



Athabasca
University

GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL (GFC)

ORIENTATION

August 2018

Focused on the future of
learning.

Welcome

Thank you for your service. We hope you find your term interesting and satisfying.

The goal of this orientation is to provide you with a high level overview of university governance and of GFC procedures and processes, so that you can attend meetings feeling confident that you can participate effectively.

Canadian University Governance Landscape

University governance is largely dictated by provincial statute.

As such, post-secondary institution governance varies both within and among provinces.

One significant commonality is the model of shared governance.

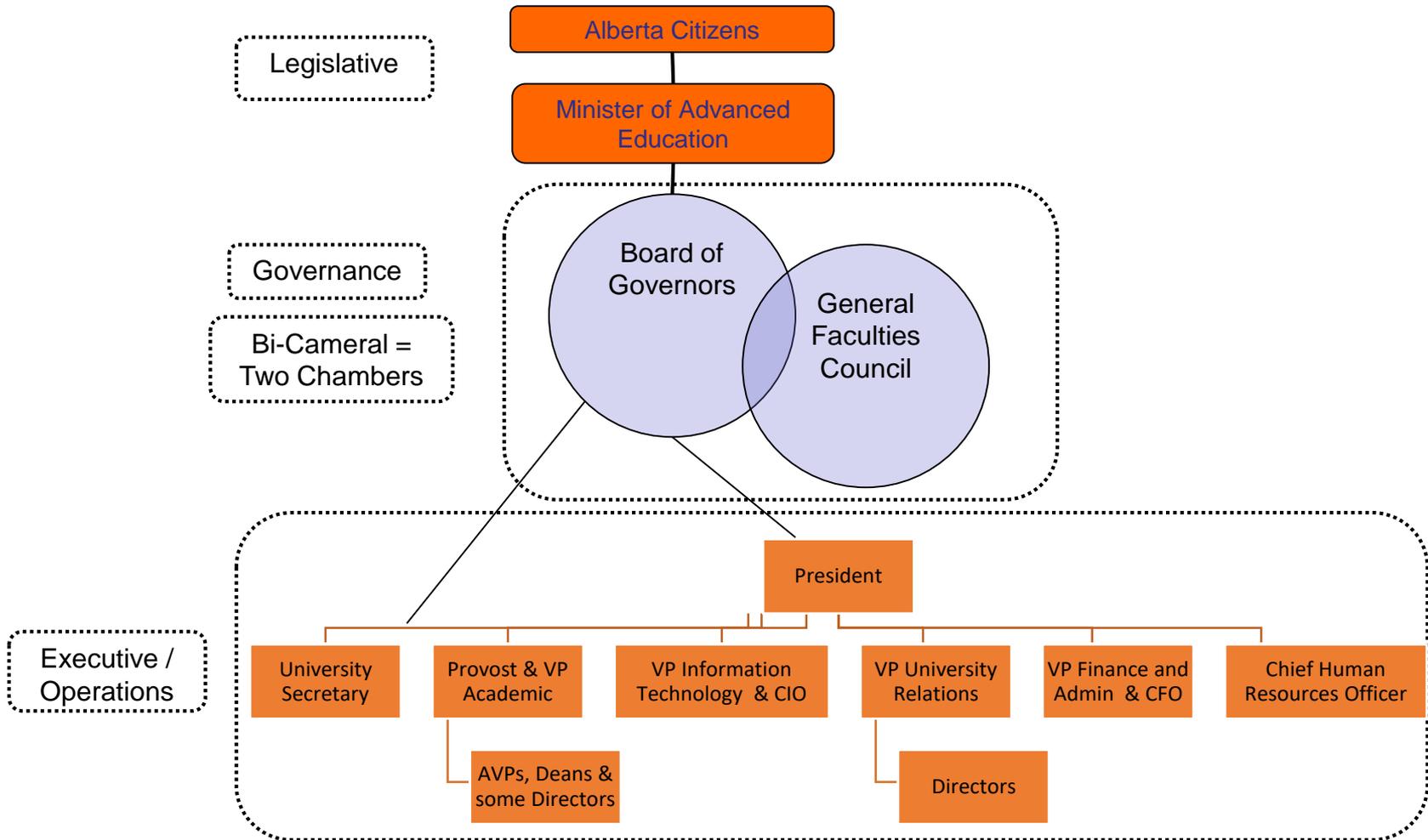
Under shared governance at the University, the Board retains the ultimate responsibility and authority for governance of the University; however, different groups are given primary authority over different areas of expertise and a voice in decisions affecting the university.

