

# GFC Orientation

INFORMATION 2024-25

# Topics

- University Governance
- General Faculties Council
- GFC Committees
- Roles and Responsibilities
- GFC Meetings
- Policy Framework

# UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

[Governance & Leadership website](https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/index.htm)

<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/index.htm>

# What is Governance?

- It is the way the institution organizes itself and its decision making processes ⇒ meet its purpose
- Expressed through structures and procedures such as:
  - legislation
  - policies
  - bylaws
  - informal norms
- Goal of successful system ⇒ effectiveness and accountability to community it serves

## Where Does the Authority Come From?

In Alberta, authority is transferred from the Province to the University by means of legislation



***Post-secondary Learning Act (PSLA), 2003*** defines responsibilities for the Board and GFC  
***Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act (APAGA), 2009*** defines the accountability of the University to the provincial government



Although there are many checks and balances, the University is an autonomous entity and its own corporation, regulated by Provincial legislation

## *Post-secondary Learning Act (PSLA)*

The PSLA came into force in 2004. It combined and updated four separate Acts into one complete piece of legislation. The PSLA is intended to advance the concept of **Campus Alberta** by taking Alberta's post-secondary system into the future:

- Accessible
- Flexible
- Responsive regardless of where a student chooses to learn

## **Campus Alberta**

Movement within Alberta for the advanced education system to focus strongly on the learner. PSE institutions working together to achieve these goals:

- Accessible, affordable and quality learning opportunities for Albertans
- Enhanced learner transitions into and movement within the advanced education system
- Learners who have the tools they need to succeed in their chosen learning pathway
- Lifelong participation in the advanced education system by all who have the desire and the skills to succeed

## **Six Sector System** *(under review)*

PSLA revised in February 2019 – sectors renamed:

- Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities
- **Undergraduate Universities**
- Polytechnic Institutions
- Comprehensive Community Colleges
- Independent Academic Institutions
- Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions

# Government of Alberta

## Publicly Funded Institutions

- Accountable to the Minister and governed under the authority of the PSLA
- Funded in part by government through operating and other types of grants
- May also generate revenue from:
  - tuition and fees
  - ancillary services
  - sponsored research funding
  - investments and donations

## Regulated Environment

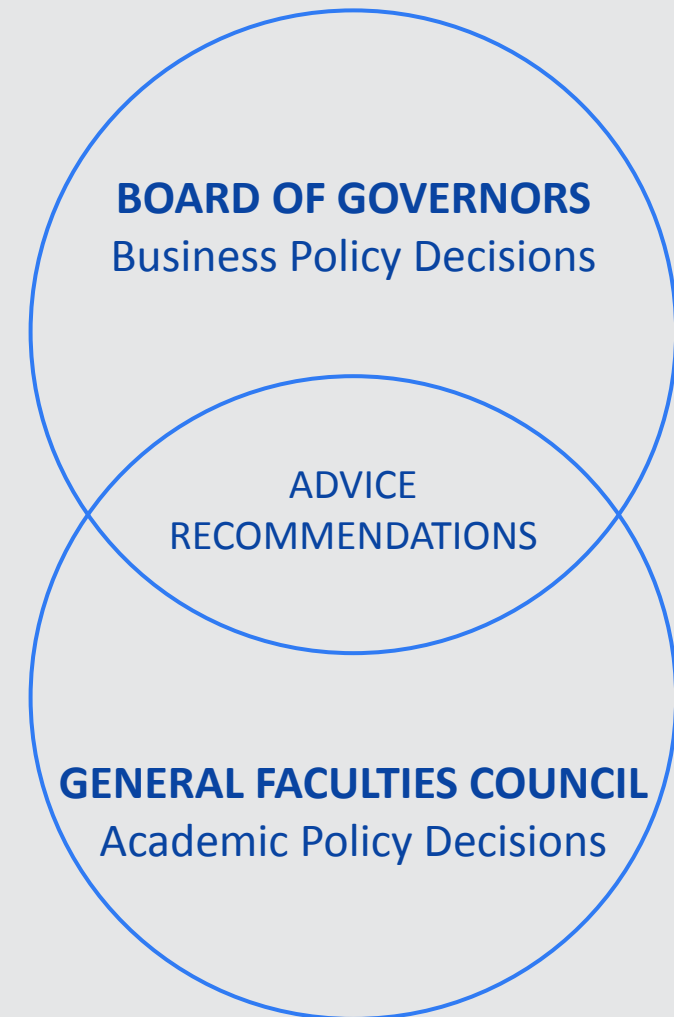
- Application to the Minister must be submitted for new degree programs:
  - System coordination review: determine need and fit with other programs
  - Quality review: Campus Alberta Quality Council
  - Ministerial approval
- Tuition Fee Regulation – annual increases limited to % annual change in Alberta CPI
- Permission for use of institutional financial reserves

