

GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL MEETING #598
Approved Minutes**Monday, March 2, 2026**
3:00 p.m. in W646

- Present:** D. Jayas, Chair, M. Helstein, O. Awosoga (virtual), J. Bachinger, K. Bruce (virtual), C. Bryden, N. Buis Deering, C. Carnaghan (virtual), D. Checkley, B. Cummins, S. Das, H. Davis-Fisch, J. Doan (virtual), J. Dobbie, K. Edwards (virtual), C. Epplert (virtual), A. Figueroa, A. Fiori, E. Galway, B. Gerwin, B. Hughes, K. Ito, A. Iwaniuk, H. Jansen, S. Johnsrude, A. Khassetarash, L. Kopp (virtual), O. Kovalchuk (virtual), R. Larouche, O. Legg (virtual), M. Letts, D. Lucas, K. Massey, C. Mattatall, D. McMartin, R. Mujarrab, M. Oladoye, W. Osborn, J. Otto, S. Pelech, B. Pike, J. Rice, J. Sanders, R. Schiff, K. Schwartz, D. Scott, D. Slomp, C. Steinke (virtual), J. Sumbera, A. Taylor, N. Thakor (virtual), L. Vogelsang (virtual), R. Wevers (virtual), J. Wiltshire (virtual)
- Regrets:** S. Alam, J. Archibald, Y. Dixit, S. Findlay, P. Ghazalian, K. Godfrey, K. Greenwood, S. Malla, T. Matemera, J. Oldfield, L. Starr, R. Tajudeen, S. Thomas, J. Youngdahl
- Other:** J. Gallais, K. Fuglerud, S. Marchant, M. Mathurin-Moe, M. Okeowo-Grant, T. Schmaltz, L. Svenson, S. Webber, R. Westlund, M. Whipple (*other guests were present on Zoom*)

Oki. As Chair, D. Jayas opened the meeting with a warm welcome and a Territorial Acknowledgement. D. Jayas noted that this morning the University, Elder Francis, conducted Sweet Grass Over Coal ceremony. He also encouraged everyone to attend the Indigenous Week events.

The Chair welcomed new members, Jana Archibald, Jacob Bachinger, Katie Bruce, and Jennifer Otto and thanked Justin Blum for his contribution to the GFC.

Copies of Knowledge Without Borders (Volume 10) from a Montreal-based think tank, focused on international students in a global context, were received. The project was supported by eight philanthropic organizations. Members were invited to take a copy for review.

D. Jayas introduced K. Massey to provide an overview of the GFC Curriculum Coordinating Committee.

1. CONSENT AGENDA
APPROVAL

- 1.1. Approval of the GFC Meeting #598 March 2, 2026 Agenda
- 1.2. Approval of the GFC Meeting #597 February 2, 2026 Minutes

INFORMATION

- 1.3. GFC Executive Committee Report – #583 February 23, 2026
- 1.4. GFC Executive Committee Approved Minutes – #582 January 26, 2026 Meeting

MOTION:

gfc.2026.03.01

Kopp/Letts

That the General Faculties Council approve the March 2, 2026 Consent Agenda.

Motion: Carried

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

D. Jayas referred to the President's Report that was included in the agenda package and highlighted the following:

- **Upcoming Town Hall:** Scheduled for March 17, an update on the budget will be provided at that time. Students, Faculty and Staff were encouraged to attend.
- **Sports Dome Update:** The University is working with a partner to support the Sports Dome, with a requirement of a 10% contribution from the partner. A public announcement of the partner is expected soon, with construction to follow.
- **Chancellor Search – Commencement:** At its February 13 meeting, Senate approved the Chancellor Position Description and the Chancellor Search Committee Terms of Reference. As the current Chancellor's term concludes in early 2027, formation of the search committee is beginning. The GFC Nominations Committee will be issuing a call to fill GFC positions, and members with an interest and understanding of the Chancellor and Senate roles are encouraged to consider serving.
- **Provincial Budget Update:** The provincial budget was tabled on February 26, with a \$50 million increase allocated across the post-secondary system, resulting in approximately a 2.4% increase for the University. The Minister also noted the government's awareness of the need for University Hall renovations; advocacy efforts are ongoing.
- **February 4 Event:** University leadership worked to balance campus safety with legal protections for freedom of expression on a public campus. It was clarified that the individual did not have space booked on campus. The University is aware of social media statements regarding a potential return and will act in accordance with established campus security and the trespass notice protocols as necessary.

