



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Executive Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, January 09, 2012
3-15, UHALL
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Carl Amrhein	Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee (Delegate)
Bill Connor	Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction)
Gerry Kendal	Vice-Provost and University Registrar, Office of the Registrar
Emerson Csorba	Students' Union Vice-President (Academic)
Hillary Sparkes	Graduate Student Association Vice-President (Academic) (Delegate)
Ed Blackburn	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Lee Livingstone	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Lise Gotell	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Ingrid Johnston	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Chris de Gara	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Anita Molzahn	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Duncan Saunders	Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Jonathan Veinot	Academic Staff, Member of GFC

Presenter(s):

Mary Persson	Associate Vice-President (Audit and Analysis)
Wade King	Safe Disclosure and Human Right Advisor
Kris Fowler	Helping Individuals at Risk Coordinator

Staff:

Garry Bodnar	Coordinator, GFC Executive Committee
Emily Paulsen	Scribe

Observers:

Marion Haggarty-France	University Secretary
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OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Items on the Agenda were rearranged to accommodate guests.

Motion: de Gara/Molzahn

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Agenda, as reordered.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Regular Session Minutes of December 5, 2011 (to be distributed)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Blackburn/Livingstone

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Minutes of December 5, 2011.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Chair

The Chair commented on a number of items of interest to members.

ACTION ITEMS

4. Proposed Changes to Selection and Review of Faculty Deans Procedures (UAPPOL)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee; Irene Hacke, Selection and Review Initiatives Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Purpose of the Proposal: Revisions have been proposed to the Selection of Faculty Deans Procedure and the Review of Faculty Deans Procedures to reflect a broader allowance for the appointment of an additional member to a Decanal selection or review committee. The current procedure allows for the appointment of one additional faculty member only; we are proposing revisions that do not restrict this additional member to faculty.

Discussion:

Ms Hacke introduced the proposal to members noting that the change would take away limitations in the appointment of an additional member to a Decanal selection or review committee and therefore allow for a more comprehensive selection or review process. The Chair explained that this issue had arisen with the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry selection process—resident physicians do not fit the current criteria for the composition of this Decanal selection committee but are a significant stakeholder in the Faculty.

After a question from a member, it was agreed that the document should read that the Chair be allowed to name “[...], normally, one” additional member to allow for those exceptions where the current committee composition required, in the opinion of the Provost, some slight modification to ensure broader representation. The Coordinator noted that it was important to allow the Provost to add an additional member to ensure proper representation in order to address, for example, potential gender imbalances within the committees’ membership.

After discussion from the members regarding the proposed change in wording from “faculty” to “Faculty” and what this capitalization denotes, members agreed to eliminate the confusion by changing “...to ensure

broad representation from the faculty” to “...to ensure broad representation.”

Motion: Johnston/Molzahn

THAT the GFC Executive Committee, acting under delegated authority from General Faculties Council and the Board of Governors, approve proposed changes to the Selection of Faculty Deans Procedure and the Review of Faculty Deans Procedure (both in UAPPOL), as set forth in Attachment 1 (as amended), to be effective upon final approval.

CARRIED

5. Draft Agenda for the January 30, 2012 Meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Purpose of the Proposal: To consider the order of items on the draft Agenda for the General Faculties Council (GFC) meeting of January 30, 2012 and, upon doing so, approve the Agenda in its final form.

Discussion:

The Chair proposed adding items to the draft Agenda for the GFC meeting scheduled for January 30, 2012; he noted that both he and President felt it was important this upcoming meeting be held. The first discussion item proposed by Dr Amrhein was regarding the Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions (CARI) in the post-secondary sector in the Province of Alberta—these four institutions (ie, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the University of Lethbridge, and Athabasca University) have larger budget pressures than their non-CARI counterparts, including (but not limited to) graduate student funding, post-doctoral funding, core research funding, and funding for research libraries. The Chair noted that, in the past, the Provincial Government was unwilling to differentiate between CARI schools and other post-secondary institutions within the Province, but that the CARI schools are now working together to find a common approach to acquire appropriate and adequate funding from the Government. Dr Amrhein noted the President was amenable to this item being discussed at the upcoming GFC meeting and would be taking the lead in the presentation/discussion. Members agreed to add this item to the draft GFC Agenda.