## Accountability Reporting

- Institutional Mandate
- Institutional Performance Metrics
- Budget Plan
- Capital Plan
- Annual Report
- Audited Financial Statements

# Bicameral Governance

- MRU governs itself with a bicameral governance structure. The two senior governing bodies at Mount Royal are:
  - Board of Governors:** has senior oversight of the institution; concerns itself with long-range planning and business affairs (e.g. mandate, budget, investment management, collective agreements, appointment of President, policy framework, institutional risk).
  - General Faculties Council:** senior academic body responsible for overseeing the academic affairs of the university, subject to the authority of the Board (e.g. program approval, academic policies and regulations, research policies, academic schedule, granting of degrees other than honorary degrees).
- The **President and Vice-Chancellor** is the liaison between the Board and GFC.





# Collegial Governance

- GFC operates under principle of collegial academic governance:
  - Commitment to inclusive and participatory governance decision-making
  - Desire to facilitate meaningful individual-level engagement in governance processes
  - Commitment to openness, transparency and respectful communication
  - Commitment to responsiveness, respect and reciprocity between governance bodies and between government bodies and University administration

# GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL

[GFC Website](https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/index.htm)

*<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/index.htm>*

# GFC Composition

[GFC Membership](https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/Membership/index.htm) <https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/Membership/index.htm>

- Regardless of manner of appointment, all GFC members are Members within the body.

## **REGULATORY MEMBERS *(as required by the PSLA):***

- **Ex Officio Members** PSLA Section 23(a) (members by virtue of office)  
*(Executives, Deans, Registrar)*
- **Elected Members** PSLA Section 23(b); Section 24 (elected by Faculty Councils)  
*(Full-Time Academic Staff Members)*
- **Student Members** PSLA Section 23(c) (appointed by SAMRU)

## **ADDITIONAL MEMBERS *(as appointed by GFC):***

- **Additional Members** PSLA Section 23(d); Section 25; GFC Bylaws  
*(Administrators, Elected Full-Time & Contract Academic Staff Members, Indigenous Members, Students, Other)*

# GFC Bylaws

[GFC Bylaws](https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/Bylaws/index.htm) *<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/Bylaws/index.htm>*

- Bylaws cannot contradict enabling statute (or other points of law), but can duplicate, explain or amplify them
- Bylaws explain how, on a day-to-day basis, a governing body conducts its business
- Bylaws will be reviewed by the GFC at least once every three years

## Role of GFC

- GFC is the legislative governance body responsible for the academic affairs of the University including academic policy decisions, subject to the authority of the Board
- Make recommendations to the Board on matters of academic import
- Brings expertise and academic perspective to the governance of the University