Provincial Legislation

Post-secondary Learning Act (PSLA)

- Associated Regulations
 - Alternative Academic Council Regulation
 - Athabasca University Regulation
 - Campus Alberta Sector Regulation
 - Land Use Regulation
 - Model Provisions Regulation
 - Pension Validation Regulation
 - Programs of Study Regulation
 - Public Post-secondary Institutions' Tuition Fees Regulation

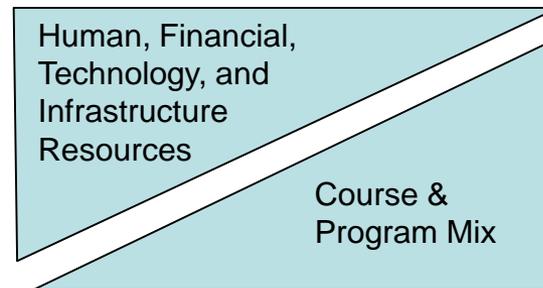
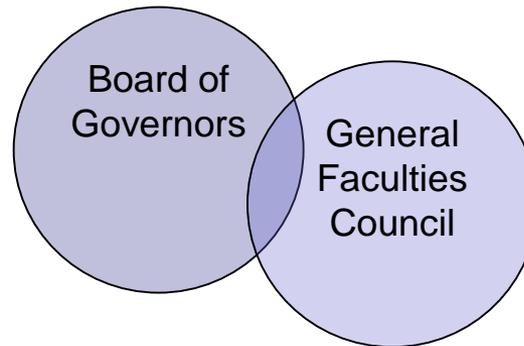
Governance Overview



Bi-cameral Governance

Governance | Long Range Planning | Business Affairs

Mandate
Budget
Tuition
Financial Statements
Investments
Infrastructure & Technology
Collective Agreements
President Hiring & Oversight
Parking, Traffic, and Pedestrian By-laws
Own & Operate a gas utility



Academic Affairs

Recommend new faculties, schools, departments, chairs and programs of study
Timetables (exams, instruction, courses)
Student assessment
Granting degrees other than honorary degrees
Student discipline and appeals
Management and operation of libraries
Academic awards
Admissions & Calendar
Appointments, promotions, and tenure of faculty
Budget recommendation

Governance in a Nutshell

University governance refers to the system by which the university is directed and operated.

Governance is about

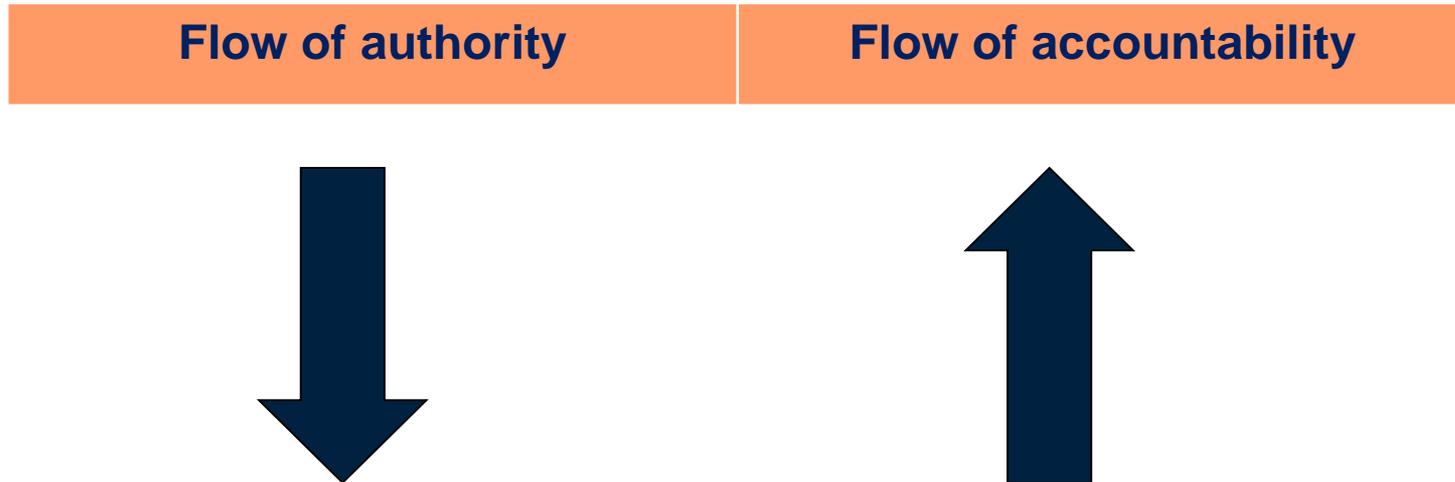
- Who informs whom
- Who consults whom
- Who decides what

