

General Faculties Council
GFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes

Meeting 65
November 27, 2019, 2:00 p.m.

A167

Voting Members

Ed McCauley, Chair
Dru Marshall, Vice-Chair
Mohamed Abdelsamie
Joule Bergerson
Eloise Carr
Sarah Eaton
Mary O'Brien
Lesley Rigg
Richard Sigurdson
Trevor Tombe
Hussein Warsame

Non-Voting Member

Paul Rogers

Secretary

Susan Belcher

Scribe

Elizabeth Sjogren

Regrets

Jessica Revington

Guests

Robin Arseneault, Teaching and Learning Project Coordinator, Taylor Institute – present for Item 5
Andrew Estefan, Co-Chair, USRI Working Group – present for Item 5
Karen Jackson, General Counsel – present for Item 8
Dawn Johnston, member, USRI Working Group – present for Item 5
Leslie Reid, Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) and Co-Chair, USRI Working Group – present for Item 5

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded

That the Agenda for the November 27, 2019 General Faculties Council Executive Committee meeting be approved.

Carried

2. Remarks of the Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair included the following in his remarks:

- Two of the University's students, Manpreet Deol, Schulich School of Engineering, and Emily Boucher, Cumming School of Medicine, have been announced as new Rhodes Scholars
- The Dinos men's football team won the Vanier Cup this week, and a celebration event will take place on November 28, 2019

The Vice-Chair included the following in her remarks:

- The ii'taa'poh'to'p/Indigenous Strategy annual update event will be held on November 29, 2019
- Hiring is underway for a Dean of the Faculty of Social Work, a Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and a Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion). It is hoped that all three searches will be shortlisted by December.

3. Approval of the September 25, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the General Faculties Council Executive Committee meeting held on September 25, 2019 be approved, with the requested amendments.

Carried

4. Appointment of One Academic Staff Member (replacement) to the Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Working Group

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. The Chair and Susan Belcher presented this item.

The Chair and Vice-Chair reported that it is desired that the replacement member for the Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Working Group (ASCPWG) be an Indigenous academic staff member or an academic staff member strong in equity, diversity and inclusion scholarship, if possible.

The Committee named, in rank order, academic staff members to be approached by the University Secretariat to serve on the ASCPWG. The first individual to agree to serve will be deemed appointed by the Committee.

5. Recommendation of Recommended Changes to the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Leslie Reid, Andrew Estefan, Dawn Johnston, and Robin Arseneault presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponents commented that the evaluation of teaching is a complicated and ongoing issue, and reported that the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) sent a memo to units in August 2019 outlining how the USRI should be used at the University. The presenters reported that a USRI working group has been working for almost a year to review the USRI at the University. Some recommendations for immediate change are coming forward at this time and additional changes are expected to come forward in the future.
- The proponents then reviewed the three proposed immediate changes to the USRI survey and report
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
 - Training in the appropriate use of the USRI will be available
 - The USRI should not be used to compare instructors or courses
- Discussion included:
 - Responses to Question 1 (the rating of overall quality of instruction) can be influenced by bias and other factors
 - The use of mode is considered better than using mean in the report, but mode is not a flawless measure either
 - Students are interested in how their feedback plays a role in the assessment of teaching and the changes to teaching practices
 - Narrative feedback from students, and context and reflection provided by instructors, can be more meaningful than a survey of ratings
- The Faculty Association representative read the following statement for the minutes: *“The Faculty Association objects to any consultations with academic staff members on the USRI proceeding while there is an active grievance that is now proceeding to arbitration on this topic. The Association will not consider itself bound by the findings of the USRI Working Group, and cautions that the result of the USRI review may be an instrument and process as ineffective and discriminatory as the existing instrument and process.”*
- The Vice-Chair observed that the filing of a grievance does not put a matter in abeyance unless both parties agree, and pledged to work with the Faculty Association to come to a common understanding. The Vice-Chair noted that student feedback is important for both teaching development and assessment, and stated that, because the development of an entirely new instrument will take time, it is believed that these three recommendations should come forward to GFC at this time to address some immediate concerns.

Moved/Seconded

That the General Faculties Council (GFC) Executive Committee recommend that the GFC approve the recommended changes to the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) report and survey, as presented to the Committee.

Carried

6. Approval of Revisions to the Academic Program Subcommittee and Academic Planning and Priorities Committee Terms of Reference

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Belcher presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter reported that, following the approval by the GFC of the new University of Calgary Non-credit Professional and Continuing Education Credentials Framework in June 2019, and the revised Program Proposal Approval Process in November 2019, revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Academic Program Subcommittee and the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee are needed in order to align with these updated practices
- There were no questions

Moved/Seconded

That the General Faculties Council Executive Committee approve the revisions to the Academic Program Subcommittee and Academic Planning and Priorities Committee Terms of Reference, as set out in the documents provided to the Committee.

Carried

7. Review of the Draft December 12, 2019 GFC Agenda

The Committee reviewed the draft December 12, 2019 GFC Agenda.

8. Statement on Free Expression

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Karen Jackson presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponent reviewed the changes that were made to the University's Statement on Free Expression following broad consultation during October 2019, and reported that the statement was submitted to the provincial government on November 13, 2019. The proponent reported that feedback, and hopefully approval, from the government is expected soon, and then the statement will be approved by the Board of Governors (BG) on December 13, 2019 and posted publicly by December 15.
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
 - The GFC reviews the statement, but the BG is the approval authority
 - In the unlikely event that feedback and approval from the government is not received by early December, the University will still proceed with BG approval and posting in December in order to meet deadlines
 - All 26 post-secondary institutions in the province were required to write statements, and they are all different. No institutions have had their statement approved by the government yet.

- Discussion included:
 - The statement “*we may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the institution*” addresses the need for instructors to be able to moderate discussions in the classroom. It was noted, however, that this does not match requirement “d” of the government’s July 4, 2019 letter which states that “*Institutions should not attempt to shield students from ideas or opinions they disagree with or find offensive. Mutual respect and civility are valued, but do not constitute sufficient justification to limit free speech*”, and so it is possible that the government may not agree with the University’s statement relating to the regulation of expression.
 - The words “*The right to free expression does include the freedom to critique and contest the expression of others – but it does not extend to efforts to obstruct or prevent the free expression of others*” speak to hateful or controversial speech, but confirms that expression cannot be blocked
 - The statement’s assertions that free expression is subject to the University’s policies and procedures, in addition to being subject to the law, will guide decisions relating to free expression at the University, such as who is responsible for paying for security at an event

9. Revised Terms of Reference of the Faculty of Graduate Studies Faculty Council and Faculty Council Committee

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Belcher presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter reported that a Faculty Council cannot approve an addition to its membership without the approval of the Committee and that this was missed in the documents. The Committee agreed to consider approval of this revision at this time.
- In response to a question, it was confirmed that the other change to the terms of reference does not require Committee approval

Moved/Seconded

That the General Faculties Council Executive Committee approve the addition of the Graduate College Head to the membership of the Faculty of Graduate Studies Faculty Council, as set out in the document provided to the Committee.

Carried

10. Approved 2019-2020 EC Work Plan

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda for information only.

The Committee reviewed its approved work plan. In response to a question, the University Secretary reported that the work plan is not updated as business changes, however the Chair and Vice-Chair report to the GFC at the end of the meeting year on the Committee’s progress through its work plan and so any changes to the business of the Committee through the year are included in that report.

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Adjournment

Moved/Seconded

That the General Faculties Council Executive Committee adjourn the November 27, 2019 meeting.

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Susan Belcher
University Secretary