



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

General Faculties Council
Council on Students Affairs
Approved Open Session Minutes

Thursday, September 26, 2019
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Steven Dew, Chair
Dylan Ashley
Akanksha Bhatnagar
David Draper
Anastasia Elias
Kelly Hobson
Melissa Padfield

Samantha Tse
Marc Waddingham
Sarah Wolgemuth (delegate)

REGRETS:

Katherine Belcourt
Melinda Chisholm
André Costopoulos

Ian Gatera
Dhanvanth Soora

Staff:

Meg Brolley, GFC Secretary
Marion Haggarty-France,
University Secretary
David Epp, Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Mover/Seconder: Padfield/Ashley

THAT the Council on Student Affairs approve the agenda.

CARRIED

2. Comments from the Chair (no documents)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and Chair, COSA

The Chair welcomed members to the inaugural COSA meeting, introduced himself, and asked members to introduce themselves. He noted that he will normally use this time to point out recent relevant events that may relate to this committee.

The Chair provided some background information, noting that the *Post-secondary Learning Act* (PSLA) states that the university may have a student affairs committee, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority recommended to incorporate it in their April 21, 2019 report. The COSA Terms of Reference were approved by GFC on February 25, 2019.

The Chair noted that there are a number of channels for student engagement, including Faculty Councils, student government, and regular meetings with administrators. It is very important that proposals that come before GFC have had a chance to get student input. Future items for this committee will be discussed in Item 8, Topics for Committee Workplan.

3. Welcome and Committee Member Development and Orientation

Presenter(s): Marion Haggarty-France University Secretary; Meg Brolley, Secretary to GFC and Manager of GFC Services

Ms Haggarty-France provided a brief history of COSA, referring back to the original PSLA, and how to make this committee more meaningful through encouraging members to suggest topics that are important to students. She

noted that there are still several vacancies on the committee and encouraged members to try and help fill vacancies.

Ms Haggarty-France and Ms Brolley gave a presentation on the structure of academic governance at the University of Alberta. They spoke about recent changes to processes stemming from the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority. They also covered the mandate and role of the Council on Students Affairs and meeting logistics. Ms Haggarty-France and Ms Brolley highlighted the importance of early consultation which allows opportunities for members to engage in early and meaningful debate on important issues. They explained that by participating, members can contribute to the content of significant proposals and shape the direction of policy on matters of significant academic importance or interest before items proceed through the regular approval pathways.

Ms Haggarty-France expressed gratitude to the Provost for freeing up time in his busy schedule to chair COSA meetings and noted that other venues for the meeting will be considered if suggested.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Draft Principles on Freedom of Expression at the University of Alberta

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Wendy Rodgers, Deputy Provost; Brad Hamdon, General Counsel; Logan Mardhani-Bayne, Strategic Development Manager, Office of the Provost

Purpose of the Proposal: The university is developing a policy on free expression. The Free Expression Advisory Group, established in May 2019, has developed draft principles to serve as the basis for such a policy. These draft principles are presented for discussion.

Discussion: Dr Rodgers thanked Brad Hamdon, General Counsel; Logan Mardhani-Bayne, Strategic Development Manager, Office of the Provost; Joel Agarwal, undergraduate student; and Dylan Ashley, graduate student, for their work on the Draft Principles on Freedom of Expression at the University of Alberta, and noted that she hopes the statement will satisfy the requirements of the government and still allow university community engagement in diverse topics. The university was given a choice by the government to adopt the “Chicago Principles” or adapt them and the Advisory Group on Free Expression chose to adapt. Dr Rodgers indicated that the guidelines need to be submitted to the Ministry by November 15, 2019 and be approved and posted on the university’s website by December 15, 2019.

Dr Rodgers noted that the university has been working on this topic for two years as it was the first topic of the joint Board/GFC/Senate Summit held in January 2018. The aim is to have alignment with the discrimination and harassment policy which will result in a safe learning and working environment. She invited feedback on the draft documents and indicated that comments could be made online on the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) website.

Mr Hamdon provided some insight into the differences in legal context between the American and Canadian jurisdictions. He noted that “Chicago Principles” are based on American laws where free speech is given priority protection under their constitution. He noted that free expression in Canada is enshrined in the Charter and that it must be balanced with other rights.

Members expressed several comments and questions including but not limited to: the relationship between space management principles and free expression; situations where false information is deliberately spread; whether the university would be seen to endorse any statements made by individuals on campus; the application of the statement to physical, online, and off-campus situations; and timelines for translating the statement to French.

5. Undergraduate Honorifics (no documents)

Presenter(s): Tammy Hopper, Vice-Provost (Programs), and Chair, Academic Standards Committee (ASC)

Dr Hopper noted that ASC has delegated authority from GFC to approve changes to academic standing regulations and that she is before the committee to discuss a proposal by the Faculty of Science that will affect the awarding of 'With Distinction' and 'First-Class Honors' upon graduation. Current Faculty regulations state that to be awarded these honorifics a student must maintain a GPA of 3.5 on a normal full course load (24 credits) within the last two Fall/Winters of the program. Not all students are able to carry a course load of at least 24 credits for a number of life circumstances, and under the Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy the university cannot discriminate against these students. As the current regulations disadvantage students that cannot take 24 credits a term, and advantages those that can, it was proposed that the most equitable solution would be to remove this stipulation and focus on the last 60 credits of the program. Student associations in the Faculty of Science have been consulted and are generally in favour.