It is also about

- How governing groups interact
- How they relate to constituents
- How decisions are made
- How they render account

Primal Rule of Governance

For each authority there is a corresponding accountability



Examples of Governance Processes

Creating Governance Instruments

- to exercise or transfer power

Examples: Resolutions, Policy, Procedure/Regulations/
Guidelines, Delegations, Contracts

Creating Accountability Pieces

- Comprehensive Institutional Plans
- Annual reports
- Financial statements

Enriching Decision-making through consultation

- Testing and debating
- Advice and recommendations
- Identifying alternatives

Role of the Board of Governors

Oversee the management and operation of the University's business and affairs

- Appoint the President and monitor his/her performance - PSLA s.81(1), 81(2), 81(3), 81(4)
- Collective Agreements - PSLA s.83, 87(1), 96(1)
- Formulating the institution's mandate – PSLA s103(1)
- Government relations and accountability – PSLA s.78-80
 - Comprehensive Institutional Plan (includes budget information)
 - Annual Report (includes financial statements)
- Developing investment policies – PSLA s.75(3)
- Approving long-range plans – PSLA s.121(2)
- Approving programs of study for submission to the Minister – PSLA s.19(e)
- Approving tuition levels – PSLA s.61(1) and Tuition Fees Regulation
- Community relations
- Serving as an appeal body – PSLA s.63

