



# Athabasca University General Faculties Council

Approved minutes for Special Meeting 39 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on July 18, 2017, Room 1222, AU-Edmonton (Peace Hills Trust Tower)

**Present:** Neil Fassina (Chair), Terry Beckman, Walid Belassi, Rhiannon Bury, Priscilla Campeau, Lisa Carter, Martin Connors, Michael Dabrowski, Margaret Edwards, Elaine Fabbro, Merlyn Foo, Shawn Fraser, Pamela Hawranik, Bob Heller, Paul Huebener, Jill Hunter, Deborah Hurst, Scott Jacobsen, Steve Johnson, Dietmar Kennepohl, Anshuman Khare, Jennifer Knopp-Sihota, Suzanne Kyle, Ronnie Leah, Weiming Liu, Estelle Lo, Douglas MacLeod, Richard MacLeod, Peggy Lynn MacIsaac, Dawn Mercer-Riselli, Susan Moisey, Nathaniel Ostashevski, Julie Peschke, Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown, Ann Reynolds, Donna Romyn, Meenal Shrivastava, Mira Singh, Angela Specht, Veronica Thompson, Marlyss Valiant, Harris Wang, Shawna Wasylshyn, Gina Wong

**Regrets:** Mohamed Ally, Marc Cels, Rick Harland, John Latremouille, Saktinil Roy, Eric Strikwerda, Vlad Voytenko

**Governance Staff:** Barbara Kowalchuk (Associate University Secretary), Eileen Hendy (Governance Coordinator)

## Call to Order

The Chair welcomed new members and called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

### 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1.1 **Motion 39-01 That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda as presented.**

**Belassi/Kennepohl**

**Carried**

### 2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2.1 **Action** Subject to the Conflict of Interest provision of the General Faculties Council Rules, members were asked by the Chair to declare any conflict they may have with respect to the meeting agenda.

No conflicts declared.

### 3. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### 3.1 **Draft 2017-2018 Budget**

The President presented the draft 2017-2018 Budget Plan.

During the ensuing discussion, the following was discussed:

- Budget in a balanced position for on-going operations
- Identifying and monitoring the potential impact of differential out of province tuition
- Evaluating all costs of having out of province students, including marketing, administration, delivery and convocation
- Projected increase in sales of goods and services
- Slide 20 – human capital projections include a combination of vacancy savings and prudence with new staff requests
- Projected increase in human capital for the 2017-18 year due to the recent AUFA arbitration settlement
- Slide 11- presenting salary and benefit information by category (e.g., Executive Officers, Professional, Support)
- Budget Narrative, page 1, 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph - *“As noted earlier, however, these projected surpluses do not take into account potential financial benefits that may arise from the initiatives implemented from the third-party review and assume a relatively stable operational budget.”* – it was noted that the 3% enrolment increases projected would be a result of the decisions made



# Athabasca University General Faculties Council

---

this year arising from the third party review. It was noted this addition could be made to the document.

- Budget Narrative, page 8 *“The area with the greatest potential for revenue generation is the implementation of the MyAU Bookstore”* through the separation of the learning resource fee from the expenses associated with textbooks.
- Need for transparency to students with respect to what the learning resources fee covers. The Associate Vice President Student and Academic Services noted the \$130.00 learning resource fee is based on the costs around course production and design, library scholarly resources and some elements of course packages - text books come out entirely and the students will come to the AU book store or the vendor of their choice for textbooks – it was further noted that the Bookstore will be a distribution model and the University may expect some reduced volume as some students may go to the market so inventory levels may change moving forward
- The time horizon for presentation of salary and benefits
- Funding requirements and sources for new activities and initiatives
- Projection of 4% for inflation rates compared to Statistics Canada inflation rate of 2.5%

Member Wasylyshyn requested consideration be given to increasing tuition and mandatory fees by 3% in Year 1 and 2.5% in Year 2 and Year 3 to be more in line with the reported inflation rates, and all current international program students be grandfathered with a tuition fee increase of no greater than 10%.

