

**GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL**  
Approved Minutes

Meeting #627

Thursday, March 7, 2024, 1:30 p.m.

Zoom

***Voting Members***

P. Werthner, Vice-Chair	C. Channon	V. Jones	S. Ruwanpura
B. Adams for T. Anderson	O. Chapman	C. Joseph	B. Salami
S. Al-Khaz’Aly	T. T. Chowdhury	R. Kim	A. Schmal
J. Allan	C. Cloutier	A. Knight	C. Seneviratne
S. Amin	E. Cobo	S. Lane	R. Sheldon
D. Anderson	A. Dambrowitz	R. Lauer	D. Slater
G. Assefa	S. Davidson	S. LeBlanc	F. Smith
J. Ayala	J. Dinh	K. Lukowiak	J. Spangler
K. Baetz	K. Donlevy	A. Mac Namara	E. Tadese
N. Bakana	P. Doyle-Baker for N. Holt	K. Milaney for W. Ghali	P. Toohey
B. Barton	J. Fewell	A. Musgrove	A. Uy
M. Bauer	V. Gabriel	K. O’Keefe	M. Van Hee
T. Beattie	D. Gereluk	T. O’Neill	W. D. Walls
A. Belikova	G. Grandy	E. Perrault	R. Weller
W. Benoit	A. Harvey	G. Petrie	C. Willness
J. Bergerson	C. Heggerud	Q. Pittman	J. Winter
W. Bridel	A.-M. Hubert	T. Poffenroth	
J. Brown	M. Husein	J. Poissant	
A. Burns	J. Jenkins	S. Raj	
W. Cai	A. Jenney	T. Risling	
		W. Rosehart	

***Guests***

S. Bryant, Academic Lead for Transdisciplinary Scholarship, Office of the Vice-President (Research) – for Item 8  
M. Davies, Director - Environmental Health & Safety – for Item 3  
S. Lavoie, Senior Communications Specialist, Provost’s Office – for Item 7  
M. Moon, Team Lead, WellBeing and WorkLife – for Item 7  
A. Szeto, Director, Campus Mental Health Strategy – for Item 7  
J. Thannhauser, Counsellor, Student Wellness Services and Strategy Evaluation Lead – for Item 7  
M. Tonelli, Associate Vice-President Research (Health) – for Item 9  
K. Wiens, Director, Student Wellness, Accessibility and Support – for Item 7

***Observers***

S. Cunningham, Acting Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement)  
C. Johns, Provost’s Office  
J. Lacasse, General Counsel  
S. Loo, Faculty Association  
S. Luthy, Provost’s Office  
M. Smith, Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)

***Secretary***

C. McVie

***Scribe***

E. Sjogren

***Staff***

H. Lywin  
M. Speta

The Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

### 1. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflicts were declared.

### 2. Inclusive Practice Moment

Dianne Gereluk, Dean of the Werklund School of Education (WSE), presented the meeting's Traditional Land Acknowledgment and then highlighted inclusive initiatives in her area, including that:

- The WSE has created an inclusive gathering space on the third floor of the Education Tower, which has been gifted the name *Aapiiniioyis* (White Buffalo Lodge). The space has circular seating to visibly foster connections, a ventilation system for smudging ceremonies, thoughtfully designed lighting and decoration, and comfortable peripheral seating for engagement and contemplation.
- The SMARTIE (Strategic Module Assistant for Rubrics, Tasks, and Inclusive Education) suite is a GPT AI (generative pre-trained transformer artificial intelligence) pilot program to support the development of comprehensive and inclusive course outlines. The SMARTIE program will help ensure accessible education for all students, including those with a disability or medical condition, by helping to produce robust course outlines that incorporate detailed course descriptions and explicit learning outcomes, holistic assessment practices, and mechanisms for accommodation. The SMARTIE program began in September 2023 and has been used more than 9,000 times by WSE faculty and staff, and is also resulting in conversations about the use of generative AI and improving practices to meet the diverse learning needs of students. Interested persons can reach out to Soroush Sabbaghan, WSE Associate Professor (Teaching), for more information.

