

Approved minutes for Meeting 70 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on April 21, 2022 via Microsoft Teams.

**Present:** Peter Scott (Chair), F. Haider Alvi, Murray Anderson, Jolene Armstrong, Jane Arscott, Raju Aryal, Luisa Barton, Terry Beckman, Rhiannon Bury, Leah Campbell, Priscilla Campeau, Marc Cels, Karie-Lynn Chambers, Alex Clark, Nichole Collins, Mark Crawford, Graeme Denney, Elaine Fabbro, Glen Farrelly, Shawn Fraser, Karen Fletcher, Stella George, Lorelei Hanson, Alyson House, Richard Huntrods, Angela Kuzyk, Annette Lane, Elizabeth Loree, Douglas MacLeod, Chris McTavish, Deborah Meyers, Sue Mitchell, Mark Morpurgo, Ken Munyikwa, Terra Murray, Hugh Notman, Agnieszka Palalas, Andrew Perrin, Matthew Prineas, Anne-Marie Scott, Jessica Butts Scott, Myra Tait, Adrienne Weare, Barret Weber, Kristine Williamson, Shauna Zenteno

**Regrets:** Anita Girvan, Kareena Hart, Bob Heller, Vive Kumar, Glynnis Lieb, Manijeh Mannani, Alain May, Jennifer Schaeffer

**Governance Staff:** Sara Kunto, Chief Governance Officer and General Counsel, Allison Strydhorst (Recording Secretary)

The Chair welcomed new members Leah Campbell, AUSU representative and Priscilla Campeau, Chair, Nuksahtowin.

### Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

## 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 1.1 Motion 70-01** That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda and thereby approves the consent agenda including the minutes of Meeting 69 held March 16, 2022, as amended.

**Clark/A.M. Scott**

Amendment to March 16, 2022 minutes:

- 4.7 in the discussion notes, add the word “anti” before referring to Indigenous racism. Updated to read “anti-Indigenous racism”.

**Carried**

## 2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 2.1** Subject to the [Code of Conduct for Members of the University Community](#) and the Conflict of Interest provision (clauses 11.1 and 11.2) of the [General Faculties Council Rules](#), members will be asked to declare any conflict they may have with respect to particular agenda items contained within the meeting agenda.

No conflicts declared.

### 3. REPORTS

#### 3.1 Report of the Chair

The Chair presented this item, noting the Federal Budget that was released did not have significant cuts to the sector, AU's new partnership with McDonalds, and PowerED's recent awards for collaboration in creating the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification.

Discussion held on Investment Management Agreement (IMA) metrics and enrolments, noting the metrics used for the IMA are overall total enrolment, and the management of enrolments are elements of Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM). The Provost and Vice-President Academic committed to bringing a presentation on SEM forward to GFC.

Discussion held on the Near-Virtual initiative. The Chair noted discussions are ongoing between the Government of Alberta and AU, and the Government has requested AU review the Near-Virtual strategy by the middle of the year. The Chair also noted that a hiring plan and a land use plan are both in development. The Chair informed members that the land use plan in development would be brought forward to a future GFC meeting for discussion.

#### 3.2 Faculty of Business Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Business presented this item.

#### 3.3 Faculty of Graduate Studies Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies presented this item.

#### 3.4 Faculty of Health Disciplines Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Health Disciplines presented this item.

#### 3.5 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Quarterly Report

The Acting Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences presented this item.

#### 3.6 Faculty of Science and Technology Quarterly Report

The Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology presented this item. Discussion held on workload planning, resourcing, program growth, and the balance required to ensure sustainable growth at the institution, noting workload analysis should be completed at a faculty or institutional level with the institutional focus guided by Human Resources (HR). The Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer informed members work has reconvened with formal discussions occurring on workload challenges and an Institutional Workload Plan will be brought forward to a future GFC meeting.

Discussion held on Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) in relation to workload analysis, with each faculty needing to understand where growth and decline are occurring. The Provost and Vice President Academic noted that his office along with Academic Operation leads and Deans are exploring an academic plan to help inform the overall Integrated Resource Planning.

