Approved minutes for Meeting 80 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on September 7, 2023 via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Matthew Prineas (Chair), Jolene Armstrong, Josie Auger, Nina Acharya, Carmen Allen, F. Haider Alvi, Carrie Anton, Walid Belassi, Angela Beltaos, Davina Bhandar, Chantel Bradley, Caroline Buzanko, Priscilla Campeau, Karie-Lynn Chambers, Andrew Chiarella, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Lynn Corcoran, Mark Crawford, Elaine Fabbro, Glen Farrelly, Shawn Fraser, Stella George, Megan Hall, Bob Heller, Brittany Hollett, Paul Kellogg, Dietmar Kennepohl, Angela Kuzyk, Jacqueline Limoges, Manijeh Mannani, Alain May, Sue Mitchell, Mark Morpurgo, Cori Paul, Andrew Perrin, Frederique Pivot, Ann Reynolds, Bailey Sousa, Carole Stevenson-Roy, Dur-E-Najaf Syed, Ching Tan, Vina Tirven-Gadum, Jeff Vallance, Eric Wang, Ray Welshman, Shauna Zenteno

Regrets: Alex Clark, Michael Dabrowski, David Head, Steven Johnson, Brock Olive, Kristin Rodier, Lorraine Thirsk, Lisa Watson

Governance Staff: Melissa Sadownik (Acting Chief Governance Officer and General Counsel), Eileen Hendy (Governance Coordinator), Allison Strydhorst (Recording Secretary)

The Chair welcomed the following new members to General Faculties Council:

- Ray Welshman, Interim Vice President, Information Technology & CIO
- Carole Stevenson-Roy, Acting Vice President, University Relations
- Brock Olive, Director, PowerED™
- Ann Reynolds, CUPE Representative
- Megan Hall, Associate Vice President, Learner Experience
- Bailey Sousa, Associate Vice President, Quality, Planning and Assessment
- Brittany Hollett, Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association Representative
- Glen Farrelly, Faculty of Business
- Eric Wang, Faculty of Business
- Caroline Buzanko, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Jeff Vallance, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Bob Heller, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Angela Beltaos, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Dietmar Kennepohl, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Frédérique Pivot, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Carrie Anton, Non-Academic Staff member

Call to Order
The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. and delivered the AU land acknowledgement.

1.   APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1.1   Motion 80-01   **That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda and thereby approves the consent agenda, including the minutes of Meeting 79 held May 4, 2023, as presented.**

Fabbro/Zenteno   **Carried**

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2.1 Subject to the [Code of Conduct for Members of the University Community](#) and the Conflict of Interest provision (clauses 11.1 and 11.2) of the [General Faculties Council Rules](#), members will be asked to declare any conflict they may have with respect to particular agenda items contained within the meeting agenda.

No conflicts declared.

3. REPORTS

3.1 Report of the Chair

The Chair presented this item on behalf of the president, noting:
- The report is a refocus on orientating the communities AU serves and the positive impacts that AU can achieve including:
    o refocusing on high quality learning experiences
    o focusing on supporting economic growth in the province with rural, Indigenous, and remote communities
    o research impacts and building towards sustainable growth
- work continuing on the development of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) office including:
    o identification of the positions required within the office including an Associate Vice President
    o ensuring all resources are allocated in a way to best support the office
    o finalizing the job description for an EDI Director who will be a member of Senior Leadership team and will work directly with the Provost
    o secondment of a full-time academic faculty member as a senior EDI advisor who will work with the Provost and EDI Director
    o dedicated human resources support

Discussion held on:
- the positions that will be in the EDI office, consultation that has occurred with labour organizations, the responsibilities that the various positions will have and when recruitment will commence
- the importance of continued EDI advocacy in the face of recent anti-EDI stances
- NeerPeer pilot and how it is a tool for collaboration and connection across courses and programs to create connections and to address feelings of isolation and separation across learners
- brand awareness campaign and the focus on affordability
- the new student service mental health provider noting statistics on how effective the service could be provided to a future GFC meeting, but initial feedback has been positive
- work continuing on the Faculty Workload Initiative including work to achieve a more balanced and equitable workload in faculties noting a survey has been conducted and the survey results are forthcoming

4. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

4.1 Library & Scholarly Resources Annual Report

The University Librarian presented this item. Discussion held on:
- public accessibility to library services in Athabasca
- usage of conversational agents such as Libchat to assist in library inquires
- making available the session recording around Academic Integrity and Generative AI tools

4.2 Athabasca University Annual Report 2022-2023 (Draft)

The Chair and Provost and Vice President Academic presented this item. Discussions held on:
- including statistics on the number of learners that are first in family to earn a degree
- the Near-Virtual Initiative and if a completion report was available noting that GFC members interested in additional information on the Near-Virtual Initiative should reach out to the Near-Virtual Working Group

4.3 Research Status and Strategy Update

The Associate Vice President Research presented this item. Discussions held on:
- metrics that will be used to track the effectiveness of the PURE Implementation project
- timelines for Canadian Research Chair searches
- Research Ethics Board processes and reflections
- support for grant administration in the Research Centre noting a need to add additional administrative support
- support provided by the Research Centre for the new Postdoctoral chair including the work conducted by the Academic Research Committee on the Postdoctoral Policy
- metrics that could be used to track Postdoctoral students
- the desire to hire tutors and research assistants as research assistants
- PURE Portal noting:
  - positive uptake for PURE portal registrations
  - who in the institution should be registering for a PURE profile
  - if post-doc learners are using, or should be using the PURE portal
  - how the portal is not a repository and does not hold research data or records but does have the ability to point to published research and other forums of research

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA
   None

6. ADJOURNMENT
   The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.