## GFC Powers and Duties

- Current composition and powers defined in the [Post-secondary Learning Act](https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/p19p5.pdf) (PSLA) <https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/p19p5.pdf>
- Subject to the authority of the Board, the GFC is responsible for the academic affairs of the University by exercising its powers
- **Specific powers outlined in the PSLA (s. 26(1)):**
  - a) exercise any power of a Faculty Council that the GFC considers desirable to exercise;
  - b) consider and make decisions on the reports of the Faculty Councils as to the programs of study in the Faculties;
  - c) determine all programs of study to which clause (b) does not apply that are to be offered by the University for credit toward the requirements for any degree, diploma or certificate;

## GFC Powers and Duties

- **Specific powers outlined in the PSLA (s. 26(1)):**
  - d) determine the timetables for examinations and for lectures and other instruction in each Faculty;
  - e) consider and make decisions on the reports of Faculty Councils as to the appointment of examiners and the conduct and results of examinations in the Faculties;
  - f) provide for the granting and conferring of degrees other than honorary degrees;
  - g) provide for the preparation and publication of the University calendar;
  - h) hear and determine appeals from the decisions of Faculty Councils on applications, requests or petitions by students and others;

## GFC Powers and Duties

- **Specific powers outlined in the PSLA (s. 26(1)):**
  - i) consider all matters reported to it by any Faculty Council and communicate its opinion or action on those matters to the Faculty Council concerned;
  - j) determine the date for the beginning and end of lectures in the University and also the beginning and end of each University term;
  - k) make rules and regulations for the management and operation of libraries;
  - l) recommend to the Board the establishment of faculties, schools, departments, chairs and programs of study in the University in any subject that the GFC thinks fit;
  - m) makes rules and regulations respecting academic awards;



## GFC Powers and Duties

- **Specific powers outlined in the PSLA (s. 26(1)):**
  - n) determine standards and policies respecting the admission of persons to the University as students;
  - o) make recommendations to the Board with respect to affiliation with other institutions, academic planning, campus planning, a building program, the budget, the regulation of residences and dining halls, procedures in respect of appointments, promotions, salaries, tenure and dismissals, and any other matters considered by the GFC to be of interest to the University;
  - p) authorize lecturing and teaching on the University premises by persons other than members of the staff of the University

## GFC Powers and Duties

- **Student Affairs** (PSLA, s. 31)

GFC has general supervision of student affairs at the University.

GFC may:

a) subject to a right of appeal to the Board, discipline students attending the University, and the power to discipline includes the power:

i) to fine students,

ii) to suspend the right of students to attend the University or to participate in any student activities, or both, and

iii) to expel students from the University;

b) delegate its power to discipline students in any particular case or generally to any person or body of persons, subject to any conditions with respect to the exercise of any delegated power that it considers proper;

## GFC Powers and Duties

- **Student Affairs (PSLA, s. 31)**

GFC may:

c) give to a student organization of the University the powers to govern the conduct of students it represents that the GFC considers proper.

Any powers to govern the conduct of students given to a student organization pursuant to subsection c) are subject to the overriding control of the Board, the President and the GFC.

## GFC Recommendations to the Board

- The Board must consider the recommendations of the GFC, if any, on matters of academic import prior to providing for:
  - the support and maintenance of the University;
  - the betterment of existing buildings;
  - the construction of any new buildings the Board considers necessary for the purposes of the University;
  - the furnishings and equipping of the existing and newly erected buildings, or
  - the establishment of faculties, schools, departments, chairs, programs of study and any other activities the Board considers necessary or advantageous.

(PSLA, s. 19)
- Any recommendations from the GFC to the Board must be transmitted to the Board through the President (PSLA, s. 26(2))

# GFC COMMITTEES

[Committee website](https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/Committees/index.htm)

<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/Committees/index.htm>

## GFC Committees

- The GFC functions through a standing committee structure consisting of Committees that carry out much of the detailed work and recommend actions that the GFC should take.
- GFC members (including newly elected GFC members) are strongly encouraged to sit on at least one committee, which is also a way to increase members' understanding of GFC's governing roles and accountabilities.

- **Executive Committee (EC)** – Acts as the executive body of GFC and, in general, carries out the functions delegated to it by GFC ([EC Charter](#))
- **Academic Planning and Budget Committee (APBC)** – Provides advice and recommendations with respect to policies and other matters related to academic and budget planning, principles and priorities ([APBC Charter](#))
- **Academic Programs and Curriculum Committee (APCC)** – Provides advice and recommendations with respect to policies and other matters related to academic programs and curriculum ([APCC Charter](#))
- **Academic Standards Committee (ASC)** – Provides advice and recommendations with respect to policies and other matters related to academic standards and quality assurance ([ASC Charter](#))
- **Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC)** – Provides advice and recommendations with respect to policies, programs and other initiatives related to research, creative and other scholarly activities at Mount Royal University ([RSC Charter](#))
- **Student Affairs Committee (SAC)** – Provides advice and recommendations with respect to policies and matters related to student conduct and other student affairs matters ([SAC Charter](#))
- **Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC)** – Provides advice and recommendations with respect to policies and matters related to teaching and learning ([TLC Charter](#))

## Executive Committee

- Delegated authority to act on behalf of GFC:
  - matters that require immediate action between regularly scheduled meetings
  - matters that require action when there is an extended break between meetings
- Oversees and advises on governance:
  - approves GFC meeting agendas and materials
  - recommends revisions to Bylaws



## Committee Reporting to GFC

- Committee Chairs are expected to provide a written or verbal report on committee activities at each GFC meeting
- Committees will submit a written annual plan and an annual report to GFC
- Approved minutes of committee meetings will be posted on the website following approval by the committee and will be included as information on the Consent Agenda in the following GFC meeting package

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## GFC Officers

- The roles of GFC Officers are outlined in Article 4 of the GFC Bylaws
- The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary roles are ex-officio:
  - Chair – Dr. Tim Rahilly, President and Vice-Chancellor (non-voting except to break a tie)
  - Vice-Chair – Dr. Chad London, Provost and Vice-President, Academic (voting)
  - Secretary – Amy Nixon, General Counsel and University Secretary (non-voting)
- The Recording Secretary is appointed by the General Counsel and University Secretary (non-voting) – Sheena Dyer, Assistant University Secretary, GFC

## Role of GFC Chair – Dr. Tim Rahilly

- The Chair leads GFC in all aspects of its work and is responsible to effectively lead GFC in accordance with the PSLA and these Bylaws.
- In carrying out this role, the Chair will:
  - act as the Chair of meetings of GFC and the GFC Executive Committee;
  - act as the spokesperson for GFC;
  - ensure that GFC is informed of matters of import within its role;
  - convey recommendations of GFC to the Board;
  - convey to GFC such decisions and requests as the Board may wish to refer to GFC;
  - ensure the University Secretariat maintains official records of GFC;
  - call, through Executive Committee, all regular and special meetings of GFC;
  - serve as an ex officio, non-voting member of all GFC standing Committees

## Role of GFC Vice-Chair – Dr. Chad London

- Carry out any of the Chair's responsibilities at the request of the Chair or in the event that the Chair is absent or unable to carry out their responsibilities
- Fulfill additional powers and duties assigned by the Chair

## Role of GFC Secretary – Amy Nixon

- Serve as the Parliamentarian - assist the Chair and members to answer parliamentary inquiries when they arise and comment on procedural matters before the GFC
- Count votes and distribute, collect and count ballots, if required
- Assist with the organization of annual election of members
- Assist GFC Executive Committee with development of committee charters and nominations to committees
- Maintain GFC Bylaws
- Oversee the policy framework and assure that academic policies adhere to proper format and procedures, ensure coordination and submission to GFC
- Convey GFC decisions to appropriate persons for information, advice and/or action
- Attend all regular, *in-camera* and special GFC meetings

## Role of GFC Recording Secretary – Sheena Dyer

- Prepare and distribute GFC agendas, minutes and meeting materials
- Serve as recording secretary to specified GFC committees
- Maintain office records of all GFC proceedings
- Ensure GFC website is current
- Organize and schedule GFC meetings; act as resource to Chair and Secretary at meetings
- Assist committees in research and supporting their efforts
- Work with Chair and Secretary to ensure smooth and proper functioning of GFC
- First point of contact for members regarding issues, concerns, inquiries, meeting regrets, etc.
- Attend all regular, *in-camera* and special GFC meetings

## Role of Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs

- Committee Chair and Vice-Chair work as a team to ensure effective functioning of committee
- Committee Chair and Vice-Chair liaise with the Recording Secretary to develop committee meeting agendas and ensure meeting materials are prepared/submitted
- Committee Chair conducts committee meetings in accordance with GFC Bylaws and basic rules of parliamentary procedure
- Committee Chair keeps committee meetings moving in an orderly fashion, ruling on matters of procedure, questions of interpretation or points of order
- Committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs prepare a written/verbal committee report on the committee's activities for each GFC meeting
- Committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs prepare a written plan and annual committee report and submit to the Recording Secretary for GFC



## Expectations of All Members

- In fulfilling their role on GFC, Members will:
  - familiarize themselves with and adhere to GFC's role in governing the University, these Bylaws, the University's Employee Code of Conduct, relevant laws and University policies applicable to members;
  - when exercising their powers and discharging their duties, a member's first duty is to GFC as a governance body of the University. Each member must act honestly and in good faith, bringing their perspective and insights to discussions;
  - make every reasonable effort to inform themselves including reviewing materials in advance of and attending all GFC meetings; and
  - ensure that they are able to devote sufficient time and energy to carry out their duties effectively.

## Expectations of All Members

- Members are expected to attend all GFC meetings unless there is a compelling reason preventing them from doing so
- If you are unable to attend, send your regrets to the Recording Secretary before the meeting
- The GFC Executive Committee would also like to remind GFC and Committee members that attendance is tracked, and that Members review GFC Bylaw 3.3. *Absences*, which also applies to GFC Committees.

## Expectations of All Members

- When items are presented at GFC, it is assumed that the material has been read
- Members are expected to be active participants
- Members are encouraged to let their name stand for membership in one or more standing committees each year
- All Members have a responsibility to ensure others understand the nature of GFC decision-making:
  - Faculty Members are expected to report back to their Faculty Councils on the work of GFC
  - Student and appointed Members are expected to report back to their constituents
  - GFC agenda and minutes are public documents and are available to readers on the GFC webpage

# GFC MEETINGS

## [GFC Meeting Schedule](https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/meeting-schedules/index.htm)

<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/meeting-schedules/index.htm>

## [GFC Agendas & Minutes](https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/gfc-agendas-minutes/index.htm)

<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AboutMountRoyal/OfficesGovernance/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/gfc-agendas-minutes/index.htm>

## Conduct of GFC Meetings

- GFC Open Session meetings are open to the University community unless there is a motion to move *in camera*
- To conduct meetings in an efficient and collegial manner, Members may normally speak once
- As required, GFC meetings may conclude with a Closed Session that is only for GFC Members
- The Chair will conduct the meeting in accordance with GFC Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order
  - **MRU Robert's Rules of Order Handbook** – for reference for GFC Members  
(located in the [GFC Shared Drive](#) for members)

## Meeting Quorum

- Quorum for GFC meetings is a number equal to the Simple Majority (more than half), excluding vacant positions
- If meeting is not called to order within 15 minutes of start time due to lack of quorum, meeting shall be deemed lost
- A meeting that begins with quorum shall be deemed to continue with quorum until meeting is adjourned or until a Member challenges quorum and less than majority or present at time of challenge
- A meeting where quorum is challenged and found to be correct will be deemed adjourned