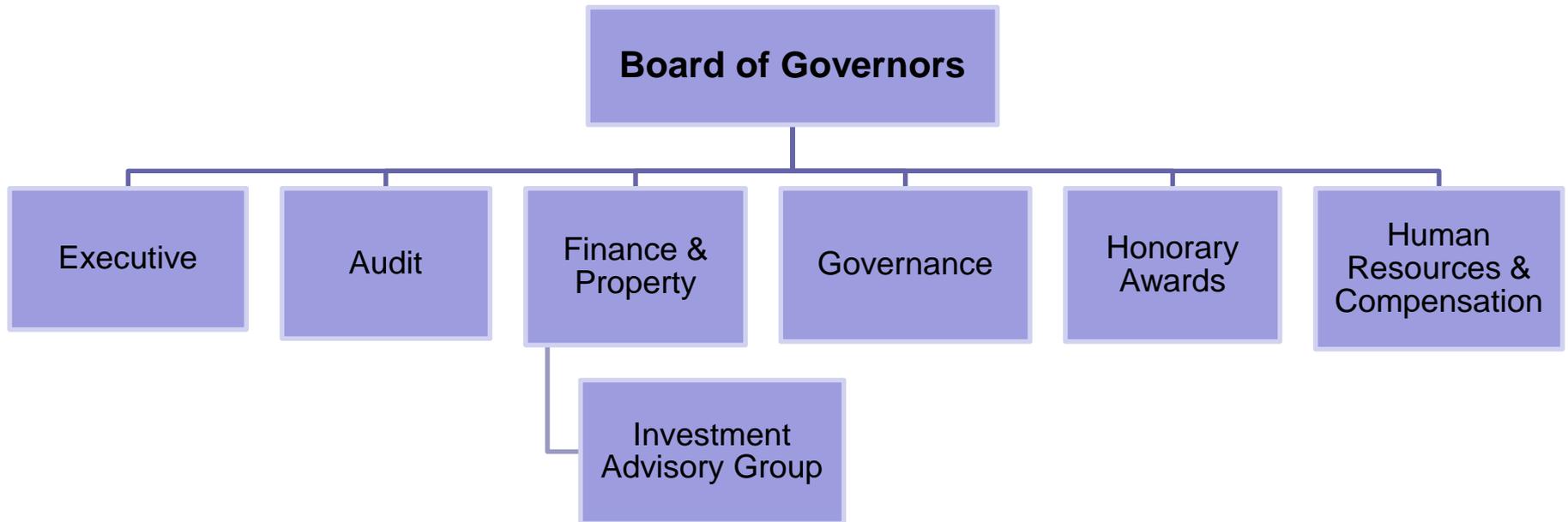
Board Composition

Membership composition for the Board of Governors is set out under section 3, AU Regulation

- Chair
- 10 Public Members
- President
- 2 Members of Academic Staff (1 GFC and 1 AUFA)
- 1 Non-Academic Staff Member
- 1 Tutor
- 2 Undergraduate Student Reps
- 1 Graduate Student Rep
- 1 Alumnus

The Board of Governors consists of 20 members

Board and Standing Committees



Role of GFC

Academic oversight and responsibility (subject to the Board)

Responsibilities:

- Academic quality (pedagogy, learning and scholarship/research)
- Curriculum and program quality
- Recommendations to the Board on matters of academic import
- Academic perspective through input on non-academic matters
- General supervision over student affairs, particularly those aspects of student life which relate to the education process
- Policies within its role or authority (academic affairs, student affairs, etc.)

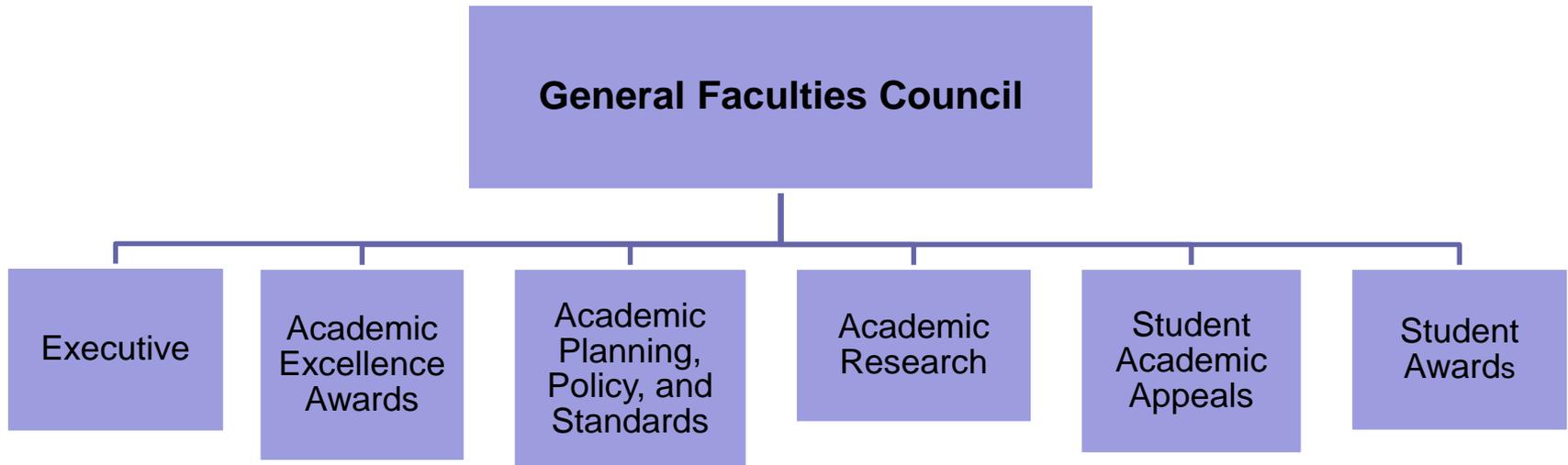
GFC Composition

Membership composition for General Faculties Council is set out under section 10, AU Regulation

