

Submitted GFC Motion asking for a thorough third-party independent investigation into the events and decision making associated with the decision to remove the May 2024 protest encampment in the Quad

Moved by Professor GE Swaters, President of the Association of Academic Staff at the University of Alberta

Whereas, as stated by President Bill Flanagan in the May 23, 2024 edition of the University of Alberta Quad newsletter, that the police action on May 11, 2024 to forcefully remove the protest encampment located in the Quad has caused hurt and trauma for many university community members and beyond, especially those who have had harmful experiences with the police, including Black and Indigenous community members and others who have experienced harm at the hands of police.

Whereas there are divergent and contradictory accounts and narratives surrounding the events and actions that allegedly occurred within the encampment and within the administration, respectively, leading up to the decision by the administration to remove the protest encampment from the Quad.

Whereas the decision by the administration to remove the encampment from the Quad raises important questions related to charter protected free speech and academic freedom, which are rights and contractual obligations fundamental to the research, scholarship and teaching academic goals of the University of Alberta, which is thus arguably and properly an “academic affair” as contemplated in section 26(1) of the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act.

Whereas the May 23, 2024 meeting of the Faculty of Arts Council passed a motion of non-confidence in President Bill Flanagan as a consequence of the administration’s decision to authorize the use of police to remove the protest encampment in the Quad.

Whereas finding a path forward for the university community after the police action on May 11, 2024 can only occur, in the spirit and traditions of truth and reconciliation, after all the facts leading up to and associated with the decision to remove the encampment are fully known to the university community and beyond, as determined by an authoritative and trusted thorough third-party independent examination and investigation.

Whereas the Students’ Union, Graduate Students’ Association, Post-Doctoral Fellows Association, Non-Academic Staff Association, and the Association of Academic Staff at the University of Alberta have jointly called for a thorough third-party independent investigation into the events and decisions within the administration culminating in the forceful police removal of the protest encampment located in the Quad on May 11, 2024.

Whereas the proposed provincial ASIRT investigation into the police action on May 11, 2024 will only focus on the specific actions of the police and not on the events and decisions leading up to authorizing the police action.

Whereas the General Faculties Council, as set out in Section 26(1) the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act, subject to the authority of the Board of Governors, “is responsible for the academic affairs of the University.”

It is therefore resolved that the General Faculties Council at the University of Alberta respectfully recommends to the Board of Governors that a thorough third-party independent investigation be held into the events and decision making by the administration at the University of Alberta, and any others as warranted, associated with the decision to remove the protest encampment in the Quad which occurred on May 11, 2024.