2.1 Questions Received in Advance

GFC Member: *Many faculty and students expressed significant concern about the February 4 matter, and inquired about the administration's response. My question is, how does Dr. Jayas plan to respond to the concerns? It should be noted, one of these controversial figures has publicly threatened to return to our campus later this semester.*

Answer to Questions received in advance:

D. Jayas confirmed that a written response (via email) had already been provided to the author of the concern, and that the University remains focused on sharing updates and providing as much information as possible. A town hall was confirmed for March 17 at 2:00 p.m. in the SU Ballroom. D. Jayas noted that the session will include information on identified topics, followed by an opportunity for participants to ask questions.

D. Jayas outlined the complexity of the February 4 event, noting the need to balance campus safety with legal protections for freedom of expression on a public campus. It was explained that once the individual indicated they would not leave voluntarily and disruption was occurring, a trespass notice was issued. There is no end date attached to the

trespass notice. Comparisons were made to other instances where trespass notices have been issued. Members questioned the rationale and authority for issuing a trespass notice, including alignment with workplace safety obligations. M. Helstein noted that while trespass decisions must be legally defensible, the University's authority is constrained by unsettled legal definitions of free expression and hate speech. As a result, the focus has focused on mitigating real physical and psychological impacts through communication and risk-reduction measures.

Members noted that there are differing perspectives on how such situations should be addressed and recognized the significant complexity involved. Further comments highlighted the impact on students and the instructional environment, as well as concerns about individuals seeking publicity through disruption.

The role of Board policy on freedom of expression was discussed, including limits where conduct causes harm or distress. M. Helstein noted that the University is relying on existing policies and legal guidance.

Opportunities for improving student communication and clarity of protocols were raised. It was noted that University leadership has conducted a formal debrief of the situation, and that the experience will continue to inform clearer tools and approaches for responding to future incidents involving disruption or safety concerns.

2.2 Question Period on Report Items

In response to a question regarding the allocation of the \$50 million provincial wide investment, D. Jayas noted that the University is receiving approximately a 2.4% increase, bringing total operating funding to just over \$90 million. M. Helstein added that further details on how the \$50 million increase will be allocated across institutions are expected as the provincial budget implementation is finalized.

3. ITEMS FOR ACTION

3.1. GFC Admission ASC Report ASC Report – May 1, 2027

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.02
Carnaghan/Buis Deering

That General Faculties Council approve the removal of the Casper assessment from the admission requirements for the Master of Management, effective May 1, 2027.

Motion: Carried

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.03
Slomp/Rice

That General Faculties Council approve a one-year online campus pilot for the Master of Education programs in Educational Leadership and Contemporary Issues in Education, effective May 1, 2027.

Motion: Carried

3.2. GFC Curriculum Coordinating Committee

- CCC Report – Effective May 1, 2027

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.04

Doan/Larouche

That General Faculties Council approve recommendations #1-6 as presented by the Faculty of Health Sciences, effective May 1, 2027.

Motion: Carried

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.05

Carnaghan/Osborn

That General Faculties Council approve recommendations #7-9 as presented by the Dhillon School of Business, effective May 1, 2027.

Motion: Carried

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.06

Jansen/Pelech

That General Faculties Council approve the addition of Education 1000 to list II: Social Sciences Courses, effective May 1, 2027.

Motion: Carried

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.07

Rice/Larouche

That General Faculties Council approve recommendations #11-12 as presented by the School of Graduate Studies, effective May 1, 2027.

Motion: Carried

- CCC Report – Pending Ministerial Approval

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.08

Slomp/Rice

That General Faculties Council approve the Policy/Program revised content for the new Master of Clinical and Counselling Psychology program, pending ministerial approval.

Motion: Carried

3.3. Ad Hoc GFC Committee – Emeriti Appointments

- Ad Hoc GFC Committee Creation

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.09

Taylor/Osborn

That GFC approve the establishment of an ad-hoc GFC committee to review the current terms of the Emeriti Appointments Policy.

Motion: Carried

D. Jayas clarified the sequencing of motions, noting that the second would proceed only if the first carried.

- Potential Ad Hoc Committee

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.10
Helstein/Taylor

That General Faculties Council approves the composition, powers and duties, and that upon the final recommendation being made to GFC, the Emeriti Appointments Policy Review GFC Ad Hoc Committee will be officially dissolved.

