

**Minutes of the AFC Meeting
December 6, 2024
Held In-Person in CHO 212**

PRESENT: A. Abdou; R. Baker; K. Bessant; C. Boulton; D. Combet; K. DeForest; R. Dwivedula; M. Ebeid; K. Edmunds; R. Gasse; S. Grills; A. Hanemaayer; P. Harms; R. Hinther; E. Holland; W. Kelly; D. Lakevold; L. MacKay; M. Malainey; A. McCulloch; K. McKenzie; L. McLachlan; S. Medd; E. Mihelakis; J. Naylor; S. Petrella; I. Puppe; S. Robinson; L. Robson; B. Rose; K. Saunders; D. Smid; D. Taylor; M. Tsoy; D. Winter; K. Wong; L. Wood; L. Xu; F. Zehtab-Jadid; H. Zhuang; C. Robinson; T. Gill (Student Services); M. Williams-Joel (BUSU); C. Kazakoff-Lane (Library); G. Kennedy (Chair); S. Mott (recorder)

ABSENT: H. Gillander; D. Klonowski; R. Kramer; L. Mayer; D. Racine; H. Venema

REGRETS: J. Allan; D. Héту; S. Koosel; A. Marshall; V. Maud; A. Mulhern; D. Ramsey; W. Robles; C. Schneider; E. Varley; M. Torabi

ON LEAVE: E. Holland; B. Strang

GUEST: Leanne Barcellona (Director, Recruitment & Retention)

Call to Order

Dr. Kennedy called the meeting to order and gave land acknowledgement. He then spoke briefly about the significance of Dec 6th and the ongoing concerns about violence against women, including the important issue of MMIWG. One of our own, Dr. Emily Holland, is currently doing important work supporting the Prairie Green Landfill search for Morgan Harris and Mercedes Myran in Winnipeg.

1.0 Welcome/Celebrations

- Dr. Kennedy welcomed Arts Faculty members and mentioned a few great things happening in Arts: Excited to welcome Dr. Leon Laidlaw to the Department of Sociology and the GWS Program in January.
- Congratulations to Dr. Jonathan Allan and Dr. Cameron Boulton, on their recently launched books
- First year IWGIDVA Visual Arts students recently held an art exhibition at the Sutherland Gallery
- Congratulations to Rochelle Douris on the successful opening of *It's a Wonderful Life* at the Evans Theatre
- Jessica Ferris successfully defended her thesis on mineral extraction and community consultation in northern MB for the MARD program.
- Congratulations to Ariane Hanemaayer and Cheryl Fleming for the successful rollout of the new EDIDR training program
- The unexpected passing of Barb Harpe was mentioned by one faculty member: Barb was a long-time employee at BU and had recently retired. Her service is scheduled for Monday Dec 9th.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

MOTION (Smid/Gasse): THAT the Agenda be approved.

CARRIED.

3.0 Approval of the Minutes

MOTION (Wood/Hinther): THAT the minutes of the AFC meeting held on November 12, 2024 be approved.

CARRIED.

4.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

- Course revisions have gone through for Senate consideration later in December.

5.0 Chair's Report

Discussion:

- A question was raised about the EDI Plan and what was meant in the report by “waiting for further direction”. Greg explained that Deans’ Council has asked for guidance and is waiting for a response from administration. The Deans do not yet have the scope for the equity plan and are waiting to hear further details before proceeding with faculty consultation.
- Lisa Wood and Dominique Héту have set up the schedule for the FASS, which will include a couple of different timeslots in an attempt to make the series more accessible to the campus community and conducive to work/life balance (i.e. not always being held on Friday afternoons)
- Greg intends to send a survey out this winter term regarding the aforementioned FASS time slots and other issues including the report on student recognition prepared by Lynn MacKay.
- We are working on incorporating spring/summer course planning into the regular workload process outlined in the CA. Departments will be asked to submit their spring/summer 2026 proposals as part of this year’s workload cycle. Exceptionally for this year, departments have until 15 January to propose courses for spring/summer 2025. Student registration also needs to be aligned better, although this will involve the Registrar’s Office and Student Services.

6.0 Student Retention and First Year Experience

Arts loses at least one-third and often more than 40% of students after their first year. Some equity-seeking groups have even lower retention rates. Overall graduation rates for three- and four-year degrees are even lower (institutional data was shared in advance). The dean opened the floor for a preliminary discussion of collective ideas about how to approach this issue, as even incremental improvements in retention rates could have significant positive outcomes for students and the Faculty of Arts as a whole. The discussion included:

ISSUES

- A suggestion was made that perhaps we could offer non-departmental courses again (ie Fundamentals of University, etc) as these courses were very successful in the past.
- There was once a service that flagged struggling students and then offered them one-on-one assistance through Student Services.
- It was noted that high school students coming in have a gap and that funding for preparatory courses has been an issue. Further, survey data suggests that students did not avail themselves of these courses and other resources—perhaps there was a stigma over resources or they were pressed for time.
- Sometimes students are nervous to approach faculty. We might think of ways to engage them: maybe something “on demand”
- The first-year experience program and supports worked in the past but have since been torn down. Traditionally peer mentoring, tutoring and transition courses work—we just lack the organization and support to run these programs to their fullest potential.
- A faculty member suggested that Arts needs a Q year as the students need support and skill development. Student Services does a good job, but it is not enough. Faculty wondered if Arts could develop its own Q year to teach students/provide them with the skills to be successful.

