

General Faculties Council
Executive Committee
Approved Open Session Minutes

Monday, November 04, 2013
2-31 South Academic Building (SAB)
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Voting Members:

Martin Ferguson-Pell	Chair (Delegate), President
Ed Blackburn	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Dustin Chelen	Member, Students' Union Vice-President (Academic)
Lisa Collins	Member, Vice-Provost and University Registrar
Colin More	Member, Graduate Students' Association Vice-President (Academic)
Norma Nocente	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Steve Patten	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Sean Robertson	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Wendy Rodgers	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Colleen Skidmore	Member (Delegate), Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Mirko van der Baan	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC
Jonathan White	Member, Academic Staff, Member of GFC

Presenter(s):

Bill Connor	Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Instruction)
Martin Ferguson-Pell	Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee
Nat Kav	Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
Paul Melancon	Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Ada Ness	Associate Registrar (Enrollment Services, Office of the Registrar
Catherine Swindlehurst	Director, Office of the President

Staff:

Garry Bodnar, Director, General Faculties Council (GFC) Services and Secretary to GFC
Marion Haggarty-France, University Secretary
Andrea Patrick, Scribe

OPENING SESSION

1. Approval of the Agenda

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Motion: Skidmore/More

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Agenda.

CARRIED

2. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of October 7, 2013

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file

Motion: Blackburn/Rodgers

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve the Open Session Minutes of October 7, 2013.

CARRIED

3. Comments from the Acting Chair

Dr Ferguson-Pell commented on a number of issues of interest to members.

A member enquired about changes to the University Calendar and whether students would be consulted on them. Ms Collins, Vice-Provost and University Registrar, responded in the affirmative.

ACTION ITEMS

4. Proposed Changes to the General Composition of Selection Committees for Chairs (UAPPOL Selection of Department Chairs Procedure)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Paul Melancon, Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)

Purpose of the Proposal: To replace the mandatory requirement for FGSR membership on Department Chair selection committees with the membership of a faculty member as selected by the Dean of the Faculty concerned.

Discussion:

Dr Melancon briefed members on the proposal, noting that it relates to proposed revisions to the composition of the selection committee for Department Chairs, as set out in the University of Alberta Policies and Procedures Online (UAPPOL). He explained that the proposal would amend the current requirement for the Dean (or designee) of FGSR to serve on each committee to be replaced with a faculty member at-large chosen by the Dean of the Faculty conducting the selection committee, thereby adding flexibility to the process. He added that the change would be effective retroactively to July, 2013 so that current Chair selection committees would not be impacted.

During the discussion surrounding this proposal, members expressed several comments and questions, including, but not limited to: clarification surrounding the origin of the procedure; whether there should be a mandatory member with some FGSR affiliation or expertise in the field; clarification on the Dean's authority to make such a selection unilaterally; support for an amendment to emphasize that the faculty member selected must possess expertise in graduate education; that committee members with expertise in graduate studies and research are important to the selection process of a Chair; that the proposal should clearly define who the replacement faculty member represents; clarification about who normally serves as the Dean of FGSR's delegate; and commentary that the proposal allows for the selection of any faculty member, at the discretion of each Dean.

Dr Melancon stated that, based on the feedback he had received from members, he would take this commentary back to the Dean of FGSR and discuss this matter with him and other Faculty colleagues further. Based on this, the Acting Chair suggested it would be appropriate to table the proposal at this time, pending review by FGSR.

Motion: Patten/Blackburn

THAT the GFC Executive Committee table the proposed changes to the general composition of Selection Committee for Chairs (UAPPOL Selection of Department Chairs Procedure), as submitted by the Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR), and as set forth in Attachment 1.

CARRIED

5. Proposed Changes to University Calendar Section 23.3 (Attendance)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter(s): Nat Kav, Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences; Ada Ness, Associate Registrar (Enrollment Services), Office of the Registrar

Purpose of the Proposal: To seek approval of the relevant governance bodies regarding revisions to Section 23.3 (Attendance) of the University Calendar which will provide guidance in cases where students are unable to meet their academic requirements due to protected grounds including religious conviction.

Discussion:

Dr Kav briefed members on the contents of the proposal, adding that he had volunteered to chair this subcommittee of the GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) following the sabbatical leave of Dr Brenda Leskiw (Faculty of Science), who had originally presented the idea for further discussion and possible policy development during a meeting of GFC ASC in late Winter, 2013. Ms Ness reported that the members of the subcommittee charged with investigating this matter further met on a number of occasions and had included consultations with the University's General Counsel, the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights, and members of GFC ASC and the GFC ASC Subcommittee on Standards (SOS) before drafting the current proposal.

Members expressed several comments and questions in relation to this proposal, including, but not limited to: clarification about the definition of 'domestic affliction'; clarification as to why medical notes cannot be requested from students; and general expressions of support for the proposal.

Motion: Chelen/Robertson

THAT GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council, the proposed changes to Section 23.3 (Attendance) of the University Calendar, as provided by the Office of the Registrar and as set forth in Attachment 1, to be effective upon approval and for publication in the 2014-2015 University Calendar.