- President (Chair)
- Provost and Vice-Presidents
- Dean of each Faculty
- Director, Library Services
- Registrar
- 25 Elected Academic Staff Members
- 2 Non-Academic Staff Members
- 2 Undergraduate Student Members
- 1 Graduate Student Member
- 1 Tutor Member
- 7 Appointed Members

GFC consists of 50 members

GFC & Standing Committees



GFC Standing Committees consists of...

- EXEC -11 members (Serve on GFC)
- APPSC - 26 members
- SAAC - 7 members
- SAC - 11 members
- AEAC - 8 members
- ARC - 7 members

109 members of the university community serve on GFC and its standing committees

GFC Standing Committees

EXECUTIVE	ACADEMIC PLANNING, POLICY, AND STANDARDS	ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS
<p>Acts on behalf of and with the full authority of GFC on matters that require immediate action.</p> <p>Also oversees and advises on the governance and membership of GFC.</p>	<p>GFC's senior committee dealing with academic planning and policy issues.</p> <p>Considers or recommends to GFC on any academic issue, including those issues under the purview of other GFC committees or issues linked to academic service units where those issues have a significant academic impact.</p>	<p>Adjudicates the AEGSS, CCMATE, PARSE, PATME and any other relevant awards.</p> <p>Responsibility for reviewing academic excellence awards policies and criteria, and recommend to the APPSC revisions to policies governing these awards.</p>

GFC Standing Committees

ACADEMIC RESEARCH	STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS	STUDENT AWARDS
<p>Advises on the overall research goals of Athabasca University, the distribution of designated or allocated research funds, and recommends on research policies and procedures.</p>	<p>Responsible for dealing with matters related to student academic misconduct, adjudicating appeals on penalties of academic misconduct and of policy on procedural grounds when a policy doesn't specify that a University Officer has final decision making authority</p>	<p>Responsibility for dealing with all matters related to student awards, including approving new student awards, approving the minimum value of an award and making recommendations on any new policy or revisions to existing policy governing awards for undergraduate and graduate students.</p>

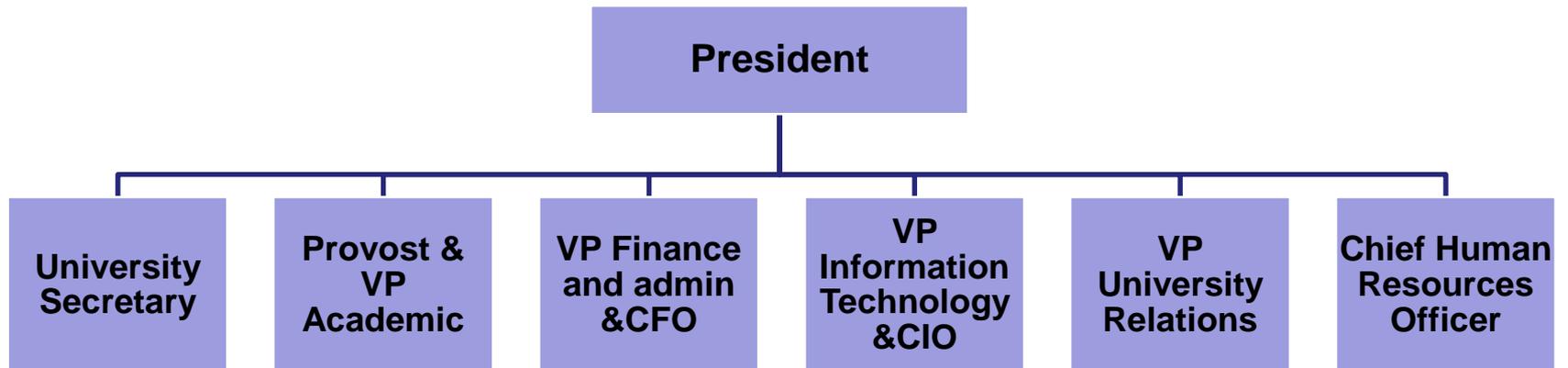
Role of Executive Team

Day to day management of the operations

Responsibilities:

