

Approved minutes for Meeting 78 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on March 13, 2023 via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Alex Clark (Chair), Jolene Armstrong, Josie Auger, Nina Acharya, Carmen Allen, F. Haider Alvi, Terry Beckman, Walid Belassi, Davina Bhandar, Priscilla Campeau, Karie-Lynn Chambers, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Nichole Collins, Lynn Corcoran, Michael Dabrowski, Elaine Fabbro, Glen Farrelly, Shawn Fraser, Karen Fletcher, Stella George, Richard Huntrods, Steven Johnson, Paul Kellogg, Vive Kumar, Angela Kuzyk, Cynthia Lambertson-Poon, Jacqueline Limoges, Manijeh Mannani, Alain May, Deborah Meyers, Sue Mitchell, Mark Morpurgo, Ken Munyikwa, Terra Murray, Agnieszka Palalas, Andrew Perrin, Matthew Prineas, Sarah Reid, Ann Reynolds, Kristin Rodier, Jennifer Schaeffer, Anne-Marie Scott, Bailey Sousa, Dur-E-Najaf Syed, Ching Tan, Lorraine Thirsk, Vina Tirven-Gadum, Lisa Watson, Kristine Williamson, Shauna Zenteno

Regrets: Murray Anderson, Mark Crawford, Cori Paul, Myra Tait

Others: Raza Hussain, Pauline Smeltz, Robyn Stobbs

Governance Staff: Melissa Sadownik (Acting 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:

- Steven Johnson, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Martha Cleveland-Innes, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m., introduced himself and Melissa Sadownik, Acting Chief Governance Officer and Legal Counsel and delivered the AU land acknowledgement.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 1.1 Motion 78-01 That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda and thereby approves the consent agenda, including the minutes of Meeting 77 held January 31, 2023, as presented.

Zenteno/Fabbro

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 following:

- employee engagement survey session will be held March 16, 2023
- recognition of Peter Scott's contributions to GFC
- work continuing with Nukskahtowin and with learners
- upcoming meetings with the president and faculties, teams, and groups across AU
- the importance of strategic planning in the coming year

Discussions held on:

- workplace optimization, utilization of space in Athabasca and the Land Development and Real Estate Plan Steering Committees progress

Member Kellogg provided his reflection on the process for the recent presidential changes.

4. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

4.1 2023-2024 Athabasca University Integrated Resource Plan (Draft)

The Chair and Vice President Finance and Performance Services & CFO presented this item noting the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) to be presented to the Board of Governors at their meeting on March 24, 2023 for approval.

Discussions held on:

- transparency in relation to the Integrated Learning Environment (ILE) budget, which is reported on at the ILE Steering Committee and commitment to provide future updates on the ILE
- fluctuation in enrolment levels at the institution and the impacts on the IRP, caused by external socio-economic factors, the pandemic, and noting the effect the ILE could have on enrolment levels
- future IRP planning assumptions
- funding and grant level impacts on the IRP
- student retention, recruitment, tuition fees and Strategic Enrolment Management
- performance based funding metrics implications
- investment in digital security enhancements and Cloud Architecture
- student representation on the Integrated Learning Resources Working Group

4.2 Institutional Research Data Management (RDM) Strategy

The Associate Vice President Research, Associate Vice President Academic Resources and Research Data Management Librarian presented this item, noting the RDM Strategy will be coming back to GFC in May for approval.

Discussions held on:

- involvement of student and faculty members involved in research
- the requirement for universities to have a RDM strategy
- process for researchers to request and apply for access to undertake a research project

Break 3:00-3:10 p.m.

4.3 Research Status and Strategy Update

The Associate Vice President Research presented this item noting:

- the Strategic Research Plan will be presented to GFC in the fall of 2023 for approval
- the Pure Implementation Strategic Project is aiming for a soft launch in May 2023 and faculty leaders and academics are encouraged to complete their profiles and requests in relation to this

Discussion held on:

- the strategic plan and focus around United Nations Sustainable Development goals
- developments on the Canadian Research Chair (CRC) Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan
- research repository software

4.4 Strategic Issues

4.4.1 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Update

The Provost and Vice President Academic and Interim Chief Human Resources Officer presented this item noting:

- work conducted to date by faculties, student leaders and grassroot efforts
- recruitment for an EDI leader at the institution to implement commitments identified in AU EDI Action Plan and EDI Framework
- progress on the CRC EDI Action Plan
- update on the steps taken to identify a search firm for an EDI Leader at the institution

Discussion held on:

- how the GFC can support the EDI office and how the institution can best utilize the internal expertise to support the office
- how the search firm was selected, the title of the EDI officer, the department the EDI office will reside in, how the EDI officer will connect with all groups at the institution and ensuring the EDI officer has independence to speak openly and honestly
- the current EDI environment in the United States
- the budget assigned to the office and position

It was further noted that the search committee will be convening next week and that the committee would be chaired by the Provost and Vice President Academic.

4.4.2 Frontline Learner Services Transformation

The Vice President University Relations and Director, Marketing and Recruitment presented this item noting:

- the project focused on the first point of contact for a learner
- the 2019-2020 current state analysis identified 28 contact centers that serve as a learners first point of contact

Discussion held on:

- academics who are also a learners first point of contact and training that may be available for faculty and tutor members and the connection between the Frontline Learner Services Transformation (FLST) and OneAU Academic Support initiative

- the various information channels learners use to interact with the institution and exploration of tools including live chat, virtual bot chat and social media and the integrations that will identify previous interactions with a learner
- the communication methods that will be used to interact with learners in secure environments
- the timeline for the implementation of the Frontline Learner Services Transformation (FLST) by March 2024

It was suggested updates on the FLST implementation be provided at future GFC meetings.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

None

The Chair thanked members Meyers and Scott for their service on and contributions to General Faculties Council.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.