## 3.2 Draft Comprehensive Institutional Plan 2017-2020

The President presented this item providing an overview of the development process for the Comprehensive Institutional Plan, noting it is a government-reporting document with a prescriptive list on content.

During the ensuing discussion, the following was discussed:

- Notation of Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives in the plan
- Need to communicate and provide more information relating to the scope and cost of the plans to adopt university design principles in course design
- Institutional strategies for:
  - Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee Report
  - Open Educational Resources
- Emphasizing training and career related to specific vocational environments may impact the status of the university
- Calculating the percentage of materials that are OERs to use as a benchmark going forward
- Inclusion of more specific language relating to ‘removing barriers’ and more emphasis on academic and instructional support that will enable students to succeed

## 4. Recess

4.1 Motion 39-02 That the General Faculties Council meeting is recessed to 12:10 PM, July 18, 2017.

Reynolds/Heller

Carried

## 5. Reconvene

5.1 Motion 39-03 That the General Faculties Council meeting is reconvened at 12:10 PM, July 18, 2017.

Thompson/Carter

Carried



# Athabasca University General Faculties Council

## 6. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 6.1 Independent Third-Party Review of Athabasca University Final Report

The President presented this item.

During the ensuing discussion, the following was discussed:

- Advocating for base funding increases, funding to undertake suggested initiatives, and impact of underfunding for the University
- Focusing more on our mission critical research and how this may limit the University's research function. The Associate Vice President, Research noted that a forum and consultations will be held in the fall for the development and revising of the strategic research plan
- Recommendation 1 – it was noted a group will be established to focus on opportunities where the University can establish earned revenue opportunities.
- Recommendation 15 – it was noted bringing together a change leadership team is really an initiative around all 15 recommendations that will bring together representatives from all groups, including GFC to look at how the University will foster and enable a review and restructuring of the institution's mandate, program plans and organizational structures
- Compilation of information about students and costs associated with 'type' of student/learner (e.g., program, visiting)
- Recommendation 7 - it was noted there are institutions open to these conversations
- Recommendation to redevelop ICT Infrastructure impacting administrators and teachers – it was noted the recommendation speaks to the hardware and software ICT environment not the programs being used
- Recommendation to redefine service delivery including pedagogical support and learning model – it was noted the report speaks specifically to the student experience, not to a teaching and learning model and it is not a question of A, B or C, but a question of what is right for AU
- Providing professional development opportunities to external parties
- Importance of retaining students

- 6.2 Motion 39-04** That the General Faculties Council strike an Ad Hoc Program Review Committee to undertake the systematic review of Athabasca University program mix and recommend to General Faculties Council which programs continue, contract, expand or close by November 1, 2017.

#### **Belassi/MacLeod**

The President presented this item.

It was suggested courses also be reviewed.

This was accepted as a friendly amendment by the mover and seconder. The motion (restated) now reads:

*That the General Faculties Council strike an Ad Hoc Program Review Committee to undertake the systematic review of Athabasca University program mix and recommend to General Faculties Council which courses and programs continue, contract, expand or close by November 1, 2017.*

It was noted there may be courses and/or programs that could be combined. It was suggested 'combine' be added to the motion. This was accepted as a friendly amendment by the mover and seconder. The motion (restated) now reads:

*That the General Faculties Council strike an Ad Hoc Program Review Committee to undertake the systematic review of Athabasca University program mix and recommend to*



# Athabasca University General Faculties Council

*General Faculties Council which courses and programs continue, contract, expand, close or combine by November 1, 2017.*

It was noted this activity could be a very divisive activity and the timeline is very short for the Ad Hoc Committee to complete the work. It was suggested the completion date be extended.

Members discussed what 'evidence based' included and that time may be required to compile quantitative data.

It was suggested the Ad Hoc Committee discuss what the review criteria should entail and bring proposed criteria to GFC for discussion before proceeding with the review. It was also suggested the date to complete the review be changed to February 01, 2018.

