



### **What is governance?**

Governance is structure and process to exercise power

### **Where does power come from?**

- In Alberta, power is transferred from the Province to the University by means of legislation
- The central legislative piece for Alberta universities is the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* of 2004
- Although there are many checks and balances, the University is an autonomous entity and its own corporation, continued by Provincial legislation

### **Who exercises our power?**

- The University of Alberta exercises its power with a governance structure of three branches, the Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch, and the Judicial Branch
- Each branch has its own set of decision-making groups and officers

### **How does governance work?**

Governance depends upon authority frameworks and effective structures and time-tested process to exercise power, to comply with legislative requirements, and to honour the University's guiding frameworks

### **What is an authority framework?**

A guiding authority which influences decisions, such as:

- Legislation
- Mandate
- Vision, Mission, Institutional Strategic Plan (*For the Public Good*)
- Collective agreements
- The University Calendar
- Policy and procedure
- Governance committees
- Terms of Reference
- Student Applicant Codes of Behaviour

### **What are governance structures?**

Examples include:

- Bicameral governance to share and balance power
- A committee system to undertake detailed work and act with delegated authority

### **What is a governance process?**

Governance processes vary, but here are some examples:

- Creation of governance instruments to guide decision-making, articulate decisions, or to create an authority to allow for decision implementation
- Creating a committee system to provide initial scrutiny and advice or to share power
- Developing advisory groups or consultative processes to enrich decision-making

### **What is a governance instrument?**

- A governance instrument is a means to exercise authority. It can, for example, empower, limit, delegate, authorize, prescribe or prohibit.
- The most common examples:
  - a resolution
  - a delegation
  - a policy
  - an agreement, such as a memorandum of agreement or a collective agreement

These examples clearly articulate goals to be implemented

### **How can governance establish shared purpose?**

- The most common means for governance to identify and realize shared purpose is through the identification of guiding frameworks, such as mandate, *For the Public Good* (Institutional Strategic Plan), Faculty Strategic Plans
- These guiding frameworks inform and influence all institutional decision-making

### **What is collegial governance?**

- It is the system of governance that depends heavily upon the participation of colleagues to establish and realize a shared purpose
- It provides an opportunity for citizens to participate in decision-making, and it is the hallmark of academic decision-making

### **What is bicameral governance?**

- Literally, it is governance in two chambers
- Our two senior governing bodies are the Board of Governors and General Faculties Council
- Although the Board is the senior of the two, the Board and GFC share and balance power within the University

### **What is the primary role of the Board of Governors?**

- The Act establishes the primary role of the Board of Governors to:

*manage and operate the public post-secondary institution in accordance with its mandate and*

*develop, manage and operate, alone or in co-operation with any person or organization, programs, services and facilities for the educational or cultural advancement of the people of Alberta*

- The Board has senior oversight of the institution, it concerns itself with the long-range planning and the business affairs of the institution
- Some examples of its role are the approval of the mandate, the budget, tuition fees, financial statements, investment policy, collective agreements, and the appointment of the President

### **What is the duty of a Member of the Board?**

“The members of the board must act in the best interests of the university.” – Post-Secondary Learning Act, 16(5)

### **What is the primary role of General Faculties Council?**

- The Act establishes the primary role of General Faculties Council:

*Subject to the authority of the board, a general faculties council is responsible for the academic affairs of the university*
- Some examples of its role are granting degrees, approval of the academic plan, academic programs, academic policies, academic calendar and academic awards, and hearing and determining student appeals

### **What are the rules of order?**

- The Board of Governors and the Board Standing Committees operate under Robert’s Rules of Order. In addition, the Board of Governors has enacted General Terms of Reference for Board Standing Committees
- The General Faculties Council and the GFC Standing Committees have enacted Terms of Reference with attendant procedural rules to carry out its responsibilities

### **What all of this means for you**

- Universities have developed a unique governance model in order to exercise authority to serve their interests
- It is important, when you are involved in governance, to remember that you serve the greater good of the entire institution
- A definition of governance that is suitable for the university setting:

*A collective effort, through smooth and suitable process, to take actions that advance a shared purpose consistent with the institution’s mission*

*Chait, Holland and Taylor, 1996*