# GFC Agendas

- The Chair and University Secretary prepares the meeting agendas with the assistance of the Recording Secretary, and GFC EC reviews and approves the agendas
- Members may request items for inclusion on agenda (including written questions)
  - Requests must be submitted by the materials deadline date (*dates posted on the [GFC Meeting Schedule](#) webpage*)
  - Submit item to the Chair, University Secretary and/or Recording Secretary in writing using the [Briefing Note Template](#), along with the item's attachments (if any)
  - The Chair provides the request to GFC EC at the next meeting for consideration
  - GFC EC determines whether item is within purview of GFC and may i) add item to GFC agenda, ii) request more information from the proposer, or iii) determine that the item should not be brought to GFC
- A matter not on the agenda may be considered on **Motion to Consider** supported by  $\frac{2}{3}$  of members present. Motion is non-debatable.

## Question Period

- “Question Period” provides an opportunity for answers to specific questions, within the scope of GFC’s jurisdiction. Once answered the meeting will move forward
- “Question Period” of up to twenty (20) minutes will be included as an item on each GFC Open Session agenda
- Members intending to pose a substantive and/or complex question are asked to submit the question in writing to the EC in advance of the EC meeting (submit question to the Chair, University Secretary and/or Recording Secretary to forward to GFC EC)
- Questions posed or comments made at meetings are to be directed to the Chair
- The Chair will redirect the question to an individual for response, as appropriate



## GFC Consent Agendas

- Meeting agendas will include a Consent Agenda
- Component of meeting agenda that includes routine, standard, non-controversial and self-explanatory items
- Enables GFC to approve all Consent Agenda Items for Approval together without discussion or individual motions
- Prior to asking for a motion to approve, the Chair asks members if any of the consent agenda items should be removed for discussion
- If a member requests that an item be removed, it must be removed and discussed
- Once the item has been removed, the item is dealt with and voted upon before proceeding to approve the remainder of the Consent Agenda Items for Approval (Items for Information do not require a vote)

## GFC Meeting Minutes

- Meeting minutes are the official record of the meeting that capture:
  - decisions made (motions)
  - next steps planned
  - identification and tracking of action items
- Meeting minutes are not a transcript of the proceedings
- Minutes are posted on the website following approval and are accessible to the public

## GFC Contacts

- If you have any questions related to GFC, contact [secretariat@mtroyal.ca](mailto:secretariat@mtroyal.ca)
- Key Contacts:
  - Amy Nixon, General Counsel and University Secretary
  - Sheena Dyer, Assistant University Secretary – GFC

# MRU POLICY FRAMEWORK

## Alignment with University Governance

- Broadly defined as the processes, instruments, and structures through which the university is governed
  - Sets out who has the **authority for decision making**
  - Puts in place **appropriate controls**
  - Establishes **accountability**



# Policy Approval Authority

**Approval Authority** ⇒ individual or entity with the authority to approve a policy or procedure.

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Approval Authority  
for Management Policies

**GENERAL FACULTIES  
COUNCIL**

Approval Authority  
for Academic Policies

## Policy Website

- [mtroyal.ca/Applications/PoliciesAndProcedures/](https://mtroyal.ca/Applications/PoliciesAndProcedures/)
- The Website is the database for our University-wide policies:
  - All University-wide approved policies are consolidated into one location
  - The online version of these policies are the official versions
  - Ensures consistent policy formats and styles
  - Ability to organize policies alphabetically, by category or by date
  - It's where you can find the associated procedures for each parent policy

## Policy Website

- Highlights the University's Policy activities:
  - Recently added, revised, and deleted Policies
  - Policy drafts that are currently open for institutional consultation. (Where you may provide feedback and help shape policy development)
- Provides an overview of Policy development
  - Includes a list of Policy terminology
  - Includes a framework of the 5 steps involved in Policy development
  - Forms for Proposing a new Policy or revising a current Policy
  - Templates to use while drafting Policy and Procedures





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