

LUFA News

Winter 2026

LUFA GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, March 5th from 10:00 to Noon in LUSU
Boardroom UC-2020 or via Zoom:

<https://lakeheadu.zoom.us/j/93076940490>

Meeting ID: 930 7694 0490

Passcode: 171216

President's Report

Gautam Das, gdas@lakeheadu.ca

The Winter 2026 General Meeting will take place at 10 am on March 5, 2026. I am inviting you to attend the meeting, and please encourage your colleagues to attend. At the upcoming meeting, Dr. Mayurika Chakravorty, Co-Chair of the CAUT Equity Committee, will address the membership on issues of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the postsecondary Institution.

Our Bargaining with the Board of Governors of Lakehead University will commence in June 2026. The bargaining team members are reviewing the recently completed survey results. You will hear from the Chief Negotiator about the priorities in the upcoming bargaining. To make an informed decision, your participation in negotiation meetings (**e.g., Coffee and Conversations**) is more important than ever before! We need to identify and embrace our common goals to make Lakehead University the best possible place for research and Innovation, teaching and learning, which cannot be achieved without transparent and collegial Governance. I would also like to remind members that this is our university. We must work together at all levels of University Governance, from Departments and Faculty Councils to the Senate and the Board of Governors.

Inside

President's Report	1
Chief Negotiator Report	3
Benefits Committee Report	4
Emeritus Committee Report	4
Equity and Social Justice Report	5
Pension Committee Report	5
LUFA Executive Committee (2025-2026)	5



I want to thank you for your participation in LUFA meetings and for engaging in discussions. I want to express my sincere appreciation to the volunteers serving on the Executive and Social Justice committees, as well as to the members serving as grievance officers. **You will receive a communication from the chair of the nomination committee about the expression of interest to serve on the LUFA committees. Please nominate yourself and encourage your colleagues.**

Service to LUFA is Administrative Responsibilities (Article 16.04 and Article 16.05).

Further, I want you to join me in thanking Ben, Executive Manager, LUFA, for his contributions to grievances and many more. His participation in CAUT and OCUFA meetings will also bring new knowledge for LUFA. Please join me to thank Ben!

In the following paragraphs, I will summarize some of the information you may find beneficial.

Compliance with Collective Agreements: LUFA Communiqué: Grievance Resolution – Roles and Responsibilities of Assistant Dean, dated **February 10, 2026**. *On February 3, the Lakehead University Board of Governors and LUFA arrived at a settlement, the key terms of which are:*

1. Assistant Deans shall not draft, co-draft, or perform any administrative or evaluative functions related to a Dean's written response to external reviewers' reports under the IQAP.
2. The Dean retains full and sole responsibility for the drafting and submission of these Faculty-level responses.
3. The parties have agreed to engage in further discussions regarding the roles and responsibilities of Assistant Deans specifically to ensure ongoing compliance with **Article 28.05.02**.

*If you have any questions regarding this settlement or the duties assigned to Assistant Deans in your faculty, please contact the LUFA office. Please note – **Assistant Deans are not Deans!***

OCUFA Advocacy - One of the issues we have discussed for the last several years at OCUFA's annual Advocacy at Queen's Park and during election debates at [Thunder Bay](#) and [Orillia](#) is **UNIVERSITY UNDERFUNDING**. It is great to see that the Ontario Government has provided significant new funds to the postsecondary sector. Totalling \$6.4 billion over four years, the new funds include:

- \$1.1 billion to increase base per-student operating funding across all program areas.
- \$1.7 billion to fund 70,000 new postsecondary seats in "in-demand programs" by 2029.
- \$3.3 billion in additional funding for "high-cost priority programs".
- \$284 million for **small, northern**, rural, and French language institutions to recognize their higher costs, and
- \$57 million in additional funds for Indigenous Institutes over the next three years.

Although we don't know how much Lakehead will receive, I can say without hesitation that Advocacy works!

CAUT News: Ben and I met with the Honorable Minister Hajdu recently and discussed the importance of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization at Northern Ontario and Lakehead University. LUFA's Advocacy at Lakehead University to improve the service of [Innovation, Partnerships and Economic Development \(IPED\)](#) failed due to deeply rooted nepotism. LUFA is in conversation with the new VP Research to overcome hurdles to Innovation and commercialization (**ARTICLE 38** – Intellectual Property, including **Patents and**

Copyrights). I regularly attend CAUT's CBO meetings in Ottawa as a committee member; of course, I don't receive **compensation or course release** for the work. In my opinion, my participation will bring some knowledge to the LUFA.



Gautam Das, MP Patty Hajdu, and Ben Hubbard

Finally, I attended the Research and Innovation Award ceremony at Thunder Bay campus. Dr. Anna Gutmann, SSHARC and Dr. Sam Salem received Lakehead University Distinguished Research Award. Please join me to congratulate Drs. Guttman and Salem.



Sam Salem and Gautam Das



Gautam Das and Anna Guttman

Further updates and information are available via **LUFA Communiqué**, NEWS Bulletin, 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,

Gautam Das, LUFA President

Chief Negotiator Report

Robert Mawhinney,
mawhinn@lakeheadu.ca

With this round of bargaining scheduled for this summer, the negotiating team is busy preparing, currently meeting every other week. Survey results were received during the last week of January and the team has been reviewing and analysing responses to develop a mandate that will guide us in our proposal development.

