

LUFA News

Spring 2026

LUFA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday March 25th from 10:00 to Noon in UC 2020 and via Zoom:

<https://lakeheadu.zoom.us/j/95812119284>

Meeting ID: 958 1211 9284

Passcode: 281592

President's Report

Gautam Das, gdas@lakeheadu.ca

I invite you to attend the Annual General Meeting on May 25 at 10 am. The meeting's main agenda item is the election of LUFA officers and members to serve on various LUFA committees. The new Executive will take office on June 1, 2026.

As a highlight of our gathering, we are pleased to have Dr. Robin Whitaker, CAUT President, as a guest speaker who will address the membership, and we will have an opportunity to hear about various initiatives CAUT has taken and the Collective Bargaining situation across the province. Further, I want to inform you that CAUT Delegates approved my appointment to the CAUT Collective Bargaining and Organizing Committee at the CAUT Council Meeting held April 30-May 1, 2026.

I would like to express my gratitude to all members who actively participated in LUFA meetings (e.g., Coffee and Conversations) and those who volunteered to serve on the LUFA Executive, on various Committees, the Negotiating Team, and as grievance officers. LUFA could not provide high-quality, professional, and timely services without your dedicated involvement. I want to remind you 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.

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Over the past few years, LUFA has worked hard to improve its governance structure. I encourage everyone to review LUFA's policies on our website [here](#). Coming forward to the annual general meeting are four changes to the bylaws:

1. Renaming Emeritus member to Retired Member
2. Combining the Benefits and Pension committee into one committee
3. Adding the Chair of the Governance Committee to the Executive as an elected member
4. Removing the cap of one Orillia and/or Barrie member on the Contract Lecturer committee

As always, I encourage everyone to join our monthly Coffee and Conversations as well as our Pre-Senate Caucus. The Coffee and Conversations sessions are critical to the flow of information between the membership and the LUFA Executive - please continue to bring your issues forward. Meanwhile, the Pre-Senate Caucus has gained even more relevance thanks to the new Senate Bylaw, which allows LUFA to appoint one of its members to serve as a Senator.

Further updates and information are available via **LUFA Communiqué, Newsbulletin**, 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.

CAUT Report

Karl Skogstad, kstogstad@lakeheadu.ca

The 100th CAUT Council meeting took place from April 30th to May 2nd in Ottawa. The meeting gave a chance for faculty associations from across Canada to meet to discuss a variety of issues facing the sector.

One particularly interesting presentation was given by Brad Lavigne, who had undertaken a survey on CAUT's behalf regarding public perceptions of the post-secondary sector. Overall, universities are trusted by the public, but this trust is declining (a broader decline seen across multiple institutions). When asked to recall any specific news about the sector, most people were unable to recall anything specific.

However, amongst those who were, the three topics most recalled were international students, finances/debts of students, and labour action. The broader public sees the role of universities primarily as workforce training. In general, the public is largely not interested in paying more taxes to fund the sector, despite acknowledging that there are substantial benefits to the communities in which the universities are located. Finally, there is little support for having the government interfere in the curriculum of universities. Those interested in the more detailed results can reach out to CAUT for the full presentation.

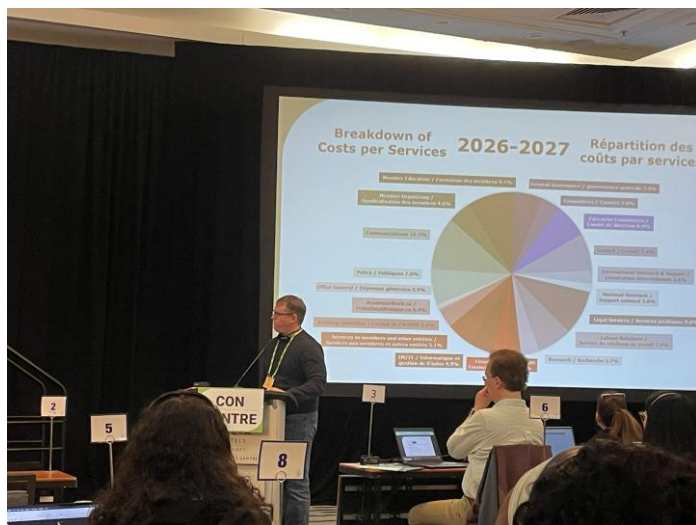
A new book was launched at the meeting. "Knowledge Under Siege: Charting a Future for Universities", edited by Marc Spooner and James McNinch. It looks at the current state of higher education in the face of threats such as funding issues, academic freedom and tenure attacks, and the rollback of DEI initiatives. For those interested, the book is available from the University of Regina Press.

There was a discussion of neutrality clauses that universities have recently released. The discussion largely centered around whether these could be used to limit the academic freedom of faculty members. It is an issue that CAUT is monitoring.

A large portion of the meeting was focused on governance issues such as the finances of CAUT and the election of the executive. There was generally a lack of competition for

executive positions, with all but one member of the new executive being acclaimed. The financial situation of CAUT is quite strong. Large surpluses have been run in the past few years, leading to CAUT having substantial reserves.

This will be the last CAUT or OCCUFA meeting that I will be attending as your Vice President, as I am not seeking re-election to the post. Thank you for the honour of allowing me to represent you at these two bodies.



Chief Negotiator Report

Robert Mawhinney,
rmawhinn@lakeheadu.ca

The negotiating team is ramping up for bargaining. Many proposals have been developed based on the priority areas and goals that arose from the membership survey. The priority areas and goals were presented at the April session of Coffee & Conversation. The team is now meeting weekly to refine proposals and develop bargaining protocols.