### 3. Safety Moment

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Mike Van Hee, Vice-President (Services), and Mark Davies, Director - Environmental Health & Safety, presented on the topic of pedestrian safety, including that:

- A Pedestrian Safety Task Force was struck to study interactions between vehicles and pedestrians on the main campus and to recommend changes to improve safety
  - Five areas of concern were identified: the Energy Environment Experiential Learning building crosswalk, the Biological Sciences building/LRT crosswalk, the Scurfield Hall crosswalks, the MacEwan Hall/Taylor Family Digital Library roadway area, and the intersection of Collegiate Boulevard and University Avenue near Kinesiology/Engineering
  - Shorter-term planned initiatives include: creating clearer, and fewer, crosswalks with better alternating flow of traffic and pedestrians; updating and improving signage to indicate pedestrian and vehicle hazard warnings and safety measures; developing an education and communications plan for pedestrian safety; and having blackout times for deliveries to campus
  - Longer-term planned initiatives include: using spotters to help safely maneuver vehicles at the loading bays; conducting another traffic study to identify further patterns and opportunities for the protection of pedestrians; introducing traffic calming measures on campus such as speed bumps; and changing the shipping/receiving location for MacEwan Hall if capital investment permits
- Members of the University community are encouraged to reach out to the Environment, Health and Safety office at [ucsafety@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ucsafety@ucalgary.ca) to communicate concerns or suggestions

In response to questions, it was reported that:

- Representatives of the University met with representatives of the City of Calgary after the pedestrian death on 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue last year, and engagement with the City about traffic and pedestrian safety will continue
- There is a shared responsibility between campus planners, pedestrians, and drivers regarding safety. A communications plan for growing consciousness about campus safety and the shared responsibility for this is being planned.
- Campaigns such as providing reflective stickers could be effective options, but the University needs to take a realistic and cost effective approach to any campaigns
- The University's other campuses, such as the Foothills campus, have not been studied in the same way that the main campus was. Issues, such as the traffic flow at the Spy Hill campus, are currently addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Members observed that the safety measures taken during the summer camps period, including the use of portable temporary stoplights at the Collegiate Boulevard/University Avenue intersection and having multiple camp drop-off locations, were effective in improving safety.

#### **4. Remarks of the Vice-Chair**

Penny Werthner, Vice-Chair, included the following in her remarks:

- The Western Vice-Presidents Academic (WestVAC) and Vice-Presidents Research annual conference is being held March 6-8, 2024, and the President is currently returning from University business in Australia
- Regarding Canada's new international student visa process, the University's enrolment team is working productively with the provincial government to establish a robust attestation letter process. Priority is being given to students who have already paid admission deposits.
- The new University Calendar launches March 14, 2024 in the CourseDog platform
- Janaka Ruwanpura has completed two terms as Vice-Provost (International) and he is recognised for his accomplishments
- The University of Calgary Teaching Awards celebration event was held February 28, 2024. Excellence was recognised by awards in many categories, including awards for Inclusive Excellence and Indigenous Ways of Knowing.
- The University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Awards were celebrated on March 6, 2024 as part of EDI Week 2024. Awards for faculty, staff, and students, individuals and teams, were announced.
- An event marking International Women's Day is being held tomorrow, March 8, 2024
- The UCalgary Recovery Community Hub has opened in Yamnuska Hall, and Victoria Burns, Faculty of Social Work, is congratulated on spearheading this initiative that offers substance-free events, peer support meetings, one-to-one support with social workers, and drop-in space for all campus community members
- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Training is launching this month. This training is a one-hour workshop, with eleven sessions currently scheduled starting in mid-March 2024, about responding to disclosures. The aim is to train faculty and staff, and members of the University community are encouraged to participate.

