



## Department Representatives Bulletin

*Following is a recap of the Department Representatives meeting of November 19, 2020.*

*The meeting was chaired by Faculty Association President, David Stewart.*

*For further information on any item, please contact the Faculty Association office:*

*Email: [faculty.association@tuca.com](mailto:faculty.association@tuca.com), phone: (403) 220-5722*

President David Stewart welcomed the Department Representatives to the meeting. He introduced the members of the Faculty Association Membership Engagement Task Force who were in attendance as well. Nigel Caulkett (Veterinary Medicine); Hamid Habibi (Biological Sciences); Justine Wheeler (Libraries and Cultural Resources) and Melanee Thomas (Political Science). He indicated that the Association has formed the Membership Engagement Task Force to develop strategies around better engaging the membership with the Association business.

He noted that this meeting will focus on the thoughts of the Department Representatives with respect to the Growth Through Focus (GTF) initiative currently being developed by President Ed McCauley and the University Administration. Stewart noted that President McCauley recently attended the Associations' Board of Directors where the Board members were provided an opportunity to discuss the initiative with him.

Stewart noted that the intention of this meeting is not to report on anything specific, but to have a discussion and hear the Department Representatives thoughts on Growth Through Focus.

Some of the issues expressed by the Department Representatives were:

- The messaging related to GTF seemed to be very tone deaf and narrow.
- The use of the word "unstoppable" is concerning.
- The workload regarding all the proposed changes and the development of Certificates.
- The potential lack of equity between Faculties/disciplines.
- What incentives are there for doing all the "extra" work?

- Concern that Certificates leave the door open for short-term contract teaching.
- Concerns that Certificates may not be as profitable noting that online courses can be completed from anywhere and that there is already competition from Top Tier institutions.
- Lack of transparency of the process
- Concerns about the narrow focus of GTF which seems to dismiss much of the Faculty of Arts.
- The implications GTF will have on the budget and the lack of transparency.
- The pedagogical implications. Students do not seem to understand the implications of certificates, they seem to miss the foundational curriculum components.
- Workload (as it relates to the labour of an instructor) is intensified with assisting students through the process to ensure they have this foundational knowledge.
- Concerns with impact to some of the current processes ie: APR, merit, FTPC, etc.
- The elements of entrepreneurship and the dichotomy between Academia and Entrepreneurial interests.
- How GTF was taking Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into account.
- Concerns that the scope of changes being talked about would be hard to reverse and that with those changes the University may not be seen as a comprehensive University.

Stewart reported that during the Eyes High initiative the ELT noted that they had surveyed the university community, including academics, and made a point that those views collected were included in the initiative. He noted that the Association was interested to know how committed the academic staff were to Eyes High. The Association asked to see those surveys and were repeatedly denied

access to them. The Association applied to see those surveys using FOIP and has recently “won” that application. The University has until December 11 to comply with the Order and we are waiting to review that information. Stewart reported that the Association will use FOIP again to get information regarding Growth Through Focus if necessary.

The Department Reps were asked if there was anything that they felt was positive with GTF, was there anything they could live with, was there anything they were enthusiastic about GTF?

There were no positive assessments of the GTF initiative advanced.

David Stewart noted that because of COVID-19, it is difficult for the Association (and its members) to have “hallway conversations” around these types of topics and encouraged Department Representatives to talk to their colleagues and to share their perspectives with the Association.

He indicated that that the Government’s AB2030 project is likely a factor in pushing forward the Growth Through Focus strategy.

Department Representatives were again encouraged to talk with their colleagues, including those colleagues on the GFC. They were urged to share any thoughts they have with the Association. They can email [faculty.association@ucfa.com](mailto:faculty.association@ucfa.com) or David Stewart ([David.stewart@ucfa.com](mailto:David.stewart@ucfa.com)) with their thoughts. He reminded the Department Representatives that any information shared with the Association is confidential.

***NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING***

***Thursday December 17, 2020***

***12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.***

***ZOOM***

***Details of the ZOOM meeting to be distributed prior to meeting.***