

INTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**April 20, 2021
2:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Chair: Adam Shaen, (Human Resources); Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance); David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic); Alexis Paulusma (COPE); Jason Freeburn (LUTA); Dave Andreason (OPSEU); Pat Larin (SchII); Gautam Das (LUFA); Jack Drewes (IUOE); Matthew Benoit & Paul Vergara (CUPE)

Regrets: Heather Spivak (Unifor); Bernie Chasse (USW); Sukhraj Grewal (LUSU); Niravkumar Kosamia (GSA)

Recorder: Kylie Williams (Human Resources)

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Dave Andreason that the agenda been approved.

Seconded by Jason Freeburn. All in favour.

Carried

2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting of January 19, 2021

Moved by Alexis Paulusma that the minutes be approved.

Seconded by Pat Larin. All in favour.

Carried

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

No business arising from the minutes.

4. 2021/22 Budget Update – Kathy Pozihun

Kathy and David presented an update on budget development for the coming year. Revenue considerations included projections for domestic and international students as well as provincial grant funding. Despite the absence of a provincial tuition framework, planning has proceeded under the assumption that domestic student tuition rates will remain frozen for the coming year. A new international student framework has also been proposed that would provide predictability for students throughout the duration of their program. Unfortunately, the University is no longer

receiving the education recovery grant or the northern sustainability funding from the provincial government. There was a one-time COVID relief support fund provided that allowed Lakehead to address the decrease in tuition and ancillary revenues over this last year. The COVID relief support fund was targeted at small and medium sized institutions affected by pandemic related costs. It is to be used to provide student support, support for in person classes and remote learning expenses.

Kathy recognized that despite best efforts, the environment remains unpredictable due to the effects of COVID. After extensive faculty consultations the projected student enrollment number for 2021/22 is 8127 students. This is up from 7901 students expected to round out 2020/21. The projections consider the growth in domestic undergraduate and graduate students and exercise caution for international students, many of whom remain subjected to mobility constraints. The University will continue to exercise budgetary caution and focus on COVID mitigation strategies.

Now that budget development is finalized this balanced budget will be going for full approval on April 30th, 2021.

5. Lakehead COVID-19 Update

Kathy was happy to relay that the number of COVID-19 cases in the Thunder Bay and Simcoe Country districts are improving but unfortunately the numbers in the GTA are exploding, causing concern over hospital occupancy and vaccine availability. The provincial stay at home order has impacted the University by limiting outdoor activities on campus. David added that students are finishing exams at this time, and spring/summer courses will be primarily held online.

It was asked if registration and planning was still on track for the fall 2021 term. David confirmed that the University continues with plans to be primarily face to face in September. Registration is anticipated to occur in June and methods for course delivery will be finalized over the next four weeks. TSC has been working on technology solutions to support course delivery options and faculty are being engaged to establish which classes could be online and which will need to be in person.

6. Questions for Senior Administration

Jack proposed graduated retirement options as a topic for discussion at the University. Adam agreed that it would be a good topic for discussion elaborating that each bargaining unit would need to look at their specific wants and needs.

Jason commented on the troubling news cycle over the recent months. There has been much concern over the Laurentian situation given they face similar financial pressures as Lakehead. There has also been a great deal of concern over the announcement of the detachment of NOSM from Laurentian and Lakehead University.

Kathy responding recognizing the similarities between Laurentian and Lakehead but emphasized we are not in the same situation. She stressed her pride over how strong and well positioned Lakehead University is. The Laurentian situation is one of the reasons why the budget process at Lakehead is so transparent. We have strong capital debt ratios, annual audits completed by external auditors, and a credit rating process that has been stable. Lakehead is financially strong and poised for the future.

David commented that Administration will continue to act to ensure the sustainability of Lakehead University. Our community needs to push back as the severance of NOSM from Lakehead University could have a strong impact on our community. He indicated that some groups, including OPSEU and LUFA have already sent messages to the government. Kathy encouraged everyone to read the Message from the President and join the call to action. She requested the help of other union groups could also publicly support the University. The City of Thunder Bay has also passed a motion supporting Lakehead's position on this matter. She reiterated David's sentiments that the University is doing everything we can to ensure our voice is heard.

7. Roundtable

Gautam Das (LUFA) – No update.

Alexis Paulusma (COPE) – No update.

Dave Andreason (OPSEU) – Dave indicated his team remains busy and is going strong.

Pat Larin (Sch II) – Patrick reported it is business as usual as we come to the end of the school and administrative year. Things are going well considering the technology challenges presented this February.

Jason Freeburn (LUTA) – LUTA members are busy wrapping up the winter term and beginning to look at preparing for the fall.

Jack Drewes (IUOE) – IUOE remains on campus and is currently working on preparing the chiller system for the summer months. Work continues to approve IUOE members, who are working on campus, for the COVID vaccine cancellation list.

Matthew Benoit (CUPE) – Regarding collective bargaining, Matthew indicated that CUPE has a memorandum of settlement with the University and hopes to meet in May to hold their ratification vote. He also announced that he is graduating this spring and this will be his last IRC meeting. Paul Vergara has been elected the next Vice President of CUPE.

Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance) – Kathy hoped that everyone from IRC was able to participate in the consultation process for the new AVP-HR. Should there be any additional comments on this recruitment, Kathy asked they be sent to her.

David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic) – No update but welcomed Paul and expressed his thanks to Adam.

Adam Shaen, (Human Resources) – Sherry Herchak from Human Resources will serve as interim chair on the Internal Relations Committee moving forward.

8. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:22pm.