
GFC Handbook

For Student Representatives





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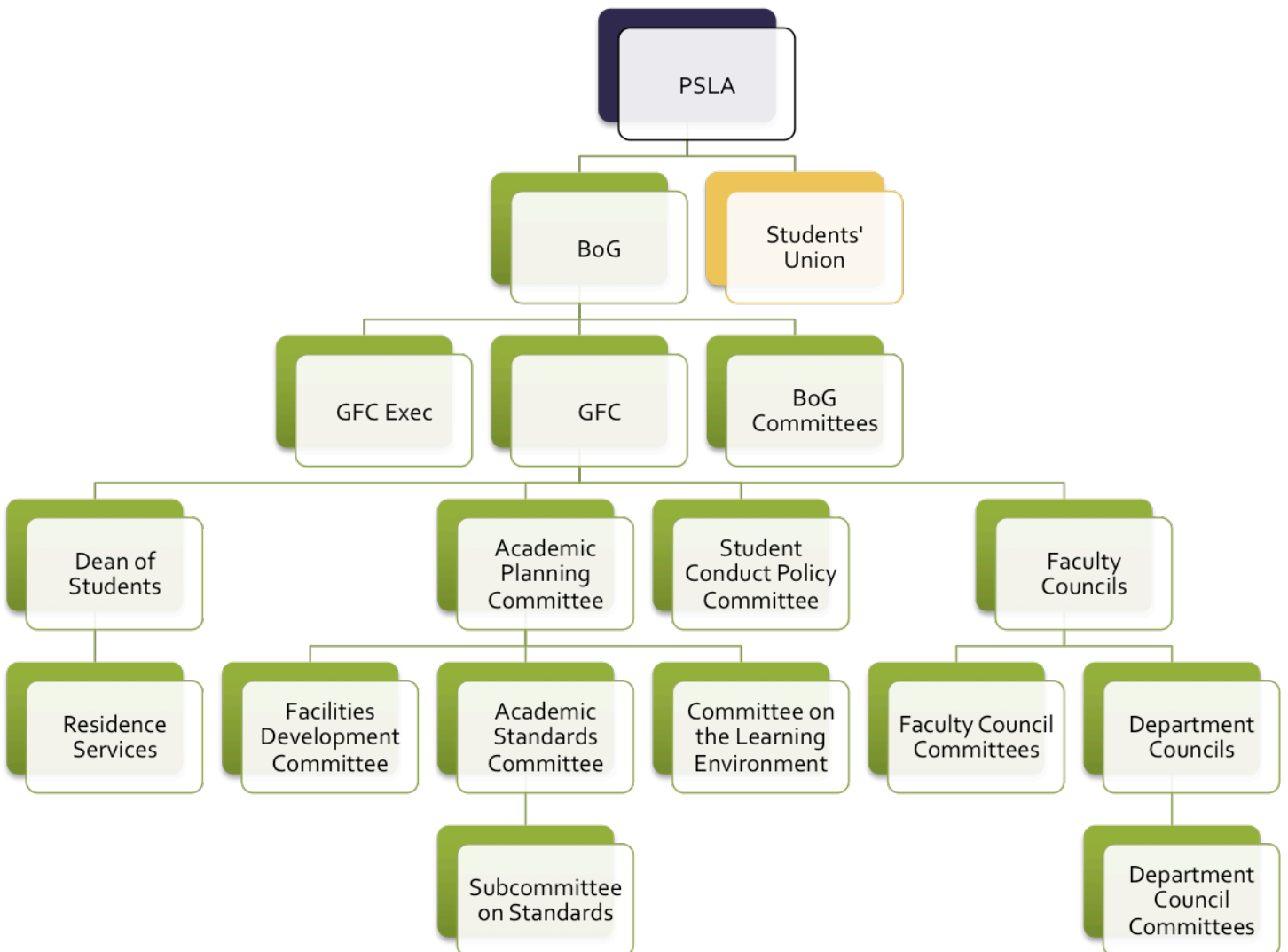
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Governance

At the University of Alberta



University Governance

University governance is bi-cameral:

