



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

General Faculties Council  
**GFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
Approved Minutes

February 14, 2024, 2:30 p.m.

AD 167 (Governors Boardroom)/Zoom

***Voting Members***

Ed McCauley, Chair  
Jessica Ayala\*  
Joule Bergerson\* – arrived during Item 4  
Olive Chapman  
Shaziah Jinnah Morsette\*  
Rachel Lauer\* – left during item 5  
Aoife Mac Namara  
Satish Raj  
Bill Rosehart

***Non-Voting Member***

Kent Donlevy\*

***Secretary***

Courtney McVie

***Scribe***

Elizabeth Sjogren

***Regrets***

Penny Werthner, Vice-Chair  
Jacqueline Jenkins  
James Steele

***Guests***

Sasha Lavoie, Senior Communications Specialist, Provost's Office – present for Item 4  
Michele Moon, Team Lead, WellBeing and WorkLife – present for Item 4  
Andrew Szeto, Director, Campus Mental Health Strategy – present for Item 4  
Kevin Wiens, Director, Student Wellness, Accessibility and Support – present for Item 4

*\*Attended virtually*

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The Chair gave a Territorial Land Acknowledgement and then called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Agenda for the February 14, 2024 General Faculties Council Executive Committee meeting be approved.

**Carried**

## 2. Remarks of the Chair

The Chair included the following in his remarks:

- Members were thanked for their attendance, as this is an important committee for the academic work of the University
- There is discussion in the media and at post-secondary institutions regarding the announcement by the federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Marc Miller, about placing a cap on student study permits. Each province and territory will be allotted a number of study permits and will distribute these among the province or territory's institutions. The University is working to gain clarity about whether this will impact enrolment at the University and is ensuring that students at the recruitment phase are updated on this new process. The University is liaising with the provincial Ministry of Advanced Education to develop a clear and functional process for producing the letters of attestation that will need to be sent to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in a timely manner so that eligible students receive the visas that they need.
- The provincial budget will be announced on February 29, 2024. Representatives of the University have been communicating to the provincial government about the value of the University and the funding needs for post-secondary institutions, including infrastructure requests.
- Organisations including the U15 leadership, Universities Canada, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, and the Canadian Association of University Teachers are coming together with a uniform message to the federal government that Canada is falling behind in funding the post-secondary sector. Research is important to international relations, and the United States Ambassador to Canada and others have noticed that Canada should be investing more in this.
- The Office of Advancement is holding Creating Tomorrow public events showcasing the University's priorities, and a series of Quantum events will be held this month, including the session 'Quantum Research: Transforming the Future' on February 21, 2024 at which Urbasi Sinha, incoming Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Photonic Quantum Science and Technologies, will be the keynote speaker.

In response to questions, it was reported that:

- It is not yet known if the upcoming provincial budget will include funding for University initiatives such as the Multidisciplinary Science Hub, downtown campus expansion, and targeted enrollment
- The United Conservative Party's resolution at its November 2023 policy convention regarding offices or policies of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at institutions has not been implemented by the government. Follow-up will be done with the Senate Office to clarify the message shared with Committee members that was the impetus of this question.

## 3. Approval of the January 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

### **Moved/Seconded**

That the Minutes of the General Faculties Council Executive Committee meeting held on January 17, 2024 be approved.

**Carried**

#### **4. 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, Staff WellBeing and WorkLife, Kevin Wiens, Director, Student Wellness, Accessibility and Support, and Sasha Lavoie, Senior Communications Specialist, Provost's Office, presented this item.