- Propose and develop strategies, plans and policies
- Lead implementation of policies, strategies, plans and direction
- Direct and carry out the operations of the university

Executive Team





Imagine:
**Transforming Lives,
Transforming Communities**

Open, Flexible,
and Everywhere

Our families, our jobs, our communities: the most important things in our lives are changing. To prepare for change, to lead it, we are driven to be more open, more flexible, and more adaptable — no matter who we are, how old we are, or where we live.



Other Governing Groups

Deans' Council

- Comprised of the President, Provost and Vice Presidents, Deans and others designated by the council
- Acts as an advisory body to the President, Board, and GFC
- Has the powers, duties and functions that are delegated to it

Faculty Councils

- Each faculty at the university has a faculty council (5 in total)
- Comprised of the Dean, President, all full-time academic staff of the faculty, professional association representatives and others appointed by GFC
- Has the powers outlined in the PSLA and that are delegated to it
- Subject to the authority of GFC

Program Councils

- Has the powers, duties and functions that are delegated to it

Other Representative Groups

Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU)

- All undergraduate students are members
- Represents the interests of undergraduate students

Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association (AUGSA)

- All graduate students are members
- Represents the interests of graduate students, graduate student teachers or research assistants

Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA)

- Represents the collective interests of academic and professional staff members

Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE)

- Represents the interests of support staff

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

- Represents the interests of tutors and academic experts

Role of University Secretary

- Gateway and facilitator for communication among the Board, GFC, senior management and other constituents
- Provides leadership and expertise to ensure effective operation and administration of the University's collegial system of governance (the Board and GFC) as set out in legislation
- Most senior advisor and counselor on governance related issues and the associated legislative and administrative policy and procedures
- Leads a varied portfolio that includes governance, legislative compliance, FOIPP, University policy management, Ombuds, and legal issues

Information for GFC Members

GFC Rules

The GFC Rules set out the responsibilities of members, rules of order for meetings, and GFC's standing committees.

GFC Standing Committee Terms of Reference & Membership set the membership composition and powers and duties for that committee

The GFC Rules are available at:

<http://ous.athabascau.ca/general/documents/gfc-rules.pdf>

Standing Committee Terms of Reference & Membership are available at: <http://ous.athabascau.ca/general/index.php>

GFC Webpage

<http://ous.athabascau.ca/general/index.php>

The GFC webpage contains information such as: GFC Rules, meeting agendas and minutes, the meeting schedule, Standing Committee Terms of Reference and Membership and links to the *Post-secondary Learning Act* (PSLA) and AU Regulation.

The academic calendar of all GFC and GFC standing committees meetings is approved annually and is available on the OUS website at:

<http://ous.athabascau.ca/general/documents/gfc-meeting-schedule.pdf>

GFC Handbook

- The GFC Handbook is available on the University Secretariat website.
- The GFC Handbook is not an officially approved GFC document. It is a compilation document, referencing GFC rules and generally reflecting practices, and is intended to serve as a resource for GFC members.
- The GFC Handbook contains information such as: the role and responsibilities of GFC, membership, rules of quorum and voting and GFC standing committees.

Responsibilities of Members

- Act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the University
- Exercise care, diligence, and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances

(GFC Rules, PART II, 5. Responsibilities of Members)

Expectations of GFC Members

- Familiarize themselves with the GFC Rules, GFC's role in governing the University, and the GFC Handbook
- Make an attempt to attend each scheduled meeting
- Come to meeting prepared to engage in respectful, meaningful discussion, provide considered, constructive and thoughtful feedback and commentary, express opinions, and ask questions to enable GFC to exercise its best judgment in decision-making

Expectations of GFC Members cont'd

- Ensure all confidential GFC records and information remain confidential, even after the member ceases to be a member of GFC
- Disclose a conflict of interest with respect to a matter that comes before GFC when speaking to the matter at a GFC meeting
(Note: the member shall be recused from voting on any motion to which the conflict related. (GFC Rules, PART II, 11. Conflict of Interest))

GFC Meeting Procedures

- Calendar meeting invites are sent for all scheduled meetings. When you receive the calendar meeting invites, **please respond (accept, decline, tentative)**. Each meeting invite includes the Skype audio/video conferencing information for that meeting.
- The University Secretariat utilizes the Governance Portal (SharePoint Site) to electronically provide members with agenda packages.
- Approximately one week prior to each meeting, members receive notice when the agenda package is uploaded to the Governance Portal.
- Occasionally, a document will be revised or added after you have received the agenda package; if this occurs, you will be notified.

GFC Meeting Procedures cont'd

All meetings of GFC are open to the public unless...

- By resolution, the majority of members present choose to go into an in camera session
- Confidential financial or personal information about a person or people might be disclosed during the debate of an item (Note, the person or all the people whose confidential information is engaged may request the item be debated in public)

GFC Meeting Procedures cont'd

If someone wishes to introduce business, a request must be submitted in writing to the University Secretary and include:

- background information on the issue
- commentary on the importance and impacts of the issue, and identification of possible conflicts
- clear indication of what the champions wish GFC to do, preferably including draft wording of any motions to be considered

The University Secretary, through the Chair will bring the request to the GFC Executive Committee for consideration and possible recommendation to GFC or its standing committees.

GFC Meeting Procedures cont'd

- GFC operates under Robert's Rules of Order.
- A majority of members, excluding vacant positions, shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.
- Each member present, including the chair and ex-officio members, is entitled to one vote. Only members present may vote on any question.
- Abstentions are not counted.
- Voting by proxy is not permitted.
- Members may not send alternates to meetings.

GFC Agenda

A typical GFC agenda is broken up into the following sections:

- Approval of the agenda, including the consent agenda
- Declaring conflicts
- Approval of the minutes from the last GFC meeting
- Business arising from the minutes
- Action and Discussion Items
- Report from the Chair
- Business arising from the consent agenda
- Adjourn

Content of GFC Agenda Material

- Briefing notes are provided for all action, information and discussion items
- A briefing note provides a summary of the item, including any proposed motion, and is intended to provide context for the item

GFC Minutes

- Minutes are approved by GFC at the next meeting
- Errors in the minutes should be reported to the University Secretary or Governance Coordinator, ahead of the meeting if possible, so that the errors can be corrected and reported at the meeting rather than using time at the meeting for this.
- Once approved, the minutes are posted on the GFC webpage.

Actions Items

Action items are proposals that require GFC approval or recommendation by GFC for final approval by the Board.

Examples of action items approved by GFC:

- Policy documents
- Proposal to terminate an academic program
- Proposals for changes to existing program regulations, if in the opinion of the Provost and VPA, APPSC should recommend to GFC

Examples of action items GFC recommends final approval by the Board:

- Proposals to create new programs
- Proposals to create new faculties or departments

Information and Discussion Items

GFC receives reports from the chairs of its standing committees to allow for awareness of what happens at these meetings. These reports are contained in the consent agenda.

GFC receives a report from the Chair

Some items come before GFC for information and discussion only, such as:

- Comprehensive Institutional Plan
- Annual Report

GFC Appointments and Elections

The Executive Committee has responsible for encouraging nominations for vacancies on GFC, its standing committees, and other bodies requiring representation from GFC or the academic community.

The Office of the University Secretariat facilitates elections and nominations to GFC. Each Spring, or as required, notices and call for nominations are made to appropriate bodies, for example:

- Positions to be filled by faculty councils – notices are given to Deans
- Positions to be filled by student associations – notice is given to the student association

Elections by GFC are conducted using an e-voting platform (Simply Voting).

Questions?

If you ever have any questions, please contact the University Secretariat:

Carol Lund, University Secretary

Eileen Hendy, Governance Coordinator

Or, visit the Office of the University Secretariat website at <http://ous.athabascau.ca>