Board of Governors	General Faculties Council												
<i>The business arm and ultimate authority of the University of Alberta. The Board and its standing committees make decisions regarding finance, property, investments, and other business or money related operations.</i>	<i>Responsible for all academic decisions as delegated by the Board of Governors. The GFC and its standing committees make decisions regarding teaching and learning, admission, graduation, and academic appeals.</i>												
Standing Committees	Standing Committees												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Finance & Property Human Resources & Compensation Investment Learning and Discovery Safety, Health and Environment University Relations 	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Academic Planning</td> <td>Academic Standards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Campus Law Review</td> <td>Subcommittee on Standards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Learning Environment</td> <td>Facilities Development</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nominating</td> <td>Replenishment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Conduct Policy</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Undergraduate Awards & Scholarship</td> <td>University Teaching Awards & Scholarship</td> </tr> </table>	Academic Planning	Academic Standards	Campus Law Review	Subcommittee on Standards	Learning Environment	Facilities Development	Nominating	Replenishment	Student Conduct Policy		Undergraduate Awards & Scholarship	University Teaching Awards & Scholarship
Academic Planning	Academic Standards												
Campus Law Review	Subcommittee on Standards												
Learning Environment	Facilities Development												
Nominating	Replenishment												
Student Conduct Policy													
Undergraduate Awards & Scholarship	University Teaching Awards & Scholarship												

Executive Committee

The GFC Executive Committee is made up top University administrators, SU and GSA representatives, and members elected from GFC. Although it is technically a committee of GFC and is accountable to GFC, it has a lot of power over GFC because it controls what goes on the meeting agendas.

Other Levels of Governance

Every Faculty has its own academic governance process, and in Faculties with distinct departments or programs, each department or program will have its own academic governance process as well. Many of the program-specific decisions made at GFC started all the way down at the department level and had to work their way up through their Department Council, Faculty Council, GFC standing committees, and finally GFC.

Strategic Plan

For The Public Good is the institutional strategic plan that will inform University decisions at all levels of governance until 2021.

BUILD

EXPERIENCE

EXCEL

ENGAGE

SUSTAIN

GFC Committees

<p><i>Academic Planning Committee</i></p> <p>The GFC Academic Planning Committee (APC) is the senior committee dealing with academic, financial and planning issues. It is responsible to GFC (or the Board) for committee matters, and may also ask to consider or recommend to GFC on any academic issue. GFC APC is also responsible to GFC for promoting an optimal learning environment for students and excellence in teaching, research, and graduate studies.</p>	<p><i>Academic Standards Committee</i></p> <p>The GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) is responsible for making recommendations and providing advice to GFC, its Executive Committee, and the APC in regards to matters of admissions and transfer, including admission and transfer to Faculties, admission of Open Studies students, academic standing policies and general university admission policies, and all institutional marking and grading policies and procedures.</p>
<p><i>Committee on the Learning Environment</i></p> <p>The GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) is the committee responsible for the promotion of excellence in teaching and of an optimal learning environment, as well as with the provision of appropriate information resources to the university community as a whole.</p>	<p><i>Subcommittee on Standards</i></p> <p>The GFC Academic Standards Committee Subcommittee on Standards (SOS) makes recommendations to ASC on issues affecting undergraduate students, including re-examination policy, academic definitions, academic standing regulations and admission requirements.</p>
<p><i>Executive Committee</i></p> <p>The GFC Executive Committee (EXEC) carries out functions delegated to it by GFC and recommends to GFC on academic proposals and student affairs issues.</p>	<p><i>Facilities Development Committee</i></p> <p>The GFC Facilities Development Committee (FDC) makes recommendations to General Faculties Council and the Board of Governors on general space and functional programs, the design and use of facilities, and policies related to facilities and planning. In addition, the President, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) may refer matters to FDC for consideration or advice.</p>
<p><i>Nominating Committee</i></p> <p>The GFC Nominating Committee ensures the replenishment of GFC standing committees and other bodies requiring representation from GFC or the academic community. It is charged with ensuring the best possible match between prospective members and the committees to which they are nominated.</p>	<p><i>Student Conduct Policy Committee</i></p> <p>The Student Conduct Policy Committee (SCPC) is charged with providing oversight to the university's student discipline codes. The committee reviews and recommends on new codes, and policies and procedures related to discipline.</p>
<p><i>Undergrad Awards and Scholarship</i></p> <p>GFC UASC has delegated authority to approve new awards and bursaries, and to amend awards and bursaries already approved for undergraduate students.</p>	<p><i>University Teaching Awards</i></p> <p>The GFC University Teaching Awards Committee (UTAC) adjudicates GFC's Teaching Awards.</p>