##### Highlights:

- The proponents gave a presentation on the development of the Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy, an overview of its themes and guiding principles, the differences between it and its predecessor, the Campus Mental Health Strategy, and the specific feedback being requested at this time
- Discussion included:
  - Whether students feel that they have sufficient access to supports, and specifically, to doctors and counsellors
    - It was reported that the Students Legislative Council was included in the consultation process and the feedback, including about the need for access to supports, is reflected in the current draft. Advocacy by the Students' Union has called for improved delivery of services, including increased numbers of professionals, increased time with professionals, easier access to professionals, and more direct access to professionals.
    - It was reported that a service delivery review was conducted
  - Concern that the focus of efforts on the 'upstream' through health and mental health promotion and illness prevention initiatives could take away from the delivery of needed downstream services such as counselling and may not achieve the hoped for lessening of demand on downstream services
    - The proponents emphasised that the focus on the upstream will not deprioritise or replace other supports and services and noted that a broad and holistic approach to mental health and wellness at the University is needed. This is explicitly stated on page 6 of the Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy, but this could be made more prominent.
  - The need for increased medical and counselling professional services is not just a University issue but is a societal issue
  - The University's Academic Leadership Academy includes content for Deans, Department Heads, and future leaders relating to the importance of fostering mental health and wellness and leading within a culture of kindness, care, civility, and respect
  - It is valuable to embed mental health and wellness information in course outlines and first day of class presentations, and to include information about this in staff onboarding sessions
  - Communicating regularly and individuals participating in mental health and wellness activities will help to change the culture at the University
    - The proponents reported that efforts will be made to increase awareness of the supports and services available
    - The proponents noted that the components and actions under Guiding Principle 1 (Influence Culture and Sustain an Environment that Values Well-Being) and

Guiding Principle 2 (Work Collaboratively to Sustain Supportive Environments for Well-Being) speak to this

- The proponents observed that leaders having awareness of workload is important, as this is a risk factor for trauma and stress of students, faculty, and staff, and that the proponents are studying research publications, partnering with the Mathison Centre for Mental Health Research, and pursuing grants to study and attend conferences about this
- It is important to review the University's policies, procedures, and practices with a lens of mental health and wellness
- In response to a question, it was reported that a ½-time person has been seconded to use metrics to evaluate the University's upstream efforts toward mental health promotion and illness prevention to see if this work is demonstrably successful. It is intended that there will be more reporting to the University community under the Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy than there was under the Campus Mental Health Strategy.
- It was suggested that:
  - The Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy could speak more about the Student Wellness Services and Staff Wellness units, about the importance of Faculties and units in fostering mental health and wellness, such as in monitoring and managing workload, about the need to study and address the financial barriers to wellness, and about the University's commitment to review service delivery models in light of the changing needs of students
  - The example actions within each of the strategy's four Guiding Principles could be even bolder

## 5. 2024 GFC Member Survey

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

Highlights:

- The University Secretary reported that the GFC Bylaws require that an assessment of the GFC's performance and operations be held at least every two years, that GFC member evaluations have been held in a variety of formats in recent years, and that it is considered that a survey will be the most effective tool at this time. It was reported that the proposed survey questions were developed in consideration of recent Academic Planning and Priorities Committee, Board of Governors, and GFC surveys, that there is an attempt to balance between asking useful questions and keeping the survey short, that the survey will be in Qualtrics, and that the survey will be deployed to members in April (before the student representatives turnover in May).
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
  - It is hoped that deploying the survey in Qualtrics will increase response rates, as Qualtrics works well on mobile devices
  - The University Secretariat will investigate a way of deploying the survey through Qualtrics such that the first proposed question (the responder's name) is not necessary
  - The University Secretariat prepares a thematic report to GFC on the survey responses, and this report will be included with the meeting materials for the June 2024 GFC

meeting. The report also identifies actions that can be undertaken in response to the feedback received.

- Discussion included:
  - That the University Secretariat should emphasise to GFC members that any identifying information will be kept strictly separate from the assessment responses and that responses will be anonymised
  - The proposed survey does not ask the members to offer feedback on the meeting space. The University Secretary reported that a meeting space solution is underway and it is felt that asking members about ST147 is not necessary.
  - It was suggested that, in addition to emailing a Qualtrics survey link to members, time be provided during the April 11, 2024 GFC meeting for members to complete the survey, as this may improve the response rate

#### **6. Review of the Draft March 7, 2024 GFC Agenda**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

There was no discussion.

#### **7. Other Business**

There was no other business.

#### **8. Adjournment**

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| <b>Moved/Seconded</b> |
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| That the General Faculties Council Executive Committee adjourn the February 14, 2024 meeting. |
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| <b>Carried</b> |
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The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

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Courtney McVie  
University Secretary