The University of Alberta governs itself with a bicameral governance structure (literally, it is governance in two chambers):

- **Board of Governors** and **General Faculties Council**
- Although the Board is the senior of the two, the Board and GFC **share and balance power** within the University
- Self-governing

The **University Governance Unit**, under the direction of the University Secretary, provides support for all areas of the Board and GFC
Where Does GFC’s Authority Come From?

Province of Alberta enacts

LEGISLATION: Post-Secondary Learning Act of 2003 (PSLA) that establishes

AUTONOMOUS ENTITY: University of Alberta, with an
ACADEMIC GOVERNING BODY: General Faculties Council (subject to the Board)
General Faculties Council (GFC)

GFC Composition

- Ex Officio: 3
- Elected Academic Staff: 20
- Statutory Students: 54
- Appointed Students: 27
- Other Appointed Members*: 54

* Board, Non-Academic Staff, Library Staff, APO, FSO, ATS, Dean of Students, St. Joseph's College, AASUA, Chair's Council
GFC Standing Committees

General Faculties Council - Academic Governance at the U of A
ad hoc Committee

Recommendations so far:

- Orientation/ Education - [GFC Guidebook](#)
- Board/GFC/Senate Summit
- Early Consultation – weigh in on strategic issues
- Standing Committee Terms of Reference
- GFC Principles
GFC Principles

Delegation of Authority
Committee Composition
Roles and Responsibilities of Members
Procedural Rules
Timely and efficient decision-making

Allows GFC to focus on substantive and strategic issues

Accountable and transparent

Reviewed regularly

*Does not have to be exercised* – Option to refer matters within mandate to full GFC

Early consultation is built into the system

**GFC Principles for Delegation of Authority**
Diversity and broad representation

Elected members > ex-officio members

Majority of elected members from GFC

Election of vice-chair – GFC member when possible

Ex-officio and cross-reps only as necessary
Roles and Responsibilities of Members

1. Understand GFC
2. Attend Meetings
3. Participate!
4. Manage Conflict of Interest and Act Ethically
5. Ask Questions
6. Communicate Information to Constituents

GFC Roles and Responsibilities of Members
Purpose:

To assist rather than impede the conduct of business
To facilitate inclusive and respectful dialogue
To ensure efficient decision making

GFC’s Procedural Rules

GFC Meeting Procedural Rules
Agenda Items:

Action Items

Discussion Items

Information Items

Items for early consultation
### Executive summary for proposals used across governance

**Objective of the Executive Summary**: Contains a high-level summary for the committee about why the proposal is before the committee for consideration.

- Action required by the committee (motion/discussion/information)
- Purpose, rationale and a high level briefing of the proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Action Requested</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<th>Details</th>
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<td><strong>Responsibility</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Purpose of the Proposal is (please be specific)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Summary (outline the specific item and remember your audience)</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Choose an item.
For the Meeting of <month, date, year>

| Agenda Title: (in Bold) | Motion: THAT |

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While you are preparing the governance briefing note, consider why this item is before the committee and what you are asking of the committee.

Consider addressing the following questions in the briefing note:

- What is the strategic impact of the proposal?
- What problems/opportunities will it address?
- What questions might you consider asking in the executive summary that will enable members to think about the issue meaningfully – for example:
  - Analysis undertaken in developing the proposal
  - Other options that were considered
  - timeline
- What risk (opportunity) is addressed in the Enterprise Wide Risk Management Framework (be specific)
- What are the financial implications (costs and funding sources)
- Does this item come forward annually?
- What are the next steps?

Ideally, the executive brief should be no more than two pages.
The Executive Summary

Engagement and consultations (who has seen the proposal and in what capacity)

Roadmap of the governance approval route

Proposal’s alignment with the institutional strategic plan, *For the Public Good*

Legislative compliance and jurisdiction (summary references to the applicable legislation, terms of reference, policy)
Mandate:

• senior committee dealing with academic, financial and planning issues

• responsible to GFC or the Board

• promoting an optimal learning environment

• excellence in teaching, research, and graduate studies
Delegated Authority

- Academic Programs
- Academic Centres and Institutes
- Budget matters
- Academic Centres and Institutes
Areas of Responsibility:

- Research Policy

- Substantial changes to admission and academic standing

- Units – establishment, re-structuring, termination, name changes

- Policy related to planning and use of facilities
Potential Changes:

- Research
- International
- Indigenous
- IT
What do we do if a fire alarm goes off during the meeting?
Questions?