

INTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**March 16, 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)

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

Recorder: Kylie Williams & Lindsay Hedlund (Human Resources)

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Kathy Pozihun 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 Dave Andreason that the minutes be approved.

Seconded by Jason Freeburn. All in favour.

Carried

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

No business arising from the minutes.

4. Professional Pension Plan Report – Kathy Pozihun

Kathy presented a summary of the external review for the Professional Pension Plan, completed by Eckler. The intention of the review was to look at the adequacy of Lakehead's pension plan compared to other Ontario Universities and employers.

The findings of the report indicated that there is room to improve the benefit adequacy of our current plan. Kathy recognized that this issue is complex as contribution rates among the different employee groups vary and are collectively

bargained. The other option presented by the report was moving Lakehead's pension plan to an existing JSPP (jointly sponsored pension plan) which is a contributory defined benefit plan.

The report compared three versions of Lakehead's plan to other pension options. These versions were: 1) Status quo, 2) No CPP offset and, 3) No CPP offset and 8% employer and employee contributions. These were compared to the CAAT DB+ plan with 8% and 9% contributions rates and the CAAT DB prime and UPP plans.

The comparison showed that member outcomes are improved by removing the CPP offset and increased pension contributions. With these changes the median ratios of Lakehead's plan would be very similar to the CAAT DB+ plans. The CAAT DB+ plan, however, does have significantly less variability. The CAAT DB prime and UPP options have the best ratios but also have much higher contributory rates.

The next phase will be to work with the actuary to determine the feasibility of making improvements to the pension plan. Administration has also started discussions with CAAT to determine what costs and steps are involved in moving a pension to CAAT. At this time the pension report has been shared with the Board of Governors, the Pension Board and Employee Advisory Committee and is posted on the pension services website. Kathy encouraged the internal relations committee to share this information with their members.

It was asked how individuals could participate in this project as it moves forward. Kathy indicated that all employee groups are represented on the two pension boards and can participate through the collective bargaining process with their unions. She stressed that this is an important Lakehead University family issue and she is happy to discuss or share information with the employee groups.

5. Lakehead COVID-19 Update

David advised the committee that the COVID-19 Transition team continues to meet as the situations evolve on both campuses. Currently, Thunder Bay is in the grey zone and Orillia had been reduced to the red zone. Requirements under these classifications remain very restrictive. Students and staff continue to access campus for essential reasons only.

Administration is turning their minds to the fall term and what that will look like. Similar to other Ontario and Canadian Universities, Lakehead has announced the fall term will be primarily held face-to-face. At this point, it is expected that 85% of courses will be held in person with 15% in remote learning options. This is twice the amount of remote learning courses we would typically see in the fall term. There are many unknowns that still need to be addressed including what the vaccine rollout means for employees and students coming onto campus.

Kathy added that Lakehead has the privilege of hosting a vaccination site on campus in partnership with TBRHSC. Lakehead is providing security and cleaning staff for the vaccination site.

Gautam expressed his concern about the potential exposure to COVID-19 for those presenting to campus. He inquired if there is a way to fast-track vaccinations for people who are regularly working on campus. Jack added that everyone in his working unit is worried about active COVID cases on campus. Their jobs require them to be on site. He asked if they could get onto the vaccination list as essential workers.

Kathy advised the vaccination rollout is under the province and health unit's directive. While we have no direct influence, administration continues to advocate on Lakehead's behalf.

Dave inquired about any considerations that have been made regarding how we conduct business once the pandemic comes to an end. Specifically, the ability of staff to work from home. Adam indicated the University cannot provide an answer just yet. He anticipates that the return to working on campus would be gradual. The pandemic has changed how we all think of work. Compared to a year ago Lakehead is more receptive to the idea of employees working from home. Conversations would need to occur with supervisors and the ability of employees to work from home would likely be department and role specific. David stressed that the University's priority will always be supporting students. At some point it is important that we get back to a community of learning.

6. Questions for Senior Administration

Jason asked how the University's servers were hacked in the cyber security event and what information was accessed. David relayed that TSC continues to work with third party experts to confirm the details of the event. He thanked TSC for their hard work to get everything back online.

Kathy also expressed her thanks to TSC and entire team who worked around the clock. We are still engaging in forensic analysis to understand what happened and how. More communication will become available as they move through the process. She added, as institutions moved more towards virtual environment the risks of cyber-attacks are more prominent. Lakehead will look at enhancing security as we work through this.

At the concern of LUFA members Gautam requested communication be given as to what, if any, information may have been compromised during the attack.

7. Roundtable

Alexis Paulusma (COPE) – No update.

Gautam Das (LUFA) – No update.

Jack Drewes (IUOE) – Advised that the IUOE team is maintaining the buildings as best as they can and trying to stay on top of where the COVID cases are on campus should those areas need to be accessed.

Jason Freeburn (LUTA) – No update but he did express that the technical staff has indicated that the winter term has been running much smoother than the fall term.

Pat Larin (Sch II) – His team had to go “old school” to make sure everyone was getting paid while the computer systems were compromised. He is thankful to TSC for providing a workspace for payroll staff to continue operating.

Dave Andreason (OPSEU) – Dave announced that after the cyber-security event most systems are back up. Despite the event causing some full-blown panic, things are progressing well and more quickly than he originally anticipated.

David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic) – The University has been faced with enrollment challenges specifically with international students in master’s programs. Students are struggling to obtain Visas to travel. Also, year one student enrollment declined this fall, and this will have a flow through impact to year two students in 2021/22. Admissions and Recruitment are working hard to get enrollment numbers up to have a strong class for the fall of 2021.

Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance) – Kathy advised that she typically would provide a budget update at this time, however, the government has yet to provide a tuition framework for next year. She stressed that we remain in a period of significant budget constraints as we are recovering from the impacts of COVID many of which will ride into this next fiscal year. Also, she announced Adam’s departure from Lakehead in the coming months. Adam has taken the position of VP of People, Mission, and Values at St. Joseph’s Care Group, adding that he will be greatly missed.

Adam Shaen, (Human Resources) – Human Resources is working through the back log of work that accumulated while the servers were down. HR is actively working through benefit renewals and finalizing the move to a new LTD plan. The team is also working to implement the decoupling of CPP from pension contributions for the non-union and LUFAs employee groups.

8. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:31pm.