

# LUFA News

Spring 2022

## LUFA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday May 4th, 2022

9:30 am

Via Zoom Join Zoom Meeting

<https://lakeheadu.zoom.us/j/91842321665>

**Meeting ID: 918 4232 1665**

**Passcode: 986918**

## President's Report

*Gautam Das, [gdas@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:gdas@lakeheadu.ca)*

The Annual General Meeting will be held on May 4, 2022. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to attend the meeting. I want to express my sincere appreciation to the volunteers serving on LUFA Executive, various LUFA committees and our grievance officers. **Please note that your service in LUFA Committees and your active participation in the activities of the LUFA are considered part of Administrative Responsibilities (Article 16.04) and Service to the Profession and the Community (Article 16.05), respectively.**

In the following paragraphs, I am summarising some of the information you may find beneficial.

**Negotiation** - LUFA appointed Robert Mawhinney as the Chief Negotiator on April 28, in an Emergency Executive meeting. The negotiation will commence on May 31, 2022. Please join me in thanking R. Mawhinney for assuming this critical role on behalf of our members.

**Coffee and Conversation** – LUFA has organized fourteen sessions since July 2021. These meetings provide a forum for the discussion of:

- (i) the current bargaining environment and issues;
- (ii) how internal and external factors can influence our ability to maintain our bargaining rights; and
- (iii) benefits, salaries, pension and any other issues you want to bring to the attention of the LUFA Executive.

LUFA received the results of the Bargaining Survey and members of the Executive discussed them in the last Emergency Executive meeting. In the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM), R. Mawhinney will summarize the results as a series of bargaining priorities you have identified as important. Furthermore, the LUFA Ad hoc Action Committee will develop a **"Message Box"** containing details on the negotiation issues identified by you as top priorities.

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**Pension Update** – During the last several Coffee and Conversation sessions, you heard about the issues related to the LU Pension Plan. The recordings of some sessions are available on the LUFA website (<https://lufa.org/agreements/pension-information/>).

As we approach the negotiation, I encourage all our members to take a closer look at our negotiation priorities and discuss their implications with colleagues and family. For more information, I encourage everyone to read the past **pension committee** report in the newsletters and **LUFA Communiqué**.

I would also like to let you know that the sub-committee on Pension Reform (Approved by the Pension Board on December 3, 2021) provided us with the following resources available on the pension services website:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/finance/pension/sub-committee-on-pension-reform>

- [Sub-Committee Terms of Reference](#)
- [The Value of a Good Pension](#)
- [UPP/CAAT DB Plus Comparison Chart](#)
- [2019 Eckler Report on Benefit Adequacy, Feasibility Analysis & Alternatives](#)
- [Town Hall Presentation - March 1, 2022](#)
- [Town Hall Recording - March 1, 2022 \(This link opens in YouTube.\)](#)

These documents contain a wealth of information that are vital to our understanding of the Pension Reform issues. As more information becomes available, LUFA will continue to update you.

Further updates and additional information are available via **LUFA Communiqué** and the **LUFA website**. I encourage you to consult them as often as you are able. Please get in touch with me or any other LUFA Executive members if you have any questions or concerns.

In solidarity,

## Status of Women Report

Karen Poole,  
[Karen.poole@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:Karen.poole@lakeheadu.ca)

Equity, diversity, inclusivity and decolonization issues continue to be a priority on university campuses, and there is much needed work to be done. As the Status of Women representative for LUFA, and a member of our Equity Diversity and Status of Women committee, I can say that we are seeing slow but positive

progress in EDI(D) at Lakehead University. We know that there is an urgent need to revise the Faculty Equity Policy (dated 1991) to better reflect contemporary EDI principles. We know that it is imperative that LUFA is represented at the committee level where issues related to EDI are discussed, such as the current LU Accessibility committee.

OCUFA has recently launched an Equity Survey of faculty associations. Their goal is to develop an action-oriented work plan to increase equity, diversity and inclusion within the university sector. The survey is seeking information regarding our equity priority needs and resources that might assist in moving the EDI agenda forward. We anticipate that the survey results will support our EDI work.