As Chief Negotiator, I attend regular meetings with other Chief Negotiators in Ontario, and across the country, to discuss strategies and share recent changes to language that may be of interest to other Faculty Associations. In early February, I attended a full day OCUFA session devoted to Artificial Intelligence in the post-secondary

education sector and reviewed language that has been implemented in recent collective agreements.

The President, Chief Grievance Officer, and I visited Barrie in late January and met with several faculty members to discuss concerns and potential solutions around the current working conditions in Barrie & Orillia.

Cheers,

Robert Mawhinney, Chief Negotiator

LUFA Benefits Committee Report

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

The Joint Benefits Committee met on December 2, 2025. The Committee was informed with several reminders for year-end submissions/claims, and also the update to GreenShield+ Claims Process that is expected to take effect in early 2026. You will be asked to upload a receipt with all claim submissions in GreenShield+, and detailed instructions will be available in the GreenShield+ Help Centre for additional support. The LUFA rep. also requested our membership usage data from all insurance providers, which would be reviewed and analyzed together with the planned LUFA membership survey for the next round collective bargaining in 2026.

The Benefits Committee had a joint meeting with the Pension Committee on February 5, 2026. It was mainly to review the proposed changes in renaming the Benefits Committee as the Benefits and Pension Committee and to revise the relevant terms of reference. The Committee also shared and discussed the results from the LUFA membership survey on preferred benefits items. Further analysis and recommendations have been planned for the Negotiating Committee.

The Committee would like to encourage and appreciate LUFA members to share any suggestions and concerns with respect to benefits with us, either via emails or through the Coffee & Conversations sessions.

Benefits Committee:

Shikui Wu (Business Administration)

Patrick Cain (Political Science)

Waleed Ejaz (Electrical & Computer Engineering, Orillia)

Glenna Knutson (Emeritus)

Robert Mawhinney (Chemistry, ex-officio)



Gautam Das at the Laurentian Picket Line – February 2026

Emeritus Committee Report

Glenna Knutson, Chair,

glenna.knutson@gmail.com

The LUFA Executive has decided to eliminate the membership fee for retirees to become official Retired LUFA Members, with the result that all retired LUFA members are now formally included as Members within LUFA as per the LUFA Bylaws. The Emeritus Committee is pleased to acknowledge that all those who retired as LUFA members are now eligible to participate in LUFA as Emeritus Members as per the LUFA Bylaws (soon to be renamed Retired Members if the proposed Bylaw change is accepted). All of these individuals

are now members of CURAC (College and University Retirees Association of Canada), eligible for the many CURAC benefits.

The LUFA Emeritus Committee continues to meet regularly on issues of concern to retired members, and meets next on February 23, 2026. The members of the Emeritus Committee are Frances Helyar, Glenna Knutson (chair), Karen Maddox, Brian Phillips, and Karen Poole. There is one vacant position.

Equity and Social Justice Committee

Juan Pernia, Chair, jpernia@lakeheadu.ca

The committee is conducting a short survey with the purpose of determining the main concerns from the membership regarding equity, diversity and inclusion at the university. The information collected will be confidential and will allow for a future in-depth survey related to the main concerns indicated in the short survey. All information collected from these surveys will be very helpful for the next steps of the committee related to future actions/activities related to equity, diversity and inclusion. Thank you for your participation

Pension Committee

Camillo Lento, Chair, clento@lakeheadu.ca

On Tuesday, January 20, the LUFA Pension Committee met to discuss the future of the Committee following the transition of active members to CAAT. The Committee determined that the current pension environment no longer requires a standalone Pension Committee and that its functions could be effectively integrated into the Benefits Committee.

Accordingly, the LUFA Pension Committee brought forward a motion at the January 27 LUFA Executive Committee meeting to rename

the Benefits Committee as the **Benefits and Pension Committee** and to revise its terms of reference to incorporate the Pension Committee's responsibilities. On February 5, members of the Pension Committee and the Benefits Committee met jointly to review and agree on the necessary revisions to the terms of reference. The revised terms of reference will be presented to the LUFA Executive Committee for consideration.

LUFA Executive Committee 2025/26

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 and Social Justice
Committee Chair
Communications Committee Chair
Librarian Committee Chair
Nominating Committee Chair
Orillia and Barrie Committee Chair
Pension Committee Chair
Physical Environment Committee Chair
Research Committee Chair

Gautam Das
Karl Skogstad
Florin Pendea
Naqi Sayed

Kamil Zaniewski
Lynn Martin
QingLai Dang
Robert Mawhinney
Gautam Das
Livio DiMatteo
Karl Skogstad
Robert Mawhinney
Wendy St Laurent-
Coutts
ShiKui Wu
Devon Lee
Glenna Knutson

Juan Pernia
Ravi Gokani
Janice Mutz
Jason Blahuta
Sree Kurissery
Camillo Lento
Muhammad Khalid
Mat Leitch



LUFA Bowling Night, February 2026