



**GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL**  
Approved Minutes

Meeting #614

Thursday, April 7, 2022, 1:30 p.m.

By Zoom platform

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***Voting Members***

E. McCauley, Chair	W. Bridel	A. Jenney	L. Reid	M. Van Hee
Teri Balsler, Vice-Chair	J. Brown	R. Lauer	M.J. Romaniuk	A. Viczko
B. Adams	A. Burns	K.Y. Lee	W. Rosehart	S. Weaver
J. Allan	M. Cassis	M. MacKenzie	A. Schmal	R. Weller
T. Akhtar	O. Chapman	M. McDonough	N. Schmidt	P. Werthner
O. Alp	R. Clements	A. Musgrove	C. Seneviratne	J. Winter
D. Ashby	A. Dambrowitz	L. Nowell	T. Shandro	B. Wylant
G. Assefa	S. Davidson	A. Paquette	R. Sigurdson	R. Yates
J. Ayala	A. Dela Cruz	R. Pereyra	D. Sinasac	D. Zamanpour
K. Baetz	V. Fast	Q. Pittman	D. Slater	M. Zhang
M. Bauer	M. Fraser	T. Poffenroth	F. Smith	M. Zytaruk
T. Beattie	M. Herring	J. Poissant	D. Stewart	
B. Beaty	C. Hurrell	J. Priest	M. Tarailo-Graovac	
J. Bergerson	M. Husein	A. Qayyum	T. Tombe	
C. Bousman	F. Jalilehvand	S. Raj	P. Toohey	

***Guests***

R. Arseneault, Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning member of the USRI Working Group – present for Item 8  
W. Benoit, Faculty of Science and member of the USRI Working Group – present for Item 8  
A. Estefan, Faculty of Nursing and Co-Chair of the USRI Working Group – present for Item 8  
N. Kenny, Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning and member of the USRI Working Group – present for Item 8  
J. Lambert, Office of Institutional Analysis and member of the USRI Working Group – present for Item 8  
J. Wiens, Faculty of Arts and member of the USRI Working Group – present for Item 8

***Observers***

C. Hogan, Senior Associate Vice-President, Communications  
S. Jinnah, incoming Students' Union Vice-President (Academic)  
C. Johns, Senior Director - Program Innovation and Planning  
J. Lacasse, General Counsel  
S. McKenzie, Faculty Association  
C. McVie, Provost's Office  
J. Ruwanpura, Vice-Provost (International)  
M. Smith, Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President Research (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)  
W. Therrien, President's Office  
R. Thompson, Associate Vice-President Research

***Secretary***

L. Houle

***Scribe***

E. Sjogren

***Staff***

T. Hodzic

R. Kenny

C. Tutt

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The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

**1. Conflict of Interest Declaration**

No conflicts were declared.

**2. Inclusive Practice Moment**

Sandra Davidson, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Deputy Provost, presented a Territorial Acknowledgment and then described the Faculty's Indigenous Community Route pilot project with the Siksika Nation.

**3. Safety Moment**

Mike Van Hee, Interim Vice-President (Finance and Services) - Services, presented on psychological and physical self-care, outlining the strategies and resources for this and noting that self-care must be supported by leaders and peers.

**4. Remarks of the Chair**

The Chair included the following in his remarks:

