What is Student Caucus?

GFC Student Caucus is made up of all student councilors who sit on GFC, and meets one week before each GFC meeting. The purpose of these meetings is to provide student councilors on GFC with the background information and knowledge they need to understand and make informed votes on upcoming issues on the GFC agenda.

GFCSC may also be used as a forum to discuss issues that are important to students, and to share and refine questions to ask at the GFC meeting. It’s a great opportunity to plan and prepare ways for student councilors to work together to achieve results that are good for students, such as preparing questions, deciding who will ask them, and agreeing on how to vote on each item*. Presenting a united front of student opinion to GFC can strengthen the student voice, add legitimacy and importance to student issues, and make it easier to vote down things that are bad for students, and vote through things that will be good for students.

Finally, GFCSC is a good place to find out what kind of work the SU Executives are doing around various GFC-related issues, and to give advice to the VPA regarding how their work may affect the students you represent and what they could do to improve.

*GFCSC cannot make any binding decisions, and student councilors are still free to vote how they choose, regardless of any GFCSC decisions.
About the General Faculties Council

General Faculties Council (GFC) is the legislative body of the University of Alberta dealing with all academic matters and student affairs issues (as set out in the Post-Secondary Learning Act). It is the highest body at which academic decisions are made, and is chaired by the President of the University of Alberta. GFC is comprised of 157 voting members, 60 of which are students. The remaining 97 members are composed of members of the University Administration, Deans, the Chief Librarian, the Registrar, faculty members and representatives of other special interest groups.

GFC provides for the granting and conferring of degrees, for the approval of courses and programs of study, and for the hearing of certain appeals. GFC determines standards and policies respecting admission of students. It may make recommendations to the University’s Board of Governors on academic planning and dismissal of academic staff, and any other matter it considers of importance to the University. It has the general supervision of student affairs.

There are ten Standing Committees established by GFC that have been delegated responsibility and authority to make decisions on behalf of GFC. The delegation of authority to the standing committees is intended to permit GFC to pursue major policy and strategic issues.

A typical meeting of the General Faculties Council will proceed as follows:

Opening Session
The opening session typically begins with an approval of the agenda for the meeting, which is voted on by the GFC. Amendments to the agenda are also voted on at this time. Once this is complete the minutes from the previous meeting are approved by the membership. Once the minutes are approved they become official records of the meeting they are minutes of.

Action Items
The Action Items section covers items for action that require the approval of the GFC. These can include the appointment of members to committees, accepting new members to the GFC, and making recommendations to other bodies.

Discussion Items
Discussion Items are just that—items for discussion by the GFC. This can include updates from the university administration on their portfolios, and subsequent discussions and questions that result from these reports. Question Period also occurs during the discussion items portion of the meeting.

Information Items
The Information items section of the meeting is when the GFC receives updates from various standing committees of the GFC and other bodies at the university.
## GFC Standing Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Committee</strong></td>
<td>Carries out functions delegated by GFC and recommends to GFC on academic proposals and student affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Planning Committee (APC)</strong></td>
<td>Deals with academic, financial, and planning issues, and is responsible for promoting an optimal learning environment and excellence in teaching, research, and graduate studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Standards Committee (ASC)</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for making recommendations to GFC, Executive Committee, and APC on matters of admissions and transfer, and all institutional marking and grading policies and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subcommittee on Standards (SOS)</strong></td>
<td>Makes recommendations to ASC on issues affecting undergraduate students, including re-examination policy, academic definitions, academic standing regulations, and admission requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for the promotion of excellence in teaching and an optimal learning environment, and the provision of information resources to the university community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Law Review Committee (CLRC)</strong></td>
<td>Reviews the Code of Student Behaviour and disciplinary procedures, reports on the behaviours unacceptable to the University and procedures to be followed if a student is charged with misconduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities Development Committee (FDC)</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for making recommendations to APC concerning policy matters with respect to planning and facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate Awards and Scholarship Committee (UASC)</strong></td>
<td>Recommends to Executive Committee on new awards, changes to the selection and eligibility criteria of awards, and new policies governing undergraduate awards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Teaching Awards Committee (UTAC)</strong></td>
<td>Adjudicates awards, reviews awards policies and criteria, and alerts the Executive Committee of any problems with the policies governing awards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Replenishment Committee</strong></td>
<td>Ensures the replenishment of the Executive and Nominating Committees by submitting nominations for vacancies to GFC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nominating Committee</strong></td>
<td>Ensures the replenishment of GFC standing committees and other bodies requiring representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Appeals Committee (AAC)</strong></td>
<td>Final level of appeal in the University for students wishing to appeal Faculty decisions on matters of academic standing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Appeal Board (UAB)</strong></td>
<td>Final level of appeal for students charged under the Code of Student Behaviour or applicants charged under the Code of Applicant Behaviour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GFC Contacts