RETENTION

- A question was asked about the data and if we know more about the reasons that students do not come back as they are not always related to academics. While the institutional data does

not permit this, we do know that some students transfer elsewhere, or pursue other educational and professional opportunities. Still, the large attrition rate needs attention.

- Trent mentioned that students who drop out often make up their minds before they get to Student Services and that these students are less likely to engage at all to begin with.
- A suggestion was made that departments need to re-arrange how we teach first year classes and focus on engaging with students. Another suggestion to remodel first year courses that will build in the missing skills that students need to be successful, such as with tutorial elements.

ENGAGEMENT

- Several members felt that building community and social connection for students could be improved. Perhaps departments can work with BUSU to help develop this area.
- Political Science members mentioned the importance of their student club: the group provides mentorship, study nights, and faculty often drop in to visit. This group helps develop study skills, and builds student connection to both fellow students, senior students and faculty.
- A comment was made that sometimes students are less engaged in required courses because they *have* to take the course, so they don't care as much
- Leanne commented that students really want faculty engagement, want to meet other students in their departments—and especially meet senior students for mentorship.
- Leanne believes that seminar classes for first year students might help student success.
- BUSU rep supported the importance of community and connection, but noted the competing demands on student for time, work, and family responsibilities.

7.0 New Business

7.1 External Chairperson

MOTION (Petrella/Smid) – THAT Rosanne Gasse be approved as external chairperson for the Department of Sociology from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

CARRIED.

7.2 Emeritus Application – Dr. Kurt Noll

MOTION (Medd/Winter) – THAT Dr. Kurt Nolls' application for Emeritus be approved by AFC and recommended to Senate.

CARRIED.

Discussion: Discussion took place over the differences between Emeritus and University Scholar. Greg has reviewed both policies and Emeritus is more honorific and Senior Scholar is for anyone who has on-going research grants and may need office space and resources etc. It was confirmed that Dr. Noll requested Emeritus status and, as Emeritus, will have access to email, will retain affiliation with BU and will remain part of the Religion department as Emeritus Professor. A request was made (and granted) to discuss the differences in these policies at a future AFC meeting.

7.3 Committee Elections – C. Boulton

MOTION (Boulton/Petrella) – THAT the various committee nominees be approved as presented.

CARRIED

Deanna Smid	Senate (Arts rep)
Allison McCulloch	BUREC
Doug Ramsey	Non-credit Certificate Policy Committee
Kevin deForest	BURC (Arts rep, alternate)

MOTION (Petrella/Hanemaayer) – THAT the various committee volunteers be approved.

CARRIED.

Deanna Smid	Academic Planning Committee (Arts rep)
Rosanne Gasse	Grade Appeal Policy Review Committee of Senate
Rhonda Hinthier	BURC (Arts rep)

7.4 Building Access

Some departments and students have requested that access to Clark Hall be consistent with other buildings on campus. Note: the current hours of Clark Hall are Monday to Thurs 8am-10:30pm (card access only after 5:30pm), Friday 8am-5:30pm and locked Saturday and Sunday (staff and faculty only can access with key cards). Other buildings on campus are open to students from 6am-midnight 7 days a week, with card access outside regular work hours. The discussion ranged from empathizing with students who want a safe haven at Clark Hall or wish to form student groups/use spaces etc on the weekend to where faculty need to feel personally safe as well when alone in the building. This was a lengthy discussion where it was decided to leave the building access at status quo. AFC can discuss this again and perhaps make changes after the campus safety audit is completed.

7.5 Faculty of Arts Selection Committee Policy – D. Smid

Dr. Smid spoke to the new Faculty of Arts Selection Committee Policy, as proposed by the AFC Review and Planning committee.

MOTION (Smid/Mihelakis) – THAT the new Faculty of Arts Selection Committee Policy be approved as presented.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

Discussion: There were many issues of concern raised by the Arts faculty regarding this proposed policy, among them the suggested limitation of only two department members being on the hiring committee. Many felt that it would be difficult and extremely limiting for the candidate to know the scope of the department if only meeting two members of said department. Another member asked if we should differentiate between the requirements for term and tenure-track positions. We need to ensure that we are recruiting and not just hiring new faculty. The involvement of students on selection committees, particularly in Rural Development, was also raised as a question. The dean emphasized that the status quo is not working well, because it has led to very large committees that are impossible to schedule and create potential equity issues in the ability for all to attend and make informed decisions. Further, the idea that all faculty are obligated to serve on every selection committee does not align with the collective agreement and concerns about workload. There was general consensus that retiring or resigning faculty should not serve on committees to replace themselves. The Review and Planning Committee will apply this feedback and bring forward a new proposal to AFC at a later date.

8.0 Other Business/Announcements

- An early reminder to faculty that Senior Colloquium is coming up in April, if interested in adding it to your course syllabi
- Greg thanked everyone for the fulsome discussion, as knowing where the consensus lies on important issues assists administrators and staff in prioritizing initiatives and efforts for the future. Topics like safety and student retention will remain a high priority going forward and require institutional support and coordination.

9.0 Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:20pm