- Finance Minister Nate Horner delivered the provincial budget on February 29, 2024. The budget is anchored on two themes: fiscal responsibility and structural reforms to the healthcare system. The government has committed that prior years of provincial cost-cutting have ended, which is good news for postsecondary institutions, and the provincial government has confirmed that the University's Operating and Program Support grant will stay unchanged. A zero percent increase to the \$374.1 million provincial grant does not address inflationary increases, however, and effectively amounts to a \$12.7 million cut if using a Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate of 3.4. The University has been informed that the capital maintenance and renewal grant will decrease from \$24.8 million to \$22.5 million. Confirmed commitments have been made to the University's Multidisciplinary Science Hub capital project, the multi-institutional Rural Physician training program, the University's Veterinary Medicine Learning Commons capital project and Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit capital expansion program, and targeted enrolment expansion funding.
- The Dinos women's basketball team is participating in a national championships tournament in Edmonton starting tonight, and the Dinos track and field and swimming teams are competing in national championships this weekend

#### 5. Question Period

In response to questions, it was reported that it is being investigated whether some Faculties may be financially impacted if fewer international students are admitted to the University because of the new federal international student visa system. There are fewer international student applications for Fall 2024 in process at this moment, but efforts are being made to make international students feel welcome here and to support them in navigating the process. Being among the first provinces to establish an attestation letters process will give Alberta an advantage, and potential students are being recruited toward 2024 and 2025 admission.

#### 6. Approval of the February 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Penny Werthner, Vice-Chair, presented this item.

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Minutes of the General Faculties Council meeting held on February 8, 2024 be approved.

**Carried**

#### 7. Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy: Renewal of the Campus Mental Health Strategy

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Andrew Szeto, Director, Campus Mental Health Strategy, Michele Moon, Team Lead, WellBeing and WorkLife, Kevin Wiens, Director, Student Wellness, Accessibility and Support, Jennifer Thannhauser, Counsellor, Student Wellness Services, and Strategy Evaluation Lead, and Sasha Lavoie, Senior Communications Specialist, Provost's Office, presented this item.

## Highlights:

- The proponents noted that the Campus Mental Health Strategy has been successful since its creation in 2015, and that the University is seen as a national leader in this area. The proponents reported that it is now necessary to update the strategy, described the process that has been followed in doing this, and highlighted three themes identified during consultation:
  - A holistic approach to mental health and well-being is desired, recognising the importance of also having good physical health, social connections, and spiritual well-being
  - The strategy should have an upstream focus that takes a preventative approach to mental health and well-being. An environment that fosters mental health and wellbeing through services and supports before a person is in crisis is desired.
  - The University's established academic and workplace culture that focuses on growth and achievement has led to successes, but the culture needs to shift to also cultivate a caring and supportive environment. The University should be a community that values respect, work/life balance, and relationships in addition to study and work excellence.
- The proponents reported that the proposed Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy has four guiding principles that are considered to be responsive to the University community's needs: 1) Influence Culture and Sustain an Environment that Values Well-Being; 2) Work Collaboratively to Sustain Supportive Environments for Well-Being; 3) Advance Knowledge to Support Ourselves and Others; and 4) Create Awareness of and Facilitate Access to Supports at UCalgary and in the Calgary Community
- The proponents emphasised that the upstream focus of the proposed strategy does not replace the existing downstream mental health and well-being supports and services, such as counselling and clinical care, and these will continue to be priorities
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
  - Persons associated with the Campus Mental Health Strategy have incorporated learnings into published works and present on this subject at conferences
  - Metrics for the Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy will be developed, especially in relation to the four guiding principles, and it will be possible to compare to metrics collected during the time of the Campus Mental Health Strategy. There will be institutional and unit-level data collected.
  - Civility, respect, and psychological safety, particularly in relation to conflict and grievance processes, have been identified as cultural pieces that the University needs to work on. It was noted that the University's Academic Leadership Academy program, targeted to Associate Deans, Department Heads, and equivalents but open to others, has recently been revamped and has workshop sessions on topics including Developing a Culture of Collegiality and Navigating Difficult Conversations and these topics will continue to expand.
  - The Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy is an institutional strategy and so must be written in general terms. The implementation team will work with units on specific needs.
- Discussion included:
  - Some things that happen at the University, such as holding an exam on the Monday immediately after the Winter term break, are counterproductive to well-being. It was reported that avoiding practices like this has been discussed with unit leaders, as decisions relating to teaching and learning should take mental health and well-being into

consideration. It was noted that, as mental health and wellbeing become more embedded in the University's culture, fewer things like holding an exam immediately after a break should happen.

