



GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL MEETING #551

Approved Minutes

Monday, December 14, 2020

3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present: M. Mahon, (Chair), C. Adams, K. Alexander, R. Barendregt, L. Barrett, J. Blum, N. Buis Deering, P. Cardozo, L. Connel, B. Cummins, J. Cunningham, C. Currie, A. Darda, J. Diaz, J. Dobbie, L. Elias, I. Genee, K. Gillespie, K. Godfrey, H. Gray, E. Greidanus, M. Helstein, B. Hughes, M. Ingraham, P. Kellett, L. Kennedy, H. Kletke, J. Laurendeau, R. Lee-Thai, M. Letts, Y. Li, R. Lindblad, C. Loewen, R. Marynowski, K. Massey, J. Mather, M. Mohajerani, C. Nicol, A. Novello, D. O'Donnell, E. Okine, T. Oosterbroek, R. Parkkari, T. Patel, K. Peacock, E. Pullan, G. Pyle, N. Rebry, J. Rice, P. Shao, J. Sheriff, S. Spenceley, L. Spencer, R. Stark, A. Stewart, M. Stingl, A. Taylor, J. Usher, J. Vokey, N. Walker, P. Wilson, S. Wismath, R. Wood, R. Yalamova, L. Zink

Regrets: D. Jarvie, I. Kovalchuk, M. Magnuson, C. Mattatall, D. St. Georges, C. Zhu

Other: J. Gallais, V. Grisack, M. Whipple, S. Bubel, T. Henschel, M. Kienzle, A. Langhorn, H. Mirau, M. Slomp, C. Takeyasu, A. Zovoilis

Oki. The President opened the meeting with a welcome and the Territorial Statement.

GFC observed a moment of silence for the passing of Z. Daroczi (DSB), P. Wiens (UL Librarian) and M. Neufeld (student).

M. Mahon introduced J. Diaz, president of the ULSU to speak to the ULSU Pass the Hat Student Foodbank Fundraiser. The link for donations was provided in the agenda package. M. Whipple announced that there is an external donor who will match donations up to \$1000.00 for GFC and Senate.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: gfc.2020.12.01

Stingl/Wismath

That the Agenda for GFC Meeting #551 held Monday, December 14, 2020 be approved.

Motion: Carried (1 opposed)

It was noted that two post-agenda items were sent out: the Independent Consultation Committee Composition change indicating, that as requested by ULFA, to have consistency

with all other employee groups, the three Academic Staff Members will now be elected by ULFA not GFC (these changes are within enclosure #1 as well as in 6.1 as that section of the agenda item is not for action); and within agenda item 4.1 the information and discussion request containing with all the signatories was included as a post-agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: gfc.2020.12.02

Novello/Oosterbroek

That the Minutes for GFC Meetings #550, November 2, 2020 and #550.1 November be approved as amended.

Motion: Carried (1 abstention)

It was requested that “anti-racist” be added to the film series mentioned in the President’s Report.

3. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

M. Mahon reported:

- Extending the Holiday Break - thanks to GFC for their part of the process, and thank you for the short turn around. The new start for Spring 2021 semester is January 11th and this and other initiatives are trying to support a healthy workplace.
- New COVID Restrictions - We are now dealing with these personally and professionally. Gym and other kinds of like facilities closed; and now should be working from home. There are no specific changes for programming; in person classes and labs remain in effect; work related to research can continue; counselling is available; continue to use uLethbridge SafeApp; and travel restrictions remain in place.
- Board of Governors appointments – Darcy Gonci, a three-time alumnus, was a new appointment and Karen Gunn and Terry Whitehead were both re-appointed for three-year terms.
- Government Updates – AB Health Town Hall with Dr. Hinshaw – Public health officers feel that the Post-Secondary sector is doing a good job managing the situation. We have tried to be as transparent as possible with COVID cases while ensuring confidentiality in terms of the individual.
- Government AB 2030 Review – lots of opportunity for consultation among many groups. The recommendations are starting to come in and some examples are ways to increase revenue/research, domestic and international student footprint, as well as savings between institutions and doing collaborative work such as printing, etc. None of these areas are surprising. The area that is concerning us is the concentration around governance. There is discussion around diminishing the number of sectors to 2-3 from 6 and having sector boards instead of individual governing bodies. There are concerns on institutional autonomy as it relates to our university. Many of these types of models are located in the US. California has been provided as an example where University of California and also the California State Universities have sector boards that oversees all of the universities.

