



# Athabasca University General Faculties Council

Approved minutes for Meeting 44 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on March 14, 2018, Room 1222, AU-Edmonton (Peace Hills Trust Tower)

**Present:** Neil Fassina (Chair), Walid Belassi, Lisa Carter, Marc Cels, Marti Cleveland-Innes, Michael Dabrowski, Margaret Edwards, Elaine Fabbro, Mark Fabbro, Merlyn Foo, Shawn Fraser, Rick Harland, Pamela Hawranik, David Head, Bob Heller, Jill Hunter, Steve Johnson, Dietmar Kennepohl, Suzanne Kyle, Michael Lithgow, Peggy Lynn MacIsaac, Douglas MacLeod, Richard MacLeod, Dawn Mercer-Riselli, Susan Moisey, Nathaniel Ostashewski, Julie Peschke, Meagan Peuramaki-Brown, Matthew Prineas, Ann Reynolds, Donna Romy, Saktinil Roy, Jennifer Schaeffer, Meenal Shrivastava, Brandon Simmons, Mira Singh, Veronica Thompson, Harris Wang, Shawna Wasylshyn,

**Regrets:** Terry Beckman, Rhiannon Bury, Priscilla Campeau, Martin Connors, Paul Huebener, Anshuman Khare, Jennifer Knopp-Sihota, Ronnie Leah, Weiming Liu, Angela Specht, Eric Strikwerda, Marlyss Valiant, Vlad Voytenko, Gina Wong

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

## Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

### 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 1.1 **Motion 44-01** That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda and thereby approves the consent agenda, as amended.

**Kennepohl/Carter**

Amendments:  
Remove CA 18 and CA 19 from the consent agenda.

**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. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

- 3.1 **CA 18 Academic Learning Environment Committee minutes for Meeting 35, held February 27, 2018**

Member Heller inquired about the review of the course evaluations being conducted by the Ad Hoc Working Group. He also expressed concern regarding the Net Promoter scores and the low student survey response rates.

The President noted the low student survey response rate is of concern and the matter is being reviewed by the Ad Hoc Course Evaluation Design Working Group. He also noted the Ad Hoc Course Evaluation Redesign Working Group has revised the undergraduate course evaluation questionnaire and will implement the revised questionnaire in April 2018.

- 3.2 **CA 19 Strategic Enrolment Plan Indicators 2017-18 Q3**

Member Heller requested visiting students be identified in the Strategic Enrolment Plan Indicators Report.

It was requested the Strategic Enrolment Management Plan be posted on the website when it is implemented.



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## 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 4.1 **Motion 44-02** That the General Faculties Council approves the minutes of Meeting 43, held December 18, 2017, as amended.

**MacLeod/Hawranik**

Amendments:

- Agenda item 3.3. CA 20 Biennial Undergraduate Student Experience Survey 2017 Page 2 - 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence should read ...students do not use the Library Digital Reading Room.
- Agenda item 6.1 Receive GFC Ad Hoc Course and program Review Committee Final Report and approve recommendations Page 10 - Line 40) - MUSI 268: Music: History of Popular Music II: Be-Bop to Beatles, 1940-1970 should be MUSI 286.

**Carried**

## 5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

## 6. ACTION ITEMS

### 6.1 Strengthening the Role of GFC

A discussion was held on strengthening the role of GFC.

Member Heller noted the role of GFC is operationalized through its standing committees, and that it was important to integrate decision making on technology between the academy and IT.

It was noted alignment of GFC committee responsibilities was needed to create efficiency in the role of GFC. The University Secretary noted the GFC Ad Hoc Governance Review Working Group will be reviewing standing committee terms of reference at upcoming committee meetings in April and present proposed amendments to GFC on May 9<sup>th</sup> for approval.

The President requested members send him their suggestions and ideas to strengthen the role of GFC, noting he will report back to GFC about the suggestions/comments he received.

### 6.2 Teaching and Learning Framework

The Provost and Vice President Academic noted the Teaching and Learning Framework will align with Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities, and discussions have been with at GFC Standing Committee meetings and with Deans on process to build the framework. He further noted the following actions will be presented at the May 9, 2018 GFC meeting with the intent to develop the framework over the summer:

- Establishment of a Teaching and Learning Framework Steering Committee

Discussions were held on the following:

- Representation on the steering working group and work stream groups - to be from across the academy
- Specifics of the framework being broad metrics, not prescribed

Member Heller noted the framework was an opportunity to emphasize the importance of collection of user data – who are the users and purpose for the collection of the data. It was agreed data assists in forming the framework.



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- 6.3 Motion 44-03** That General Faculties Council endorses the *Strategic Research Plan (2018-2022)* as a living plan that will evolve over time in conjunction with the implementation of the *Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities Strategic Plan*, effective March 14, 2018.

## Hawranik/Hunter

Member Heller inquired why GFC was being requested to endorse, not approve the plan. The President noted the Strategic Research Plan (2018-2022) was a living plan.

Member Heller inquired about the role of the Technology Enhanced Research Institute (TEKRI) in relation to the Strategic Research Plan, if research centres were being planned for the four themes, and if resources were available to establish research centres. He noted details about these matters were absent in the plan. The President noted the Strategic Research Plan enables Athabasca University to identify possible research centres and resources were available.

Discussions were held on:

- Providing opportunities for research at graduate level courses and programs
- Making available resources to enable faculty to conduct the work associated with research
- Alignment of the Strategic Research Plan with other university plans: Imagine Strategic Plan and the Teaching and Learning Framework

**Carried**

## **6.4 Draft Student and Academic Services Operational Plan**

Member Heller commented the plan and initiatives outlined in the plan were good. He inquired if the priorities were in priority order and was informed the list is not prioritized and a framework was being developed.

Member Heller also noted the following:

- Page 6 – Strengthen Student Welcome and Orientation - if the notices about library webinars could be added to Moodle courses
- Page 8 – Support Student Community Building - creating a virtual space for students
- Page 12 – Student Notice Enhancement – include information about services and support, and deadlines in letters
- Page 18 – Strengthen Exam Services – have a single exam system

The following topics were also discussed:

- resources required/needed to increase standards for student interaction
- university plans recognizing and promoting indigenous issues
- providing opportunities for staff to give feedback on academic integrity

- 6.5 Motion 44-04** That the General Faculties Council approves changing the name of the “Master of Arts, specialization in Integrated Studies” to “Master of Arts, specialization in Interdisciplinary Studies,” effective upon approval from Alberta Advanced Education.

## Hawranik/Thompson

**Carried**

## 7. REPORTS



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## 7.1 **RISE: Athabasca University's Digital Transformation 5 Year IT Strategy**

The Vice President Information Technology and CIO presented a PowerPoint presentation, noting the strategy is to provide complete flexibility and accessibility to Athabasca University's students in Alberta, across Canada and the world, with the focus to provide the highest quality digital learning experience to learners. She further noted custom coding behavior will be eliminated, and obsolete systems will be retired or eliminated.

Member Heller inquired about the role of the academy in the decision making process for which systems are chosen. He also inquired about the ability to use tools that were developed through 'research' beyond the research cycle. The Vice President Information Technology outlined processes for choosing systems and tools developed through research.

## 7.2 **2018-2019 Resource Plan Draft**

The President presented this item.

Discussions were held on:

- Ancillary services funding sources
- Tuition and student fee freeze for Alberta students
- Funding for the Third Party Review Recommendations
- Impact of out-of-province and out-of-country tuition and other student fee increases on enrolment numbers
- Sales of services and products revenue including learning resources fees
- Increasing priority of international collaborations to avoid using reserve funds

Member Heller noted the plan did not identify revenue projections for non-credit offerings, a recommendation of the Independent Third Party Review Report. He inquired about the cause for the 2% decrease in salary and benefits (page 6), and about the difference in projections for IT investments between Schedule 9, 10 and 11 (pages 16 and 17). It was noted the 2% decrease in salary and benefits projection is excluded staff salaries are frozen and the difference in projections for IT investments between the schedules is how information is required to be presented to government.

## 7.3 **Report of the Chair**

Due to the extension of time allocated for the meeting, the President asked members to provide comments and questions electronically.

## 8. **ADJOURNMENT**

### 8.1 **Motion 44-05 That the meeting be adjourned.**

**Hunter**

**Carried**

The meeting adjourned at 4:34 PM.