A member inquired if staffing/funding resources will be made available to the Ad Hoc Committee. The President noted staffing/financial resources will need to be identified before a discussion is held on this matter.

It was suggested the motion be amended to identify the different deliverables and timeframes.

The mover and seconder withdrew Motion 39-04.

**Withdrawn**

**Motion 39-05 That General Faculties Council strike an Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee to develop a specific terms of reference to:**

**A) develop the criteria for a systematic course and program mix review for discussion by GFC**

**B) determine the principles for academic engagement for discussion by GFC**

**C) determine the categories of consideration for discussion by GFC; and**

**D) make recommendations to GFC based on the criteria and categories by December 15, 2017**

**Belassi/MacLeod**

Members expressed their appreciation for the process that had been undertaken in the discussion.

The President noted that the critical path for the deliverables will be determined by the Ad Hoc Committee. He also noted a special meeting of GFC will be scheduled to discuss the proposed criteria, categories and rules of engagement developed by the Ad Hoc Committee.

**Carried  
Unanimously**

**6.2.1 Action** Approve membership composition for the General Faculties Council Ad Hoc Program Review Committee

**Motion 39-06** That the General Faculties Council approves the membership composition for the Ad Hoc Program Review Committee as follows:

- Provost and Vice-President, Academic (Chair)
- Deans of each faculty
- Four (4) full-time academic faculty members, one (1) elected by each of the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Health Disciplines, the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Science & Technology
- One (1) tutor or academic expert appointed by the tutors/academic experts represented on GFC



# Athabasca University General Faculties Council

---

- President or designate, Athabasca University Graduate Student Association (AUGSA)
- President or designate, Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU)
- Director, Integrated Planning (Resource)

## **Edwards/Hurst**

A member inquired if the members of the Ad Hoc Committee had to be members of GFC. The President confirmed that was the intent when the Ad Hoc Committee membership composition was drafted.

It was noted the GFC Rules define tutor as a part time staff member who provides tutorial services to students and includes academic experts. A member inquired about the election of the tutor/academic expert member and was informed this member would be elected by the tutors/academic experts serving on GFC.

It was requested there be a full time academic faculty member from the Centre for Distance Education and the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research.

It was suggested the motion be amended to add one full-time academic faculty member from the Centre for Distance Education and the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research.

This was accepted as a friendly amendment by the mover and seconder. The motion (restated) now reads:

*That the General Faculties Council approves the membership composition for the Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee as follows:*

- *Provost and Vice-President, Academic (Chair)*
- *Deans of each faculty*
- *Six (6) full-time academic faculty members, one (1) elected by each of the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Health Disciplines, the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Science & Technology, the Centre for Distance Education, and the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research*
- *One (1) tutor or academic expert appointed by the tutors/academic experts represented on GFC*
- *President or designate, Athabasca University Graduate Student Association (AUGSA)*
- *President or designate, Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU)*
- *Director, Integrated Planning (Resource)*

It was further suggested the motion be amended to clarify that the membership needed to be from GFC members.

This was accepted as a friendly amendment by the mover and seconder. The motion (restated) now reads:

***That the General Faculties Council approves, from the membership of General Faculties Council, the membership composition for the Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee as follows:***

- ***Provost and Vice-President, Academic (Chair)***
- ***Deans of each faculty***
- ***Six (6) full-time academic faculty members, one (1) elected by each of the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Health Disciplines, the Faculty of Humanities & Social***



# Athabasca University General Faculties Council

---

*Sciences, and the Faculty of Science & Technology, the Centre for Distance Education, and the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research*

- *One (1) tutor or academic expert appointed by the tutors/academic experts represented on GFC*
- *President or designate, Athabasca University Graduate Student Association (AUGSA)*
- *President or designate, Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU)*
- *Director, Integrated Planning (Resource)*

Discussion ensued regarding the need to include a member from the library as a resource. It was noted that there will be a number of resources that will be accessed as part of the process.

**Carried  
Unanimously**

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

**7.1 Motion 39-07 That the meeting be adjourned.**

**Hurst**

**Carried**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.