

General Faculties Council – OPEN SESSION
September 19, 2025 at 9:45am – 11am
Lincoln Park Room J301

IN ATTENDANCE:

Tim Rahilly, CHAIR
Chad London, VICE-CHAIR
Tala Abu Hayyaneh
Ademola Adesola
Ayden Ali
Karen Atkinson-Leadbearer
Neil Brigden
Katherine Bright
Todd Burton
David Clemis
Trevor Day
Karim Dharamsi
Lee Easton
Meekena Erkin
John Fischer
Dimitra Fotopoulos
Shane Gannon
Chris Gillanders
Geri Lynn Gouglas
Sarah Hamilton

Kevin Hayes
Lori Kearney
Kalen Keavey
Raniah Khorga
Carol Krol
Michael Lam
Brenda Lang
Michelle LoGullo
Margaret MacConnachie
Robyn Madden
Moussa Magassa
Jon Mee
Sara Memon
Lavinia Moldovan
Amal Mouaouia
Mary-Lee Mulholland
Scott Murray
Gloria Muskaj
Nicoleta Nedelcu
Monica Pauls

Jennifer Pettit
Katharin Pritchard
Milena Radzikowska
Kari Roberts
Melanie Rogers
Chris Rogerson
Peter Ryan
Sara Sharun
Leda Stawnychko
Simran Tamber
Cheryl Techentin
Joyce Totton
Tanya Trussler
Deepa Upadhyaya
Phil Warsaba
Gini Weber
Kelly Williams-Whitt
Jonathan Withey
Michelle Yeo

Resources

Amy Nixon, SECRETARY
Sheena Dyer, RECORDING SECRETARY

Guests

Leah Hamilton, Vice Dean, Faculty of Business, Communication Studies & Aviation
Corinne Mason, Professor, Faculty of Arts

Resources

Amy Nixon, SECRETARY
Sheena Dyer, RECORDING SECRETARY

NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Meagan Bowler	Stephen Price	Connie Van der Byl
Chris Lovallo	Nick Strzalkowski	
Tori McMillan	Keir Stuhlmiller	

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:47AM.

Land Acknowledgement

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

1. Approval of Agenda

Moved and seconded:

THAT the Agenda for the September 19, 2025 General Faculties Council open session meeting be approved.

Motion carried by unanimous consent

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

2.1. Minutes from May 16, 2025

Moved and seconded:

THAT the Minutes of the May 16, 2025 General Faculties Council open session meeting be approved.

Motion carried by unanimous consent

2.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

3. Fairness and Safety in Sport Policy and Procedure

GFC received the Fairness and Safety in Sport Policy and Procedure for discussion and advice. The Chair opened the discussion with comments on the policy's impact on the MRU community and university autonomy. The Chair noted the consideration that was given to the policy's development and the University's compliance with the Act. He also highlighted other background and context information from the briefing note provided in the meeting package.

A GFC member raised concern about the policy and indicated their intention to propose a motion. The member also requested the Chair give permission for two guests, Leah Hamilton and Corinne Mason, to speak to the motion. The Chair put forward a Motion to Consider the proposed motion:

Moved and seconded:

THAT General Faculties Council consider a proposed motion for the Fairness and Safety in Sport Policy and Procedure.

Motion Carried

Moved and seconded:

THAT the General Faculties Council expresses its deep concern to the Board of Governors regarding Alberta's 'Fairness and Safety in Sport Act' (Bill 29), and the mandated MRU policy that was approved to comply with that legislation, due to:

- 1) the discrimination it creates by excluding trans girls and women from sport;
- 2) the risks of privacy violations, humiliation and harassment it creates for all female athletes; and
- 3) the threat it poses to the autonomy of universities and other post-secondary institutions across Alberta.