Bargaining dates have yet to be set - the two sides are currently reviewing calendars and working out available times over the next few months.

The next Coffee & Conversation is scheduled for the afternoon of May 27, two days after the Annual General Meeting. I hope to see many colleagues there to discuss additional issues we should consider during bargaining. If you are unable to attend the meeting, feel free to contact me via email (rcm@lakeheadu.ca).

Rob Mawhinney
LUFA Chief Negotiator

Chief Grievance Officer Report

Qing-Lai Dang, adang@lakeheadu.ca

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the grievance team (the names of the grievance officers are provided at the end of this report) for their professional and hard work in the past year. Because of their hard work, LUFA was able to resolve all grievances and did not need to take any grievances to arbitration in the past year. Additionally, Mr. Ben Hubbard has been extremely helpful in handling grievances. Ben is a licensed lawyer and the LUFA Executive Manager. Big thanks to Ben and all the LUFA grievance officers for your great contributions!

I will focus the rest of my report on several areas that are either confusing or frequent issues in grievances:

Appointments of departmental chairs, program chairs, and program coordinators (Article 28): Only full-time faculty members with an academic rank (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and lecturer) can be appointed to those positions. Past issues include, but are not limited to, attempts to appoint an administrator (e.g., a dean) or non-academic staff to those positions. In all the instances that LUFA was aware of, LUFA filed grievances. Thus far, all grievances have led to the termination of the inappropriate appointments.

Duties assigned to Assistant Deans:

Article 28.05.02: "The Assistant Dean shall not be assigned or assume duties specifically defined as responsibilities of the Dean in Senate and/or other academic policies including functioning as a judicial officer, or duties specified or defined as responsibilities of the Dean in the collective agreement, nor shall the Assistant Dean have any supervisory responsibilities over faculty members." Yet, in several cases in the past years, assistant deans were assigned duties that are prohibited by the collective agreement. In all cases, LUFA filed grievances, and consequently, the University made appropriate corrections.

Contract lecturer matters:

LUFA is often contacted with questions regarding contract lecturers. I hope the following addresses most of the questions that members often have. More details can be found in Article 19.03 of the Collective Agreement.

- Timeline: Positions shall be posted in department/school bulletin board for at least two weeks on or before May 1st for fall/winter and full year courses and on or before February 1st for spring/summer courses.
- Criteria for hiring include: 1. Academic qualifications, 2. Ability to perform various duties of the positions, and 3. Applicable prior experience.
- Right of first refusal: An applicant who has been a Contract Lecturer Member** of LUFA for at least the previous two (2) academic years has the right of first refusal on Contract Lecturer positions for which he/she is qualified on the basis of the above three criteria.
- If more than one applicant meets the criteria relatively equally and all have the right of first refusal, the position shall be offered to the one with the highest seniority*.

- Recommendations for Contract Lecturer appointments shall be posted for five (5) days before an official offer is made.

****Contract Lecturer LUFA membership:** A Contract Lecturer who teaches four (4) or more HCEs or has eighteen (18) or more contact hours per week of performance instruction during the academic year shall be a LUFA member.

***The seniority of a contract lecturer member is calculated as the total number of full-course equivalents taught by the member since September 1988 provided there is no break in service of more than two consecutive years.**

Current LUFA grievance officers

Naqi Sayed, Business Administration

Jason Blahuta, Philosophy

Tianxuan Miao, Mathematics,

Scott Pound, English

Jennifer Jarman, Interdisciplinary Studies,
Orillia

Sherry Wang, Business Admin, Orillia

Juan Pernia, Civil Engineering

Florin Pendea, Orillia

Rachel Warburton, English

Sarah Jacoba, Languages

Sara Janes, Library

Hui Zhang, Business Administration

Communications Committee Report

Ravi Gokani, rgokani@lakeheadu.ca

In order to achieve the stated purpose of the Communications Committee in the LUFA By-Laws - "to establish an overall strategy for communicating news and events" - the Committee developed two related documents this year. The first is a Communications Backgrounder, which is a living document intended to present the best practices and principles of communications used by other unions, faculty associations,

and indicated in the labour and academic literature. The second is the Communications Template, which is a form-fillable document intended to provide a structure for the Communications Committee, the Executive, and the Action Committee in establishing their communications strategy in any given year. Both documents are intended to support LUFA's overall mission by leveraging the insights of others on how best to communicate with the membership and other key audiences.

Contract Lecturer Committee

Devon Lee, dlee2@lakeheadu.ca

The Contract Lecturer Committee has been engaging within our own community at Lakehead and in solidarity with our colleagues across Ontario. The Committee held a Contract Lecturer Information Session virtually on May 8th for Contract Lecturers in Thunder Bay and Orillia. We are also planning in-person meetings this spring/summer with dates forthcoming.

Contract Lecturer Committee Member Jill Greenwood is a member of the LUFA Negotiating Team and has been representing Contract Lecturer interests at weekly meetings as we move into bargaining. Likewise, Jill recently attended OCUFA training and is looking forward building upon these new skills to support action for Contract Lecturers and solidarity with Faculty Members and Librarians.

We are looking forward to growing the Contract Lecturer Committee next year and have received enough applications that elections will be held for remaining openings at the Upcoming AGM. We thank everyone for their interest and engagement with the committee.

With thanks,

Devon Lee, PhD (she/her, b. 345 ppm)
LUFA Contract Lecturer Committee Chair



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
Qing Lai Dang
Robert Mawhinney
Gautam Das
Livio Di Matteo
Karl Skogstad
Robert Mawhinney
Wendy St Laurent-
Coutts
ShiKui Wu
Devon Lee
Glenna Knutson

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