As this is my final report, I would like to state that it has been an honour and pleasure to represent LUFA at our association and provincial level, and am optimistic that LUFA will continue to advocate for EDID action that supports all of its members.

## CAUT Defence Fund Report

Livio Di Matteo, representative,  
[ldimatte@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:ldimatte@lakeheadu.ca)

The CAUT Defence Fund was established in 1978 to provide unionized Canadian academic member unions with a unified strike fund. Formed of associations that are members of CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers), it now includes 65 member unions representing over 36 000 academics stretching from St. John's to Victoria. Its current assets as of August 2021 were \$38.5 million and stand to assist and support faculty associations in their ongoing relations and negotiations with university administrations and boards.

In terms of recent business, the Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA) requested daily benefits while the Laurentian University Faculty Association (LUFAPPUL) requested a retroactive reduction in membership numbers and associated dues because of the decline in its membership in the wake of the insolvency and restructuring. The University of Ontario Institute of Technology Faculty Association (UOITFA) and the Acadia University Faculty Association (AUFA) also both requested benefits in light of ongoing labour issues with their administrations. The Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) has requested daily benefits. There have been calls for Flying Pickets at L'Université Ste. Anne (April 8th), University of Lethbridge (March 28th), UOIT (February 18th).

Acadia's strike came to an end in early March while the Concordia University of Edmonton had a 10-day strike in February while the University of Manitoba had a five-week strike that ended in December. Lethbridge's strike officially ended on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, but in the wake of it the semester was extended two weeks to May 5<sup>th</sup>. Across the country, faculty are increasingly frustrated with the last two years of pandemic working conditions, and inflation is starting to take its toll on salaries. Many faculty associations are also concerned about the erosion of collegial governance which appears to have been hastened by the "emergency" conditions of the pandemic as well as the increased willingness of provincial governments to intervene in university affairs.

CAUT has also issued a statement on the Ontario Auditor General's Report on Laurentian's Insolvency and called for the resignation of Laurentian's top officials given the report *"shows that the administration intentionally delayed the disclosure of important financial information to the faculty association and ignored collective agreement provisions that would have avoided the costly legal proceedings over the past year."* While a preliminary report, the Auditor General's investigation lays the blame for Laurentian's financial woes on factors including capital investments, poor management, weak governance, and rising senior administration costs. A follow up story in the Globe and Mail by Joe Friesen dated April 13<sup>th</sup> also writes that *"The Auditor General's investigation lays the blame for Laurentian's financial woes on the Administration's "poorly considered capital investments", poor financial management, weak governance oversight, and rising senior administration costs—not academic staff salary costs."* Moreover, *"The university did not seek comprehensive help from the government as its financial situation worsened, or find an alternative path that could have averted some of the damaging consequences of insolvency, Auditor-General Bonnie Lysyk says. Instead, the university had been planning for a year, with outside consultants and lawyers, to use the Companies Creditors Arrangement Act, which grants wide latitude for emergency cost-cutting measures."* Moreover, *"The idea of using the CCAA to address Laurentian's financial problems was first raised by an external law firm that was working with university administrators in 2019. Laurentian appears to have decided to pursue this path in the Spring of 2020, the report says. The university did not go to the MCU and explain its situation and seek help, nor did it trigger the financial-exigency clause in its collective agreement, which would have led to a lengthier process working with the faculty union to reduce costs."*

If one can be permitted to opine on this matter, that Laurentian appears to have deliberately chosen the CCAA option as a way of implementing a board/administration vision for strategic change at the university is disturbing. Here at Lakehead, we need to be alert to any signals that our own board and administration may be interested in their own version of strategic changes to university research mission and academic programming. The Laurentian situation suggests that university administrations and boards can be tempted to act in a more mercenary fashion for short-term benefits regardless of long-term impacts.

As we enter a negotiation year there will inevitably be statements from our administration that enrollment is down or under siege. It remains that total enrollment (Full and Part-Time) during the pandemic at Lakehead is up. While total enrollment in fall 2017 was 7,070, by fall 2021 it stood at 8,572 – an increase of 21 percent. This robust enrollment performance as well as a string of substantial surpluses appears to have given administration the divine confidence in its own infallibility needed to move changes for next year that include a commitment to return to 100 percent in-person learning.

