



Athabasca University General Faculties Council

Approved minutes for Special Meeting 41 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on September 18, 2017, Room 1222, AU-Edmonton (Peace Hills Trust Tower)

Present: Neil Fassina (Chair), Terry Beckman, Walid Belassi, Rhiannon Bury, Lisa Carter, Marc Cels, Martin Connors, Michael Dabrowski, Margaret Edwards, Elaine Fabbro, Mark Fabbro, Merlyn Foo, Shawn Fraser, Rick Harland, Pamela Hawranik, Bob Heller, Paul Huebener, Jill Hunter, Deborah Hurst, Scott Jacobsen, Steve Johnson, Dietmar Kennepohl, Anshuman Khare, Suzanne Kyle, John Latremouille, Ronnie Leah, Michael Lithgow, Estelle Lo, Peggy Lynn MacIsaac, Douglas MacLeod, Richard MacLeod, Dawn Mercer-Riselli, Susan Moisey, Nathaniel Ostashewski, Julie Peschke, Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown, Matthew Prineas, Ann Reynolds, Saktinil Roy, Meenal Shrivastava, Angela Specht, Eric Strikwerda, Veronica Thompson, Marlyss Valiant, Vlad Voytenko, Harris Wang, Shawna Wasylyshyn, Gina Wong

Regrets: Priscilla Campeau, Marti Cleveland-Innes, Jennifer Knopp-Sihota, Weiming Liu, Donna Romyne, Mira Singh

Governance Staff: Carol Lund (University Secretary), Eileen Hendy (Recording Secretary)

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1.1 **Motion 41-01 That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda as presented.**

Hurst/Elaine Fabbro

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 Comprehensive Program and Course Review

The President provided an overview of the review criteria, categories and engagement drafted by the GFC Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee.

The following was discussed:

Critical Path: it was noted a Special Meeting of GFC is scheduled for September 21, 2017 and the date should read September 18, 2017.

Review Criteria:

Environment Scan – Alignment of Program Objective

- Meaning of distinct learner and societal needs
- Proposals for new programs require this information be complied
- Consideration if an institution is required to offer a course/program to be a CARI

Environmental Scan – Competition #1 and #2

- Collection of the data within the timeframe to complete the review
- Meaning of ‘...the best in class?’
- Note ‘individualized study’, ‘anytime registration’ and ‘self-paced’ in section 1.a.
- Proposals for new programs require this information be complied



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Program and Course Demand and Enrolment Management

- How yield ratios are defined
- Inclusion of data for number of graduates going onto graduate studies – it was noted not all programs collect this data
- Data being misleading due to overlapping programs
- Consideration be given to the cost/number of students per course
- Consideration be given to why students come to AU
- Enabling course independency if program closed
- Completion rate for programs
- Promotion of courses and programs to improve enrolments
- Enrolments dependent on other programs
- Recognition that popular courses at AU most likely are popular courses at other institutions
- Students taking courses but graduating at other institutions
- How high demand courses but not programs will be dealt with
- Consideration be given to students with special needs

Course and Program Currency and Quality

- Currency of courses important
- How courses are taught or offered

Program Resources

- Contractors overseeing programs also being considered under staffing ratios
- Alignment to current faculty, tutor/academic expert strengths

Concern was expressed regarding the ability to review all the courses and programs within the time frame. It was suggested the review be limited to reviewing programs only.

It was noted reviews of programs are completed and annually reports provided to the GFC Academic Planning, Policy, and Standards Committee.

It was agreed the data compiled for the review would be made available to faculty/coordinators.

It was suggested the number of course electives offered for a program be defined. It was noted this suggestion be left with the GFC Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee to consider.

Categories:

- Consideration be given to weighting of each category
- Round two review criteria give consideration to impact on enrolment if a course is updated

4. Recess

- 4.1 Motion 41-02 That the General Faculties Council meeting is recessed to 1:00 PM, September 18, 2017.**

Hunter/Carter

Carried

5. Reconvene

- 5.1 Motion 41-03 That the General Faculties Council meeting is reconvened at 1:00 PM, September 18, 2017.**

Hunter/Carter

Carried



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Continued discussion

3.1 Comprehensive Program and Course Review

It was noted the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences recently completed a review of courses and programs using similar criteria, resulting in the recognition of the importance of conducting such reviews, and encouraged greater collaborations.

It was suggested the environmental scan section be moved from round #1 to round #2.

It was confirmed faculties will be consulted throughout the review process.

The President summarized the discussion:

- Context for yield ratio will be defined
- Unique and distinct learner and societal needs also be considered for courses, not only programs
- Paced or self-paced will be added to the 1.a under the competition section
- Move environmental scan section to round #2
- Add 'Is the program aligned to current faculty, tutor/academic expert strengths?' under program resources
- Define how to weigh the different categories under round #1 and #2

It was suggested the GFC Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee identify gaps of information that should be collected.

It was suggested data that demonstrates AU's excellence and how AU differs be compiled.

It was suggested 'continuous enrolment' be included under the section: competition 1.a.

It was noted consideration needed to be given to understanding and recognizing what are the educational needs today and in the future.

