

General Faculties Council
GFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes

April 17, 2024, 2:30 p.m.

AD 167 (Governors Boardroom)/Zoom

Voting Members

Penny Werthner, Vice-Chair
Jessica Ayala*
Joule Bergerson*
Olive Chapman*
Jacqueline Jenkins
Shaziah Jinnah Morsette
Rachel Lauer* – arrived during Item 2
Aoife Mac Namara – left after Item 8
Satish Raj
Bill Rosehart – left after Item 8

Non-Voting Member

Kent Donlevy*

Secretary

Courtney McVie

Scribe

Elizabeth Sjogren

Regrets

Ed McCauley, Chair
James Steele

Guests

Jessie Dinh, incoming Students' Union Vice-President (Academic)
Sasha Lavoie, Senior Communications Specialist, Provost's Office – present for Item 4
Michele Moon, Team Lead, Staff WellBeing and WorkLife – present for Item 4
Melissa Morrison, Associate General Counsel, Litigation, Student Appeals and Policy – present for Item 9
Ernia Rezaei-Afsah, incoming Students' Union President
Michelle Speta, Associate Secretary – present for Item 9
Andrew Szeto, Director, Campus Mental Health Strategy – present for Item 4
Jennifer Thannhauser, Counsellor, Student Wellness Services – present for Item 4
Justine Wheeler, Academic Co-Chair, Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook Working Group – present for Item 5
Kevin Wiens, Director, Student Wellness, Accessibility and Support – present for Item 4

**Attended virtually*

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Approval of the Agenda**Moved/Seconded**

That the Agenda for the April 17, 2024 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:

- Convocation ceremonies will be held in May and June. Graduating students and associated staff are encouraged to participate, and members of the University community are encouraged to volunteer to support these events.
- Promotion Review Committee meetings are occurring this week and decisions regarding granting Emeritus status will be made next
- The appointment of the Interim Deans of the Faculty of Law and the Schulich School of Engineering will be announced soon. The decanal searches will resume in the Fall.
- The Students' Union (SU) Teaching Excellence Awards celebration is being held tonight
- Shaziah Jinnah Morsette, outgoing SU President, was acknowledged on this occasion of her last General Faculties Council (GFC) Executive Committee meeting. Ermia Rezaei-Afsah, incoming SU President, and Jessie Dinh, incoming SU Vice-President (Academic), one of whom will be the new SU representative on the Committee, were welcomed as observers of the meeting.

3. Approval of the March 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the General Faculties Council Executive Committee meeting held on March 13, 2024 be approved.

Carried**4. Recommendation of the 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, Jennifer Thannhauser, Strategy Evaluation Lead and Counsellor, Student Wellness Services, and Sasha Lavoie, Senior Communications Specialist, Provost's Office, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponents gave a presentation on the process followed in renewing the Campus Mental Health Strategy, the content of the new Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy including that it has three priorities: a holistic approach to well-being, a focus on the upstream while continuing downstream supports and services, and creating a supportive academic and workplace culture. The revisions made to the Strategy since the Committee last discussed it were noted. The presenters reported that feedback provided during the approval process includes appreciation of the priorities, the clarity of scope, and the importance of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), and it was reported that action and evaluation plans will be developed after the Strategy is approved.
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
 - A caring environment will include people showing civility and respect to one another
 - The team will take a principles-based approach to evaluating the impacts of the Strategy, including using qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate that the University is becoming an increasingly caring community
- Discussion included that:
 - It is possible for the University to maintain its excellence in research and teaching while being a caring environment
 - The focus on a preventative approach to well-being is applauded. There will always be stressed and struggling individuals, but a preventative approach to well-being will help many.
 - The proponents were thanked for listening to feedback during the consultation process and for incorporating concerns, such as about workload, into the current draft

Moved/Seconded

That the General Faculties Council Executive Committee recommend that the General Faculties Council recommend that the Board of Governors approve the Community Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy (the strategy), in the form provided to the Committee, and authorize the proponents to make non-substantive changes to the strategy prior to the Board's approval.

Carried**5. Recommendation of Revisions to the GFC Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Justine Wheeler, Academic Co-Chair of the Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook Working Group (ASCPHWG), presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponent provided an update on the revisions to the Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook made since the Committee last discussed the document
- The Committee's discussion included whether the references to "undergraduate and graduate" students and courses includes professional programs with clinical training. The proponent reported that the Faculty Guidelines can interpret Handbook sections as needed for a particular discipline. It was suggested that the general word 'student' could be used or the word 'trainees'

could be added, and it was decided that the ASCPHWG should consider this as part of next year's revisions, as changing the wording around students would need to be done in several sections and/or defining the meaning of 'student' in Section A.1 will require careful work.

