



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Executive Committee - Special Meeting
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, May 04, 2020
Virtual Meeting by Video/Phone
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

ATTENDEES:

David Turpin, Chair
Adarsh Badesha
Steven Dew
David Draper
Duncan Elliott
Bill Foster
Christopher Lupke
Sean McMurtry

Pierre-Yves Mocquais
Roger Moore
Melissa Padfield
Sachiketha Reddy
Eleni Stroulia

non-voting:

Marion Haggarty-France
Yimmie Sonuga

REGRETS:

Mary Forhan

Guest:

Bill Flanagan, President-elect

Staff:

Heather Richholt, Assistant
Secretary to GFC

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): David Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of GFC Executive Committee (Exec)

Motion: Stroulia/Dew

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): David Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of Exec

Discussion:

The Chair welcomed new student members and the President-elect to the special meeting of GFC Executive Committee and thanked everyone for attending.

The Chair acknowledged the complex issue of planning for fall 2020 and spoke to the constraints of the guidelines of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) for the province. He noted that consideration of all members of the university community and a variety of factors was essential. He explained that the university moved to remote delivery in March 2020 because of the original CMOH restrictions on gatherings greater than 250 people. He spoke about some of the challenges expected and the complexity of the issues, which the committee had been called to discuss at this meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. GFC Nominee to the Board of Governors – Variation in Election Process Due to COVID 19

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Marion Haggarty-France, University Secretary

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee because University Governance wishes to be transparent with the community about the variation in moving to the virtual nomination process.

Discussion:

Ms Haggarty-France gave a brief overview of the item and explained how a change to a virtual nomination process was necessary.

Motion: Elliott/Mocquais

THAT the GFC Executive Committee delegate authority to the GFC Secretary to vary the election process to move to a virtual nomination process for the collection of signatures for the nominator.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Emergency Academic Governance Protocols – Fall 2020 Discussion Document

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): David Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of Exec; Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations)

Purpose of the Proposal: The discussion item is before the Committee in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as advice to decision makers is required from General Faculties Council and GFC Executive with respect to Fall 2020.

Discussion:

Mr Sharman gave an overview of the current situation, in Alberta, Canada and abroad, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, and pandemic forecasting for the fall. He stressed that even with the best information available there were many remaining critical uncertainties, including:

- physical distancing and other public health restrictions that must be met;
- potential for second wave;
- constraints on international travel;
- requirements for use of and availability of PPE;
- timelines for Public Health decisions and risks of increasing previous constraints and/or mandated; and
- closures if a “cluster or outbreak” occurs.

Dr Dew presented the planning structure for short-term and long-term decisions that would have to be made going forward including working groups for the following areas:

- Academic Impact
- Communication
- Faculty and Staff
- Finance and Resource
- Infrastructure and Operations
- Research

Dr Dew explained the three planning scenarios for the fall, which ranged from an open campus with limited in-person instruction and non-essential research allowed, to a closed campus with no in-person instruction or non-

essential research. He further presented some information on sector trends and the planning uncertainties and complexities.

The Chair presented the results of a Universities Canada nationwide survey of students and parents regarding comfort levels for fall in-person and remote learning scenarios.

Ms Padfield noted that the Office of the Registrar was surveying current and prospective University of Alberta students and that the data would be available later in the week.

The Chair noted that there was no single big decision to be made but, instead, many smaller decisions would need to be made over the coming months.

During the discussion, members asked questions and expressed comments including but not limited to:

- the presumption that there would be a second wave of COVID-19 infections;
- that stronger precautions, including personal protective equipment (PPE) would be needed;
- how to allow for flexibility and more efficient responses by decision makers;
- how to better communicate and engage with GFC;
- how many students would be online and in-person in each of the three scenarios presented by Dr Dew;
- whether the fall semester could or should begin with remote delivery and then transition to in-person in the middle of the term;
- whether there was any reason not to proceed with remote delivery given the uncertainties;
- The use of materials developed for a blended learning reality;
- concerns with graduate students and restrictions on non-essential lab work;
- consideration for students in residence;
- the potential for flexibility in fee deadlines for students who were struggling financially;
- the availability of financial supports to help students in need;
- concerns with how to deliver exams and assessments and the amount of cheating occurring with remote delivery;
- whether students would be able to defer admission if they would prefer in-person delivery;
- the need to adapt pedagogy to include online learning and the good work that faculty were doing in this regard;
- the need for advice and ideas on how to adopt pedagogy and deliver courses online;
- work underway in the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to support instructors with remote teaching and learning, and assessment;
- working group memberships and the importance of including members of GFC in the planning; and
- clarity around the differentiation between short-term decisions that would have to be made quickly and long-term decisions that would be made by GFC.

5. Question Period

Presenter(s): David Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of Exec

There were no questions.

CLOSING SESSION

6. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.