



General Faculties Council
GFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes

Meeting 84
March 23, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

By Zoom platform

Voting Members

Teri Balsler, Vice-Chair
Joule Bergerson
Rachel Lauer
Alex Paquette
Renzo Pereyra
Bill Rosehart
April Viczko
Jennifer Winter

Non-Voting Member

David Stewart

Interim Secretary

Lise Houle

Scribe

Elizabeth Sjogren

Regrets

Ed McCauley, Chair
Jessica Ayala
Meghan McDonough
Richard Sigurdson

Guests

Andrew Estefan, Co-Chair, Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) Working Group – present for Item 4
Leslie Reid, Co-Chair, USRI Working Group – present for Item 4
Wendy Therrien, President's Office
Cherie Tutt, Director, University Secretariat and Student Appeals Office

The Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded

That the Agenda for the March 23, 2022 General Faculties Council Executive Committee meeting be approved.

Carried

2. Remarks of the Chair and Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair included the following in her remarks:

- The University has maintained its mask mandate as previously committed, and planning for the Spring/Summer session continues. There will be in-person convocation ceremonies in June, but it is not yet known if spectators will be permitted.

- The situations in Ukraine, Afghanistan, and other locations have impacted scholars, and the University has been providing bursaries and supporting students and others through mental health resources. The University has been communicating to the government that temporary visas may not be appropriate for refugees, and that nomination for permanent residency may be more appropriate for professionals.
- Verity Turpin has been announced as the University's new Vice-Provost (Student Experience) starting July 1, 2022. Other searches, including for a new Dean of the Cumming School of Medicine, will be wrapping up soon.
- The U15 Provosts are meeting in Ottawa next week
- A Graduate College retreat is being held at the Banff Centre

In response to questions, it was reported that:

- The University's budget is being presented for approval at the March 25, 2022 Board of Governors meeting. The program expansion proposals that the provincial government called for are due next week, and approved proposals will be for the September 2022 student intake.
- Decision regarding whether guests can be present at the June convocation ceremonies will be made on April 14, 2022. Specific logistics, such as where and how guests will be situated, will also be decided.

3. Approval of the February 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the General Faculties Council Executive Committee meeting held on February 23, 2022 be approved.

Carried

4. Recommendation of the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) Working Group Recommendation Report

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Leslie Reid and Andrew Estefan presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponents reminded the Committee of the USRI Working Group Recommendation Report consultation process to date, and provided an overview of the purpose of this item and the changes made to the report since it was reviewed at the January 13, 2022 GFC meeting
- A member of the Committee expressed concern with this item moving forward at this time and requested confirmation that the report and its recommendations do not relate to merit, tenure or promotion processes. The proponents reported that developing an accurate and fair academic staff member assessment system is not within the purview of the USRI Working Group.
- In response to a question, the proponents reported that the USRI Working Group paused its work in 2019 after the Faculty Association expressed concern about the work continuing while a related grievance is in process, but the work was since restarted.

- Discussion included:
 - The University is in need of an overhauled student feedback system, including modern questions and a better platform
 - There is uncertainty about who will have access to the data under the new system and how it will be used, for example students currently use the USRI data to make decisions about course registration
 - The proposed implementation committee (Course Feedback Working Group) should report regularly on its work, and the membership of this committee should be broad and inclusive of the Faculty Association. It was reported that the terms of reference for this committee are currently in development, and its reporting path and membership are elements that will be set out.
 - It may be difficult to choose a new platform for the student feedback system if the uses for the data are not pre-determined
 - Graduate students will benefit from receiving feedback from the students they teach
 - It is desirable to make the student feedback system more accessible to students
- In response to a question, it was indicated that not all of the recommendations in the report will need to move through the University's governance system for approval, and that the implementation committee will be considering the appropriate routing of any decisions.
- It was directed that the proponents strengthen the 'next steps' description in the documentation, clarifying that any decisions about changes to currently-approved processes will be reviewed through appropriate channels
- Following discussion, including about whether it is appropriate to move ahead with this item while a related grievance is underway and a memorandum of agreement is in place, it was decided to put this item to a vote

Moved/Seconded

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

Carried**5. Recommendation of Revisions to the GFC Bylaws**

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

Highlights:

- The Committee was reminded that the GFC is required to review the GFC Bylaws at least once every three years, and that the GFC Bylaws were last revised in December 2018. The presenter provided an overview of the proposed revisions to the GFC Bylaws and noted that the GFC Bylaws can be reviewed for additional changes at any time.

- Discussion included:
 - While the GFC Bylaws are overdue for review, it is preferable to follow the model of bringing substantive items to GFC twice, once for discussion and again for approval, and to give time for wider consultation
 - There are other sections of the GFC Bylaws, e.g. section 7.7.1 (challenging a ruling of the Chair), that could be reconsidered
 - There is value in waiting to approve revisions to the GFC Bylaws until after the 2022 GFC evaluation session, in case there is feedback during the session that relates to the GFC Bylaws
 - The proposed timeline of 14 days to submit a request for adding an item to a GFC meeting agenda is considered to be too long
- The Committee decided that this item should be presented to GFC for discussion only at the April 7, 2022 meeting

6. 2022 GFC Evaluation

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. The Vice-Chair and Interim University Secretary presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters asked that the Committee decide upon a clear plan for the 2022 GFC evaluation session
- Discussion included:
 - The use of engagement tools such as Jamboard or the chat function can collect more feedback than a simple discussion session
 - Hybrid in-person/virtual meetings can be successfully executed in some situations, and this might be raised during the session
- The Committee decided that:
 - Two questions should be provided to the GFC members in advance of the session, to allow members to be thinking about their feedback, and a survey with more questions should be sent after the session. Sending a survey after the session will allow members to anonymously expand upon their feedback and will also allow members not present for the session to provide feedback.
 - The Zoom chat function should be enabled during the session
 - A Zoom poll question asking about preference for in-person versus virtual GFC meetings could be done
 - The questions regarding the quality of the pre-read materials and the functioning of the GFC standing committees could be left off the survey. The question regarding the effectiveness of presenters could be left in the survey.

7. Review of the Draft April 7, 2022 GFC Agenda

The Committee reviewed the draft agenda for the April 7, 2022 GFC meeting, and confirmed that the GFC

Bylaws will be a discussion item.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Adjournment

Moved/Seconded

That the General Faculties Council Executive Committee adjourn the March 23, 2022 meeting.

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Lise Houle
Interim University Secretary