

Approved minutes for Meeting 81 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on October 5, 2023 via Microsoft Teams.

**Present:** Alex Clark (Chair), Jolene Armstrong, Nina Acharya, Carmen Allen, Walid Belassi, Chantel Bradley, Caroline Buzanko, Priscilla Campeau, Karie-Lynn Chambers, Andrew Chiarella, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Michael Dabrowski, Glen Farrelly, Shawn Fraser, Stella George, Megan Hall, Bob Heller, Brittany Hollett, Steven Johnson, Paul Kellogg, Dietmar Kennepohl, Angela Kuzyk, Jacqueline Limoges, Manijeh Mannani, Alain May, Sue Mitchell, Mark Morpurgo, Brock Olive, Jennifer Pascoe, Cori Paul, Andrew Perrin, Matthew Prineas, Bailey Sousa, Dur-E-Najaf Syed, Ching Tan, Lorraine Thirsk, Vina Tirven-Gadum, Jeff Vallance, Lisa Watson, Ray Welshman, Shauna Zenteno

**Regrets:** F. Haider Alvi, Carrie Anton, Josie Auger, Angela Beltaos, Davina Bhandar, Lynn Corcoran, Mark Crawford, Elaine Fabbro, David Head, Frederique Pivot, Ann Reynolds, Kristin Rodier, Eric Wang

**Guest:** Raza Hussain

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

The Chair welcomed new and returning members including Jennifer Pascoe, Vice President, University Relations and thanked David Head, Interim Vice President, Finance and Performance Services and CFO for his contributions to GFC.

### Call to Order

The Chair delivered the AU land acknowledgement, acknowledged the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30<sup>th</sup>, and called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.

## 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 1.1 Motion 81-01 That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda and thereby approves the consent agenda, including the minutes of Meeting 80 held September 7, 2023, as presented.

Morpurgo/Watson

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 noting:

- upcoming events in the Athabasca Region include the President's Installation, Board of Governors retreat and visit from the Minister of Advanced Education
- 70% of undergraduate program students at AU are the first in their family to attend university
- research growth at AU, continuous improvements in Information Technology (IT) and ongoing work in Human Resources to address workload and work equity, and utilizing data compiled to guide decision making
- work commencing on the AU Strategic Plan

Discussions held on:

- the format of the Report of the Chair for future GFC meetings, noting they will include alternating verbal and written reports
- strategic planning at AU noting the Senior Leadership Team is an inclusive and diverse team who will empower and support team members at AU, and that a vision document will be shared in the coming weeks
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) including the ethical use of AI, and work ongoing on policy development and guidance on use of AI for instructors. It was further noted that future engagement on AI could occur at GFC
- decreasing student registration numbers noting the Strategic Enrolment Management committee (SEM) and the Director for SEM have implemented its action plan, which has been approved by the Board of Governors and includes:
  - an adjustment to the price for out of country students
  - analyzing retention, student success and program completion data and taking targeted approaches
- graduate student concerns including enrolment and the learners experience. It was noted:
  - the Associate Vice President, Quality, Planning and Assessment is working on a new graduate course evaluation
  - the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) is exploring issues impacting graduate learners including program structures
  - feedback can be provided to the Dean, FGS and the FGS Faculty Council
  - the impacts resulting from courses that require revisions and the need for additional faculty

#### 3.2 Faculty of Business Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Business presented this item noting:

- an application to develop a new AI driven sustainable co-op in sustainable business was accepted and \$150,000 was awarded to start development over the next year
- work is ongoing on exploring partnerships with other Canadian business schools to increase capacity to serve Indigenous learners
- exploring program closures that will open capacity for new initiatives

A discussion was held regarding the AI application noting the simulations are business focused and the faculty has data that could be shared on the success of simulations.

### 3.3 Faculty of Graduate Studies Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies presented this item noting:

- challenges to have proper oversight of student records and progress
- challenges identifying students eligible for funding
- work is ongoing to align administrative processes with associated IT support
- work is ongoing to address governance and policy gaps in the graduate calendar and regulations.

Discussions held on:

- approaches to ensure graduate students are supported
- ability to contact student cohorts in Brightspace

### 3.4 Faculty of Health Disciplines Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Health Disciplines presented this item, noting a collaboration with Northern Lakes College for graduates to started their first courses in Athabasca University's Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing program on September 1, 2023.

### 3.5 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences presented this item noting the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Strategic plan requires renewal but is paused awaiting the AU strategic plan to be renewed.

Discussion held on workload concerns in the faculties and administrative units.

### 3.6 Faculty of Science and Technology Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology presented this item noting:

- workload impacts on administrative, frontline and faculty units
- work continuing on address barriers that impact student success
- work continuing to increase opportunities to diverse learners in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) including the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Ada Lovelace Day.

*Break: 10:35-10:45 a.m.*

## 4. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 4.1 Nukskahtowin Update

The Chair/Program Administrator Nukskahtowin presented this item noting:

- Elder Maria Campbell was awarded the 2023 Cheryl and Jenry Kloppenburg Award for Literary Excellence from the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild
- Nukskahtowin and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences held a two-day session in Athabasca with course writers and knowledge holders and a ceremony was held in the ceremonial room with Elder Cardinal.

#### **4.2 Frontline Learner Services Transformation**

The Vice President, University Relations and Raza Hussain, Director, Marketing and Recruitment presented this item noting the Frontline Learners Services Transformation (FLST) initiative has been in flight for 2 years.

Discussions held on:

- future discussions on the integration between FLST and the Academic Support model will be held
- the type of survey that was conducted as part of the FLST and how the survey was intended to obtain an understanding of how contact centers interact and further that student considerations were incorporated following workshops with student representatives
- FLST working closely with the Transforming Graduate Education project to ensure alignment

#### **5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA**

None

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.