
GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL – OPEN SESSION

October 22, 2021

VIRTUAL

IN ATTENDANCE:

Tim Rahilly, CHAIR	Cynthia Gallop	Stephen Price
Elizabeth Evans, VICE-CHAIR	Shane Gannon	Michael Quinn
Yasmin Ahmed	Geri Lynn Gouglas	Tabussom Qureshi
Terri Baker	Leah Hamilton	Sara Reena
Arianna Borruel	Sally Haney	Kari Roberts
Meagan Bowler	Tim Haney	Paul Rossmann
Fiona Chetty	Brenda Lang	Peter Ryan
Peter Choate	Brad Mahon	Marc Schroeder
Liza Choi	Linda ManyGuns	Bill Scott
Erik Christiansen	Katharine McGowan	Robyn Stewart
David Clemis	Tori McMillan	Spirit River Striped Wolf
Christian Cook	Cari Merkley	Cheryl Techentin
Holly Crowe	Lavinia Moldovan	Annalise Van Ham
Trevor Day	Nabeel Muhammad	Paul Varella
Yasmin Dean	Elaine Mullen	Phil Warsaba
Nader Dehghany	Scott Murray	Gaye Warthe
Israel Dunmade	Nancy Ogden	Therese Wiart Jenkinson
Lee Easton	Kenna Olsen	Kelly Williams-Whitt
Mohamed El Hussein	Carlton Osakwe	Jonathan Withey
Maryam Elahi	Akash Parmar	
Angela Galeos	Jennifer Pettit	

Resources

Amy Nixon, SECRETARY
Sheena Jensen, RECORDING SECRETARY

NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Doug Doucette
Michael Uzoka
Michelle LoGullo

T. Rahilly, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and confirmed quorum.

TERRITORIAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Nabeel Muhammad opened the meeting with a Territorial Land Acknowledgement.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved and seconded:

THAT the Agenda for the October 22, 2021 General Faculties Council open session meeting be approved.

Motion carried by unanimous consent.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Moved and seconded:

THAT the Minutes of the September 10, 2021 General Faculties Council open session meeting be approved, as presented.

Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Business Arising from the Minutes

In reference to the Faculty Hiring Plan that was noted in the previous minutes a concern, which was stated is an ongoing concern, was heard regarding the overreliance on contract faculty members and the need for more full time faculty.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

Extension of Fall 2021 Withdrawal Deadline

Moved and seconded:

THAT General Faculties Council approve a one-time extension of the Fall 2021 withdrawal deadline from November 19, 2021 to December 9, 2021.

Discussion:

- In response to questions, the best practice of post-secondary institutions to have a withdrawal deadline for students was explained. It will not impact the number of students returning next semester or a student's GPA.
- It was also explained that programs with unusual semester start/end dates for courses will be managed directly through the Registrar's Office to work with those programs to make adjustments as necessary.
- A student perspective was shared to support this motion that it will help alleviate stress for students due to factors out of their control (especially during the COVID-19 pandemic) and not have an impact on their GPA.
- A point of order was raised that "Abstain" was not an option for the electronic voting form for GFC members. Abstentions are not captured in the electronic vote and a member does not submit a vote to abstain. Abstentions are noted by referencing the difference between the total number of votes submitted and the total number of eligible voters in attendance.

Motion carried.

Extension of the first day of class for the Winter 2022 Semester and associated policy changes

Moved and seconded:

THAT the first day of Winter 2022 classes be moved from January 6, 2022 to January 10, 2022.

(Amendment to the 'Academic Schedule Policy', section C.3.1 and C.3.2)

THAT the close of the Winter 2022 Drop/Add period be extended from January 14, 2022 to January 18, 2022.
(Ensuring adherence to the 'Registration Policy', section C.5.1.b)

THAT the last day of Winter 2022 classes be moved from April 6, 2022 to April 8, 2022.
(Ensuring adherence to the 'Academic Schedule Policy' section C.1.2, which requires a minimum of 60 instructional days in a 13-week semester)

THAT the first day of the examination period for the Winter 2022 be moved from April 8, 2022 to April 11, 2022 and the last day be changed from April 22, 2022 to April 25, 2022.
(Ensuring adherence to the 'Academic Schedule Policy', section C.1.5, C.1.6 and C.3.4)

THAT the posting of the Winter 2022 Final Exam Timetable be moved from February 16, 2022 to February 18, 2022.
(Ensuring adherence to the "Grades and Examination Policy", section C.2.4.e)

THAT the requirement for the Dean and Registrar to approve unusual start and end dates for courses prior to scheduling be amended to allow changes to those courses after they have been scheduled.
(Amendment to the 'Academic Schedule Policy', section C.1.3)

THAT the Winter 2022 New Student Orientation date be moved from January 5, 2022 to January 7, 2022.
(Amendment to the 'Academic Schedule Policy', C.3.1)