- The proponent was thanked for listening to the feedback offered at the last meeting

Moved/Seconded

That the General Faculties Council (GFC) Executive Committee recommend that the GFC approve the revisions to the Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook, effective July 1, 2024, as set out in the document provided to the Committee.

Carried**6. Appointment of One Academic Staff Member to the Academic Program Subcommittee**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

The Committee named, in rank order, academic staff members to be approached by the University Secretariat to serve on the Academic Program Subcommittee. The first individual to agree to serve will be deemed to be appointed by the EC.

Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, Donna Slater, Cumming School of Medicine, agreed to serve and is deemed to be appointed by the EC.

7. Appointment of One Academic Staff Member of GFC to the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

The Committee named, in rank order, academic staff members of GFC to be approached by the University Secretariat to serve on the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee. The first individual to agree to serve will be deemed to be appointed by the EC.

Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, Jessalynn Keller, Faculty of Arts, agreed to serve and is deemed to be appointed by the EC.

8. Appointment of Two Academic Staff Members of GFC to the Academic Staff Criteria and Processes Handbook Working Group

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

The Committee named, in rank order, academic staff members of GFC to be approached by the University Secretariat to serve on the ASCPHWG. The first two individuals to agree to serve will be deemed to be appointed by the EC.

Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, Jacqueline Jenkins, Faculty of Arts, and Bukola Salami, Cumming School of Medicine, agreed to serve and are deemed to be appointed by the EC.

9. Student Misconduct and Academic Appeals Policy Suite Revisions

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Melissa Morrison, Associate General Counsel, Litigation, Student Appeals and Policy, and Michelle Speta, Associate Secretary, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponents gave a presentation on the consultation process for the revisions to the Student Misconduct and Academic Appeals Policy and three related procedures, providing data relating to recent appeals, and reporting that the proposed changes include:
 - To streamline the structure of student appeals to a single level of appeal for decisions in the scope of the Policy, with academic assessment appeals to be heard by Faculty appeals committees, academic progression appeals to be heard by the University Appeals Committee (UAC), and misconduct appeals to be heard by the University Appeals Tribunal (UAT)
 - A second fail of a candidacy/thesis exam will be appealable to the Faculty of Graduate Studies appeals committee and the associated Required to Withdraw (RTW) will be appealable separately to the UAC
 - There will be a single pool of UAC and UAT Appeal Review Administrators and panel members
 - Clarifying the language to better explain the grounds for appeal, types of appealable decisions, and to enhance the Student Appeals Office oversight of Faculty appeals committees
- It was reported that streamlining the process is intended to improve the student experience by reducing confusion for students and administrators, and by getting to a final decision more quickly. It was observed that the University's system prioritizes and provides procedural fairness for students.
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
 - Appeals by course-based graduate students go to the home Faculty appeals committee and appeals by thesis-based graduate students go to the Faculty of Graduate Studies appeals committee
 - The first fail of a candidacy/thesis exam is currently handled at the Faculty of Graduate Studies level
 - The proposed policy and procedures are in compliance with the Post-Secondary Learning Act
- Discussion included that:
 - Support for the revisions to the policy suite including eliminating an under-used level of appeal was expressed
 - It is appreciated that an academic progression appeal is only on procedural grounds and not de novo
 - The Students' Union has concerns about the proposed changes, and questioned the conclusion that a second level of University appeal is underutilised and does not impact outcomes. The Students' Union feels strongly that students should continue to have the option to access a second level of University appeal. The proponents and the Students' Union will have further dialogue regarding the proposal.

10. Revisions to the GFC Executive Committee Terms of Reference and GFC Standing Committees General Terms of Reference

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

Highlights:

- The presenter reported that a fulsome review of the GFC standing committees' Terms of Reference (TOR) is being conducted, and that the proposed changes to the GFC Executive Committee TOR are to capture two responsibilities not currently specifically captured and the changes to the General TOR are largely to align with the General TOR for the Board's standing committees. It was reported that the TORs will come to the Committee for approval (or recommendation, in the case of its own TOR) at the next meeting.
- There were no comments or questions

11. Review of the Draft May 9, 2024 GFC Agenda

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

The Committee reviewed the draft May 9, 2024 GFC agenda, and there were no comments or questions.

12. Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Adjournment**Moved/Seconded**

That the General Faculties Council Executive Committee adjourn the April 17, 2024 meeting.

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

Courtney McVie
University Secretary