

INTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 19, 2022
2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Chair: Sherry Herchak for Roshni Antony (AVP, Human Resources); Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance); David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic); Sanjana Sharma for Lahama Naeem (LUSU); Karen Anderson (COPE); Jason Freeburn (LUTA); Gautam Das (LUFA); Pat Larin (SchII); Jack Drewes (IUOE)

Regrets: Rahul Parameswaran (GSA); Paul Vergara (CUPE); Heather Spivak (Unifor); Greg Croft (USW); Dave Andreason (OPSEU)

Recorder: Kylie Williams (Human Resources)

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Gautam Das that the agenda be approved.

Seconded by Jason Freeburn. All in favour.

Carried

2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting of March 15, 2022

Moved by Kathy Pozihun that the revised minutes be approved.

Seconded by Jason Freeburn. All in favour.

Carried

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

Gautam asked for clarification on a comment from the minutes that Pension is a collective bargaining issue. Kathy clarified that pension is complicated as each bargaining group has different rates, different combinations of employer vs. employee paid, some groups have decoupled pension amounts from CPP, others have not. Gautam asked for the process to be expedited. Gautam and Kathy would continue discussions outside of this meeting.

4. Lakehead COVID-19 Update

At the last COVID transition meeting there were discussions about extending the mandatory mask mandate to the end of May. More information would be provided shortly. As of May 1st, the daily self screening requirement, along with the mandatory vaccination policy will be suspended.

5. Preliminary Budget Presentation

David and Kathy presented on the 2022/2023 preliminary budget. It was announced that tuition rates would again be frozen for the coming year. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the ministry has delayed activation of performance-based metrics for the third year of SMA3. Enrollment projections have remained static, and it is anticipated Lakehead should receive full corridor funding, but it was added that projections are extremely close to the floor of the enrolment corridor. This emphasized that every effort must be made to focus on enrollment.

The proposed operating budget has been reviewed and endorsed by senate. This is a starting blueprint. If enrollment targets are not met there would need to be further mitigation strategies that could include targeted budget cuts.

Gautam asked where the pension solvency payments were accounted for. Kathy confirmed that they were included in the salaries, pension & benefit costs.

Jason asked if there had been any analysis of the funding Lakehead would have received if the performance-based funding was implemented. David relayed that the University was a little short in performance metrics. Fortunately, the delay of performance-based funding for one more year gives us a year to work on areas where we wouldn't have received full funding.

Patrick asked if the performance-based funding would be phased in or go right back to the year 3 rates. David confirmed there is no final decision on that, but it is under discussion. The sector is arguing that it should be slowly phased in.

6. Questions for Senior Administration

Gautam asked for an update regarding the UPP presenting at Lakehead. Kathy had not yet heard back from the UPP representatives. She will follow up but stressed that the Ad hoc committee would have more information. Clint Mason (Manager, Pension and Payroll Services) can provide information on the ad hoc pension committee members.

7. Roundtable

Jason Freeburn (LUTA) – Members are busy wrapping up the term.

Patrick Larin (SchII) – The SchII group held one executive meeting since the last IRC meeting and are planning to hold an annual general meeting.

Jack Drewes (IUOE) – IUOE members have been preparing for the May 7th annual shutdown. Members have been unpacking the pension issue and eagerly await more information on pension reform.

Sanjana Sharma (LUSU) – LUSU is transitioning to preparations for the next year. There will be a new VP Advocacy, but the other executive members are returning.

Karen Anderson (COPE) – Working on gathering survey results from COPE members. So far there are 36 responses.

Gautam Das (LUFA) – LUFA and LUSU are organizing a panel discussion via zoom with the provincial political candidates. Issues that impact the University include contract faculty, government funding, special northern university funding, the increase to OSAP and the option of grants instead of loans.

David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic) – The focus of the Provost's office has remained on enrollment for fall of 2022.

Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance) – Given the chatter following the preliminary report from the Auditor General on Laurentian University, renewed focus has resulted on the importance of financial sustainability for Universities.

8. Other Business

The question of in person meetings was proposed. While the goal is to remain cautious the committee will be polled to determine if members are comfortable moving to in person meetings.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.