

INTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**May 18, 2021
2:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Chair: Sherry Herchak, (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); Paul Vergara (CUPE); Heather Spivak (Unifor); Lahama Naeem (LUSU)

Regrets: Bernie Chasse (USW); Niravkumar Kosamia (GSA)

Recorder: Kylie Williams (Human Resources)

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Jason Freeburn that the agenda been approved.

Seconded by Dave Andreason. All in favour.

Carried

2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting of April 20, 2021

Moved by Alexis Paulusma 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. Lakehead COVID-19 Update

David reported that the COVID Transition Committee met to discuss the status of COVID-19 in the Province. Effective today, vaccinations are available to those 18 and older. Operations at the CLE will also be increasing by 50% to accommodate vaccinations for up to 1200 people per day. With this increase, it is hoped they can reduce the time in between obtaining the second shot. David also recognized that the Province is in lock down until at least June 2nd, reiterating that employees must continue to work remotely wherever possible.

Kathy indicated there will be information available in the next month or so with the intent to help facilitate return to campus planning, utilizing a staggered approach.

Gautam shared his concern over the status of vaccinations for the fall semester, specifically, many would not be fully vaccinated at this time and one would not know if students or other employees were vaccinated or not. Since there is not a mandatory vaccination scheme he asked if vaccination information would be shared with professors teaching classes in person? David confirmed that vaccination is not mandatory in Ontario and individuals will not be compelled to get a vaccine or inform the University of the vaccination status. To address concerns, the University has taken steps to ensure that everyone has the ability to get vaccinated. There is also some information/guidance from the federal government anticipated that will facilitate reopening. Kathy relayed that Universities are advocating strongly to have all staff and faculty vaccinated before the fall. We must continue to act to protect ourselves from exposure.

Lahama asked what the screening process would look like for the fall and if the mobile safety app would continue to be utilized? Kathy confirmed that the University will continue to take the advice of the province and local health units when it comes to screening requirements come the fall.

5. Questions for Senior Administration

Dave asked what childcare accommodations would be available for those returning to work in the fall. Kathy affirmed that Lakehead would endeavour to be an accommodating employer as much as possible. Accommodation discussions would best be had with the employee and their supervisor. Specific accommodation questions cannot be answered at this time as we do not have any further information.

6. Roundtable

Pat Larin (Sch II) – No update.

Jason Freeburn (LUTA) – No update but Jason mentioned that LUTA has a meeting scheduled for June 7th.

Alexis Paulusma (COPE) – No update.

Jack Drewes (IUOE) – IUOE remains on campus and continues to prepare the chiller system for the summer months.

Dave Andreason (OPSEU) – Dave indicated OPSEU remains busy with preparations for returning to work on campus and for the fall academic term.

Gautam Das (LUFA) – No update.

Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance) – Kathy informed the committee that the 2021/22 balanced operating budget was approved at the last Board of Governors meeting.

She relayed that she was both happy and proud of the efforts everyone put forward to respond to and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the University. Kathy also advised that the fiscal year end is underway with the external auditors expected in July. The AVP-HR search is progressing, and she hoped to have an update for the committee next month. Kathy also extended her thanks to those who showed their support of Lakehead University regarding the changes proposed to NOSM. There have been many people speaking on behalf of Lakehead. While the outcome is uncertain the University has done everything it possibly can.

David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic) – David indicated the search for the Dean of Health & Behavioural Sciences is underway. Three candidate presentations have been scheduled to occur shortly. The hope is to have the new Dean commence this summer. David also reported that planning for the fall term continues. The goal remains to be primarily face-to-face and Residence, food services and student support services are all preparing to be open this fall. Administration will continue to monitor the situation and move forward with scheduling. The University will follow health guidelines, pivot, and adapt as we move closer to the fall.

Lahama Naeem (LUSU) – Lahama introduced herself as the new LUSU president who is transitioning into the role along with the rest of the new executive team. She also mentioned that LUSU will be making a deputation today for NOSM staying part of Lakehead University.

Paul Vergara (CUPE) – No update.

Heather Spivak (Unifor) – No update.

7. Other Business

Kathy recognized that there remain a lot of unanswered questions regarding vaccinations and fall planning. She promised that the executive team would communicate frequently and as soon as more information becomes available.

Course delivery methods were discussed, specifically how complex the planning process is for departments and faculties. Gautam suggested Senate as a place for more discussion to occur. David confirmed he has been highly engaged with the Deans who have been speaking to the Chairs and faculty councils. Those conversations have and should be happening. He was unconvinced that utilizing senate to facilitate these group discussions would be more fruitful.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:11pm.