

Approved minutes for Meeting 99 of the Athabasca University General Faculties Council held on September 1, 2026 via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Alex Clark (Chair), Farook Al-Shamali, Trevor Baxter, Angela Beltaos, Jason Bernard, Donna Bowen, Leigh Brownhill, Shauna Bryce, Caroline Buzanko, Priscilla Campeau, Andrew Chiarella, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Liam Connelly, Alexa DeGagne, Ali Dewan, Richard Dixon, Joel English-Dubois, Elaine Fabbro, Lisa Gray, Sami A. Houry, Ramses Illaraza, Stuart Johnston, Steven Johnson, Bangaly Kaba, Anshuman Khare, Angela Kuzyk, Matthew Lee, Denver Ma, Manijeh Mannani, Ken Munyikwa, Amy Neumann, Hugh Notman, Nina Paulovicova, Kristin Petrovic, Adnan Qayyum, Sandra Rein, Diana Sarkis, Simon Sigué, Serita Smith, Cynthia Spring, Ian Stephenson, Catherine Swindlehurst, Norin Taj, Tyler Tollefson, Harris Wang, Krystal Zahara, Shauna Zenteno

Regrets: Ellen Cobham, Osire Glacier, Kelly Miller, Marc Nesca, Rebecca Nelems, Saktinil Roy

Governance Staff: Tyler Tollefson (Vice President Governance and University Relations, and General Counsel), Aimee Couturier (Governance Administrative Associate), Allison Strydhorst (Recording Secretary)

The Chair delivered a land acknowledgment, recognized the 150th anniversary of Treaty 6, and welcomed the following new and re-elected members:

- Elaine Fabbro, Interim Associate Vice President Learner Experience
- Sandra Rein, Deputy Provost
- Bangaly Kaba, Faculty of Business
- Saktinil Roy, Faculty of Business
- Donna Bowen, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Nina Paulovicova, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Cynthia Spring, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Farook Al-Shamali, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Angela Beltaos, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Jason Bernard, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Ken Munyikwa, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Sami A. Houry, Non-Academic Staff Member
- Leigh Brownhill, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Representative
- Trevor Baxter, Tutor/Academic Expert, Faculty of Health Disciplines
- Matthew Lee, Tutor/Academic Expert, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Kelly Miller, Athabasca University Students' Union Representative
- Ellen Cobham, Athabasca University Students' Union Representative
- Diana Sarkis, Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association Representative

The Vice President Governance and University Relations, and General Counsel provided members with governance guidance.

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1.1 Motion 99-01 That General Faculties Council approves the agenda and thereby approves the consent agenda, as presented.

Bernard/Cleveland-Innes

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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3.1 Motion 99-02** **That General Faculties Council approves the minutes of Meeting 98 held May 7, 2026, as presented.**

Zahara/Fabbro

Carried

4. REPORTS**4.1 Report of the Chair**

The Chair presented this item noting:

- the Report of the Chair will be included as a written report at each General Faculties Council (GFC) meeting
- new institutional neutrality legislation is expected this fall
- AU's participation in the Expert Panel on AI Impacts on Labour Markets and Post-secondary Outcomes continues
- recognition of recent grant recipients

Discussions held on:

- the expansion of Convocation to a three-day event noting the extended event will have additional awards, honorary degrees, and potential changes to the Convocation program
- the new funding model and the potential impacts of the proposed metrics on programs under development

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 5.1 Motion 99-03** **That General Faculties Council approves students enrolled in the Bachelor of Commerce, Business Technology Management Major (regular route and post diploma route) program regulations between June 1, 2003, and June 30, 2020, who have not taken MKTG 410: e-Marketing, will take MKTG 411: Digital, AI and Social Media Marketing, effective January 1, 2027**
Dixon/Khare

The Interim Dean, Faculty of Business presented this item.

Carried

- 5.2 Motion 99-04** That General Faculties Council approves students enrolled in the Master of Nursing – Nurse Practitioner (MN-NP) or Post-Master’s Diploma – Nurse Practitioner (PMD-NP) program regulations between August 1, 2019 and August 31, 2026 may choose to continue in the program regulations that were in place when they registered, or transfer to the new program regulations effective September 1, 2026.
Neumann/Bernard

The Dean, Faculty of Health Disciplines, presented this item.

Carried

- 5.3 Motion 99-05** That General Faculties Council approves changes to Bachelor of Arts 4-year program regulations (all majors) between September 1, 1999, and August 31, 2026, effective September 1, 2026
Mannani/Taj

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

Carried

5.4 Library and Scholarly Resources Annual Report

The Interim Associate Vice President, Learner Experience presented this item.

It was noted a minor correction to page 204 – Master of Science and Information Systems to be Master of Science Computing and Information Systems.

Discussion held on copyright access requirements noting questions pertaining to copyright clearance can be directed to the Director, Academic Services.

Break: 9:57 – 10:15 a.m.

5.5 Academic Plan

The Provost and Vice-President Academic presented this item noting over 1600 people have participated in consultations and emerging themes include:

- intentionally building connection and community across the institution, with learners at the core of the university's work
- feedback on improving current systems and processes to support the student experience, and strengthen the university's technology foundations
- growing impact around the university's maturing research culture
- responding to changes in the provincial funding model while continuing to address student needs

Discussions held on:

- expectations and metrics related to research growth under the provincial funding model
- AU's unique research impact, growing research culture, and advocating for community engaged research

- potential impacts the proposed funding may have on the growing graduate research culture noting the importance of putting the academic mission and vision first and determining the resources required to sustain and grow research culture
- utilizing program review recommendations to address institutional areas of improvement to improve the overall learner experience
- the need to continue building community and strengthening cross-faculty information sharing to grow interdisciplinary research and share student services successes

5.6 Learner Success and Learner Access

The Provost and Vice-President Academic presented this item, noting:

- AU's commitment to learner success through improving access, retention, student supports, and academic programming
- continued work on program and course renewals, student financial supports, and creation of inclusive learning spaces
- the successful implementation of the AU Service Centre, noting increased stability within the unit and that approximately 75% of student inquiries are now resolved at the first point of contact, reducing the need for referrals
- the development of a Virtual Career Centre and work-integrated learning opportunities
- the Master in Architecture, and the Graduate Certificate in Artificial Intelligence, which are expected to open for applications in January 2027
- the Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas in Strategic Analytics and Leadership which received Ministry of Advanced Education approval, are scheduled to open in January 2027
- the Master in Management, and the PhD in Computing and Information Systems have been submitted to the Ministry of Advanced Education for review
- the PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies is under development and expected to come forward to APPSC in the fall
- the Master of Counselling Psychology proposal is currently under development

Discussion held on an institutional teaching and learning centre to support faculty on topics including artificial intelligence, assessment, and teaching excellence.

5.7 Research Update

The Provost and Vice-President Academic presented this item noting:

- research will be a key component in the new provincial funding model and the importance of thinking about how to foster and measure research culture and how AU differs from other research institutions
- increase in Tri-Agency in Canada research applications
- the development of two PhD programs at AU and exploring how to integrate graduate student research in our culture
- continuing discussions in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Research Centre regarding research, graduate students, and graduate student supervision

Discussions held on:

- the unique opportunity AU has due to its location in Northern Alberta and in proximity to sensitive biodiverse areas
- the Knowledge Hub of the North, and the impact AU can have on rural, remote, and Indigenous communities and partnerships
- AU's online nature which positively impacts communities by being able to meet learners where they are, and opening pathways for learners to AU through articulation agreements
- the opportunity to address labour market and community needs
- the upcoming GFC Research Forum and Graduate Studies and Research Conference (GSRC) in Athabasca in October

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

None

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.