THAT the Winter 2022 withdrawal deadline be moved from March 18, 2022 to April 8, 2022.
(Amendment to the 'Registration Policy', section C.5.2.b)

Discussion:

- In response to a question, it was confirmed that SPoTs completed by students who then withdraw from the course are also withdrawn.
- In response to an inquiry with respect to field schools, it was confirmed that there is constant communication with International Education for those that may be impacted by these shifts and adjustments will be made accordingly. This is also being addressed for lab schedules. It was noted that no concerns had come forward last year with this same extension, and that there are not many field schools in winter.
- A suggestion was made about a permanent extension to the start of winter semester.
- Concern was raised about how these shifts impact the exam schedule and student impact. It is communicated to students that exam schedules are subject to change and an explanation was provided about how the exam schedule is being managed to accommodate students. Any students that may have a conflict will be supported to work through it with them.
- Student perspectives were heard that supported these motions and SAMRU has been regularly communicated with.

Motions carried.

Academic Schedule 2022-2023***Moved and seconded:***

THAT General Faculties Council approve the 2022-2023 Academic Schedule.

Discussion:

- A question was raised if consideration was given about whether or not to hold classes on September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and about that decision-making process.
 - If a decision were made to close campus for September 30, it could be accommodated in terms of being able to meet the number of instructional days required in the Fall semester.
 - The decision for this particular day is an institutional discussion with input from GFC. GFC's role would be about the issue of classes occurring on a given day and not about a university closure.
- A suggestion was shared about considering a different model for New Student Orientation to allocate those two days for instructional days instead, given that NSO moved online this year and beyond the two days in the schedule.
- It was clarified that the decision for GFC at this meeting is about the academic schedule itself and the reasoning for the timing of this approval was given. Adjustments to the schedule could be made with a motion to GFC at another meeting.
- It was asked why this item comes forward to GFC if the dates are driven by policy, and any changes would require a policy change.
 - GFC approves the academic schedule. It was explained that other institutions delegate the approval of the academic schedule to the Registrar, which has not been done at Mount Royal. This could be considered in terms of simplifying the approval process if there was interest to do so.
- It was commented that the issues being raised in discussions seem to relate more to the policy, and as such the policy should be reviewed in detail as a way to address the issues and it was suggested a committee of GFC could do this.
- Student perspective was shared with reflection about this year's National Truth and Reconciliation Day on campus and areas for improvement on the communication of information and execution of events for next year. A suggestion was also made for Territorial Land Acknowledgements to be made at the start of class, if classes are held on September 30.
- The Chair acknowledged that based on these discussions, there needs to be more substantial discussion about the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and to engage a committee of GFC with regard to the Academic Schedule Policy. If appropriate, the GFC Executive Committee will be engaged on how to approach this.

Motion carried.**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION****Winter 2022 Scheduling**

A briefing note was included in the meeting package with context and background information, key considerations and next steps about Winter 2022 scheduling and for bringing this item forward to GFC for discussion. The intent of this item was to provide the opportunity to engage GFC in a discussion related to the pandemic planning that has been undertaken by Academic Programs, Chairs and faculty members to make adjustments to the Winter 2022 schedule. It was highlighted from the briefing note that the GFC Executive

Committee (EC) had met on October 4, 2021 to discuss the letter received from Lee Easton (MRFA President and GFC member) on behalf of the MRFA regarding “Winter 2022 Scheduling Issues and GFC Input” and EC made the decision not to call a special meeting of GFC to discuss this item. Instead, it was decided to bring the opportunity for discussion forward to this meeting.

Discussion:

- In response to a question, an overview was provided about the broad consultations for development of the guiding principles that were used to inform the planning process.
- In response to a request for additional guidance for this discussion, clarification was given about the framing and context of this discussion to be within GFC’s purview, which had been addressed by EC, and continuing to operate in the pandemic.
- In response to a question, it was highlighted from the briefing note how the future for the potential integration of online learning discussions would be undertaken through the established curriculum development processes and structures, which is separate from this discussion.
- It was reiterated that EC did not ignore the letter that requested a special GFC meeting be held and EC considered the request in terms of the role of GFC. Information of how the request had been responded to was also given.
- Members of GFC made comments and suggestions with respect to the scheduling for Winter 2022 and learnings from it in the following areas:
 - Communication of the decision with Faculties and improving future communications
 - Provide GFC with an opportunity (such as a special meeting of GFC) to discuss and provide recommendations on decision-making pieces that have an academic impact before the decision-making occurs. Consult with GFC and provide information on the rationale, goals and objectives that lead to the decisions.
 - Process for requesting a special meeting of GFC.
 - Prepare for future emergency situations to ensure the proper collegial governance bodies (such as GFC and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee) are appropriately engaged to best respond to the situation. For example, a situation when MRU has to pivot to remote learning or suspend operations. It was asked for EC to give thought to this for the future.
 - T. Rahilly noted the request for EC and confirmed a commitment to bringing this forward to EC.
 - Experiences and challenges throughout the pandemic were shared from the perspectives of faculty members and students with respect to the decision-making process and impacts of the University’s decisions made throughout the pandemic.