The President summarized the discussion:

- GFC agrees the comprehensive program and course review will be completed in two rounds and the following changes to the review criteria:
 - Move environmental scan section from round#1 to round #2
 - Alignment of Program Objectives – 1.: add 'Mandate' after Mission
 - Alignment of Program Objectives – 2.: add 'or course' after program
 - Alignment of Program Objectives – 3.: add 'as a CARI' after itself
 - Competition 1.a.: add '(continuous enrolment and non-continuous, paced and self-paced) after environment
 - Program Resources – add #2.: Is the course or program aligned with current faculty, tutor and/or academic expert strengths?
- Under Categories, GFC is OK with having a 'fix' category and the Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee will define how best to weigh the categories under round #1 and #2
- Under Engagement, GFC understands the review will be a clear, fair and transparent process, and all faculties will be fully aware of the recommendations coming forward to GFC
- Under Critical Path, two additional meetings will be scheduled for the GFC Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee

It was requested the summary be provided to members. The President agreed, noting there will be a communique to all staff about the course and program review.

An inquiry was made if accessibility was factor to be considered under course and program currency and quality. The President noted this was not part of this review.



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It was suggested this process be the starting point for continuing reviews. The President agreed.

It was noted a societal need identified in the independent third party review report is non-credit courses.

It was suggested lessons learnt be documented and timeline to update policies be established.

Motion 41-04 That the General Faculties Council agrees the Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee move forward on the comprehensive program and course review as summarized:

- GFC agrees the comprehensive program and course review will be completed in two rounds.
- GFC agrees to the following changes to the review criteria:
 - Environmental Scan:
 - Alignment of Program Objectives – 1.: add '/Mandate' after Mission to be: '1. To what extent does the program align with the Mission/Mandate of Athabasca University?'
 - Alignment of Program Objectives – 2.: add 'or course' after program to be: '2. To what extent does the program or course respond to a unique and distinct learner and societal needs that are consistent with what the institution values? What is the evidence that there is a need?'
 - Alignment of Program Objectives – 3.: add 'as a CARI' after itself to be: '3. To what extent does this program help the institution differentiate itself as a CARI?'
 - Competition 1.a.: add '(continuous enrolment and non-continuous, paced and self-paced) after environment to be: '1.a. If so, in a face-to face, blended, or online environment (continuous enrolment and non-continuous, paced and self-paced?'
 - Competition 2.: change 'that demonstrates that Athabasca University the best in class? How do we differ?' to 'that demonstrates Athabasca University's excellence and how do we differ?' to be: '2. If others are offering the same/similar program, is there data that demonstrates Athabasca University's excellence and how do we differ?'
 - Move the environmental scan section from round#1 to round #2
 - Program and Course Demand and Enrolment Management
 - Enrolment Management 1.: no change but need to be mindful of yield ratio
 - Program Resources:
 - Program Resources – add 2. Is the course or program aligned with current faculty, tutor and/or academic expert strengths?
- Under Categories, GFC agrees to having a 'fix' category and the Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee will define how best to weight the categories under round #1 and #2.
- Under Engagement, GFC understands the review will be a clear, fair and transparent process, and all faculties will be fully aware of the recommendations coming forward to GFC.
- Under Critical Path, two additional meetings will be scheduled for the GFC Ad Hoc Course and Program Review Committee.

Ostashewski/Elaine Fabbro

Carried



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The Comprehensive Program and Course Review Review Criteria now reads:

Round #1: Primary Set of Criteria

PROGRAM AND COURSE DEMAND AND ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT

Program Demand

1. FLE and Headcount of learners registering in the program of study year over year (5-10-year window)

Course Demand

1. Course enrollment by course by year (5-10-year window)?
2. Proportion of enrollments for major, minor, general studies, visiting, or service purposes by registration period?

Enrolment Management

1. What percentage of people finish the program that start the program (yield ratio)?
2. Course and program average time to completion
3. For graduate programs: for the project and thesis routes – what is the retention rate after course work; after the thesis proposal or candidacy; during the thesis/dissertation work?

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Student Completion

1. Number of parchments awarded by year over ten years?

COURSE AND PROGRAM RESOURCES

Program Expenses

1. Direct expenses associated with the course / program?

Round #2: Criteria for Context

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Alignment of Program Objectives

1. To what extent does the program align with the Mission/Mandate of Athabasca University?
2. To what extent does the program or course respond to a unique and distinct learner and societal needs that are consistent with what the institution values? What is the evidence that there is a need?
3. To what extent does this program help the institution differentiate itself as a CARI?

Competition

1. Are other institutions in Alberta and Canada offering the same program?
 - a. If so, in a face-to face, blended, or online environment (continuous enrolment and non-continuous, paced and self-paced?)
2. If others are offering the same/similar program, is there data that demonstrates Athabasca University's excellence and how do we differ?



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PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Student Characteristics

1. Student demographics

COURSE AND PROGRAM CURRENCY AND QUALITY

1. Is the course/program current (not synonymous with last revision)?
2. Does the course align to program learning outcomes? Does it fit the curriculum map?

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Faculty & Staff

1. Staffing Ratios for Faculty, Tutor/Academic Experts, Support staff
2. Is the course or program aligned with current faculty, tutor and/or academic expert strengths?

Program Revenue (beyond enrolment)

3. Is the program associated with any research grants? If so, specify.
4. Does the program receive any fundraising dollars? If so, specify.
5. Does the program receive any equipment grants? If so, specify.
6. Other sources of revenue for the program?
7. Has the program cultivated relationships that benefit the institution (support the mission)?

PROGRAM ALIGNMENT

1. Alignment to a discipline (if applicable)
 - a. Is the program or the courses appropriately situated in the current program/faculty? Should it be moved to another faculty?

The President reminded members a special meeting of GFC is scheduled for October 13, 2017 to discuss the draft strategic plan.

6. ADJOURNMENT

6.1 Motion 41-05 That the meeting be adjourned.

Hunter

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM.