
1. Mandate and Role of Council

The University of Alberta is governed bicamerally by the Board of Governors and General Faculties Council (GFC); they share and balance power within the University and are called upon to provide both oversight and strategic vision. The proper functioning of the Board and GFC are essential to the university's institutional autonomy and the processes of collegial academic governance.

GFC is the University's senior academic governing body defined in the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (PSLA) and is responsible for the **academic affairs** of the University, subject to the authority of the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors has primary responsibility for the business affairs of the institution.

- [Post-Secondary Learning Act](#)
- [GFC Governance Framework](#)
- [GFC and Committee Member Guidebook](#)
- [Board of Governors Principles Documents](#)

2. Areas of Responsibility

General Faculties Council (GFC) operates by authority of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (PSLA). According to the PSLA, GFC is responsible for the academic affairs of the university. The full list of GFC authorities is outlined in section 26, and GFC's responsibilities regarding Student Discipline are outlined in section 31. In addition to specified powers and authorities, GFC may also make recommendations to the Board of Governors on any matters considered by the General Faculties Council to be of interest to the university (section 26(1)(o))

The PSLA allows GFC to delegate its responsibilities to GFC standing committees and other persons.

GFC has delegated authority on many matters to GFC standing committees, faculty councils, officials of the University, and other bodies (see Section 6), thus allowing it to focus on high level strategic items of academic significance which include, but are not limited to:

- high level strategic and academic stewardship policy issues or matters of significant academic consequence to the University;
- alterations to the mandate, terms of reference, composition, or structure of a Standing Committee; and
- those matters that a Standing Committee, body, or officer holding delegated authority from GFC considers to be of major strategic significance to or long-term impact on the University.

3. Composition

Voting Members (158)

Statutory:

Ex-officio (26) – PSLA, Sec 23(a)

- President, Chair
- Vice-Presidents (5)
- Dean of each Faculty (17)
- Associate Vice President, Online and Continuing Education (Director of Extension)
- Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian
- Vice-Provost and University Registrar

Students (3) – PSLA, Sec 23(c)

- 2 students nominated by the Students' Union
- 1 student nominated by the Graduate Students' Association

Elected Academic Staff(52) – PSLA, Sec 23(b)

- full-time academic staff (Category A) elected by Faculty/School Council in the numbers assigned by GFC

Appointed – PSLA, Sec 23(d):

Ex-Officio and Affiliate Members (8)

- Vice-Provost and Dean of Students, or delegate
- 3 College Deans
- President of AASUA
- President of NASA
- President of St. Joseph's College, or delegate
- Principal of St. Stephen's College, or delegate

Board of Governors Representatives (6)

- 1 academic staff member, nominated to the Board by GFC
- 1 academic staff member, nominated to the Board by AASUA
- 2 undergraduate students, nominated to the Board by the Students' Union
- 1 graduate student, nominated to the Board by the Graduate Students' Association
- 1 non-academic staff, nominated to the Board by NASA

Elected Students (52)

- undergraduate students (39)
- graduate students (13)

Elected Staff (11)

- 1 representative from Chairs' Council
- 2 non-academic staff; elected by NASA, up to 1 may be from excluded category
- 1 APO/FSO Representative, election conducted by University Governance

- 2 Academic Teaching Staff (ATS), election conducted by University Governance
- 3 library academic staff elected by the academic staff of the University Library
- 1 Postdoctoral Fellow, elected by the Postdoctoral Fellows Association
- 1 elected Management and Professional Staff (MAPS) representative, election conducted by University Governance

Non-voting Members:

- University Secretary
- GFC Secretary

Reapportionment of elected academic staff and student seats takes place every three years with at least one academic staff member and one student per Faculty.

Each Faculty shall adopt a method of election for their respective elected academic staff representatives to GFC. Academic staff members serve three-year terms, elected individuals may serve more than one term. Faculties may elect members to serve one or two-year terms in order to provide overlapping terms. Persons on leave normally do not serve.

Elected students are elected in accordance with the principles approved by GFC on February 3, 1971. Student members serve a one-year term, elected individuals may serve more than one term.

The President will chair GFC. In the absence of the President, GFC will be chaired by the Provost or by the Dean serving on the GFC Executive Committee.

4. Delegated Authority from the Board of Governors

Should be reviewed at least every three years and reported to GFC and the Board.

- 4.1 Physical Testing and Immunization of Students - individual Faculty regulations (sub-delegated to GFC Programs Committee)
- 4.2 General Space Programs for academic units (sub-delegated to GFC Academic Planning Committee)
- 4.3 Proposals concerning the design and use of all new facilities and the repurposing of existing facilities

5. Responsibilities Additional to Delegated Authority

- 5.1 Receive an information session on the proposed budget each year just prior to being introduced to the Board approval process.

6. Delegations from General Faculties Council

Should be reviewed at least every three years and reported to GFC.

6.1 per section 26(3), the PSLA allows GFC to delegate its responsibilities to GFC standing committees and other persons. Limitations to delegations of authority are outlined in GFC Committee Terms of Reference. Principles and specific delegations from GFC are outlined in the following documents:

- [GFC Delegations of Authority List](#)

7. Limitations to Authority

GFC is subject to the authority of the Board of Governors

8. Communicating Recommendations and Reporting

GFC recommendations to the Board of Governors are communicated by the Chair of GFC as per section 26(2) of the PSLA.

GFC reports regularly to the Board of Governors with respect to its activities and decisions through the GFC nominee to the Board of Governors.

9. Definitions

Reapportionment – The process by which the number of members that may be elected by each Faculty is determined. This number of elected academic staffmembers shall be proportional to the number of academic staffmembers in each Faculty. The number of elected undergraduate student members shall be proportional to the number of undergraduate students in each Faculty.. Reapportionment occurs every three years.

Academic staff – as defined by the [Recruitment Policy \(Appendix A\) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff, Administrators and Colleagues](#) in UAPPOL

Non-Academic staff – as defined by the [Recruitment Policy \(Appendix B\) Definition and Categories of Support Staff](#) in UAPPOL

AASUA – [Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta](#)

NASA – [Non-Academic Staff Association](#)

Repurposing – Significant changes to the use of a facility, as determined by the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) or delegate.

University Facilities – All lands, buildings, and space owned, operated, or leased by or from the University of Alberta (as per UAPPOL).

10. Links

- [GFC Apportionment Table and Reapportionment Procedure](#)
- [Post-Secondary Learning Act](#)

Approved by General Faculties Council:

April 29, 2019

September 20, 2021

October 17, 2022

November 14, 2022

May 29, 2023

May 26, 2025