Key Purposes

To understand governance at the University of Alberta

To spark interest in those considering getting involved and highlight the role you could play in university decision making

To give interest in those considering more involvement in governance committees – or to those who have already ‘jumped-in’ with access to information

To provide insight into the rationale behind the process and preparation behind the decisions and why ‘good’ material makes a big difference

To learn something about governance at the University of Alberta
History of the University of Alberta
What is Governance?

• **processes and practices** through which an entity organizes itself to achieve its mandate.

• **structures and procedures** for decision-making, accountability, control and codes of conduct.

• **How? Through legislation, policies and by-laws, and informal norms.**

• **GOAL** - of effective governance is an organization that achieves peak performance and is accountable to the people it serves.
Governance – that is, how an educational community defines its mission, identifies its challenges, develops its strategies, involves its stakeholders, and makes its decisions – determines whether a school can thrive.

- G Douglass Lewis

“Governance of good relationships”

- Harold Cardinal
Participating in Governance

• Governance at a University –
  • works because of the participation and engagement of many

• For GFC and its standing committees, there are 370 members of our community who serve

• For the Board, we have about 40 members (21 on the Board and External members)

• Members serve the ‘institution’
  • Not their particular constituency group

• Each of the stakeholders and Faculties also have a number of structures and processes - all of which depend on an engaged community of members!
Collegial Governance

System of governance that depends heavily upon the participation of colleagues to establish and realize a shared purpose.

Provides an opportunity for citizens to participate in decision-making, and it is the hallmark of academic decision-making.
Where Does Authority Come From?

In Alberta, authority is transferred from the Province to the University by means of legislation.

As noted, the central legislative piece for Alberta universities is the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* of 2004.

Although there are many checks and balances, the University is an autonomous entity and its own corporation, continued by Provincial legislation.
Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)

Proclaimed in 2004 (combined and updated four separate Acts into one comprehensive piece of legislation)

Advances concept of Campus Alberta by taking Alberta’s post-secondary system into the future: accessible, flexible, and responsive, regardless of where a student chooses to learn.
Advanced Education

• Works with post-secondary institutions to ensure all Albertans have access to high quality learning opportunities
Accountable to the Minister and governed under the authority of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*

**Funded** in part by government through operating and other types of grants

May also generate revenue from:
- tuition and fees
- ancillary services
- sponsored research funding
- investments and donations
The University of Alberta exercises its authority with a governance structure of three branches:

- Legislative Branch
- Executive Branch
- Judicial Branch

- Each branch has its own set of decision-making groups and officers
- And each branch operates with a set of ‘rules’ – and committees have their own terms of reference as a guide
<table>
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<th>LEGISLATIVE</th>
<th>EXECUTIVE</th>
<th>JUDICIAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Makes broad guiding decisions, e.g., mission, mandate, academic plan, policy</td>
<td>• Develops proposals for Legislative Branch</td>
<td>• Sits in judgment on individual cases independent of the Legislative or Executive Branch</td>
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<td>• Implements the decisions of the Legislative Branch</td>
<td>• Acts in accord with judicial policies passed by Legislative Branch</td>
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<td>• Develops procedures, regulations and guidelines</td>
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<td>• Oversees operations</td>
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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
Debates and passes policies

Executive Branch
Proposes policy to Legislative Branch
-Carries out policies

JUDICIAL BRANCH

Students (GFC)
- Academic Standing
- Discipline
- Practicum placement/safety

Academic Staff (Board of Governors)
- Article 16 of Board/AASUA Agreements

Non-Academic Staff (Board of Governors)
- Discipline and Grievance Articles of Board/NASA Agreements

*Named in the PSLA
The most common means for governance to identify and realize shared purpose is through the identification of guiding frameworks, such as the Institutional Strategic Plan: *For the Public Good*, Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP), Faculty plans, and business plans.

These guiding frameworks inform and influence all institutional decision-making.
Guiding authorities which influence decision-making:

- Legislation
- Staff agreements
- Mandate, vision, the academic plan, business plans
- The University Calendar
- Policy and procedure
- Governance committees
- Terms of reference
The general operating practices of the University are found in:

- [University of Alberta Policies and Procedures On-Line](#) (UAPPOL)
- [General Faculties Council Policy Manual](#)
- [University Calendar](#)
- [Staff Agreements](#)
University of Alberta Policies and Procedures On-Line (UAPPOL)

- UAPPOL (pronounced “you apple”) is a central repository in SharePoint for University of Alberta policies and procedures, except for those found in the University Calendar and Staff Agreements. Please be aware that UAPPOL is the official repository for these documents (there is no “official hard copy”)

- Policies exist to protect both you and the University. Please be aware that you have an obligation to comply with University policy and procedure

- The work of populating UAPPOL is ongoing. There is currently material in transition to UAPPOL from the General Faculties Council (GFC) Policy Manual
Governance processes vary, but here are some examples:

• Creation of governance instruments to guide decision-making, articulate decisions, or to create an authority to allow for decision implementation

• Developing advisory groups or consultative processes to enrich decision-making
A governance instrument is a means to exercise authority.

It can, for example: empower, limit, delegate, authorize, prescribe, or prohibit.

The most common examples:

• a resolution
• a delegation
• a policy
• an agreement, such as a memorandum of agreement or a collective agreement

These examples clearly articulate goals to be implemented
The University of Alberta governs itself with a bicameral governance structure (literally, it is governance in two chambers):

- The two governing bodies are the 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.

