

INTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**September 21, 2021
2:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Chair: Sherry Herchak, (Human Resources); David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic); Kathy Pozihun (VP Administration & Finance); Roshni Antony (AVP, Human Resources); Alexis Paulusma (COPE); Jason Freeburn (LUTA); Dave Andreason (OPSEU); Gautam Das (LUFA); Pat Larin (SchII); Brandon Rhéal Amyot, for Lahama Naeem (LUSU); Jack Drewes (IUOE); Paul Vergara (CUPE); Heather Spivak (Unifor)

Regrets: Bernie Chasse (USW); Rahul Parameswaran (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 August 17, 2021

Moved by Jason Freeburn that the minutes be approved.

Seconded by Gautam Das. All in favour.

Carried

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Lakehead COVID-19 Update

David recapped the events and activities leading up to Lakehead's mandatory vaccination policy. The COU, LUFA, LUSU and the local health units have all advocated for a mandatory vaccination policy. Government regulations that advise following the local health unit recommendations essentially made vaccine mandates law for post secondary institutions.

To monitor compliance the University is using App Armour to upload proof of vaccination or apply for a vaccine exemption. David indicated there is still more needed to educate the

University community about the mandate. The University is doing its best to respond to the changing information. He added there is a vaccination clinic established at Student Health & Wellness as well as a rapid testing site on campus. Kathy reported that the University must report to the Ministry weekly how many people have uploaded their proof of vaccination. She advised everyone to watch the communications bulletins and the COVID-19 webpage for return to campus plans and updates.

Gautam asked about classroom cleaning protocols, specifically, if there was any cleaning done between classes. Roshni spoke on the enhanced cleaning protocols including the twice daily disinfection of high touch points. Disinfectant wipes are also available in every classroom for those who choose to clean their area. Kathy indicated she would follow up with the committee's concern that disinfectant wipes were not readily available in the ATAC classrooms.

Jason asked how the system responds to someone who fails screening and what occurs if someone on campus tests positive for COVID-19. Kathy answered that anyone who failed screening is advised to stay home. If someone on campus tests positive, then the local health unit would take the lead and conduct any necessary contact tracing. At that point the University would follow any further direction from the local health unit. There is a privacy issue with disclosing medical information so the health unit will make the determination when to contact others who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Brandon asked about any strategies the University was pursuing to educate others about using the app and becoming vaccinated. They suggested using customer service individuals to issue reminders. David mentioned there would be a friendly educational approach to provide information about vaccinations. These efforts are set to commence the following week.

Dave asked about the long-term plans for the rapid testing site on campus and if it was open to anyone wishing to obtain a COVID-19 test. Kathy forecasted that the need for the rapid testing services would be reduced over time. Currently the site is only available for those who are not fully vaccinated or who have an exemption.

5. Questions for Senior Administration

Jason asked for an update regarding the committee's previous discussions about the University pension plans, specifically, what the state of the pension is and any next steps.

Kathy replied that work continues on the outcomes from the external review that was complete. The University has provided a significant amount of data to CAAT to obtain a proposal from them. A review of the normal form pension factor and updated actuarial valuation of our pension plans is also underway by the actuary. That is expected to be complete by the end of September. She emphasized that since our last valuation in 2019 there have been changes to the contribution amounts, specifically due to the CPP decoupling. This has had an overall positive impact on our pensions.

6. Roundtable

Pat Larin (Schll) – Schedule II members are busy with the commencement of the fall term. Some employees have returned to working on campus and others will be phasing back through mid-October.

Dave Andreason (OPSEU) – TSC is working towards transitioning people back to campus, facilitating computer checks and providing hybrid teaching kits.

Jack Drewes (IUOE) – IUOE members are occupied as facilities are winding up. He asked about the return to in person meetings in the future. Kathy responded that caution is being exercised at this time as we remain in step 3 of the provincial reopening framework. She was hopeful that would change soon.

Gautam Das (LUFA) – Gautam spoke on the University's pension plan. He indicated that pension is a top priority for LUFA, and the association is committed to working with the University to improve the pension situation.

Jason Freeburn (LUTA) – Jason relayed that Technical Staff are engaged in the fall term. He also mentioned that LUTA is at a standstill with unanswered questions from Human Resources. Sherry will work with the association to discuss strategies to obtain the answers that are required.

Brandon Rhéal Amyot (LUSU) – LUSU staff are back on campus using a hybrid model, part time in person and part time online. The traffic and service demands will be monitored to ensure that protocols are being met. They added that orientation was held this fall safely and successfully.

Paul Vergara (CUPE) – The union continues to have concerns over the process of offering and hiring Graduate Assistants. He also is awaiting responses from departments regarding software requests made by the union. Human Resources confirmed they are aware of some of those concerns and were seeking more information.

Roshni Antony (Human Resources) – No update.

Kathy Pozihun (VP, Administration & Finance) – Kathy reported that there are approximately 600 students in Thunder Bay residence and 130 students in Orillia residence. The University remains in a period of significant budgetary caution. International mobility has begun to open up again which will hopefully stabilize over the next few months.

David Barnett (Provost & VP Academic) – David spoke about the event being hosted by the Faculty of Law on Thursday September 23rd. There will be an expert panel discussion regarding vaccination policy and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This event is open to the public.

Alexis Paulusma (COPE) – No update.

7. Other Business

Kathy indicated that recruitment in certain fields has been challenging as of late. One department affected is Security Services. She asked members to encourage anyone they know looking for a job in this field to come forward. The job posting can be found on the Human Resources website.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m.