We are pushing back on that idea. It would be the first such model in Canada. It would be harder for us to position ourselves as a comprehensive institution in a smaller center.

- Celebrations – we recognize this is not an optimal way to celebrate but we did our best to acknowledge our community with the virtual Awards Evening on November 30th which included President’s Awards as well as the Distinguished Teaching, Speaker Research award, Volunteer Award. The Long Service & Retiree Event was also held virtually to recognize our employees.
- Holiday Celebration will be tomorrow night, hosted by John Wort Hannam with a number of faculty members participating in the event.
- Budget Update (presentation attached to GFC minutes) – slides were presented for this section of the report. It is an overview and update on the provincial budget. He thought it would be useful for the discussion later on in the agenda. The first slide was shown at the town hall but it has been updated. The reductions that we have faced starting in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. The second set is what we face minimally over the next two years, 2021-22/2022-2023. It will be approximately \$10.1 million dollars in Provincial operating grant reductions still to come. The total reduction to the operating grant after the four years will be 20.25% with a total of \$20.2 million from our budget. There is more uncertainty that we could face this budget year. The first is a possible in-year operating grant reduction in 2020-2021. There are signals that this may happen and we are mindful to be prepared for this. The minister talked at the board of governors’ retreat of the potential of larger operating grant reductions in future years. We are at the risk of losing the annual capital improvement grant (formally Infrastructure Maintenance Grant (IMP)) that we use for projects such as to upgrade facilities, fix leaking windows, and any physical changes on campus. The signals we are receiving are that we will have to apply competitively for capital maintenance funding and the pool of funds will be smaller. The last risk/concern is enrolment. For the first time, also related to COVID, we have had a larger decrease in our student enrolment than ever before. For the winter semester and possibly farther, we are tracking a much lower amount of acceptances which our recruitment team is trying to improve. Domestic enrolment, for the first time since he has been president, is looking far shakier than he would like. In 2018-19 the provincial operating grant was 50% of our funding and in 2022-23 – it will be at 41% if we don’t have any other reductions. The government would like to see the funding of post-secondary similar to British Columbia or most likely Ontario which is at 30%. We have lost 93 positions since 2019-20. There is the potential of 100 positions lost over the next year to balance the budget. This total would be 17% of our workforce lost if the budget is reduced. In addition to all of that is the effect of COVID on our budget. So far the total impact is \$6.7 million dollars due to COVID. Most of the hit is on the revenue side with student residence refunds and parking losses countered with some savings in the travel budget. We hope to cover it with one time funding which uses up one third of our one time funds. M. Mahon wanted to give an overview so members understand the challenges that we are facing in the next few years. He doesn’t believe that we should rely on a government change in a few years and given the economic situation that we need to be open to change. We can decrease the size of the institution with decrease in operating funds. We can increase tuition fees dramatically across the board. The response in the US to these situations has been a dramatic increase in tuition. The only realistic option is to increase our options for outside funding. It is not good to sugarcoat the

challenges that we are facing. This is not going away and to ignore this is to put the University of Lethbridge in peril. We will also have metrics introduced in the next few months that will challenge our budget. These metrics will be based on a number of areas such as research/enrolment/etc.

4. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

4.1. Transformational Restructuring Task Forces 2020-2021

Following the report on the budget reductions required E. Okine and N. Walker discussed the transformation process. The Provost stated that the information that the president reported should give us pause in relation to the vision. We did not want to have external consultants tell us how to structure our university but we did want our community to think of how to look for potential budget reductions or efficiencies. Every area is being looked at and reviewed. There were taskforces to assess the costs and governance models in various areas to achieve efficiencies. The Independent Consultation Committee is being staffed to review the taskforce recommendations and options. There is a need to respect confidentiality of the reports as they will affect people. E. Okine went over the composition of the committee. There is an update for the selection of academic staff member in that ULFA suggested that the process for selection of the academic staff member should be consistent with other employee groups. After consultation and consideration, we have halted the GFC selection process for the academic staff members. All individuals that had submitted their names in our process have been requested to submit their names through the ULFA process. This change has been communicated to GFC. Please note that this is not a GFC committee but an independent committee that provides advice to the Budget Advisory Committee. We will continue to consult with General Faculties Council, student groups, and Statutory Deans' Council. Not all recommendations will flow through GFC and the Board of Governors. If a decision is recommended that affects academics, it will flow through General Faculties Council. Employment will flow through Budget Advisory Committee to the Board of Governors. It is a very stressful time for all of us. These taskforces are expressing options and the appropriate governance paths will be followed if we accept any of the recommendations. N. Walker and E. Okine thanked the members and stated that they are trying to keep you informed as well as being committed to the excellence of our institution.

The President opened the floor for discussion. Concern was expressed on how the taskforces and staffing of them along with the Independent Consultation Committee (ICC) were brought to GFC, it was noted that it is not a GFC committee and is made up of membership that is outside of GFC and more broadly than GFC. The ICC will report to the Budget Advisory Committee. The consideration of the taskforces go beyond academic with some recommendations that will be managerial in orientation and won't come to GFC for consideration but others will. There was discussion on who/why GFC will not be able to decide what is academic. Student representation on the various taskforces was discussed and where the students were and were not. It was noted that team leads are listed, etc., but that consultation could possibly have been done by the Team Leads with others that are not listed as members of the taskforce in order to get more information.

There was concern that the purpose statements were not the same as the actual terms of reference for the taskforces. It was indicated that the Board of Governors have been made aware of the activities underway but are not involved; however, any recommendations will be moved through the proper channels of approval. It was mentioned a few times that what is happening at our sister institution no one wants it to happen here.

There was discussion on collegial governance – what is it and what does it look like in this situation. GFC is a body that needs to discuss things that affect academic affairs and are reflected in the PSLA and our bylaws, some discussion occurred on a resolution to this situation is to have a GFC meeting in January with an eye to a meaningful dialogue to discuss the role, mandate and powers of the committee.

MOTION: gfc.2020.12.03
Laurendeau/Lee-Thai

That we move for an emergency meeting of GFC in January for a fulsome discussion of the composition, mandate and powers of the ICC.

Motion: Withdrawn

A point of privilege was raised that GFC has a right and responsibility to deal with academic affairs of the university that can involve financial matters, etc. GFC's rights have been abrogated and GFC should be deciding on what is coming to GFC. M. Mahon reported where we are in the process and that he was unclear on what the point of privilege was addressing. It was added that the problem was that the composition of the committee has been on and off of the agenda with the nomination process started all without GFC being informed on the process. It was felt that due process had been harmed. There was further clarification and discussion on what the concerns were regarding the role of GFC in this process. The President did not agree with the point of privilege and ruled against a breach of privilege.

MOTION OF APPEAL: gfc.2020.12.04
O'Donnell/Cunningham

Appeal of the Chair's decision.

Motion: Carried (36 in favour/20 against/5 Abstained)

Clarity was asked by a member on what the appeal was for.

As the meeting was nearing 5:00 p.m., a motion to extend the meeting was made.

MOTION: gfc.2020.12.05
Hughes/Zink

That GFC continue the GFC Meeting #551 past 5:00 p.m.

Motion: carried

After discussion regarding the motion about the special meeting as a resolution, the motion was withdrawn on agreement by the mover and seconder. To clear the point of privilege, M. Mahon will request as chair of GFC Executive to call a special meeting in January to discuss the ICC and ask that GFC Executive construct the agenda. The withdrawal of the motion and the chair requesting a meeting cleared the point of privilege.

5. QUESTION PERIOD

- L. Spencer – You mentioned that 15% of upper Administration positions were eliminated. What positions were eliminated and are they the ones being searched for at present? M. Mahon stated that the percentage does not relate to the positions being searched for now. He didn't have information on which positions and will get the information. *Nancy Walker reported after the meeting that: the 4 senior administrative positions eliminated (and have not been replaced): AVP Research; Executive Director, Advancement; Executive Director, Sport & Recreation Services; and Registrar.*
- R. Marynowski – Do the COVID cases we are notified about include students or just faculty & staff? M. Mahon reported that we report all of those cases to make sure we don't miss a situation where someone may have been exposed. M. Helstein added clarification that those cases are reported when we are informed. Many students are not in Lethbridge so it is possible that there are cases that we are not notified about.