Motion: Carried

M. Helstein noted that the GFC Bylaws outline the process for striking an ad hoc committee and acknowledged that GFC Executive has proposed potential structural ideas in accordance with the Bylaws. In response to a question regarding the handling of recommendations, it was noted that any recommendations arising from the work of the ad hoc committee that propose changes to policy would be required to proceed through the established policy review process to ensure appropriate governance oversight.

3.4. GFC Nominations Committee – Destination Project Phase II Steering Committee Appointments

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.11
Dobbie/Letts

That GFC Nominations Committee met on February 23, 2026 and recommends to GFC for approval the following nominees for terms commencing immediately:

Destination Project Phase II Steering Committee

*Kevin McGeough (Professor, Geography & Environment)
Tabitha Spagnolo (Associate Professor & Chair, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics).*

Motion: Carried

3.5. GFC Research Planning Committee

- Centre for Culture and Community

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.12
McMartin/Letts

That General Faculties Council approve the termination of the Centre for Culture and Community, effective immediately.

Motion: Carried

D. McMartin highlighted that all centres undergo a review every five years and through this process, some centres are identified as defunct due to a lack of activity and the absence of a designated director. In such cases, the originating department is given the opportunity to determine whether there is interest in reinstating the centre.

- Small Business Institute

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.13

McMartin/Carnaghan

That General Faculties Council approve the termination of the Small Business Institute, effective immediately.

Motion: Carried

- ULRF Terms of Reference

MOTION: gfc.2026.03.14

McMartin/Figueroa

That GFC approve the changes to the University of Lethbridge Research Fund (ULRF) Terms of Reference.

Motion: Carried

Questions were raised regarding eligibility and whether applicants could be named on more than one ULRF, as well as the potential implications for teamwork. D. McMartin clarified that while there are separate categories for team-based projects, the ULRF is intended as a seed grant for individual projects. It was noted that the program guidelines are clear in this regard, as recent application rounds were submitted by individuals rather than teams.

Further discussion addressed whether repeat applicants are common. It was confirmed that this does occur, and emphasis was placed on the intent of the fund as a seed opportunity to support individual projects in their early stages.

4. ITEMS FOR REVIEW (Prior to Board Action)

4.1. None

5. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

5.1. GFC 2026-2027 Statutory Seat Allocation

J. Gallais reviewed the statutory seat allocations for the 2026–2027 General Faculties Council, based on the Academic Staff count as of January 31, 2026. It was noted that there are no changes from the 2024–2025 allocations. Appointed seat allocations, as set out in the Post-Secondary Learning Act and the GFC Bylaws, remain fixed and do not change annually.

5.2. ULSU Update

A. Figueroa announced that the ULSU Changeover Dinner will take place in early April. The Transition Gala, which will support campus food security, brings together community and university leaders, highlights the ULSU's accomplishments from the past year, and introduces incoming student leaders. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, April 8, 2026, and members were encouraged to save the date.

An update was also provided on the ongoing student election, including the One Pass referendum. Members of GFC were encouraged to help promote student participation through reminders and advocacy. It was noted that election results will be announced on Friday, March 6, and members were encouraged to attend the results announcement event.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1. Question Period on Other Items

Further comments were provided in relation to item **2.1 Questions Received in Advance**.

Members noted the importance of the institution's role in determining and demonstrating campus safety while balancing other considerations. Discussion highlighted the need for clearer guidance and best practices to support safe student gatherings and protests, recognizing that situations can escalate and pose risks. It was acknowledged that efforts were made to provide information at the time, while also recognizing opportunities to improve communication and preparedness. A question was raised regarding whether an upcoming town hall would be dedicated exclusively to this topic, and it was clarified that the March 17, 2026 town hall will address multiple topics.

In response to a question regarding targeted enrolment expansion, M. Helstein noted that the University is awaiting confirmation of its allocation related to this initiative, as discussions with the provincial government have not yet taken place. It was further noted that programs already identified for targeted enrolment growth are expected to continue, on a year by year basis, as the framework is rolled out.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

gfc.2026.03.15

Pike/Buis Deering

That the GFC meeting of March 2, 2026 be adjourned.

Motion: Carried