



INTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

September 17, 2024

2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

GCR (UC 2001) and Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Chair: Roshni Antony (AVP, Human Resources); Mehran Aziminezhad (CUPE); Jason Freeburn (LUTA); Gautam Das (LUFA); Sakshi Bathla (GSA); Jack Drewes (IUOE); Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance); David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic); Brandon Amyot (LUSU); Dr. Gillian Siddall; Rob Bell (COPE); Erfan Azimi Bizaki (GSA)

Guests: Tom Warden

Regrets: Dave Andreason (OPSEU); Dustin Piche (Unifor); Patrick Larin (Schll);

Recorder: Katherine Mends (Human Resources)

1. **Icebreaker** - Roshni presented an icebreaker activity focused on the various departments and contacts at Lakehead University, explaining what each department handles and when to reach out to them.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Gautam that the agenda was approved.

Seconded by Jason. All in favour. Carried

3. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting of August 20, 2024

Moved by Efran that the minutes be approved.

Seconded by Jack. All in favour. Carried

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

No business arising from the minutes



5. Athletics Services concerns

Tom mentioned that the cleaning concerns are valid; however, the furniture purchases and cleaning requirements were not ideal for the area. Although the furniture is steam cleaned, it does not appear fully cleaned due to stains, and tends to get dirty quickly. Cleaning schedules are timed around the new school year and events.

Tom explained that there have been ongoing issues with the sauna and pool for years. While issues have been identified and acknowledged, there has been a long delay in getting them fixed. Repairs are scheduled to begin tomorrow (Wednesday). Tom noted that the average closure for pool maintenance is 3-4 weeks, depending on the extent of the work required. Annual shutdowns occur, but this year's is longer than usual due to necessary repairs and parts.

Brandon inquired why the maintenance occurs in September instead of summer. Tom said that they will consider changing the closure days.

Erfan asked if there are alternatives or compensation for students during long shutdowns. Kathy noted that the cost of maintaining the pool is becoming prohibitive, especially given the low usage (less than 1% of the student body). Erfan asked if a survey had been conducted to understand why students do not use the pool. Kathy confirmed that a survey could be initiated.

Mehran asked if there is an opt-out option for fees related to the pool. Kathy clarified that fees are applicable to the entire athletics building and its maintenance.

6. Questions for Senior Administration

Gautam raised concerns regarding vandalism in the Visual Arts Building and inquired about insurance coverage for the damages. Kathy confirmed that the university has extensive insurance covering all buildings, though there is a large deductible. Insurance management is necessary to determine if claims are worthwhile. Jack noted that many physical plant items were also destroyed, including lights and emergency lighting.

Jason expressed concerns regarding the lack of representation from the LUTA employee group on the Provost search committee. Requested clarification on how the selection committee was determined and noted the absence of representation from the employee group. Jason agreed to summarize his concerns in an email to Dr. Siddall.



Jason asked if the Lakehead Georgian partnership will continue. David responded that discussions will take place in the future to evaluate how the partnership evolves.

Mehran asked when health coverage under CUPE begins. Roshni responded that the coverage has been in effect since January 1, 2024.

7. Round Table Discussion

Rob Bell (COPE); Rob expressed that COPE feels Lakehead lacks transparency, particularly regarding HR's collaboration with unions. He noted that HR response times are slow and highlighted a lack of transparency concerning the AVP Communications search and noted that COPE was not included in the recent Provost search committee. Kathy noted that VP searches are more comprehensive and are often done completed by executive search firms, whereas AVP/Associate searches are typically managed internally at Lakehead, with the supervisor leading the search with Human Resources support.

Jack Drewes (IUOE); Jack noted that Physical Plant is busy and that they are experiencing the effects of the deferred maintenance issues over the years.

Jason Freeburn (LUTA); Jason mentioned that many members are currently involved in field schools. The weather has been great, everyone is busy, and things are going smoothly.

David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic); David provided an update on several initiatives, including ongoing work related to the veterinary school. He mentioned that the Lakehead Georgian partnership is evolving, and discussions will continue. Additionally, a comprehensive review of academic programming is currently underway.

Brandon Amyot (LUSU); Brandon mentioned that the Outpost and Study are now open and that the bike shack has been in high usage since the start of the semester.

Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance); Kathy noted that residence is nearly full and that 63 beds have been added to the Thunder Bay residence inventory. Kathy mentioned that the President's Advisory Committee on Financial Sustainability has a lot of work underway; everyone is encouraged to stay updated with shared communications.

Sakshi Bathla (GSA); Sakshi expressed enthusiasm for working with everyone and excitement about the future.



Erfan Azimi Bizaki (GSA); Erfan raised concerns about a \$1,000 deposit for graduate students inquiring about its origin, purpose, and whether it is refundable. Gautam said he will seek clarification from Charisse on this matter.

Dr. Gillian Siddall (President); Dr. Siddall expressed excitement for the new school year and announced plans for a townhall in November, where an update on strategic planning will be provided.

Gautam Das (LUFA); No updates

Katherine (Human Resources); Katherine reminded the group that a communication was sent out yesterday regarding the revamp of the staff award process. She encouraged everyone to review the shared documents and provide feedback as soon as possible.

Roshni Antony (AVP, Human Resources); Roshni announced that there will be an event for all staff and faculty during Homecoming Week. A communication will be sent out in mid-October with details about the gathering event.

8. Other Business

No other business to discuss.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.