

LUFA News

Fall 2020

LUFA GENERAL MEETING

Friday November 27th, 2020

9:30 am

Via Zoom

President's Report

Gautam Das, gdas@lakeheadu.ca

As this difficult, challenging year comes to a close, our professional community at LU faces the toughest, most critical test yet – the securing of a fair Collective Agreement with the LU administration. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continuous support as LUFA members and your efforts as part of LUFA's various committees and working groups.

During the last seven months, LUFA's negotiating team has tried, on your behalf, to reach a fair, balanced deal with the LU administration that would include decent working conditions for all members, including contract lecturers, job security, and a dignified livelihood upon your retirement. Unfortunately, we are now at an impasse as the LU administration refuses to continue negotiating in good faith. As such, I am asking you all to attend our General Meeting on Friday, November 27, 2020, to show your support for our Negotiating team as it enters this critical phase in the negotiation process.

More importantly, I am asking you all to affirm your formal support for your Negotiating Team by voting "yes" in the strike vote. While such a vote seldom leads to an actual strike, it represents a powerful tool that the Negotiation Team will have in this critical negotiation stage.

Updates and additional information are available to you via **LUFA Communiqué**, **Negotiations Bulletins**, and the **LUFA website**, and I encourage you to consult them as often as you are able. In addition, myself, Mrs. Angie Kozak, and the other members of the LUFA Executive are available to answer any questions or concerns you may have. In solidarity,

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Chief Grievance Officer Report

Qing-Lai Dang
qdang@lakeheadu.ca

It recently comes to LUFA's attention that the University has been asking LUFA members to sign a contract to transfer 100% of the IP ownership to the University when the member uses the University's agents to help with patent applications and the University shares the cost of the application. This is an overt breach of the collective agreement which explicitly spells out that the rights to all IPs, patents and rights arising from them shall be the sole property of the member (Article 38.01.02). LUFA has filed an associate grievance over the matter. The LUFA Executive Committee has authorized the LUFA Grievance Committee to take the matter to arbitration if a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached with the University.

LUFA signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the University on November 17th to make the presentation of student course evaluation results for courses taught in spring/summer 2019/20 and fall/winter 2020/21 optional for all relevant processes or applications, including but not limited to annual reports, PTR applications, and determination of limited-term contract renewal or contract lecturer appointment. This is in addition to the Memorandum of Agreement that LUFA signed in May which stipulates (1) that modifications of course delivery and other work conditions in response to the covid19 pandemic will not be used as precedent to practices during the normal operation of the University, (2) that LUFA members are permitted to defer their 2020/21 sabbatical leave to 2021/22, and (3) that the presentation of student evaluation results for courses taught in winter 2020 optional for the purposes described previously.

Several grievances have been filed and resolved to LUFA's satisfaction in the past year on the issue of interference or attempts to interfere with the hiring of faculty members, including research chairs, by deans and/or other administrators. According to the collective agreement, deans and other administrators cannot serve on faculty search committees, can not interfere with the independent work of the search committee directly or indirectly. The chair of the search committee serves as the interface of communications between the committee and the dean.

If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact one of LUFA grievance officers. The LUFA grievance officers are:

Scott Pound (English)
Naqi Sayed (Business Administration)
Tianxuan Miao (Mathematics)
Jason Blahuta (Philosophy)
Wely Floriano (Chemistry)
Juan Pernia (Civil Eng.)
Jennifer Jarman (Orillia)
Sree Kurissery (Orillia)

Chief Negotiator Report

Ken Hartviksen
Ken.hartviksen@lakeheadu.ca

This shall be an abbreviated report because of the continuous flow of information to the membership through Negotiating Bulletins shared with the membership since June of 2020.

OCUFA Advocacy Day at Queen's Park

During the week of November 9, OCUFA hosted Ontario University Advocacy Week. Gautam and I formed a three person team that included Geoff Hudson from NOSM. We met via ZOOM with individual MPPs from ridings in Northern Ontario. These included:

Hon. Judith Monteith-Farrell – NDP MPP representing Thunder Bay-Atikokan
Hon. Jill Dunlop – Conservative MPP representing Simcoe North and Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues
Michael Mantha – NDP MPP representing Algoma-Manitoulin
Guy Bourgouin – NDP MPP representing Mushkegowuk-James Bay and
Michael Gravelle – Liberal MPP representing Thunder Bay Superior North

During our 30-minute, one-on-one discussions with MPPs in their offices, we focused on three key issues:

1. Need for a coherent, Province-side strategy for Faculty Renewal that preserves the quality of Ontario Universities
2. Risks and Realities of Performance based funding especially as it affects small and northern universities, and
3. Collegial Governance issues including the importance of no Government interference in accreditation processes for degree granting institutions (Canada Christian College issue) and discussion of OCUFA's concerns with Bill 168 related to antisemitism.

We were pleased to having had an opportunity to engage with a member of the Conservative Government directly, especially someone whose riding encompasses Lakehead University.