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University Governance

The Board of Governors (§242.1)
The Board of Governors (BoG) is the highest governing body at the University of Alberta. It conducts, manages and controls the University and all its property, revenue, business, and affairs. It also fixes the various fees charged in connection with university courses (i.e. it sets tuition) and makes financial provision for the establishment of new faculties, departments and courses.

The Senate (§242.1)
The University of Alberta Senate is responsible for examining, fostering and celebrating the achievements and excellence of the University of Alberta, resulting in enhanced linkages internally, provincially, nationally and internationally. It receives reports from faculty councils, the SU and members of the academic staff, arranges for public meetings, radio and television programs, makes reports and recommendations to BoG, GFC or other appropriate body, and can confer Honorary Degrees.

Deans’ Council (§242.1)
Deans’ Council is an advisory body to the President, the Board of Governors, and to the General Faculties Council. It consists of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Dean of each Faculty, the Director of the School of Native Studies, the Registrar and the Chief Librarian.

Faculty Councils
Each Faculty Council, subject to the control of the GFC, arrange the courses of study falling within its jurisdiction and provides for the setting of examinations and for determining the results. It deals with admissions and withdrawals and authorizes the granting of degrees in branches of learning within its jurisdiction.

Association of Academic Staff

The purposes of the Association, as set out in its bylaws, are to advance and protect the individual and collective interests of its members, to protect independence of thought and freedom of teaching and research, and to provide an environment appropriate to the University and the enhancement of the quality of university education in Alberta.

The Association is active in negotiating and administering the contract agreements, monitoring and influencing internal university governance, and participating in activities at both the federal and provincial level that affect universities.

Non-Academic Staff Association

NASA is the legally recognized bargaining agent for the non-academic staff working on the University of Alberta campus. It negotiates the terms and conditions of employment for over 4,000 non-academic employees. In addition, it provides its members with advice and assistance in many areas including problem-solving with respect to rights under the collective agreement, health and safety issues, WCB difficulties, and benefit needs.
The Students’ Union

The Students’ Union is mandated to exist under the Post Secondary Learning Act. As an organization, our mandate is to serve students in ways that meet student needs.

The four pillars of the Students’ Union:

Advocacy
The Students’ Union advocates for students at a number of different levels. At the University of Alberta, representation occurs at both the student government level and the administrative level. All undergraduate students are represented on Students’ Council by faculty. Students’ Council, the highest governing body of the Students’ Union, controls the budget, bylaws and political policy through which the organization operates. The Students’ Union also represents its members to various levels of government.

Services
Another primary function of the Students’ Union is to provide services, which give both academic and non-academic support to students in order to facilitate a more fulfilling University experience. These services include the Campus Food Bank, Centre for Student Development, Information Services, OmbudService, Safewalk, Student Group Services, and more. In some cases, the SU has teamed up with the U of A or the GSA to provide these services.

Businesses
The purpose of Students’ Union businesses is to make a profit, which provides financial support for the political and service functions. Without these profits, the Students’ Union would be forced to either raise the fees that students pay, or cut back on its services and political activities. However, some of the Students’ Union's businesses are targeted to operate on a break-even basis rather than produce profit. SU business include Dewey’s, RATT, SUBprint, SUBmart, Meyer Horowitz Theatre, and more.

Building
While the Students’ Union's Advocacy, Service and Business activities all require space in which to function, and while an organization of our size also requires space for central support and administrative activities, this core focus is particularly aimed at providing student-friendly study and relaxation space.
Students’ Union Governance

Executive Committee
The Executive Committee consists of the President, the Vice President Academic, the Vice President External, the Vice President Student Life and the Vice President Operations & Finance. The Executive is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Students’ Union, including implementation of policy, management of staff, and general administration.