The University Governance unit, under the direction of the University Secretary, provides support for all areas of the Board and GFC.
The Board has senior oversight of the institution; it concerns itself with the long-range planning and the business affairs of the institution.

- Examples of its role are the approval of the mandate, the budget, tuition fees, financial statements, investment policy, collective agreements, and the appointment of the President.

General Faculties Council, subject to the authority of the board, is responsible for the academic affairs of the university.

- Examples of its role are granting degrees, approval of the academic plan, academic programs, academic policies, academic calendar, academic awards, and hearing and determining student appeals.
Board of Governors

Autonomous

Composed of 21 members who represent groups including students, staff, alumni, and the public

Members are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and the Minister

Must follow the approved mandate of the institution
The University of Alberta’s Mandate and Roles Document was approved initially in 2010 and is reviewed annually by the Board. The document describes:

- the mandate of the University
- the roles of Government and the University
- the accountability chain
- a process for annual reaffirmation of mandate documents
- how the renewal of mandate documents will occur
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>Audit and Risk</td>
<td>BARC</td>
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<td>Finance and Property</td>
<td>BFPC</td>
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<td>Board Governance</td>
<td>BGC</td>
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<td>Human Resources and Compensation</td>
<td>BHRCC</td>
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<td>Investment</td>
<td>BIC</td>
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<td>Learning and Discovery</td>
<td>BLDC</td>
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<td>Safety, Health, and Environment</td>
<td>BSHEC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reputation and Public Affairs</td>
<td>BRPAC</td>
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In June 2018 the Board endorsed the Board Working Group report and further work on the Board Committees is forthcoming.
General Faculties Council (GFC)

Legislative body dealing with academic and student affairs

**Composition**
- 158 members
  - **Statutory** members by virtue of their office (*ex officio*) or elected
  - **Appointed** members (appointed by Statutory members)

**Authority**
- New Faculties, Schools, Departments, Programs
- Admissions, the Calendar,
- Academic Schedule/Exam timetable
- Budget
- Conferring degrees (except Honorary)
- Appeals
- Processes associated with appointments, promotions, dismissals, salaries and tenure
Ad Hoc Committee’s Four Guiding Documents (approved by GFC on April 21, 2017):

**Principles for General Faculties Council Delegation of Authority**

**Principles for General Faculties Council Standing Committee Composition**

**Roles and Responsibilities of Members**

**Meeting Procedural Rules**

*GFC and Committee Member Guidebook*
The Board of Governors and the Board Standing Committees operate under Robert’s Rules of Order. In addition, the Board of Governors has enacted General Terms of Reference for Board Standing Committees.

The General Faculties Council and the GFC Standing Committees have enacted Terms of Reference and attendant procedural rules to carry out its responsibilities. Roberts Rules are the ‘last’ reference!
Share 7 Members In Common

- President
- SU President
- GSA President
- Undergraduate student nominee
- Nominee – AASUA
- Nominee – NASA
- Nominee – GFC

Each GFC Agenda – receives a report from the Board

Each Board Agenda – receives a report from GFC
GFC Committees Dealing With:

**STUDENT ACADEMIC STANDING AND DISCIPLINE**

- **Academic Appeals Committee**: final level of appeal for students wishing to appeal Faculty decisions on matters of academic standing, as outlined in the [Academic Appeals Policy](#).

- **Practice Review Board**: deals with appeals from students who have been withdrawn from practicum placements, as outlined in the [Practicum Intervention Policy](#).

- **University Appeal Board**: final level of appeal for students and student groups charged under the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) or applicants charged under the [Code of Applicant Behaviour](#).

- **Other student discipline resources**
Required by the Post-Secondary Learning Act

Advisory to:

• President
• Board of Governors
• General Faculties Council

Members include:

• President
• Vice-Presidents
• Dean of each Faculty
• Other administrators
Other Bodies Mandated by the PSLA

Faculty or School Councils:

- Required for each Faculty and School
- Members include the President and all of the School or Faculty’s full-time academic staff

Student Affairs:

- Students Association (Students’ Union)
- Graduate Students’ Association
Important Stakeholders

- Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta (AASUA)
- Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA)
- Postdoctoral Fellows Association (PDFA)
- Alumni Association (governing body: Alumni Council)
Elects a **Chancellor** for a 4-year term

- represents the University at ceremonial occasions
- presides over all degree-conferring ceremonies
- chairs Senate meetings

The **President** serves as the Vice-Chancellor

**61 members**, including 30 members of the public

“It is the duty of a senate to inquire into any matter that might benefit the university and enhance its position in the community.”

*The Post-Secondary Learning Act, 2003*
Mandate: “To inquire, promote and connect.”

Senator Roles (ABCs):
- Ambassador
- Advocate
- Bridge-Builder
- Catalyst
- Celebrant
Central Administration
The President and Vice Presidents

- President and Vice-Presidents are appointed by the Board of Governors

- President – has overall supervision and direction of the operation of the institution. President – Chief Executive Officer

- Provost and VP (A) – Chief Operating Officer and Chief Academic Officer

- Sources of Authority for the President and Vice-Presidents:
  - PSLA
  - Job Descriptions (approved by the Board)
  - Delegations of Authority – from the Board and GFC
Universities have developed a unique governance model in order to exercise authority to serve their interests.

It is important, when you are involved in governance, to remember that you serve the greater good of the entire institution.

A definition of governance that is suitable for the university setting:

A collective effort, through smooth and suitable process, to take actions that advance a shared purpose consistent with the institution’s mission.  
- Chait, Holland and Taylor, 1996
Board Governance

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