

Approved minutes for Meeting 74 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on September 1, 2022 via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Peter Scott (Chair), Nina Acharya, Carmen Allen, Josie Auger, F. Haider Alvi, Jolene Armstrong, Terry Beckman, Davina Bhandar, Priscilla Campeau, Karie-Lynn Chambers, Nichole Collins, Mark Crawford, Eliana El Khoury, Elaine Fabbro, Shawn Fraser, Karen Fletcher, Stella George, Anita Girvan, Alyson House, Richard Huntrods, Paul Kellogg, Vive Kumar, Angela Kuzyk, Jacqueline Limoges, Manijeh Mannani, Deborah Meyers, Sue Mitchell, Mark Morpurgo, Terra Murray, Agnieszka Palalas, Cori Paul, Andrew Perrin, Sarah Reid, Ann Reynolds, Kristin Rodier, Jennifer Schaeffer, Anne-Marie Scott, Jessica Butts Scott, Myra Tait, Ching Tan, Lorraine Thirsk, Vina Tirven-Gadum, Lisa Watson, Kristine Williamson, Shauna Zenteno

Regrets: Murray Anderson, Alex Clark, Lynn Corcoran, Glen Farrelly, Alain May, Ken Munyikwa, Matthew Prineas, Dur-E-Najaf Syed

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

The Chair welcomed the following new members to General Faculties Council:

- Lorraine Thirsk, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Lynn Corcoran, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Jacqueline Limoges, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Coral (Cori) Paul, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Davina Bhandar, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Kristin Rodier, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Josie Auger, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Vina Tirven-Gadum, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Paul Kellogg, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Eliana El Khoury, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Manju (Nina) Acharya, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Stella George, Faculty of Science and Technology (appointed for a second term)
- Qing Tan, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Carmen Allen, Faculty of Science and Technology

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and delivered the AU land acknowledgement.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 1.1 Motion 74-01** That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda and thereby approves the consent agenda including the minutes of Meeting 72 held June 23, 2022, as presented.

Reynolds/Fabbro

The Chair noted Consent Agenda 8, Draft 2022-2023 GFC Workplan, is provided for information. The GFC Executive Committee discussed the workplan on August 22, 2022, and further discussion will be held at Deans' Council before being brought back to GFC.

Clarification was sought as to whether the motion for agenda item 4.3.1 is debatable after a mover and seconder is confirmed. The Chief Governance Officer and General Counsel (CGOGC) noted that the motion is debatable. The Chair noted that the In Camera session was approved to be included on the agenda by the Executive Committee of GFC and that its purpose was to facilitate an informed consultation of GFC on the Minister's directives of July 29, 2022 which required the sharing of confidential information that could not be shared or discussed in the public session.

A further query about whether GFC open session agenda packages are publicly available. The CGOGC noted that GFC meeting agendas and approved minutes are posted on the CGOGC website and will consider whether posting GFC meeting agenda packages is appropriate and will report back to the GFC Executive Committee at a later date.

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.

It was suggested the AU Land Development and Real Estate Plan consider the "Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages" to support the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Indigenous Languages Act.

Discussion held on the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) office and resources attached to the initiative. It was noted that:

- a member requested clarity on specific equity actions and steps being undertaken
- work is ongoing with respect to how other post-secondary institutions (PSI) are structuring their EDI offices
- the structure of the EDI office and the EDI officer role will be solidified after consultation across AU has concluded
- the impacts that relocation of staff could have on equity deserving groups
- the Chief Human Resources Officer advised that more information on the progress of EDI at AU can be provided at a future GFC meeting
- ongoing EDI work is occurring at the University behind the scenes as well that is not always reflected in the Report of the Chair

The Chair and Vice-President University Relations thanked Jessica Butts Scott, Director, PowerED™ for her work and contributions to GFC and AU in her over 10 years at AU. Jessica will be leaving AU on September 5th to begin her new role at the University of Alberta as the inaugural Associate Vice

President of Online and Continuing Education. Cynthia Lamberton-Poon will be representing PowerED™ on GFC until a new Director is recruited.

4. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

4.1 Library & Scholarly Resources Annual Report 2021-2022

The University Librarian presented this item noting the last year has been very productive with substantial progress made around research data management. Discussion held on the thesis repository and the consolidation of the two existing repositories. It was noted that a report has been received from Hanover and consultation will be completed with other post-secondary institutions to explore how they are handling their resources. Further consultation will be held with faculty councils and future discussions will be held with GFC to ensure the needs of the institution are fully understood.

4.2 Athabasca University Annual Report 2021-2022 (Draft)

The Chair presented this item, noting the financially challenging year as enrolments were in decline.

Discussions held on:

- mentioning of the near virtual initiative considering recent Ministerial directives - the chair noted the significance of this initiative and that it is an important strategy for AU
- including information on the current negotiations with union partners – the chair noted negotiations are occurring this fiscal year and will be reported on in the 2022-2023 annual report
- revising reference to excellent access for the under-served in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities on page 6 as some rural remote communities have poor internet services and had difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic
- impact tuition increases may have had on the reduction in enrolment numbers
- implementation of EDI – the chair noted the work completed during 2021-2022 is noted in the annual report
- fast tracking course changes to remove offensive course content
- collaboration across AU and with Nukskahotwin to continue efforts to decolonize and indigenize all aspects of our community

It was noted, pursuant to the *Post-secondary Learning Act* (PSLA), AU must submit an annual report to the Government, and the template for the annual report is provided by the Government.

The Chair welcomed members to send him further comments and he will pass the comments along to the team working on the Annual Report.

Break 2:23-2:33 p.m.

4.3 Strategic Issues Roundtable

4.3.1 Motion 74-02 That the General Faculties Council moves In Camera

Perrin/Zenteno

Discussion was held on the rationale for moving In Camera.

The Chair commented on the importance for GFC, under the bicameral governance structure, to be consulted on and discuss the Minister of Advanced Education's unilateral amendments to AU's Vision, Mission, and Mandate via the 2022-2025 Investment Management Agreement (IMA) dated July 29, 2022, as well as the new performance metrics as contained therein. The Chair reiterated that in order for GFC to have a fulsome discussion and provide reasoned advice to the Board as is the right of GFC under the PSLA, GFC was provided with confidential information to help inform that consultation. The Chair confirmed that the confidential documents provided can only be discussed In Camera and further noted that if GFC did not go In Camera, GFC could discuss only that information which is public, and could not discuss any of the documents provided to it in confidence by the Board.

Carried

**In favor: 37
Opposed: 3
Abstained: 5**

4.3.2 Motion 74-04 That the General Faculties Council exits In Camera

Kellogg/Watts

Carried

Following is the motion approved In Camera.

Motion 74-03 WHEREAS Athabasca University is a Comprehensive Academic and Research University (CARU) under the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA);

AND WHEREAS in accordance with the PSLA the General Faculties Council has the authority to make recommendations to the board with respect to any matters it considers to be of interest to the university.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT General Faculties Council recommend that the Board reject the changes made by the Minister of Advanced Education to the Mission, Vision and Mandate of Athabasca University through his 2022-2025 Investment Management Agreement (IMA) dated July 29, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT General Faculties Council recommend that the Board not agree to include the additional performance metrics inserted by the Minister of Advanced Education in his 2022-2025 IMA dated July 29, 2022, and specifically any performance metrics not previously included in the Board approved 2022-2025 IMA dated March 30, 2022.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT General Faculties Council affirms the importance of Athabasca University's relationship with the Town, County and Region of Athabasca and is committed to ongoing consultation with local community partners about Athabasca University's innovative academic and research purpose.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the General Faculties Council recommend that the Board support local economic development in the Town, County and Region of Athabasca in innovative ways which do not require any forced relocation of employees to the Town, County and Region of Athabasca.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the General Faculties Council, including its Executive Committee, deems this decision to be in the public interest and therefore resolves that it be included in the public minutes of the General Faculties Council and that the President transmit the recommendations to the Board of Governors.

Collins/Perrin

Carried

**In Favor: 42
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 0**

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA
None

6. ADJOURNMENT

6.1 The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.