- The teaching and learning subcommittee of the Campus Mental Health Strategy discussed that the mental health and well-being of students and instructors is important, and it is appreciated that the proposed strategy includes recognition of instructors and mention of workload
  - It is valuable to have consideration of mental health and well-being at a proactive systems level, and the strategy identifying the building of this into policies, guidelines, and administrative support networks is appreciated
  - Workload is high, and it can be difficult to fit in learning and well-being workshops and other sessions
  - Supervisors are often keen to support their graduate students and other trainees in a holistic way that will benefit them long term, and guidance on how to do this would be helpful
- Members were encouraged to submit any additional feedback directly to the proponents

## **8. Institutes for Transdisciplinary Scholarship Update**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Steven Bryant, Academic Lead for Transdisciplinary Scholarship, Office of the Vice-President (Research), presented this item.

### Highlights:

- The presenter provided an update on transdisciplinary scholarship at the University, including an overview of the Institutes for Transdisciplinary Scholarship (ITS) creation and mission, the development of an institutional definition of transdisciplinary scholarship, investment in transdisciplinary scholarship seed funding grants, the ITS coordinating team and areas of focus Academic Leads, current collaborations and events, the Transdisciplinary Scholarship Connector Grants program, the University of Calgary Research Excellence Chairs program, and new transdisciplinary academic staff hires
- Discussion included:
  - The new academic staff hires will be beneficial to units as these are Faculty positions and not central Vice-President (Research) Office positions
  - Granting agencies are increasingly expecting transdisciplinary work, and this will continue to grow at the University
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
  - The impacts of transdisciplinary research will be studied, although the research outputs can be non-traditional and may be difficult to measure
  - Work is underway to reduce barriers to participating in transdisciplinary scholarship
  - It is hoped that, in the future, transdisciplinary scholarship will expand even more to student learning, for example, students may be able to take classes in many Faculties. This would need to be grown in a mindful way.

## 9. DORA and Research Impact Update

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Marcello Tonelli, Associate Vice-President Research (Health), presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter provided an overview of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and its incorporation into the University's Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook, DORA-related activities at the University, the research impact goals incorporated into the University's Research and Innovation Plan, and information relating to research impact reporting. The presenter highlighted that the DORA principles include that:
  - The content of a paper is more important than its publication metrics, and journal-based metrics should not be used as a measure of quality
  - The value and impact of all research outputs, and a broad range of impact measures, should be considered
  - The criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions should be explicitly communicated
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
  - Some open access to information is mandated by the Tri-Council and is the basic standard. Open infrastructure and citizen science are at early stages, and the UCalgary Open Science Initiative is being developed to grow this.
  - The University is looking into the UNESCO framework for "rethinking research and knowledge" and is considering how alternative demonstrations of knowledge, such as through Indigenous Ways of Knowing, are counted
  - The Tri-Council and other institutions are positively interested in what the University is doing to improve its assessment system and recognize forms of impactful output beyond journal publishing
- Discussion included that:
  - Developing a system that recognizes other forms of research impact, beyond the publication of papers, is welcomed
  - It may be difficult to demonstrate the impact of research, and guidelines on how to measure the effects of research are needed. The presenter provided the number of citations of a published work as an example of a measure of impact, as this demonstrates that the work is being read and used.
  - Avenues for research output may differ by discipline

## 10. International Research Update

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

## 11. Standing Reports

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

- a) Report on the February 14, 2024 GFC Executive Committee Meeting
- b) Report on the February 5, 2024 Academic Planning and Priorities Committee Meeting
- c) Report on the February 15, 2024 Research and Scholarship Committee Meeting
- d) Report on the February 13, 2024 Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting
- e) Report on the February 22, 2024 Senate Meeting

**12. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**13. Adjournment**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the General Faculties Council adjourn the March 7, 2024 meeting.

**Carried**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

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Courtney McVie  
University Secretary