Discussion:

- The Chair invited the two guests to speak to the motion
- A statement was read in opposition to the policy and support for the proposed motion, acknowledged administration's careful efforts in crafting the procedures, and referenced research that is ongoing with focus groups involving families and individuals affected by this Act
- Concerns raised about the policy's potential negative impacts on youth and students included:
 - effects on mental health
 - involvement in sport
 - experiences of transphobia
 - infringement on Charter rights
 - high risk of exclusionary outcomes (citing research on the harm caused by similar policies)
 - violation of transrights and anticipated harm
- A suggestion was made for MRU to consider how it can support impacted individuals during policy implementation, and to monitor the use of this policy and document its impact
- Other comments in support of the motion were made, including that there have been commitments from other groups in the MRU community about their continued advocacy against this Act

Motion carried

The Chair acknowledged the comments and suggestions made, and outlined next steps. The MRU community will be asked to provide feedback on the policy that will be shared with the Board of Governors, along with this GFC motion, for their October 23, 2025 meeting, and also shared with members of the Government of Alberta.

4. Committee Chair Reports

Written Committee Chair reports of the most recent Committee meetings were provided for each of the following Committees:

- 4.1. Executive Committee
- 4.2. Academic Programs and Curriculum Committee

It was noted that the APCC Chair position remains vacant and GFC academic staff members can express their interest in this role at any time by contacting the University Secretariat.

5. Question Period**5.1. Written Questions**

No written questions were submitted for inclusion in the package.

5.2. Questions from the Floor

- What is the status of responding to the EDI Task Force Final Report on addressing racism at MRU from 2023, the status of the development of the EDIA Strategic Plan, and the reason for the name change of the EDI office to "Office of Community and Belonging"?
 - It was explained that the EDI plan development is underway and on track to be completed this Fall term

- It was clarified that department name change had been communicated over the summer
- A follow-up question requested additional context about that department's name change, noting that they did not see a communication about the name change that was mentioned, and referenced similar changes at other Alberta universities. It was asked if MRU had received any government directives regarding EDI initiatives and if the name change was in response to any such directives? And if not, to explain why MRU is visibly stepping back from its EDI commitment?
 - The Chair clarified that MRU has not received any such directives and the name change was due to an organizational change, not a stepping back from its EDI commitment
 - The Chair also provided an update with respect to institutional autonomy and the work being done by the "Mintz Panel" (Expert Panel on Post-Secondary Institution Funding and Alberta's Competitiveness)
- With respect to the October 20, 2023 GFC motion to approve the academic schedule with the aim to revisit the Academic Schedule policy to reassess if the timing of the Fall break has been successful, it was asked if there is discussion to keep the timing the same or to change it?
 - It was reminded that updates on this topic have been shared in the GFC Chair and Vice-Chair reports
 - GFC will receive information for discussion at the October 17, 2025 meeting
 - It was also clarified that any change to the Fall reading break would require a change to policy
- A follow-up question about the EDI Task Force Final Report on addressing racism at MRU requested clarification on the status of a response to this report
 - It was clarified that the report was received by Deans' Council and shared with the AVP, Community and Belonging for consideration during development of that office's strategic plan
- With respect to recent events about Charlie Kirk and the University of Alberta's response to a faculty member's comments, will there be a communication from MRU for potentially affected MRU faculty regarding free speech?
 - The Chair acknowledged the concern raised and that it is part of an ongoing dialogue

6. Other Reports

6.1. GFC Chair and Vice-Chair Report

The GFC Chair and Vice-Chair submitted a written report.

Discussion:

- A question was raised about the timelines for the new AI Steering Group's work, raising a concern that there is an urgent issue for both faculty and staff to have a policy around AI
 - It was reminded that guidelines for responsible use of AI for teaching and learning are available, and that a purpose of the GenAI in Teaching and Learning

Working Group, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, is to provide policy recommendations to the GFC, TLC, and other groups as appropriate

- The focus of this new AI Steering Group was explained, as highlighted in the report, which may include policy-related recommendations based on identifying opportunities and gaps

6.2. Board of Governors Meeting Summary

A written summary of the May 29, 2025 Board of Governors meeting was provided for information.

7. For Information

The following items were provided for information:

- 7.1. GFC and Committees Meeting Schedules
- 7.2. GFC Membership List
- 7.3. Committee Meeting Minutes
- 7.4. GFC Orientation Information 2025-26 Presentation

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Adjournment 10:50AM