

INTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**April 18, 2023
2:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

GCR (UC 2001) and Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Chair: Sherry Herchak for Roshni Antony (AVP, Human Resources); David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic); Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance); Gautam Das (LUFA); Pat Larin (SchII); Jack Drewes (IUOE); Dave Andreason (OPSEU); Yamandeep Malhi for Lahama Naeem (LUSU); Alexis Paulusma (COPE); Heather Spivak (Unifor); Jason Freeburn (LUTA); Rahul Parameswaran (GSA)

Regrets: Greg Croft (USW); Siavash Hosseini (CUPE)

Recorder: Kylie Williams (Human Resources)

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Dave Andreason that the agenda been approved.

Seconded by Jack Drewes. All in favour.

Carried

2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting of March 21, 2023

Moved by Jason Freeburn that the minutes be approved.

Seconded by Patrick Larin. All in favour.

Carried

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. 2023-24 Operating Budget Update (30 minutes)

Kathy and David presented an update on the development of the 2023/2024 budget reviewing the integrated planning and budgeting process. They reviewed the avenues that generate revenue: enrollment and tuition for domestic and international students, and government grants generated by the SMA process. Currently the operating budget is projecting a deficit. The University continues to monitor enrollment levels including high school application rates. The international tuition fees have been finalized and approved by

the Board. The University continues to advocate to the government for additional funding due to the unique position of Lakehead as the only comprehensive University in the north. In addition, the Ontario government is creating a blue-ribbon panel of experts to provide advice and recommendations for keeping the postsecondary education sector financially stable and focused on providing the best student experience possible. This work is expected to commence over the next few months and Lakehead will ensure strong messaging related to a northern strategy is incorporated as part of the work.

At this stage there are two scenarios the Administration is working with. Both scenarios project an operating deficit, with the most probable scenario resulting in a \$5.755 million deficit.

Means to address the budget shortfall include a variety of mitigation tactics, including: vacancy management, temporary contracts minimized, limited travel, and expenditure controls. All budget carry-forward funds have been previously expended. The focus will continue to be on enrollment growth, looking for unrealized potential and continuing intense advocacy efforts to secure enhancements to support Northern Sustainability.

Kathy added that this is still a work in progress. Our board requires a balanced budget so a lot of work is underway to confirm enrollment projections and they will continue to continue to advocate strongly with government. The Lakehead community is encouraged to continue to support enrollment activities, specifically those related to recruitment and retention as this effort will minimize the immediate and longer-term impacts arising from the environment.

Dave asked for clarification on mitigation strategies. David clarified that there is an opportunity to reevaluate where faculties have seen a decline in enrollment, looking for unrealized potential and operational inefficiencies. Attrition will be considered. Resources could also shift between the Thunder Bay and Orillia campus.

Jason asked if we are on a delayed timeline for budget approval. Kathy indicated the Board of Governors recognizes the intense work underway to mitigate the budget challenges. The Board is willing to support further advocacy efforts and temporarily delay budget approval.

5. Questions for Senior Administration

There were no additional questions for Senior Administration.

6. Roundtable

Jack Drewes (IUOE) – Jack brought up the many names of 1294 Balmoral that have caused confusion, especially for contractors. He informed the committee that IUOE is still short two employees but now have one contract employee to assist the team.

Gautam Das (LUFA) – No update

Alexis Paulusma (COPE) – Negotiations are set to commence next month.

Yamandeep Malhi (LUSU) – The LUSU board is meeting tonight to ratify the results of the recent election.

Rahul Parameswaran (GSA) – No update

Heather Spivak (Unifor) – Heather asked if there was a date set for the Employee Service Recognition Reception. This committee will be notified once the date is set.

Kathy Pozihun (VP, Administration & Finance) – Kathy encouraged everyone to attend the Wellness Celebration on Tuesday April 24th. She also announced that Rita Blais (AVP Financial Services) has decided to retire after 38 years working for Lakehead. Her last date will be around the end of September.

David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic) – No update

Dave Andreason (OPSEU) – Dave informed the committee that TSC is still incapable of doing hot fixes. There is a 1-week cycle provided by Ellucian in which there is one window to apply these.

Jason Freeburn (LUTA) – End of term activities along with field work planning are occurring among the Technical Staff.

Patrick Larin (Schedule II) – No update

Sherry Herchak (Human Resources) – No update

7. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.