



General Faculties Council
GFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes

November 22, 2023, 2:30 p.m.

AD 167 (Governors Boardroom)/Zoom

Voting Members

Ed McCauley, Chair
Penny Werthner, Vice-Chair
Jessica Ayala
Joule Bergerson
Olive Chapman
Jacqueline Jenkins
Rachel Lauer*
Satish Raj
Bill Rosehart

Non-Voting Member

Kent Donlevy*

Secretary

Courtney McVie

Scribe

Elizabeth Sjogren

Regrets

Shaziah Jinnah Morsette
Aoife Mac Namara
James Steele

Guests

Janet Stein, Senior Director - Risk Management – present for Item 4
John Alho, Associate Vice-President (Government Relations) – present for Item 4

*via Zoom

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 22, 2023 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:

- The recent federal government financial update did not include additional funding for the post-secondary sector. There had been hope that at minimum there would be additional funding for

graduate students but that did not come to fruition.

- The University is becoming recognized by the Trusted Institution Framework of Canada's student visa program, which should positively impact the University's future international students as the number of visas will not be capped
- It was announced today that the University has received two Canada Excellence Research Chairs: one in Photonic Quantum Science and Technologies (Urbasi Sinha) and one in Indigenous Ways of Climate and Water Sustainability for Planetary Health and Well-being (Deborah McGregor)
- Meetings continue with the province's Treasury Board members, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Chiefs of Staff regarding the value proposition of the University and the need for financial support for the University's operating expenses (including for tuition backfill, inflation adjustment, population growth, and infrastructure) and investment in future endeavours
- Members of the University community have expressed concern following the United Conservative Party policy convention held November 3-4, 2023, at which resolutions were passed including to defund post-secondary institutions that have Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion offices and policies. It was noted that it is unlikely that this resolution will become provincial government legislation, as this would put at risk millions in funding including grants from the Tri-Council.
- Seven University scholars have been appointed as Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC): Frank Cheng, Schulich School of Engineering, Carolyn Emery, Faculty of Kinesiology, David Hodgins, Faculty of Arts, Nicole Letourneau, Faculty of Nursing, Jennifer Love, Faculty of Science, Venkataraman Thangadurai, Faculty of Science, and Marcello Tonelli, Cumming School of Medicine. Five University scholars have been elected to the RSC College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists: Marie-Claire Arrieta, Cumming School of Medicine, Gina Dimitropoulos, Faculty of Social Work, Kirsten Fiest, Cumming School of Medicine, Joe Harrison, Faculty of Science, and Aaron Phillips, Cumming School of Medicine. Two members of the University community received RSC awards: Perri Tutelman, Cumming School of Medicine postdoctoral scholar, received an Alice Wilson Award, and Saliha Haq, Faculty of Law J.D. graduate, received a Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella Prize.

The Vice-Chair included the following in her remarks:

- The Fall 2023 convocation ceremonies were held last week
- The name of the new Director of the School of Public Policy will be announced tomorrow. The searches for new Deans of the Faculty of Law, Schulich School of Engineering, and Faculty of Graduate Studies are underway.
- National meetings with other Provosts occurred in October, including one at which there was discussion of shared governance practices and committee responsibilities

3. Approval of the October 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the General Faculties Council Executive Committee meeting held on October 18, 2023 be approved.

Carried

4. Appointment of One Academic Staff Member to the Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook Working Group

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

The Committee named, in rank order, academic staff members to be approached by the University Secretariat to stand for appointment to the Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook Working Group (ASCPHWG) for a term to end June 30, 2026. The first individual to agree to serve will be deemed appointed by the Committee.

Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, Hussein Warsame, Haskayne School of Business, agreed to serve.