- Renzo Pereyra, Students' Union (SU) Vice-President (Academic), Tanille Shandro, Graduate Students' Association (GSA) President, Alex Paquette, GSA Vice-President (Academic), and several other undergraduate and graduate student representatives were acknowledged on this occasion of their last General Faculties Council (GFC) meeting. It was reported that Nicole Schmidt will be continuing as the SU President and Shaziah Jinnah, incoming SU Vice-President (Academic), was welcomed as an observer at the meeting.
- Bart Beaty, Faculty of Arts, and James Fewell, Cumming School of Medicine, were welcomed on this occasion of their first GFC meeting as new Faculty academic staff representatives
- Members were thanked for their efforts during this incredible term, dealing with the impacts of the pandemic, transitioning from virtual to on campus activities, their dedication to the University and each other, and trying to keep the campuses as safe as possible
- Current conflicts around the world, including in Ukraine and Afghanistan, are impacting scholars. The University is providing supports to members of its community through bursaries, mental health resources, and immigration assistance.
- The University's Start Something campaign launched on March 1, 2022 and serves to advance the University's brand as an entrepreneurial university. The campaign celebrates key accomplishments and creativity across Faculties, such as the University's recent successes in New Frontiers in Research Fund support for eight projects.
- The federal budget is being announced today. The University will continue to engage federally and maintain awareness of federal commitments that could be accessed to the institution's benefit.
- The House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry and Technology is gathering information as the National Quantum Strategy is developed, and University representatives presented to this committee last week

- Representatives of the University presented to representatives of the provincial government yesterday about the accomplishments of the University, including recent successes in the Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) and Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF) programs, and its work with all of the Ministries. In particular, the Minister of Indigenous Relations was impressed with the University’s genuine support of Indigenous scholarship.
- The University is hosting the first international NextGen EDI Data Symposium from April 8-11, 2022. The symposium will explore the meaning and use of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) data in making systemic change and driving success in this area.

**5. Remarks of the Vice-Chair**

The Vice-Chair included the following in her remarks:

- The NextGen EDI Data Symposium will be an exciting event with engaging panel discussions. Data-driven and evidence-based EDI work is crucial.
- The University’s Experiential Learning (EL) website is now live. It provides resources to help students understand and access EL.
- The University community’s engagement during a challenging year is appreciated and the meetings, workshops, and townhall gatherings held during the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)’s first year were valuable. There is positive anticipation of continued return to in-person activities.

**6. Question Period**

In response to questions, it was reported that:

- There have been impacts to the caretaking staff as a result of cuts to the University’s Campus Alberta grant, but no more than any other group
- The University committed at the start of the Winter term to maintain the masking mandate until the end of April, and this decision is reflective of the University’s values and monitoring of data. The vaccine mandate was lifted because the University community is 99% vaccinated. Masking scenarios for the Spring term are under review.

**7. Approval of the February 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

<p><b>Moved/Seconded</b></p> <p>That the Minutes of the General Faculties Council meeting held on February 10, 2022 be approved.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Carried</b></p>
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Quentin Pittman abstained.

## 8. Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) Working Group Recommendation Report

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Leslie Reid, Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) and co-chair of the USRI Working Group, and Andrew Estefan, co-chair of the USRI Working Group, presented this item. Other members of the USRI Working Group who were present to join the discussion were Robin Arseneault, Taylor Institute, Wendy Benoit, Faculty of Science, Natasha Kenny, Taylor Institute, Jacqueline Lambert, Office of Institutional Analysis, Alex Paquette, GSA Vice-President (Academic), Renzo Pereyra, SU Vice-President (Academic), and Jason Wiens, Faculty of Arts.