MPPs were given facts and asked to write letters of support on these topics to the Premier and to the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

We also had a brief opportunity to speak about the protracted negotiating problems at Lakehead University.

It has been a privilege for me to join Gautam and Geoff in these visits over the past two years. As well, I want to congratulate Geoff as the 2019 recipient of the OCUFA

Lorimer Award and thank him for his service to LUFA by way of his role in LUFA's Action Team.¹

Verbal Report

I will give a more detailed, and up-to-date verbal report to the membership at the General Meeting to be held on Friday, November 27.

The Negotiating Team appreciates and needs your support to reach a fair and equitable Collective Agreement.

Please remain alert to communications from the LUFA Action Team and the LUFA Executive.

Pension Committee Report

Glenn Colton, Chair, glenn.colton@lakeheadu.ca

The LUFA Pension Committee met on October 22 via Zoom to discuss the preliminary report on the Lakehead University Professional Pension Plan prepared by Eckler Associates. The report considered benefit adequacy and feasibility of the current plan, alternative models such as jointly sponsored pension plans (JSPPs), and benchmarking analysis.

Key findings of the report include the following:

- 1) Lakehead University's employer contribution rates to the plan (5.2% adjusted for CPP offset) are the lowest of any comparable university pension plans in Ontario by a wide margin;
- 2) Under the current plan structure, LU faculty members are expected to achieve a basic replacement rate (gross post-retirement income relative to gross pre-retirement income) of just 32% (less than half of the recommended basic replacement rate target of 70%);
- 3) Member outcomes under the Lakehead Plan would be improved significantly with removal of the employer CPP offset;
- 4) JSPPs such as the CAAT Plan can provide higher replacement rates, given that they are DB plans that reflect highest average earnings and higher contribution rates.

The Pension Committee will be closely monitoring the final recommendations of the Eckler Report (to be presented to the Lakehead University Pension Advisory Board by late November).

Contract Lecturer Committee Report

Laurie Forbes, Co-Chair, laurie.forbes@lakeheadu.ca
John Fell, Co-Chair, john.fell@lakeheadu.ca

The Contract Lecturers/Continuing Lectures Committee hosted their Fall Annual General Meeting (AGM), on October 19, the first day of Fair Employment Week. Fair Employment Week is sponsored each year by CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers), to highlight the unfair treatment of Contract Faculty. This year's AGM focused on negotiations and the need for substantive changes for LUFA (Lakehead University Faculty Association) Contract Faculty.

The Contract Lecturers/Continuing Lectures Committee will be happy to address any questions/concerns Contract Lecturers/Continuing Lecturers may have.

Best wishes for the rest of the term.

Status of Women Report

Karen Poole, karen.poole@lakeheadu.ca

The Status of Women and Equity (SWEC) group of OCUFA has met via Zoom in September, and will continue with virtual meetings until travel restrictions are lifted. The September workshop "Combating Anti-Black Racism in the Academy: A Primer for Faculty" was facilitated by Paige Galette, a social and racial justice advocate. This informative dialogue is available on the OCUFA website at <https://ocufa.on.ca/blog-posts/watch-combating-anti-black-racism-in-the-academy-a-primer-for-faculty/>. OCUFA is seeking nominations from any member institution for the Status of Women and Equity Award(s) of Distinction. The deadline for the nominations is November 27th, and the process is available on the OCUFA website. This award celebrates the outstanding contributions of OCUFA members whose work has contributed meaningfully to the advancement of professors, academic librarians, and/or academic staff who are Indigenous, women, racialized, LGBTQ2S+, living with disabilities and/or belong to other historically marginalized groups.

The LUFA contract negotiating team continues to stand firm for a revised, updated and contemporary Faculty Equity Policy to replace the current 1991 policy.

¹ <https://ocufa.on.ca/press-releases/northern-ontario-school-of-medicine-professor-honoured-with-lorimer-award-for-outstanding-work-advancing-faculty-rights/>

CAUT Defence Fund Report

Livio DiMatteo, ldimatte@lakeheadu.ca

The annual meeting of the CAUT Defence Fund was held October 17th and October 24th via Zoom. The CAUT Defence Fund dates from 1978, and its founding purpose was to provide unionized Canadian academic member unions with a unified strike fund. Formed of associations that are members of CAUT, it now includes 65 member unions representing over 36 000 academics from St. John's to Victoria. As of August 2020, the total net assets of the fund are at \$35.5 million dollars, up from \$34.7 million in May of 2020.

Elections were held filling positions on the Investment Committee, the Planning and Policy Committee, the Audit Committee and the Elections Committee. The CAUT Defence Fund also welcomed several new trustees. A number of universities are currently in, preparing for or going into negotiations including Alberta, Athabasca, Calgary, Grant McEwan, Lakehead, Laval, Laurentian, Lethbridge, Manitoba, Mount Royal, Regina, and Simon Fraser. A number of universities also have their agreements expiring in 2021 including Acadia, Carleton, UOIT, Windsor. Many associations are reporting more intense or protracted negotiations with their administrations.