While a return to in-person learning is important and necessary, next year's scheduling with a stated 100 percent return to in-person teaching seems unconcerned with many students still wanting flexible options. It also seems to be a unilateral decision on mode of delivery of course materials and academic content. Anecdotally, students have privately expressed concerns that they will be unable to take many of the courses they want online to complete degrees they undertook remotely during the pandemic. This may harm our fall enrollment which will then inevitably be thrown back at the faculty as a negotiating tactic. Should enrolment falter, the doctrine of administrative infallibility will inevitably be followed by pontifical pronouncements of faculty responsibility.

One can be tempted to conclude that the desire to restore ancillary revenues from parking, residences and food services is really what is driving the move to full in-person teaching after pre-pandemic years of getting faculty to do more online. On the other hand, this may be a tactic designed to generate the groundwork for implementing a fully hybrid teaching model. Yet, compared to a blend of in-person and online options, complete hybrid teaching represents a substantial increase of workload for faculty. As well, it can be an unsatisfactory classroom environment given it is ultimately voluntary in-person classroom attendance with fully online evaluation.

While we may want to reasonably give Lakehead's board and administration the benefit of the doubt, considering what has occurred at Laurentian, vigilance and caution should be the watchwords. While one may feel the views expressed here are alarmist, it remains that if two years ago one had opined that Laurentian might use financial difficulties as a way of invoking CCAA proceedings to circumvent existing collective agreements and unilaterally implement program and staffing changes, one might have also pooh-poohed such sentiments as 'alarmist'.

It remains that this year continues to be particularly active on the university labour front. The continued importance of maintaining a large and stable national defence fund for university faculty in the current environment cannot be underestimated. As Lakehead is currently in the process of moving into labour negotiations this summer, the importance of access to the CAUT Defence fund cannot be stressed enough. The importance of being alert and monitoring the actions of administration is indeed a collective responsibility of faculty.

## Research Committee Report

Jennifer Jarman  
[jjarman@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:jjarman@lakeheadu.ca)

The Chair attended the meetings of the Senate Research committee and has prepared a background report for the LUFA Research Committee that makes suggestions relating to the criteria and administrative processes relating to the Distinguished Researcher, Research Excellence, and other Research Fund award competitions. This report will also be circulated to the LUFA Equity committee for consideration. Following consideration by these two LUFA committees, the Working Group for the Senate Research committee have agreed to meet and work through the issues with both committees.

## OCUFA Report

Glenn Colton, representative,  
[gcolton@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:gcolton@lakeheadu.ca)

On April 13, 2022, OCUFA issued a statement in response to the recent release of the Auditor General of Ontario's preliminary report on Laurentian University's financial crisis, noting that "*the university's financial crisis resulted from secretive and deficient*

*governance practices and the Ford government's failure to step in and support the institution when its financial needs became clear. The Auditor General found that the use of the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) was inappropriate and unneeded and that, instead, the university should have worked collegially with the Laurentian University Faculty Association to address the institution's financial challenges."*

The OCUFA Board of Directors has identified three main areas of focus in its advocacy platform for the 2022 Ontario election: government funding, fairness for contract faculty, and tuition fees.

Accordingly, OCUFA is advocating for the next Ontario government to implement the following measures:

### Government funding

- Meaningfully increase university operating grants.
- Increase funding for research under the province's research funding envelope.
- Boost funding for northern and bilingual institutions, as well as Indigenous programming, in recognition of their unique importance for Ontario's postsecondary education system.
- Discontinue the performance-based funding model for Ontario's universities.

### Fairness for contract faculty

- Remove the wage constraints legislated under Bill 124.
- Reform Employment Standards Act (ESA) language to include equal pay for work of equivalent value for contract workers, including contract faculty.
- Increase university funding to ensure faculty renewal so that retiring faculty are replaced.

### Tuition fees

- Increase funding for the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP).
- Provide grants, not loans to OSAP recipients to reduce historically high levels of student debt.

The next meeting of the OCUFA Board of Directors will take place May 14-15 in Toronto.

