

GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL – ORIENTATION AND BUSINESS MEETING

September 10, 2021

VIRTUAL

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Resources:

Amy Nixon, SECRETARY
Sheena Jensen, RECORDING SECRETARY

NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Katharine McGowan
Carlton Osakwe
Aida Patient

TERRITORIAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Kelly Williams-Whitt opened the meeting with a Territorial Land Acknowledgement.

GFC ORIENTATION

GFC received an orientation that covered the areas of: University Governance, GFC and its committees, roles and responsibilities, GFC meetings, and policy framework.

T. Rahilly, Chair, called the business meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and confirmed quorum. The meeting was live streamed for observers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved and seconded:

THAT the Agenda for the September 10, 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 May 28, 2021 General Faculties Council open session meeting be approved, as amended.

Amendments:

- To indicate that the following motion was defeated by a tie vote: *“THAT GFC recommends that Administration consider an increase to remote delivery limits to 40%”*.
- To clarify that in the *“Planning for Fall 2021 Update”* section, the intention for the concerns raised about the future of remote working for staff was about a continuation of remote work opportunities beyond the pandemic.

Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

GFC Bylaw Revisions

Moved and seconded:

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the GFC Bylaw revisions, effective immediately.

Discussion:

- The intent of a proposed addition for an electronic voting provision for GFC committees (new section 10.2.) was explained, highlighting from a procedural point of view the importance of having the ability to undertake urgent work when necessary between meetings.
 - Concern was raised with the wording that the Chair has to give consent for an item to be voted on electronically, which some members expressed they are uncomfortable with.
 - It was requested the Executive Committee reconsider the wording of this section.
- Clarification for the proposed additional information in Bylaw 8.1.e. for “invited guests” in closed sessions was provided. Invited guests would be resources invited to speak to their respective agenda item on a closed session agenda, if required.
- With the concerns raised about section 10.2., the following motion was made to divide the main motion:

Moved and seconded:

THAT the main motion be divided to deal separately with the proposed electronic voting provision for GFC committees (10.2).

Motion carried.

Amended main motion:

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the GFC Bylaw revisions, effective immediately, minus the electronic voting provision for GFC committees (10.2).

Motion carried.

It was agreed that the GFC Executive Committee will discuss the electronic voting provision for GFC committees (10.2) at their next meeting to bring back to GFC.

REPORTS FROM SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

President and Vice-Chancellor

T. Rahilly submitted a written report with updates on the AVP, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion search, June convocation, and recognizing September 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation). Questions were responded to for additional information about the audit process for COVID-19 vaccine declarations, and the AVP, EDI position and search committee.

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 the Vice-Provost and AVP, Students. K. Williams-Whitt was welcomed as the new Dean of Business and Communication Studies, and the faculty members who received approval for tenure were congratulated.

Questions about various areas of the report were responded to for additional information and clarification, including:

- Plans for addressing full-time/part-time faculty ratios with respect to the Student Affairs section of the report.
- Opportunities for students to participate in the planned activities for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. Faculty are encouraged to leverage this day as an opportunity for engaging with their students to learn about truth and reconciliation.
- Concerns about availability of microphones in classrooms, which required follow-up with the individual raising the question following the meeting.
- With respect to the Faculty Hiring Plan that Provost's Council will be working on, clarity was provided about the role of Provost's Council in terms of decision-making and in consideration of GFC's oversight of long term planning at MRU.
- Impact of extending the student withdrawal from a course deadline to the Student Perception of Teaching (SPoT). This will be addressed as part of potential implications when the motion comes forward at the next meeting. It was noted that the deadline for SPoTs are articulated in the Collective Agreement.

Discussion of Reports from Senior Administration

Annalise Van Ham, VP Finance and Administration, provided additional information about the auditing of COVID-19 vaccine declarations, the rapid testing rollout and other COVID-19 protocols.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

Executive Committee (EC)

T. Rahilly, Chair of EC, submitted a written report for the September 1, 2021 EC meeting.

OTHER REPORTS

Report from the Board of Governors

A written report was submitted for the June 11, 2021 open session board meeting. A question was responded to about how the Board of Governors receives reports and recommendations from GFC. It was explained that the President and Vice-Chancellor is the liaison between the Board and GFC, providing regular reports on GFC meetings and bringing forward items for recommendation to the Board for consideration, which are included as items on the Board meeting agenda.

Additional information with respect to the Board's approval of the revocation of the Personal Harassment Policy was provided in response to a question. Due to challenges with that policy, it was revoked and a new Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy was approved.

QUESTION PERIOD

Written Questions

No written questions were submitted to GFC.

Questions from the Floor

In response to a question and concerns raised, an explanation was provided to give a better understanding of how a surplus projected to exceed \$6 million beyond what was planned in the budget came about and the context of why budget cut scenarios were required. There were impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic which were very fluid and challenging to project in terms of budget outcomes with revenue losses. Concerns about the impacts of the requested budget cuts to Faculties and staff were heard and it was noted that discussions are taking place about the future use of this surplus outcome. It was explained that a surplus is required and moved to reserves to fund maintenance and initiatives beyond the budget cycle to support the necessary investments. In response to an additional question about the strategic priorities of the institution with the budget, it was clarified that there have been no decisions at this time regarding allocation of these funds.

CONSENT AGENDA

Items for Approval

Moved and seconded:

THAT the General Faculties Council approve the Consent Agenda items for the September 10, 2021 Open Session:

- Health, Community and Education Faculty Council Terms of Reference

THAT the revised Health, Community and Education Faculty Council Terms of Reference be approved.

Motion carried.

Items Removed for Discussion

Committee Charter Revisions for Academic Planning and Budget (APBC), Academic Standards (ASC), and Research and Scholarship (RSC) Committees

Moved and seconded:

THAT the revisions for the APBC, ASC, and RSC Charters be approved.

Discussion:

- A concern was discussed about the proposed change to the Chair/Vice-Chair positions in the RSC Charter, specifically that the Chair role would no longer be held by an Academic Staff Member and it would be a non-academic staff member.
 - Background information and rationale was provided as to how RSC arrived at this recommendation and the benefits it would bring.
 - It was questioned whether the Committee had considered other alternatives rather than a structural change to address efficiency/access to information issues when agenda planning. It was explained that all members can bring forward items for the agenda and the Chair does not control the agenda. The Chair ensures an agenda is set for each meeting and supports discussions at the meeting.
- With the concerns raised, the following motion was made to divide the main motion:

Moved and seconded:

THAT the main motion be divided to deal separately with APBC and ASC.

Motion carried.

Amended main motion:

THAT the revisions for the APBC and ASC Charters be approved.

Motion carried.

Moved and seconded:

THAT the revisions for the RSC Charter be approved.

Discussion:

- Further explanation of RSC's unanimous decision to bring this proposed structure change in the Chair/Vice-Chair in the Charter was provided. It was reiterated that this change addresses the inefficiencies the Chair and Vice-Chair had experienced when preparing agendas. Because RSC's activities are reflective of the Office of Research, Scholarship and Community Engagement, which is overseen by the Senior Administrator to the Committee, RSC members had agreed it would be more efficient to have them chair the RSC meetings.

Motion carried.

Items for Information

The following items were received for information:

- GFC 2021-2022 Meeting Schedule
- GFC 2021-2022 Membership
- Committee Meeting Minutes

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

11:23AM