REPORTS FROM SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

President and Vice-Chancellor

T. Rahilly submitted a written report with updates on acknowledging the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Provost and Vice-President, Academic search, the AVP Equity, Diversity and Inclusion search, November convocation, and the new Deputy Minister.

Provost and Vice-President, Academic (Interim)

E. Evans submitted a written report with academic updates, and updates from the Vice-Provost and AVP, Academic and Vice-Provost and AVP, Students.

Discussion of Reports from Senior Administration

In response to questions about the reports from Senior Administration, additional information was provided on the following:

- Overview of the Associate Vice President, Faculty Affairs role that is being recruited for
- Reporting on updates for the Learning Management System project, which will primarily be reported to GFC through TLC. Updates on the project were provided:
 - An Organizational Change Management Consultant (LMS) will be hired to assist with communication, consultation and change management
 - Implementation of the new LMS is expected to occur before the start of the start of the 2022/23 academic year
- Acknowledgement of a comment related to Indigenization and Decolonization to flag that the charter for the standing committee of GFC in this area is still open ended and to think about how to move ahead. It was also reminded that other committees of GFC have a position for a member from this committee.
- With respect to the University Directive – COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Program and a comment made about needing to have teaching assignments in place for the Winter 2022 semester, it was explained that the timelines are forthcoming and there are plans to communicate them with the Chair's Assembly.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS**Executive Committee (EC)**

T. Rahilly, Chair of EC, submitted a written report on EC meetings and activities in September and October 2021.

Academic Planning and Budget Committee (APBC)

No report.

Academic Programs and Curriculum Committee (APCC)

P. Choate, Chair of APCC, submitted a written report on the October 5, 2021 meeting.

Academic Standards Committee (ASC)

L. Easton, Chair of ASC, submitted a written report on the October 7, 2021 meeting.

Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC)

M. Quinn, Chair of RSC, reported at the meeting that RSC has met and the working groups have been established and begun their work.

Student Affairs Committee (SAC)

P. Warsaba, Chair of SAC, submitted a written report on the September 20, 2021 meeting.

Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC)

C. Cook, Chair of TLC, submitted a written report on the September 30, 2021 meeting. The Celebrate! Event Save the Date is May 4 and 5, 2022. A comment was responded to for clarification about the focus of the Future of

Online Teaching working group of TLC. Their focus is longer-term (not the pandemic-environment) and will use an evidence-based approach as much as possible.

An additional question was asked about the status of the APBC Chair vacancy and a concern with the membership structure of this committee because the position is vacant. T. Rahilly agreed to bring this matter to EC to try to move it forward.

OTHER REPORTS

Report from the Board of Governors

A written report was submitted on the October 7, 2021 board meeting.

Moved and seconded:

THAT the meeting be extended by 20 minutes.

Motion carried by unanimous consent.

QUESTION PERIOD

Written Question

A written question was included in the meeting package that was submitted by Leah Hamilton, Professor, Department of Management & Human Resources; Department of Psychology (cross-appointed) and GFC Member and Shiraz Kurji, Associate Professor, Department of Accounting & Finance. The submission asked questions related to the budget surplus that was generated in 2020-2021 to better understand it and how it came about.

Annalise Van Ham, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, gave a verbal response to the written question submission. This included explanations of the development of the budget for 2021, the impact and restrictions tied to the provincial government funding, addressing the comments about this being a recurring pattern (prior to COVID years, outcomes came close to the projected outcomes), impacts related to COVID-19, the one-time investment priority initiatives, and the budget planning process for the next future years.

In response, comments were heard that there are issues with understanding the impact of budget decisions on teaching and learning and that GFC and Faculty Council's should have an opportunity to provide feedback on those matters and impacts. Concern was raised that areas of the 2017-2022 Academic Plan are not being done. It was specifically asked if the University will commit to upholding the commitments that GFC voted upon and collectively agreed to undertake when they approved the Academic Plan, and will a more robust approach be taken to faculty complement planning that is principled, clear and transparent and allows for balancing the budget constraints and issues with the academic implications of the decisions made.

- T. Rahilly acknowledged the question and comments and it is a complex matter that warrants ongoing conversation. It was noted that the Provost was not present to provide a response.

In response to a question, a status update about the applications for the one-time investment priority initiatives was provided. The President's Executive Committee has reviewed the submissions and further review is occurring. It is anticipated to be brought forward to the Board as part of the budget process. It was noted that the vast majority of those funds are going into academic affairs.

Questions from the Floor

There were no questions from the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

Items Removed for Discussion

No items were removed for discussion.

Items for Information

The following items were received for information:

- MRU Institute Annual Reports
- Accessibility Services Annual Report
- Committee Meeting Minutes
- Faculty Council Approved Curriculum

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

11:16 AM