## Contract Lecturer/Continuing Lecturer Committee Report

Taina Chahal, Chair,  
[tchahal@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:tchahal@lakeheadu.ca)

The Contract Lecturer Committee recently emailed to all contract faculty the Annual Survey PowerPoint, which covered ideas from the survey, basic facts of our work, and directions for the upcoming bargaining session. We thank all who filled out the survey and those who shared ideas at the CL AGM in March.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work of all contract lecturers this difficult pandemic-influenced school year. Also, we recognize the invaluable work of two long-serving Continuing Lecturers who are retiring this spring: Karen Bishop, who has taught for 40 years in the Faculty of Business and the Dept. of English, and Mavourneen (Moe) Trainor Bruzzese, who has taught for 37 years in the Dept. of Visual Arts.

As evident through their decades of non-stop teaching, Lakehead University has depended on their supposed part-time labour to function. In 2016, LUFA succeeded in gaining job security for them and eight others through the creation of the 12-month Continuing Lecturer position. There are now six people left in that position and one in the 2009 created 9-month Continuing Contract Lecturer position. The Contract Lecturer Committee hopes that other contract lecturers who have been working for years on end can also find job security through moving into these positions.

This past year, as union representatives, the Contract Lecturer Committee has worked in solidarity to push for equitable solutions to improve the conditions of contract faculty work and to draw attention to fairness for contract lecturers.

## Emeritus Committee Report

Glenna Knutson, Chair  
[gknutson@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:gknutson@lakeheadu.ca)

In 2020-21, the focus of the LUFA Emeritus Committee was on increasing Emeritus membership. This resulted

in an increase from 14 members in 2020-21 to 39 members in 2021-22.

The Committee met regularly during the 2021-22 year. There was continued attention to increasing Emeritus membership. In addition, the Committee began to focus on member retention and services. This discussion continued through the year, and is anticipated to be a major focus of attention in 2022-23.

LUFA will be represented at the annual CURAC meeting by members of the Emeritus Committee, as occurred in 2021. The members of the 2021-22 LUFA Emeritus Committee are:

Joey Farrell, David Kemp, Glenna Knutson, Karen Maddox, Brian Phillips and Jim Stafford. As Chair, I would like to thank the members for their work on the Committee in the past year.

## Equity, Diversity and Status of Women Committee Report

Juan Pernia, Chair [jpernia@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:jpernia@lakeheadu.ca)

The EDSW Committee had a couple of meetings during the Winter 2022 semester. In these meetings, the Committee discussed the possibility of creating a survey regarding how the pandemic affected work conditions, including load, for faculty from various backgrounds and in different academic positions. It was also discussed that currently there is no clear process for requesting accommodations at the university and it is a concern that needs to be addressed.

The EDSW Committee is also waiting for the Director of the Office of Human Rights and Equity from the university to have ready the draft policies for Harassment and Discrimination and Sexual Violence at the university in order to review them and provide feedback. The Committee is also waiting to provide feedback on the draft survey for the LU community intended to identify each community member in reference to special groups and about other aspects of policies related to the university. The information collected from this survey will allow to have data to evaluate the university EDI Action Plan.

The Committee is also looking into updating the terms of reference of the committee in order to add accessibility to them. During this part month of April, it participated in an OCUFA Equity survey for faculty

associations. The committee is also in the process of contacting the Accessibility Committee at the university to explore the possibility of having collaboration in their work in this area.

Finally, the Committee intends to be more active by participating and promoting several events throughout the academic year such as celebrating International Women's Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Please contact the EDSW Committee if you have any concerns or suggestions regarding Equity, Diversity or Status of Women at the university.

## LUFA Executive Committee 2021/22

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 Chair  
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  
Executive Assistant

Gautam Das  
Glenn Colton  
Florin Pendea  
Sherry Wang

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Scott Pound  
Lynn Martin  
Qing Lai Dang  
Robert Mawhinney  
Gautam Das  
Livio Di Matteo  
Glenn Colton  
Ken Hartviksen  
Karen Poole  
Shikui Wu  
Taina Chahal  
Glenna Knutson

Juan Pernia  
Doug Ivison  
Debra Gold  
Jason Blahuta  
Sree Kurissery

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Hui Zhang  
Jennifer Jarman  
Angie Kozak  
Benjamin Hubbard

