

INTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 19, 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); Sukhraj Grewal (LUSU); Dave Andreason (OPSEU); Pat Larin (SchII); Niravkumar Kosamia (GSA); Matthew Benoit (CUPE); Gautam Das (LUFA);

Regrets: Jack Drewes (IUOE); Heather Spivak (Unifor); Bernie Chasse (USW);

Recorder: Kylie Williams (Human Resources)

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Matthew Benoit that the agenda be approved

Seconded by Kathy Pozihun. All in favour.

Carried

2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting of November 17, 2020

Moved by Matthew Benoit that the minutes be approved.

Seconded by Jason Freeburn. All in favour.

Carried

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

Regarding the LTD RFP out for tender, Adam told IRC members to expect an invitation to participate in the short list interviews within the next week. Committee representatives are encouraged to attend or delegate to another member.

4. Lakehead COVID-19 Update – Kathy Pozihun & David Barnett

Kathy spoke about the second wave of COVID-19 being observed across the country, province and city. On December 26th the province was put into a lockdown. Lakehead University established a travel directive for those travelling over the break that required a mandatory 14-day quarantine period upon return. This quarantine period had a major impact

for Residence students in that many chose to travel over the holiday period. Many departments came together to assist in this situation.

The lockdown isn't expected to be lifted until February 11th with the possibility of an extension. Kathy reminded everyone to be vigilant, work remotely whenever possible, and not to go on campus unless it is absolutely necessary. Those who do require access to the campus during the lockdown require prior approval.

Kathy also provided clarity on the mask requirements on campus advising everyone that "gaiters" or neck tubes do not meet Lakehead's safety requirements. Face masks must fit snugly around the nose and chin and either loop behind the ears or tie at the back of the head.

New functionality for the Lakehead Mobile Safety app was announced. The application, which is accessible via cell phone or tablet, now includes access to a mandatory self-screening process to be completed prior to accessing the campus. On the app you answer a series of questions which will either produce a green badge stating it is safe for you to enter campus, or a red badge where you will be denied access. Security will be doing spot checks. Those who do not have access to a mobile device must report to Security to complete the screening process upon arrival on campus.

5. Questions for Senior Administration

Sukraj asked for an update on the Wolf Den and inquired if students would be receiving a refund. Kathy confirmed that construction on the Wolf Den was 99% complete and having obtained substantial completion we are in the process of licensing. There is no plan at this time to refund any student fees. The facility is currently closed due to the lockdown.

Jason asked for more information on the process of decoupling CPP from the employer pension contributions for the non-unionized employee groups. Adam has compiled the responses received during the comment period. Many comments were primarily questions for clarification but overall, he observed strong support for the change. The University is now proceeding through the formal process of requesting amendments to the Pension Plan Texts and obtaining approval from the Board. Kathy confirmed that the university is still restrained by Bill 124. While she could not comment on what would be in place in 21/22 as the budget has not yet been approved, she agreed it would make sense to decouple the second half of the CPP from the employer pension contributions.

On the topic of pension, Kathy indicated that a formal review of the Professional Pension Plan has been complete and is now posted on the pension services website. At the next IRC meeting Kathy will provide a formal presentation summarizing the findings of this report.

Patrick asked if the changes to the pension would be implemented retroactively, should they be approved. Adam confirmed that the full 1% envelope would be applied but due to the logistical challenges of spanning calendar years this would likely occur in 2021.

6. Roundtable

Pat Larin (Schll) – Patrick indicated that he received many questions regarding the decoupling of CPP from the employer pension contributions and how it would be applied. The group is looking forward to updates as things progress.

Sukhraj Grewal (LUSU) – LUSU is working with students encountering challenges and some confusion with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as addressing concerns regarding Athletics dues and fees.

Matthew Benoit (CUPE) –CUPE will soon be commencing collective bargaining with the University.

Gautam Das (LUFA) – No update.

Dave Andreason (OPSEU) – The team is working through the January rush with the added challenges of limiting contact.

Jason Freeburn (LUTA) – The LUTA annual general meeting recently took place. The meeting commenced with a round table discussion concerning the Fall Term in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Jason indicated it was incredible to hear about all of the challenges Technicians overcame. It was a positive outlook and staff look forward to implementing their new skills in the Winter Term. LUTA also had questions surrounding the CPP decouple of employer pension contributions, but the group was generally supportive of the idea.

Alexis Paulusma (COPE) – Alexis announced that COPE and the University have ratified a 3-year collective agreement.

Niravkumar Kosamia (GSA) – Nirav is the newly elected GSA president. They have had many successful activities executed in the last year and are looking forward to many more in the coming months.

Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance) – Now that enrollment results are finalized it has been a focus for the Board committee meetings occurring this week. Budget development for the 21/22 fiscal year continues and is complicated by the absence of a tuition framework from the government. Deans are sharing their recruitment and retention plans with Administration as the University hopes to return to face to face operations in the fall of 2021.

David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic) – COVID-19 continues to have an impact on learning. The face-to-face components of the winter term had to change in response to the lockdown. David announced that Dr. Janusz Kozinski commenced his appointment as Dean of the Faculty of Engineering on January 1st, 2021. The University is moving forward with the search for the Dean of Health & Behavioural Sciences and the Vice President-External Relations search is progressing. Like Kathy, David hopes to return to face to face learning in the fall of 2021, but the University will continue to assess the situation.

David indicated that enrollment is at 93% of what was planned under SMA3. While it is not on target, it's better than anticipated in the early days of COVID. International enrollment is down from last year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the University continues to work towards 20% international enrollment as outlined in the strategic plan. The University is also working to build back the Education program after the change to the two-year program. Orillia enrollment, specifically in Education is doing well along with an increase in PhD students attributed to the introduction of the Health Sciences doctoral program. There has been an increased competition for first year students as a result of other Universities opening their doors to more students.

Planning for May 2021 convocation has also commenced. Convocation will be held virtually but planners are looking at what could be done safely face to face.

Adam Shaen, (Human Resources) – Adam announced the official launch of the approved wellness strategy for faculty, students, and staff on Monday January 25th via Zoom. There will also be initiatives and programming to celebrate aligning with the upcoming Thrive week.

7. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned.