Chair)  
Hussain Alhussainy  
Sarah Ejekwuipe  
Jun Hu  
Saad Iqbal  
Rija Kamran  
Adrian Lam  
John Lemieux

Brendan Pham  
Tracy Raivio  
Norma Rodenburg  
Ravina Sanghera  
Michael Schmidtke  
Tuesday Young  
Keith King

*non-voting:*

Kate Peters

**REGRETS:**

Taylor Good  
Malijha Moyan  
Jennifer Passey  
Prabhnoor Singh

Staff:

Faiza Billo, Coordinator

**OPENING SESSION**

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chair acknowledged:

The University of Alberta resides on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. To acknowledge the territory is to recognize the longer history of these lands and our commitment to working in good relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

1. Approval of the Agenda

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

The Chair welcomed members and observers.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the agenda.

**CARRIED**

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of November 2, 2023

*Presenter(s):* Verna Yiu, 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 November 2, 2023.

**CARRIED**

3. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

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

*Discussion:*

The Chair noted the open invitation to the University of Alberta Round Dance hosted by the First Peoples' House. She provided an update on the Academic Materials Program and thanked members for their input at a discussion in the Fall. She noted that the initiative had been delayed because of questions raised in the RFP process. She also noted that the University had received notice to initiate bargaining with both the Academic and the Non-Academic Staff Associations.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

4 Enrolment Report

*Presenter(s):* Norma Rodenburg, Acting Vice-Provost and University Registrar; Tracy Raivio, Vice-Provost and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

*Discussion:* N Rodenburg presented the Annual Report for Undergraduate and Graduate students. She presented the key points of the report and trends in enrolment. T Raivio presented graduate enrolment statistics and notable and emerging trends.

Members asked questions and made comments including:

- The University's efforts to increase enrolment and the plans to support growth through faculty renewal and student supports;
- Reasons behind the reduction in yield and whether this was a trend in other universities;
- How the University anticipates that the recent international student cap announcement from the federal government will impact enrolment trends;
- How the University is responding to changes in affordability in the City of Edmonton and how this context impacts enrolment; and
- The admission rate for graduate students and whether this reflects the quality of applications or the capacity of graduate programs.

The Chair noted the recent communication on the Quad concerning international enrolment.

5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

*Presenter(s):* Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)

*Discussion:* C Smith noted the ongoing work to build an integrated Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan. She spoke to the foundation of the EDI Strategic Plan which came to an end in 2022. She emphasized the need to build upon the outcomes of the Plan and articulated the need to prioritize initiatives while making Equity a connecting theme. She asked members to share their thoughts and encouraged them to submit feedback online.

Members noted the need for equitable access to services, especially for student services. They provided the example of Augustana Campus where students, especially International students, may experience challenges accessing supports. Members asked about how performance metrics and accountability metrics within the plan could be tracked for some of the more difficult issues where progress may look slow.

The Chair reminded members this was an ongoing process and invited members to submit feedback through the online form.

## 6. Sexual and Gender-based Violence Training Modules

*Presenter(s)*: Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion), Deb Eerkes, Sexual Violence Response Coordinator

*Discussion*: D Eerkes spoke to the imperative to put in place resources and training for sexual and gender-based violence for anyone who interacts with students who may disclose. She spoke to the approach to the training modules which aims to be inclusive to other initiatives and services through a modular structure. She emphasized the work to clarify definitions that may be more broadly applicable such as trauma-informed approaches and privacy and confidentiality. She noted the possibility of expanding the program for offer in other institutions across the province. She noted that currently the priority was to equip faculty and staff to respond appropriately but that many of the topics were useful in other arenas, not just for employees. She asked members to reflect on which topics could be used in other areas, for example for student groups, residences or other stakeholders.

Members asked:

- Whether the modules will remain visible so that learners could look back on the content and refresh their knowledge;
- If there could be alignment with supervisory training offered by the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies to improve supervision across Campus;
- How modules could support students who are embarking on Work-integrated Learning;
- If content will include intersectionality, understanding Indigenous perspectives; transphobia and homophobia;

Members recommended that modules concerning responding to disclosures are particularly valuable to students who need tools for how to respond when someone discloses.