Reading Outline of Issue

Prior to any meeting by the GFC or Board of Governors, meeting materials are posted online. Each agenda item in these meetings has an *Outline of Issue*, which introduces the topic, followed by related documents. Each outline of issue will usually contain a lot of sections with details about the item.

These are the outline of issue sections you should pay the most attention to:

<i>The motion</i>	The actual statement you will be voting on.
<i>Action Requested</i>	Could be approval, recommendation, discussion, or just for information.
<i>Proposed by</i>	The name of the person, committee, or office putting forward the proposal.
<i>Subject</i>	A general statement about the issue.
<i>Responsibility</i>	The unit with the authority to implement the motion. This tells you who the motion will affect the most directly.
<i>Purpose of the proposal</i>	Why is the proposal necessary? Reading this section will answer many of your questions in advance.
<i>Impact of the proposal</i>	If you read no other section, read this one. It outlines what the real-world consequences of the motion are intended to be.
<i>Timeline or implementation date</i>	The timeline in which the motion is to be implemented. Implementation schedules that are too short are often detrimental to students.
<i>Consultative route</i>	Everyone who has seen and provided feedback for the motion. This will tell you whether or not it has gone through the proper governance process, and whether or not students who are affected by it have been properly consulted.
<i>Approval route</i>	This will show you the path the motion will have to take before it is considered fully approved and can be implemented. This will tell you where it's going next so that you can carry on your advocacy efforts if necessary.
<i>Final Approver</i>	Usually GFC Executive or Board of Governors, this is the end of the line for the motion.

If, after reading these important sections, you still have questions, try skimming through the rest of the outline of issue to see if your question has already been answered.

Student Advocacy

A Step-by-Step Introduction

Step 1: Discover the issue, and its scope.

When an issue arises that affects your constituents, collect as many details as you can, figure out who has direct power in relation to the issue, and how you can interact with them, make a list of potential other stakeholders and/or allies, and determine potential courses the issue may take in the future so you can be prepared.

Uncovering potential issues before they blow up can make all the difference in your advocacy efforts.

<i>Keep in contact with...</i>			
<i>Your constituents</i>	<i>Students' Council</i>	<i>Your Faculty Association</i>	<i>Department Associations</i>
<i>Board of Governors Representative</i>	<i>GFC Representatives</i>	<i>Faculty Council Representatives</i>	<i>Department Council Representatives</i>

Step 2: Consult constituents to fairly represent them.

Get feedback from your constituents through social media, tabling in faculty buildings, sending out feedback forms, holding town halls, or attending the meetings of clubs and associations in your faculty. The feedback you collect should be incorporated into your advocacy activities as much as possible.

Step 3: Formulate possible outcomes for the issue.

Determine what your ideal outcome would be so that you have a clear goal in mind, but also think about other possible outcomes and plan how you will respond should that scenario arise.

Step 4: Convince decision makers and combat opposition.

Figure out the best way to convince each of the decision makers related to the issue to act how you want them to, and the best way to counter any opposition you face, and put that plan into action through lobbying, awareness campaigns, petitions, and any other methods of advocacy at your disposal.

Step 5: Evaluate.

Did you achieve the outcome you wanted? Why or why not? What would you do differently in the future? Evaluate your success, keep a record to help future advocates, and advertise your results (good or bad) to your constituents.

Advocacy Planning Worksheet

1. What is the issue I am advocating on?

2. Who is the most important decision-maker involved in this issue?

3. What is the best way to interact with this decision-maker?

4. How will I spread knowledge of this issue?

5. How will I consult my constituents on this issue? Do they even see it as an issue?

6. What advocacy position will maintain my organization's integrity while still reflecting my constituents' opinions?

7. What will my opposition say about my advocacy position?

<i>Their Argument</i>	<i>My Argument</i>

8. How can my advocacy position benefit stakeholders? How can I "sell" it?

9. How will I get my point across to decision makers on this issue?

Asking Effective Questions

Before you ask a question

Preparation is key. Take a moment to reflect before you ask.