6. ITEMS FOR ACTION

6.1. GFC Nominations Committee

Independent Consultation Committee

As indicated in the post-agenda the three academic staff members are to be elected by ULFA.

GFC Academic Appeals Committee

MOTION: gfc.2020.12.06

Stingl/Spenceley

The GFC Nominations Committee recommends to GFC the appointment of Fangfang Li to fill the position on the GFC Academic Appeals Committee.

Motion: Carried

There were no questions or concerns.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7.1. Potential Navitas Partnership

E. Okine reported on the exploration of a partnership with Navitas as a potential way to supplement and support international students. With the current budget situation, we need to generate revenue. There were a number of consultations with Navitas that occurred in November and December with various groups across campus. This is a presentation on the initial consultation to GFC. (The presentation to GFC is attached to these minutes.)

Several members of GFC had concerns surround the consultation and the changes made to the partnership after the consultation. Erasmus Okine explained that we need evidenced based data and no decisions will be made until we are satisfied the partnership is feasible and beneficial for the University of Lethbridge. M. Mahon responded that there is no structured partnership on paper. We are still fact finding on how to best move forward to increase international enrolment. The GSA is also fact-finding on the student experience. There was a comment on how do we know that the evidence Navitas gives us is unbiased? E. Okine replied that part of his plan was to visit institutions that have dealt with Navitas. This plan was derailed by Covid for now but he will continue to seek clarity from our own sources. M. Helstein added that this presentation to GFC is that last piece of the consultation before we move to any next step. We need to do some more information gathering and then we will start to include the stakeholders again. There was more discussion surrounding consultation and it was suggested that the Provost speak with students and faculty associations as well as his counterparts at Navitas institutions

Questions were asked regarding what fees might be charged and how the Navitas pathways align with our liberal education ideals. E. Okine replied the tuition rates are comparable to what we charge our students but we are also looking at any other fees they may charge. He also responded that we haven't decided if we are doing a partnership yet but that liberal education is part of what we are so any partnership with Navitas will have to include lib ed ethos.

The Provost was asked why this process has not been sent out to tender. Both the President and the Provost responded that we don't tender partnerships at the UofL. If the partnership doesn't make sense, then we don't pursue it. We do consultation and have to be comfortable that it is beneficial to the UofL. M. Mahon responded, in regards to the for profit aspect of Navitas, that we already have a public private partnership in place with the Potato Grower's agreement. He is not aware of a tendering process for a partnership of this kind. This is a negotiated relationship and not tendered. There was further discussion that a number of institutions go with an internal process. We have to be realistic in that we cannot do this in-house as we don't have the budget or the staffing needed to increase our recruitment to ten percent. We do have internal expertise to draw on and the intent of this partnership will not be to replace the International Centre.

Motion to extend the meeting past 6:00

MOTION: gfc.2020.12.07

Zink/Stark

That GFC continue the GFC Meeting #551 past 6:00 p.m.

Motion: carried (40 in favour/6 opposed)

Another concern raised was the thought that Navitas brings in students that couldn't get into the UofL on their own and how will this further strain our on-campus student supports. With Navitas, are we basing the growth in international numbers on the students that are most expensive ones to bring in? M. Helstein clarified that this partnership is to get us beyond 10%. We haven't seen the drop in international numbers that other institutions have seen with Covid. The international centre's role is direct entry and growing that number to 10% and that will continue to be the case. A Navitas partnership would provide an additional group of students access to our programs, and support them appropriately, as well as providing revenue to increase supports for all international students.

The two final discussion points from members were the concern about this being based at the Calgary campus as well as who will be making the final decisions on the partnership. E. Okine replied that there is space in the model to grow both the Lethbridge and the Calgary campus. More consultation will happen before the final decisions are made. The partnership will come through the normal governance model including GFC.

7.2. GFC Executive Committee Report – December 7, 2020

Received as information. No questions raised.

7.3. GFC Executive Committee Approved Minutes – #530 – October 26, 2020 and #530.1 November 27, 2020

Received as information. No questions raised.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

B. Cummins - GFC Executive will have to schedule the special meeting and is there any way to get people's schedules. It was then indicated that we will endeavour to keep the same day and time for consistency.

A. Taylor – thank you for hearing member's concerns out and answering the difficult questions.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: gfc.2020.12.08

Blum/Marynowski

That the GFC meeting #551 be adjourned.

Motion: Carried