The Chair asked about making the content available in French.

## 7. Tuition Briefing

- MNIF Update

*Presenter(s)*: Melissa Padfield, Deputy Provost (Enrolment and Student Experience)

*Discussion*: The Chair noted the role of COSA in providing the student perspective on proposals coming forward for decision by governing bodies and that tuition proposals would be reviewed by the Academic Planning Committee and the Board of Governors in March. M Padfield spoke to consultations with students and expressed thanks for student support in organising different opportunities. She outlined the proposed tuition proposals including domestic and international tuition, as well as tuition offset programs for graduate students.

Concerning tuition, members asked about the impact of increases to Exceptional Tuition Increases (ETI) and whether they would be applied across the board. Members expressed concerns about the additional tuition on ETI and noted the barriers faced by students enrolled in these programs. They asked why the Government required these increases be applied to ETI. They asked how the increase to ETI is impacting the University's expected shortfall. Members asked how the increase was calculated.

M Padfield provided an update on Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs) reminding members about the fees paid by students that cover costs of services. She noted that the MNIFs are overseen by an agreement between the University and the student leaders which sees that the MNIFs normally annually increase by a board-approved formula known as the Academic Price Index (API) without governance approvals. However, she noted that there would be a new Athletics and Recreation Fee for an off-campus athletics rate to recognize that students studying online may not use the athletics and recreation services. The new fee structure will be coming forward for approval to governance in March.

Concerning MNIFs, members asked:

- About plans to waive MNIFs for Indigenous students as some U15 institutions have done to support affordability for students; and
- How the University will continue to monitor MNIFs to ensure their relevance.

#### 8. Development of a U of A Foundation Program

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

*Discussion:* M Padfield presented the proposed approach to a Foundation Program as one prong to the growth strategy. She emphasized the value of international students to the University community. She explained how the Foundation program will support international students who are needing admission with deficiency in certain subjects, English Language Proficiency, and wrap-around supports to integrate into Canadian studies. She noted that the program ensures that students are following a University curriculum, taught by U of A instructors, on a pathway to their desired program. She explained that admission through Open Studies still requires that applicants meet the admission criteria of their desired program. She noted the RFP was live and that the University hopes to welcome students in the next academic year.

Members asked:

- If the year includes course content and whether students will be required to meet the academic standing criteria for their program;
- Whether this was a model that would provide a pathway for domestic students who may face similar barriers;
- What the impact of the federal immigration and enrolment targets will be on the Foundation program; and
- Where the students will be located and whether they will have the opportunity to live on Campus.

#### 9. Student Updates (no documents)

*Presenter(s):* Christian Fotang, President, University of Alberta Students' Union; Rija Kamran, Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association

*Discussion:* R Kamran spoke to the work to develop an Indigenous Graduate Students Executive position within the Graduate Students' Association before the 2024 elections. She explained a student mental health survey that would be conducted by the GSA. She spoke to collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Students on student supports and with the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral studies on PhD minimum funding.

C Fotang spoke to the work to understand student needs for space as a part of the space optimization initiatives. He informed the Committee about zero-cost textbook data and the success of the initiative to lower costs for students. He thanked M Padfield for the opportunity to be consulted at the Town Hall on Tuition and Fees. He encouraged members to join events for the Indigenous Experience week and ongoing efforts to educate about Residential School denials. He concluded by encouraging students to put their name forward for the forthcoming elections.

#### 10. Question Period

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

*Discussion:* A member made a statement concerning the student safety on Campus and issues with theft, especially bike safety. The Chair thanked the member for sharing their concerns and R Sanghera committed to following up. A member shared plans for a special event to remember Missing and Murdered Indigenous

Women and Girls on February 14, 2024, and the launch of the Student Experience Action Plan on January 31, 2024.

The Chair closed by thanking students for their patience during the cold snap especially issues with buildings and classroom moves.

### **CLOSING SESSION**

11. Adjournment

- Next meeting of COSA: March 21, 2024
- Next meeting of GFC: January 29, 2024