

Approved minutes for Meeting 84 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on March 11, 2024 via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Alex Clark (Chair), Nina Acharya, Carmen Allen, F. Haider Alvi, Carrie Anton, Jolene Armstrong, Walid Belassi, Davina Bhandar, Chantel Bradley, Derek Briton, Caroline Buzanko, Priscilla Campeau, Karie-Lynn Chambers, Andrew Chiarella, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Lynn Corcoran, Mark Crawford, Glen Farrelly, Shawn Fraser, Stella George, Megan Hall, Bob Heller, Brittany Hollett, Steven Johnson, Paul Kellogg, Dietmar Kennepohl, Angela Kuzyk, Jacqueline Limoges, Manijeh Mannani, Alain May, Sue Mitchell, Mark Morpurgo, Dale Mountain, Brock Olive, Jennifer Pascoe, Cori Paul, Andrew Perrin, Frederique Pivot, Ann Reynolds, Kristin Rodier, Bailey Sousa, Dur-E-Najaf Syed, Ching Tan, Vina Tirven-Gadum, Jeff Vallance, Eric Wang, Lisa Watson, Ray Welshman, Shauna Zenteno

Regrets: Angela Beltaos, Michael Dabrowski, Elaine Fabbro, Matthew Prineas, Lorraine Thirsk

Presenters: Catherine Swindlehurst

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

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. and delivered a land acknowledgement.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 1.1 **Motion 84-01** That the General Faculties Council approves the agenda and thereby approves the consent agenda, including the minutes of Meeting 83 held January 30, 2024, as presented.

Anton/Morpurgo

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.

4. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

4.1 2024-2025 Athabasca University Integrated Resource Plan

The Chair, Deputy Provost and Vice President Finance and Administration and CFO presented this item noting a focus on learners at the core of the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), direction on a balanced budget and ensuring AU is building a foundation for long term financial stability.

Discussions held on:

- the recently tabled Government of Alberta provincial budget
- opportunities for long term targeted capital investments made available by government and the planning required
- the continued growth of staff at the institution built within various initiatives
- the importance of matching our strengths with the needs of the province
- the importance of advocating for post-secondary institutions noting the intention to scale up and broaden advocacy efforts at AU
- the suggestion of fundraising initiatives to support revenue streams
- PowerED being revenue generative and net revenue positive, how PowerED is actively working with faculties to offer courses and exploring offering non-credit and credit courses that could be stackable
- how Investment Management Agreement metrics were integrated into the IRP process

4.2 Strategic Planning Update

The Chair and the Chief Growth Officer presented this item noting:

- importance of thinking about your highest contribution
- AU is a university that stands for making the world better and more equal with the learner at the centre
- the plan embraces impact, teaching, research, diversity, place and digital space
- the plan shows how AU values opportunity, the importance of community and accessibility
- the plan speaks to what should guide the AU way
- the plan embraces equity, diversity and inclusion, and Nukskahtowin, personal values, growth, trust, teamwork and authentic respect

Discussions held on:

- the relationship between openness and accessibility
- a greater push for the use of Open Educational Resources
- promotion of our students and how we provide high quality education with a tutor model
- how academic freedom and collegiality are key items that authentic trust and respect need to be built upon

It was further noted that the draft AU Strategic Plan will be presented to GFC for endorsement at the May 2, 2024 meeting.

4.3 Flexible and Hybrid Work Culture

The Chair, Chief Growth Officer and Vice President Finance and Administration & CFO presented this item noting:

- sessions have been held for supervisors and staff members keen on to engage in person with 300 people engaged thus far, with team members encouraged to attend future engagement sessions
- the Hybrid work program is based on principles of choice and flexibility in the working environment while promoting positive in person and virtual working environments
- the focus in on the Athabasca Campus, with consultations for Edmonton and Calgary occurring later this spring
- the Hybrid and Flexible work program was soft launched with no policy or human resources changes
- as part of the soft launch and expression of interest has been provided and team members are encouraged to speak with supervisors to foster and support the hybrid work model

Discussions held on:

- the stage of planning that the Hybrid work program is it, noting it be between the conceptual and planning phases and the working group is seeking feedback and input to shape hybrid with the desire to create a model that works for everyone
- AU has three designations including fully virtual, fully place based and virtual with place based components and the hybrid model is an opportunity to introduce more options by encourage staff to engage place based further noting this would not be a change in job description designations
- If the hybrid model will be extended to learners

Members were encouraged to email the hybrid working group with any additional questions and feedback they may have.

Break: 2:45-3:00 p.m.

4.4 Research Status & Strategy Update

The Associate Vice President, Research presented this item.

Discussion held on:

- suggestion to add additional wording to themes in the Strategic Research Plan

4.5 Motion 84-02 That the General Faculties Council delegates to Faculty Councils the authority to approve the following and report on such to the next required meeting of General Faculties Council, effective March 11, 2024:

- closing and opening courses
- adding and removing courses within the list of electives in credential regulations
- changes to course title, level, credit value, and discipline/area of study, where there is no impact on credential regulations

And further,

That the General Faculties Council rescinds motions 16-07, 16-08 and 36-05, effective March 11, 2024.

Kennepohl/Mannani

The Deputy Provost presented this item.

Discussions held on:

- if there would be any potential impacts on how program councils are formed by the motions being rescinded noting the Deans' are discussing various internal governance structures to adopt best practices
- the process that was followed when the Centre for Distance Education was reassigned to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Carried

- 4.6 Motion 84-03** That the General Faculties Council rescinds motion 155-10 (mandate and terms of reference for the undergraduate program councils and advisory committees) approved by the Athabasca University Academic Council on March 1, 2000 and motion 156-07 (terms of reference for graduate program councils) approved by the Athabasca University Academic Council on April 19, 2000, effective March 11, 2024.

Watson/Mannani

The Deputy Provost presented this item.

Discussion held on:

- confirmation that the approval of the motion would not impact the manner in which program councils are currently operating

Carried

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

None

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m.