#### 4. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### 4.1 Strategic Issues Roundtable

###### 4.1.1 Decolonization

Member Tait led the discussion highlighting the desire to bring ideas and questions to GFC to make a concerted effort towards decolonization. She notified GFC of another reported discovery of unmarked graves and that as a whole we are a nation complacent with genocide and the conversation today is an urgent need to address what we can do as thinking and caring human beings to address the impacts of genocide. She brought forward three points for discussion:

- Collegial Governance – the desire for GFC to come together in a collaborative way to solve some issues identified at AU pertaining to decolonization including diplomacy and speaking truth to power. Notwithstanding budgetary constraints, how to build collegiality so as not to be adversary and how does GFC facilitate hard discussions that ask difficult questions. Noted working with Nukskahtowin and their strategic plan to see where priorities can be aligned.
- Roles of settlers – noting most members are not Indigenous Peoples, there are many good things occurring at AU to decolonize course curriculum and the counting of Indigenous learners, although the effort is being made, it is not coordinated and occurring in a siloed approach. Implored members to explore how efforts could be more coordinated to be more effective and to expand the resources available. She noted her request to establish a standing committee to guide, promote and support decolonization at an institutional level and the role of settlers to do the work of decolonization and to bring those efforts together in a more meaningful and effective way. Member Tait suggested the land acknowledgement be offered when the GFC meeting is called to order.
- Indigenous Faculty – noted she is unsure of her place at AU and whether she belongs and asked what is being done to attract, support and value Indigenous Faculty; asked how Indigenous Faculty access the Nukskahtowin ceremonial space and how do Indigenous Faculty become more involved in Nukskahtowin. Implored members that Indigenous Faculty cannot be delegated to their own areas, and they need to be brought into the big picture of the circle. The Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer spoke to Indigenous Faculty not feeling welcomed and offered to speak offline with her, noting the intent is to achieve and advance decolonization and indigeneity, highlighting the work completed so far.

The Chair, Nukskahtowin invited Member Tait to engage and work with Nukskahtowin and Elder in Residence. She noted that the number of Indigenous Faculty at AU is the highest it has ever been, provided a brief history of Indigenous Faculty at AU, and noted the establishment of an Internal Allies Committee who will be meeting in the fall. She also noted ongoing discussions between the President and Nukskahtowin have highlighted the need for a common place to discuss important issues such as unmarked graves, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), missing and murdered Indigenous women, Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples and recommendations that have not been addressed. She further noted work on these issues will be conducted with input from the Internal Allies Committee and Council of Elders. She also noted the community involvement from the Town of Athabasca and the creation of a gallery for learners and community members of Indigenous art. Work still needs to be completed on attracting Indigenous Faculty to AU and redesigning of Indigenous Studies and although progress being made, the need to incorporate oral traditions is still required. The President noted GFC would welcome regular reports from Nukskahtowin.

Discussion held on problematic content within course materials which reinforces stereotypes, and Indigenous learners inability to access accessibility services requiring medical gatekeeping due to harm caused by the healthcare system.

#### **4.2 Integrated Learning Environment (ILE) Update**

The Provost and Vice President Academic and Deputy Provost, Academic Operations presented this item prefacing that the ILE has a Steering Committee consisting of the Deans and an Academic Users Group to address specific questions on course design.

The Deputy Provost, Academic Operations noted the scope of the initial launch has changed to deliver the learning environment piece sooner to learners. Discussion held on workload and the transfer of courses from Moodle over the course of the next year and the desire to have the list of courses being transferred communicated. The Deputy Provost, Academic Operations noted the request would be brought forward to the Steering Committee.

#### **4.3 Indigenous Student Research**

The Dean, Faculty of Business introduced this item and welcomed Associate Professor, Faculty of Business and Chair/Assistant Professor, Indigenous Business to present their research findings to date, noting this work is funded by the Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA). The Indigenous Student Research was researching Indigenous voices and the under representation of learners in the fields of accounting and business. The Associate Professor, Faculty of Business informed members that once the report is finalized, they will share the report with GFC members.

#### **4.4 Athabasca University Brand Strategy**

The Vice President, University Relations and Associate Vice President, Communications presented this item providing an overview of the research conducted and the key elements of the AU brand that would be changing, noting an internal roll out of the refreshed brand would commence this summer with an external rollout commencing in the fall of 2022. The Brand Strategy will be presented to the Board of Governors at their May meeting.

### **5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA**

None

### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

#### **6.1 The meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.**