5. Research and Innovation Plan

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Bill Ghali, Vice-President (Research), presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponent provided an overview of the content of draft Research and Innovation Plan, including specifically noting that the plan continues many of the initiatives from the *Eyes High* strategic plan and previous Research Plan, such as transdisciplinary scholarship
- Discussion included that:
 - Purposeful structures will be needed to ensure that the initiatives can be achieved. The presenter noted that three additional support units are being established within the office of the Vice-President (Research) (VPR): the Strategic Initiatives and Research Intelligence Unit, the Industry Engagement Unit, and the International Research and Innovation Unit. The presenter also noted that the office of the VPR is investing in offices of support for each of the five Institutes of Transdisciplinary Studies areas of focus (Energy Transformation, Health and Life, Cities and Communities, Digital Worlds, and Democracy and Social Change) and programs such as the Connector Grants will continue.
 - The Research and Innovation Plan and the Academic Innovation Plan intersect in some areas, such as to create opportunities for undergraduate student research. It was observed that opportunities for undergraduate student research include the Program for Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) awards, the Mitacs program, the Institutes of Transdisciplinary Studies, and Faculty initiatives.
 - The University has several programs relating to innovation, and the objective stated in the plan to integrate information about these is encouraged
 - There is a lot of detail in the Research and Innovation Plan, to the point of being somewhat overwhelming. It was suggested that the opening preamble of the document could set out more fully the purpose of the plan so that readers can orient themselves.
 - In a time of limited resources, it is necessary for units to share spaces, equipment, and technical support. It was suggested that Section 3 of the Research and Innovation Plan (Becoming Best-in-Class for Administrative and Regulatory Functions) could refer to this.
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
 - The *Ahead of Tomorrow* strategic plan implementation plans are three-year plans, and these will be reviewed and renewed to 2030. There will be metrics, such as those relating

to research revenue and societal impact, and the four domains of the Research and Innovation Plan (Enhancing Institutional Capacity, Connecting Our People with Opportunities, Becoming Best-in-Class for Administrative and Regulatory Functions, and Leading Research Impact) will be monitored for progress.

- While there were some differing opinions about the word “entrepreneurial” during the development of the *Ahead of Tomorrow* strategic plan, the University has a broad and inclusive definition that is reflected in the creative and critical thinking actions described in the Research and Innovation Plan
- An inventory of courses with entrepreneurial thinking content is being compiled, in part to make these opportunities more accessible to students, and the Office of Institutional Analysis has indicated that metrics relating to entrepreneurship at the University can be developed
- The office of the VPR oversees match funding requests, and will step in if Faculty match funding is requested unnecessarily
- Once the Research and Innovation Plan is approved, a less detailed version could be prepared for sharing with the external community

6. Academic Innovation Plan

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Penny Werthner, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic), presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponent provided an overview of the content of the draft Academic Innovation Plan, including specifically noting:
 - The connection to the three objectives of the *Ahead of Tomorrow* strategic plan: 1) to become the #1 university in the U15 in student engagement, 2) to increase undergraduate and graduate student enrolment, and 3) to ensure all students are provided opportunities for meaningful entrepreneurial and critical thinking within scholarship
 - The four domains of initiatives within the Academic Innovation Plan: 1) Transformative Student Experience, 2) Innovative Academic Programs, 3) Increase Influence and Investment with Our Communities, and 4) Inclusive, Caring and Sustainable Campus Culture
 - Priority initiatives will include providing one semester of financial support and wrap-around services for first-in-family students, increasing financial support for thesis-based graduate students, expanding programming relating to entrepreneurial thinking, and developing a Digital Learning Strategy
- Discussion included that:
 - While the initiative to increase financial support for thesis-based graduate students is important, course-based graduate students also need increased support. The presenter noted that scholarships are available to course-based graduate students.
 - It was suggested that the words “expanding understanding...” in the initiatives of the fourth domain of the Academic Innovation Plan (Inclusive, Caring and Sustainable Campus Culture) could be made more specifically action oriented

- The third domain (Increase Influence and Investment with Our Communities) describes initiatives relating to teaching and learning, and it was suggested that this section could speak specifically to Generative AI and the need to proactively address the challenges relating to this
- Summer undergraduate research opportunities are good, but the funding is below minimum wage which means some students cannot practically afford to access these opportunities
- As blended and online learning environments expand, effort should go into making sure that students are supported to thrive in these environments both academically and socially
- As transdisciplinary teaching and scholarship increase, coordinated and informed administration will be needed

7. Review of the Draft December 7, 2023 GFC Agenda

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

The Committee reviewed the current draft of the agenda for the December 7, 2023 GFC meeting, and discussion included that:

- The Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) Update will be rolled into the Remarks of the Chair
- In response to a comment, the University Secretary reported that the proposal for the New Name and New Core Questions for University of Calgary Course Surveys item has been recommended by the Teaching and Learning Committee to come forward for approval at the next GFC meeting

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Adjournment

Moved/Seconded

That the General Faculties Council Executive Committee adjourn the November 22, 2023 meeting.

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

Courtney McVie
University Secretary