CARRIED

6. Draft Agenda for the November 25, 2013 Meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC)

Materials before members are contained in the official meeting file.

Presenter: Martin Ferguson-Pell, Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee

Purpose of the Proposal: To consider and approve the Agenda for the General Faculties Council (GFC) meeting of November 25, 2013.

Discussion:

Dr Ferguson-Pell began the discussion by reporting that the item regarding the graduate education review would not be ready for discussion at GFC on November 25, 2013 as he had originally anticipated. He continued by noting the President will be in attendance at the upcoming meeting and would like to discuss the Dare to Discover Report Card, which normally does not go through a governance process. He added that the Report Card is available online now for review. He suggested a number of other Agenda items for the November 25, 2013 GFC meeting including a verbal update regarding the Leadership Initiative, a budget update, and an update from the President regarding the so-called 'Change Agenda', which stemmed from the Board of Governors Retreat held in April, 2013.

During the lengthy discussion that followed, members expressed comments and questions, including, but not limited to: clarification about where the Dare to Discover Report Card would be placed on the Agenda; clarification about the process of cancelling a GFC meeting; that positive news should be included on the Agenda, such as rankings information; a question about the timing of GFC Executive Committee meetings in relation to GFC meeting dates; a suggestion to allow certain administrative offices more time to deliver possible Agenda items for consideration; that the Dare to Discover Report Card is more appropriate as an Information Item on the Agenda; suggestions to include on the Agenda updates about Collegium Vocale, the Visioning Committee, and the recently-produced student mental health report; a suggestion to distribute the Students' Union (SU) position paper on the Leadership Initiative to members; that there should be material available to members before meetings to foster better discussion at GFC meetings; clarification about the student mental health report being released to the media prior to review by GFC members; a request for an update regarding the President's Task Force; the importance of holding a GFC meeting in light of current concerns surrounding the institutional budget; discussion surrounding whether certain items should be included on the Agenda with or without correlating materials; support for the Leadership Initiative to remain on the Agenda; that meeting material should be reviewed by the GFC Executive Committee before GFC members receive it; a request that meeting materials on the Leadership Initiative, when available, address concerns on this issue discussed at the September 16, 2013 GFC meeting; concerns with the lack of material regarding the Change Agenda; commentary that there should be several substantive items on a GFC Agenda before calling together such a large body; that there are other forums accessible to the community relating to University budget updates; that there is a need for consultation on

several items, regardless of the number of 'weighty' items on the Agenda; that the President will be in attendance and that it is beneficial to engage her regarding issues such as the Leadership Initiative and the budget; a request for the President to frame the Leadership Initiative discussion, with the discussion progressing beyond the comments made by members at the September GFC meeting.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was agreed the following items would appear on the Agenda for GFC's November 25 meeting: the Dare to Discover Report Card; an oral update on the Leadership Initiative; an oral update on the institutional budget; and an oral update from the President on her 'Change Agenda'.

Motion: Patten/Collins

(Abstention: Chelen)

THAT the GFC Executive Committee approve, under delegated authority from General Faculties Council (GFC), the Agenda for the November 25, 2013 meeting of GFC.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. Graduate Education

There were no documents.

Presenter(s): Martin Ferguson-Pell, Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Acting Chair, GFC Executive Committee; Catherine Swindlehurst, Director, Office of the President

Purpose of the Proposal: For information/discussion.

Discussion:

Dr Ferguson-Pell reported that while the recent focus on the University's budget had detracted attention from this item, it remains a priority for the Administration. He stated that Ms Marcia Lang, Senior Strategic Officer in the Office of the President, has been compiling benchmarking data surrounding graduate funding at the University of Alberta compared to other major post-secondary institutions in Canada (ie, the U-15 group of universities). He noted that the most striking data collected thus far indicates that the University of Alberta is at the bottom of the cohort in terms of the amount of federal scholarship funding for doctoral students, even though the institution provides the same level of support. He commented that it would be beneficial for the University to look at methods of encouraging and supporting graduate supervisors in order to become more successful at attaining federal scholarship funding. He reported that another focus in this area will be how to effectively program experiences for graduate students which will prepare them for professional trajectories, including non-academic professions, and he added that the other elements which will be reviewed include the role of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) and the progress made in relation to graduate studies during individual Faculty and unit reviews.

Members expressed several comments and questions in relation to this item, including, but not limited to: commentary that the University of British Columbia (UBC) has a systematic approach to supporting graduate students; that a wide range of factors influence federal scholarship successes, including Tri-Council funding; a suggestion to develop an internal process for vetting student scholarship applications; clarification about whether the application rate or the success rate is the main problem; that there has to be

a strong partnership with FGSR; that doctoral funding has been decreasing; and commentary that these discussions will change substantively if alterations to the distribution of funding moves ahead.

Dr Ferguson-Pell thanked members for their comments and stated this item would come back to the GFC Executive Committee for discussion very early in the New Year.

8. Question Period

There were no questions.

INFORMATION REPORTS

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

There were no items.

10. Information Items Forwarded to Committee Members Between Meetings

- A Quick Update for Members of the GFC Executive Committee [E-Mailed to Members on October 18, 2013]

CLOSING SESSION

11. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:15 pm.