Dr Amrhein also noted that the proposal from the Students' Union (SU) regarding their Fall Reading Week initiative could possibly be a discussion item at the upcoming GFC meeting. He stated that this proposal spoke to the introduction of a Fall break that would have the effect of reducing instructional days in the Fall Term from 63 to 61, although it was noted that the University of Alberta has one of the higher numbers of instructional days (on a per Term basis) amongst its Canadian peers. There would be an effort to focus this Fall break on academic-enhancement opportunities for students, with sessions on such topics as coping strategies, study help, time management, and research fairs. A member noted that GFC meetings are not always successful as brainstorming sessions so it would be important to focus the broad issue of the Fall Reading Week into a more concrete item for discussion. Dr Amrhein noted he would consult further with the President of the SU, Mr Rory Tighe, on this item to determine whether or not it would be appropriate to take it forward to GFC in late January for discussion or to hold it, instead, for a future meeting of Council in order to allow Mr Tighe and his colleagues time to further refine the proposal. [Subsequent to the meeting, the Provost reported to the Secretary to GFC that it was decided by the SU, in consultation with his Office, that this item was not yet ready to take to full GFC for discussion.]

Members agreed that Item 7 (Helping Individuals at Risk and Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Activity

Report 2010-2011) appearing on the Agenda for today's meeting of the GFC Executive Committee should be discussed at the upcoming GFC meeting since it would be valuable to make the wider University community aware of the important issues, policies, and programs described in this report.

Motion: Gotell/Molzahn

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the draft Agenda, as amended, for the January 30, 2012 meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC).

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. Guest Speakers at Meetings of General Faculties Council (GFC) – Continuing Discussion

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Purpose of the Proposal: To continue discussing with GFC Executive Committee members the possibility of having guest speakers at meetings of GFC and to determine the methods by which this could be accomplished on a continuing basis.

Discussion:

The Chair introduced this discussion item noting that most GFC members appeared to support guest speakers at GFC as long as it was handled in a reasonable and controlled manner. Dr Amrhein recommended that a subcommittee of the GFC Executive Committee be formed that would be responsible in large part for deciding who would speak and who the appointed respondent(s) could be. A member voiced support for a small subcommittee and recommended that it include members of GFC not currently serving on the GFC Executive Committee. It was clarified that any subcommittee formed to deal with this issue would be required to have their proposal approved by the GFC Executive Committee before it could be put on a GFC agenda. A member suggested that the subcommittee be provided with general guidelines so that speakers remain relevant.

The Chair noted that if a suitable speaker was found who required financial compensation for travelling expenses, for example, it would be possible to find funds to arrange his/her visit; however, it would be wise to book these speakers for additional on-campus activities beyond the GFC event. A member suggested that guests already visiting the University could be considered to speak at GFC, if appropriate. The Chair suggested that the funding could be combined with that for other events, possibly enticing higher-profile guests.

The Chair stated that it would be valuable for the speakers to express a range of views—there should be no reluctance on the part of GFC to entertain views that some would consider controversial in nature. He hoped that the speaker/respondent structure would give voice to both sets of views to empower members on all sides of the discussion to speak. The Chair provided two examples of possible controversial topics on which guests could potentially speak: the standard of buildings constructed on campus (finding a balance between quality and quantity) and the so-called 'brain drain' of trained medical professionals from regions such as South Africa (where their skills are desperately needed) to Alberta and other Canadian jurisdictions.

Several members questioned the speaker/respondent structure of debate; some expressed concern that it would be overly simplistic while others expressed the opinion that the discussion Dr Gwyn Morgan had provoked at the October 31, 2011 GFC meeting was successful. The Chair agreed that the discussion generated by Dr Morgan's presentation had been an interesting one, but he indicated that many felt uncomfortable voicing opinions in that setting. He stated that, out of the many GFC members who had indicated they were prepared to submit their written opinions for forwarding to Dr Morgan, only two had done so. A member suggested that the Chair be the appointed rebuttal speaker at future meetings of GFC at which guest speakers were present. The Chair noted he would take this under advisement.