OCUFA Report

Glenn Colton glenn.colton@lakeheadu.ca

The OCUFA Board of Directors met on Oct. 31 via Zoom. In response to the ongoing global pandemic, OCUFA has compiled a database on Ontario university reopening plans for the Fall 2020 term (including information on modes of course delivery, access to campus facilities and services, and letters of understanding). The database includes a governance category to reflect the level of inclusion, representation, and consultation of faculty in decision making related to reopening plans during the period of emergency remote teaching.

OCUFA is also conducting a survey to better understand the experiences of faculty, academic librarians and students across Ontario during the Fall term and has prepared a health and safety guide that reviews some of the measures required for a safe return to campus. OCUFA and CAUT statements in response to the COVID-19 crisis, as well as resources for faculty associations and their members, are available on the OCUFA website: <https://ocufa.on.ca/home/covid-19-response-on-campuses/>.

OCUFA, along with its partners in the Ontario Federation of Labour Coalition, is proceeding with a legal challenge to the "Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act," the provincial government's controversial wage cap legislation for public sector workers that was first introduced as Bill 124. While the outcome of the legal proceedings cannot be predicted, it is worth noting that repressive wage legislation for public service workers in the province of Manitoba was struck down by the courts in a landmark decision earlier this year. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-government-public-sector-wage-freeze-1.5608713>



As announced by the provincial government in September, the implementation of performance-based funding for Ontario universities has been delayed until 2022 due to the pandemic. OCUFA has long expressed concerns over performance-based funding, arguing that the metrics chosen threaten to impact traditionally marginalized students disproportionately, and may result in less quality control and reduced institutional autonomy as government exercises more influence over which programs are offered.

In the face of significant headwinds provincially, OCUFA continues to advocate for its priority goals - delivering fairness for contract faculty and advocating for faculty renewal via new tenure-stream appointments - while continuing to support member associations at the bargaining table and strengthening relationships with unions across the province. To further these objectives, the Board of Directors has approved the appointment of OCUFA's new executive director, labour leader and social justice advocate Jenny Ahn. <https://ocufa.on.ca/press-releases/jenny-ahn-hired-as-next-ocufa-executive-director/>

Benefits Committee Report

ShiKui Wu, Chair, shikui.wu@lakeheadu.ca

The LUFA Benefits Committee shared the analysis results and recommendations on benefits with the Negotiating Committee. The Negotiating Committee spent time reviewing the results and the notes from all engagement sessions to ensure that the priorities of the membership were understood, including benefits. That has carried through in LUFA proposals to the Administration.

Specifically, updating the language around parental leave and making sure it is congruent with federal legislation was important. Another issue is about long-term disability (LTD). In this Spring, the University reported a major spike in the cost of LTD. Since LTD premiums are paid solely by the employee, this was cause for concern. At the bargaining table LUFA has tried to address this issue. The University has agreed to have a Joint Benefits Committee to oversee the benefit plans such as LTD. The University has agreed that the Committee shall be active, elect its own chair, maintain minutes, and engage with the benefits providers.

LUFA member's benefits during the negotiation remain the same as in the previous collective agreement. During strike or lockout, LUFA will make appropriate arrangements with the support from OCUFA and CAUT's defense fund. For further information or specific questions with regard to benefits, please contact me or LUFA.

Benefits Committee

Shikui Wu, Chair (Business Administration)
Robert Omeljanuk (Biology)
Salimur Choudhury (Computer Science, Orillia)
Ken Hartviksen (Business Administration, ex-officio member)

Emeritus Committee Report

Glenna Knutson, Chair, gknutson@lakeheadu.ca

The Emeritus Committee met on November 3, 2020 to discuss retiree benefits, role of the Emeritus members in LUFA committees, and recruitment of new Emeritus members. The Emeritus Committee plans to meet again on December 3, 2020. The committee's members are:

Joey Farrell
David Kemp
Glenna Knutson (chair)
Karen Maddox
Brian Phillips
Jim Stafford

LUFA Executive Committee 2020/21

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Past President
Members at Large

Chief Grievance Officer
Chief Negotiator
CAUT Rep.
CAUT Defence Fund Rep.
OCUFA Rep.
OCUFA Collective Bargaining
Status of Women Rep.
Benefit Committee Chair
Contract Lecturer Chairs

Emeritus Committee Chair
Equity, Diversity & Status of Women
Committee Chair
External Relations Committee Chair
Librarian Committee Chair
Nominating Committee Chair
Orillia Committee Chair
Pension Committee Chair
Physical Environment Committee Chair
Research Committee Chair
Administrative Assistant

Gautam Das
Glenn Colton
Florin Pendea
Sherry Wang

Scott Pound
Stephen Hecnar
Qing Lai Dang
Ken Hartviksen
Gautam Das
Livio DiMatteo
Glenn Colton
Ken Hartviksen
Karen Poole
Shikui Wu
Laurie Forbes
John Fell
David Kemp

Karen Poole
Will Zhao
Debra Gold
Jason Blahuta
Sree Kurissery
Glenn Colton
Juan Pernia
Richard Maundrell
Angie Kozak