### Highlights:

- The proponents provided an overview of the development of the USRI Working Group Recommendation Report, highlighting the need for an overhaul of the University's student feedback system to make it more current, relevant and accessible and the need for instructors to receive meaningful feedback from students
- The proponents reported that consultations have shown that revising the survey questions alone is not enough, and that the use of new technologies, the seamless integration of Faculty questions with the main questions, compatibility with Brightspace D2L and other systems, and changes supportive of EDI and Indigenous Engagement are desired. The proponents also reported that the working group heard that academic staff who receive harassing feedback must receive stronger support.
- Members of GFC praised the working group for all the efforts that went into producing this report, and for its depth and clarity
- Discussion included:
  - Student feedback is the best measure of the student experience, helps shape activities in the classrooms, and is a factor in the career progression of faculty
  - The current feedback system is very outdated, inefficient to execute, and does not provide instructors with useful information. The report's recommendations are a priority for students and reflect the needs of students and instructors.
  - Graduate Teaching Assistants will benefit from receiving feedback from students, as this is a formative time for them. An overhaul of the student feedback system is therefore needed as soon as possible.
  - The Faculty Association has requested that an overhaul of the student feedback system not proceed at this time as a related grievance is ongoing. There is disagreement about whether an overhaul of the student feedback system can be accomplished without crossing into processes for tenure, promotion and the assessment of academic staff.
  - It is well documented that the current student feedback system has flaws in relation to EDI
- In response to a question, the proponents explained that it is expected to take a few years for the recommendations of the working group to be implemented. Actions will include the establishment of an implementation working group, determination of decision-making authorities, planning for the administration of a new system, and identification and testing of suitable new technology.
- Members of GFC expressed support to move forward with the work at this time, as this is considered to be in the best interests of students and instructors

**Moved/Seconded**

That the General Faculties Council receive the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) Working Group Recommendation Report, in the form provided, and direct the Teaching and Learning Committee to oversee the appropriate actioning of the recommendations including the formation of the Course Feedback Working Group, as recommended by the General Faculties Council Executive Committee and the Teaching Learning Committee.

**Carried**

David Stewart and Donovan Ashby abstained.

**9. Elections**

- **Two Academic Staff Members to an Advisory Review Committee for the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing**
- **Two Academic Staff Members to an Advisory Review Committee for the Dean of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. The Chair explained that, in order that it can be confirmed that only voting members of GFC are participating, the elections will be conducted via an electronic form and a link to this will be sent by email immediately following the meeting. Members will have until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 8 to follow the link and submit their votes.

No nominations from the floor were received.

Secretary's Note: *The following persons were elected:*

*Advisory Review Committee for the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing:*

**Lorian Hardcastle**, Faculty of Law

**Naweed Syed**, Cumming School of Medicine

*Advisory Review Committee for the Dean of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape:*

**Marjan Eggermont**, Schulich School of Engineering

**Victoria Fast**, Faculty of Arts

**10. Revisions to the GFC Bylaws**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. The Interim University Secretary presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter reported that the GFC Bylaws were created in October 2018 with the provision that the Bylaws be reviewed at least every three years. The presenter then provided an overview of the proposed revisions to the Bylaws, noting that feedback is being solicited today and then the Bylaws will return to the GFC Executive Committee and the GFC at upcoming meetings for further review and approval.
- Discussion included:
  - The Bylaws should incorporate language explicitly setting out the GFC's commitment to EDI

- Consideration could be given to revising the quorum requirement (section 7.3) to set a minimum number of elected academic staff members
- Section 7.5 (GFC meeting agendas) does not include provision for a member to bring forward an emergency issue, and consideration could be given to building in a process for this. It was observed that additional GFC Executive Committee meetings can be scheduled if there is urgent business, and this could be done in order to get an issue raised by a member to a GFC meeting faster.
- The Chair indicated that any additional feedback on the GFC Bylaws can be sent to the University Secretariat

**11. Standing Reports**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda as 'In Package Only' for information:

- a) Report on the February 23 and March 23, 2022 GFC Executive Committee Meetings
- b) Report on the February 14, March 14 and March 28, 2022 Academic Planning and Priorities Committee Meetings
- c) Report on the March 15, 2022 Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting
- d) Report on the February 17 and March 17, 2022 Research and Scholarship Committee Meetings
- e) Report on the March 25, 2022 Board of Governors Meeting
- f) Report on the February 17, 2022 Senate Meeting

**12. Approved GFC and GFC Standing Committees Meeting Schedules for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda as 'In Package Only' for information.

**13. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**14. Adjournment**

The April 7, 2022 General Faculties Council meeting was adjourned by consensus.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m. and was followed by the 2022 GFC Evaluation Session.