The Coordinator commented that it was unusual to have a subcommittee of GFC, itself, and recommended that a subcommittee of the GFC Executive Committee be created that would provide for membership from Council.

A member noted that a certain amount of the discussion that Dr Morgan's visit produced occurred after the GFC meeting adjourned; therefore, a post-meeting reception or at least an invitation to stay behind to discuss the issues would be productive.

A member mentioned that the rigid, formal structure of GFC could be one of the reasons that many felt uncomfortable stepping out of their usual roles to engage in debate. The Chair said that Dr Morgan was specifically chosen to make GFC aware of the regard (or lack thereof) in which the Academy (and, more narrowly, GFC) are held in certain quarters and the severe opinions of influential people.

Dr Amrhein concluded the discussion by indicating his Office would continue to work on this issue and the matter would return in the near future to a meeting of the GFC Executive Committee for further discussion and for the probable striking of the subcommittee raised earlier in this afternoon's discussion.

7. Helping Individuals at Risk and Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Activity Report 2010-2011

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Mary Persson, Associate Vice-President (Audit and Analysis); Wade King, Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Advisor; Kris Fowler, Helping Individuals at Risk Coordinator

Purpose of the Proposal: To file an annual report with General Faculties Council.

Discussion:

Ms Persson introduced the item to members by stating the purpose of the document before members was intended to report trends. It was noted that the Helping Individuals at Risk Policy Suite is a new one, formally implemented in September, 2010. Mr King stated that harassment and bullying were the top problems with most reported cases coming from staff (63%). He noted that it is difficult to put value judgements on the number of reports because an increase in awareness will mean more cases reported. Mr King mentioned that one of their goals was to increase exposure of these policies/procedures to students. Their current use of the referral model was noted to be sound, with strong, positive relationships with counselling services.

Ms Fowler, in turn, noted that it was difficult to report any trends at this time, given the recent implementation of the aforementioned policy suite. There was a strong focus on creating awareness of the programs offered, as well as establishing a case team, creating appropriate filing systems, and developing the necessary protocols. The Chair noted the importance of these programs since they are proactive and educational, which is much less disruptive than policing programs.

A member expressed concern about the staff dedicated to this initiative becoming overwhelmed with cases. Ms Persson said that they were aware of this possibility and noted that there may be at point in the future where the allocation of additional resources was needed. In order to avoid counselling services from becoming overwhelmed, referrals were only given when necessary, with several options for outreach. Social workers were also mentioned as being a great help. In reference to one of the pie charts in the report, "other" risk behaviour was noted to comprise three main parts: disruption to the community, behavioural concern (warning signs), and bullying.

Several members voiced concern that there was no obvious link on the website to these services. The Provost noted that emergency response is not the purpose of these groups but conceded that better links on the website to the policy suite and services would be important. Ms Fowler and Mr King noted that they are trying to educate the community about these programs through faculty orientation, student orientation, banners, bullying awareness campaigns, and other related awareness activities.

8. Question Period

Professor Saunders commented on an article he had read in *Maclean's* magazine in which the results of students polled about their experiences at Canadian universities had been set out. He noted that the University of Alberta had not fared particularly well in said polling. The Provost replied that *Maclean's* and *The Globe and Mail* use flawed statistic methodologies which result in misinformation. He stated that the most recent results of the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) are currently being unpacked, which will have more comprehensive and truthful results. The Provost acknowledged that there are areas that the University falls short, such as career advice and counselling, due in large part to a lack of funds. Once the results of NSSE are processed, it will be decided how to share those results more widely within the University for further review and discussion.

INFORMATION REPORTS

9. Items Approved by the Committee by E-Mail Ballots

There were no items.

10. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

Approved Motions and Final Documents from the GFC Undergraduate Awards and Scholarship Committee (UASC) Meeting of November 8, 2011 (E-Mailed to Members on December 16, 2011)

CLOSING SESSION

11. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:10pm.