Members expressed several comments and questions including but not limited to: how the changes would affect graduate school admissions, summer research awards, and post-graduate career opportunities; creating a category for exceptions to the current regulations; disadvantaged students versus students that choose a reduced course load based on student engagement activities such as student government; and whether more consultation is required.

6. Annual Report on Undergraduate Student Financial Support and Accompanying Overview

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar (Interim); Amy Dambrowitz, Associate Registrar; Fiona Halbert, Assistant Registrar, Student Financial Support

Purpose of the Proposal: The proposal is before the committee to provide the Annual Report on Undergraduate Student Financial Support and Accompanying Overview for information.

Discussion: Ms Padfield introduced the item noting that it is the fourth report given to the campus community, which provides a snapshot of the full report, and noted that there are some omissions on funding because of different accounting coding being utilized.

Dr Dambrowitz noted that 50% (18,304) of students are touched by financial support through donor, government and university funding sources. Dr Dambrowitz noted that there was an increase in need-based spending, due to efficiencies in administrative workflow and that 32% of students receiving needs-based funding also received merit-based funding as part of a package. 93% (16,118) of all students receiving financial support in the 2018/19 fiscal year were domestic undergraduate students. Of these, 71% (11,501) accessed government loan funding. This represents 42% of all domestic undergraduate students and the national average is 38%. There are 1,175 self-declared Indigenous undergraduate students and of these 71% (837 students) are currently receiving financial support. The Office of the Registrar appreciates the government's Indigenous Careers Award which increased their funding by \$630,000 to an additional 161 recipients since 2017-2018. International undergraduate student support tends to be merit-based and is sourced from the international tuition stream

Ms Halbert noted that in the past it has been difficult to compare financial support spending in a Canadian context but now there is a benchmarking survey for inter-institutional discussions to gather better information to understand how to support students at the university. Some future goals are to reduce the reliance on emergency funds, and to determine what the need is for fundraising purposes.

Ms Padfield noted that the Office of the Registrar is growing financial literacy among students and that changes to the Student Financial Support policy suite have been proposed and are in the early consultation stage. She noted that the Office of the Registrar supports students with loans as well as merit-based funding.

Members expressed several comments and questions including but not limited to: the number of students accessing multiple levels of funding; improving the use of data to predict student need and provide timely support; different financial literacy products; streamlined processes for need-based support; increased loan usage; future government funding and other sources; the level of institutional support if tuition rises; and flexible pools of need-based support.

7. Consultation: Rescission of the Awards and Bursaries for Students Policy Suite in UAPPOL and the Proposed Student Financial Support Policy Suite

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Melissa Padfield, Vice-Provost and Registrar (Interim); Amy Dambrowitz, Associate Registrar; Fiona Halbert, Assistant Registrar, Student Financial Support

Purpose of the Proposal: The Council on Student Affairs (COSA) is a standing committee of GFC charged with providing considered input to ensure proposals and policies before GFC are evaluated in light of their impact of students at the University of Alberta. COSA's input and feedback on a major rewrite of current institutional policy is being sought prior to seeking an approval path anticipated to take place the Fall of 2019.

Discussion: Ms Padfield noted that the proposal concerns both graduate and undergraduate students and will allow for more transparency in the administration, and creation, of awards. The university community has been consulted extensively on the proposed policy suite.

Ms Halbert noted the proposal ensures that student funding is maintained.

Dr Dambrowitz noted that some of the desired outcomes of the proposal are to align current policies and procedures with institutional goals; outline clear authorities and roles; create procedures that reflect best practices; and allow the university to be nimble in response to changes in the post-secondary, provincial and global environments.

Members expressed several comments and questions including but not limited to: scholarship continuity for a graduate student on leave; support for a hybrid or need-based model; communication of award availability to mitigate unclaimed awards; updating award terms of reference; targeting of specific students eligible for specific awards; the creation of a cost calculator to display how many awards students can access; and eligibility for part-time students.

8. Discussion on Topics for Committee Workplan (no documents)

Presenter(s): Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and Chair, COSA

Discussion:

Due to time constraints, for the next meeting the Chair challenged the committee to consider topics for future discussions.

The Chair noted that the August 2019 Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances Report and Recommendations includes three recommendations on advanced education: Recommendation 7 is to set clear deliverables and performance indicators like employability; Recommendation 8 suggests changing the revenue mix for less reliance on government grants and more from tuition and entrepreneurial activities, such as the British Columbia and Ontario models (in this case the university would offer greater financial support to students who require it); and Recommendation 9 will quickly address the financial liabilities of some institutions which may result in

amalgamations that could affect the university in different ways. The government budget will be tabled prior to the next meeting and a clearer financial picture should result by then.

9. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

10. Items Approved by the Committee by email Ballots (non-debatable)

There were no items.

11. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

There were no items.

CLOSING SESSION

11. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.