- Are you sure your question hasn't been answered in the meeting materials?
- Why are you asking it?
 - You may discover you don't actually have a good reason.
 - If you have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish it will help you structure your question to get a better answer.
- What kind of answer do you want?
 - Yes or no answer
 - Clarification of facts
 - Presenter's opinion
- Would it be better to email your question?

Strategies for asking effective questions

<i>Come prepared</i>	Read the materials in advance and understand your role as a representative.
<i>Ask questions respectfully</i>	You will be more successful if you treat others with the respect you wish to be treated with yourself.
<i>Draw from your own expertise</i>	Draw from skills you're learning in your studies to structure coherent, meaningful questions.
<i>Listen carefully</i>	Don't cause repetition, and listen to others to learn how to say what you want and get the best reaction.
<i>Practice</i>	Ask lots of questions, learn by trial and error.

Basic Question Theory

How do you get the kind of answer you're looking for?

<i>Open Question</i> Deeper, more complex answers.	<i>Factual Question</i> Data or clarification.	<i>Hypothesis Testing</i> You think you already know the answer but want to test it.	<i>Convergent Question</i> Has one answer.
<i>Closed Question</i> Specific answers.	<i>Evaluative Question</i> Assessment of strengths, weaknesses, or progress.	<i>Leading Question</i> Lead the respondent to a particular answer.	<i>Divergent Question</i> Has multiple answers.
	<i>Interpretive Question</i> Opinion or speculation.		

Important Contacts

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Acronym Cheat Sheet

AAC	Academic Appeals Committee	FA	Faculty Association
ALES	Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences	FADRO	FA Deputy Returning Officer
APC	Academic Planning Committee	FAMF	Faculty Association Membership Fee
APIRG	Alberta Public Interest Research Group	FDC	Facilities and Development Committee
APSA	Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association	FAUnA	Faculty of ALES Undergraduate Association
ASA	Augustana Students' Association	GFC	General Faculties Council
ASC	Aboriginal Students Council	GFCSC	GFC Student Caucus
ASC	Academic Standards Committee	GSA	Graduate Students' Association
ASC SOS	Subcommittee on Standards	ISSS	Interdepartmental Science Students' Society
AUFSJ	L'Association des Universitaires de la Faculté Saint-Jean	KSRSS	Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation Student Society
BAC	Budget Advisory Committee	LSA	Law Students' Association
BFC	Board Finance Committee	MNIF	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees
BoG	Board of Governors	MOOC	Massive Online Open Course
BSA	Business Students' Association	MSA	Medical Students' Association
CAC	Council Administration Committee	NASA	Non-Academic Staff Association
CASA	Canadian Alliance of Student Associations	NSSA	Native Studies Students' Association
CATP	Campus Association Transfer Payment	NUA	Nursing Undergraduate Association
CAUS	Council of Alberta University Students	OASIS	Organization for Arts Students and Interdisciplinary Studies
CLE	Committee on the Learning Environment	POTSU	President of the SU
COFA	Council of Faculty Associations	PSLA	Post-Secondary Learning Act
CORA	Council of Residence Associations	RBAC	Residence Budget Advisory Committee
COSA	Council on Student Affairs	RO	Registrar's Office
CRO	Chief Returning Officer	UAB	University Appeal Board
CSL	Community Service Learning	UAPPOL	U of A Policies and Procedures Online
DA	Departmental Association	UASC	Undergraduate Awards and Scholarships Committee
DFU	Dedicated Fee Unit	URI	Undergraduate Research Initiative
DG	Discover Governance	UTAC	University Teaching Awards Committee
DIE Board	Discipline, Interpretation, and Enforcement Board	VPA	Vice-President Academic
DRO	Deputy Returning Officer	VPOF	Vice-President Operations and Finance
ESA	Education Students' Association	VPSL	Vice-President Student Life
ESS	Engineering Students' Society	VPX	Vice-President External