Students’ Council
Students’ Council is the legislative body of the Students’ Union and, as such, is ultimately responsible for all matters of finance, policy, and legislation. It derives its authority from the Post Secondary Learning Act, and includes representatives from every undergraduate faculty as well as the Executive Committee.

Students’ Council has delegated certain portions of its authority to various committees, the membership of each being composed of members of Students’ Council.
1. Audit Committee
2. Budget and Finance Committee
3. Bylaw Committee
4. Council Administration Committee
5. Elections Review Committee
6. Grant Allocation Committee
7. Policy Committee
8. Social and Environmental Responsibility Committee

Students’ Council has also delegated certain portions of its authority to the following boards and committees, each of which contains no councilors amongst its membership.
1. Awards Committee
2. Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement (DIE) Board
3. Executive Committee

Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement Board
The Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement Board, or DIE Board as it is more commonly referred to, is the judiciary branch of the Students’ Union, responsible for interpreting and enforcing Bylaws of the Students’ Union.

Political Policies of the Students’ Union
Political Policies are reflective of the goals of the Students’ Union’s advocacy efforts on given matters. Each policy deals with a specific political issue in either the external Government or University realm. Each policy highlights background details and includes one or more resolutions, which represent the official position of the Students’ Union, as determined by Students’ Council, on the matter in question. These documents also serve to direct the position taken by the Executive Committee members – who are bound by Political Policy – in speaking with the media and the public.
Introduction to the Council of Faculty Associations

The Council of Faculty Associations (COFA) is the official venue for Faculty Association executive officers to coordinate with each other and the Students' Union, and to voice student concerns from their respective faculties. It consists of a Senior Board and four Working Groups.

**Senior Board**
Sets the direction for the COFA working groups, and supports and oversees their work.

**Advocacy Working Group**
Advises the Students’ Union on faculty-level advocacy and academic issues, and acts as a forum for collaboration to promote a student-friendly environment in University and Faculty governance.

**Finance and Administration Working Group**
Advises the Students’ Union on the financial oversight of faculty associations and the management of their membership fees, and acts as a forum for collaboration on the promotion of good governance in faculty associations.

**Member Services Working Group**
Advises the Students’ Union on the promotion of student life and engagement, member outreach, services, and risk management, and acts as a forum for collaboration on the promotion of these initiatives.

GFC Student Caucus members are expected to have communication with members of their respective Faculty Association, to ensure that there is adequate information exchange between issues relevant to both parties. This information exchange should also involve the faculty’s representatives on Students’ Council, again so that it is universally known what each body is doing in regards to faculty issues.

For FA contact information, visit [http://su.ualberta.ca/governance/cofa/](http://su.ualberta.ca/governance/cofa/)
Frequently Asked Questions

When are GFC agendas made available, and where do I get them?
All materials for GFC meetings are usually made available about one week before the meeting. They are e-mailed out to all GFC members, and can also be accessed online along with the last meeting’s minutes and other information: governance.ualberta.ca/GeneralFacultiesCouncil/GFC.aspx

How do I send in a written question?
You can send a written question to the Secretary of GFC at any time. If you require a written response, your question has to be submitted at least six business days before the next GFC meeting. If you are nervous about getting up and asking a question during the meeting, or if you require an in-depth answer with specific information on a subject that may require the answerer to do some research, you should send in a written question.

Can I send a proxy?
You cannot send proxies or alternates to either GFC or Student Caucus. If you miss more than two GFC meetings in a year, you may be expelled from the GFC. However, you cannot be expelled from GFC Student Caucus while you are a GFC Councilor.

What if I have a class at the same time?
GFC meetings only happen about twice per semester, so you shouldn’t have to miss too many classes. If necessary, you can pick up a note from the GFC Secretary at each GFC meeting excusing you from class. Be sure to tell your instructor about your GFC meeting schedule in advance so that they can prepare any extra notes or assignments you might need to make up for the missed class time. If your instructor won’t excuse you from class, contact the Vice President Academic (vp.academic@su.ualberta.ca) for additional help.

Resources

Asking Effective Questions

Reading Outline of Issue

Governance Acronym Dictionary

Post-Secondary Learning Act

Governance In A Nutshell

Question Period Procedures