

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGREEMENT
(JCOAA)

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD

October 31, 2016

390 York Lanes

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Association: Robert Tordoff (Co-Chair), Alidad Amirfazli, Sheila Embleton, Sonja Killoran-McKibbin, David Cabianca & Richard Wellen

Employer: Barry Miller (Co-Chair), Alice Pitt, Ananya Mukherjee-Reed and Noura Shaw

Chair: Robert Tordoff

Guests: R. Francki and R. Ogata (Campus Services and Business Operations), Associate Deans M. Fallah and S. Morin, and P. Thompson (Senior Advisor, Institutional Space Planning)

Regrets: Shawn Brixey

Minutes

Receipt of the June 24, 2016 and September 12, 2016 meeting minutes was acknowledged and will be approved at the next meeting.

Science, Health and Engineering Infrastructure Renewal Project

R. Francki gave a presentation on the project (*Major Science & Health Refresh Project*) and discussion followed in which the guests participated. (Please see presentation attached.)

The Association noted that it has been contacted by a number of faculty inquiring about the impact of the project including where they and the teaching labs will be relocated. R. Francki indicated that the relocation sites for the teaching labs have been identified. P. Thompson noted that relocation of faculty is complex and the objective will be to move faculty to space that is appropriate to their research needs. The process involves one-on-one meetings to identify needs. Discussions with the affected faculty began in September, starting with faculty in Science and Health. S. Morin indicated that a forum was held a month prior for affected faculty. It was further noted that communications are being distributed through listserves. The Employer indicated that it would provide the Association with a list of the affected faculty.

The Association inquired about the number of untenured faculty who will be affected, and 5 untenured faculty were identified across the three Faculties. [Note: further information has indicated that there are 6 untenured faculty members across four Faculties.]

The Association asked about the anticipated impact or “knock-on” effect of the Project while in progress, and the response was that there would be no impact on the quality of the facilities. Any impact is likely to be on scheduling of classes relating to the relocation of the teaching labs.

The Association indicated that they were concerned that there be no negative impact of the affected faculty’s ability to conduct their research. M. Fallah and other guests indicated that affected faculty will have access to all of the necessary resources and that there should be no impediment to their ability to continue with their research.

Pension Calculation Issues

Aon Hewitt, the University’s Plan actuary, will be sending out a summary of the full report outlining the outcome of the analysis conducted. This report will be shared with the Association when provided.

Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures

The parties agreed to keep this topic as a standing agenda item.

Members of the working group developing the Policy and Procedures will be reaching out to the Association and other employee groups in order to provide input into the development of policies and procedures. Given the deadline of December 31, 2016 this process is expected to commence soon.

The Association suggested having “wallet cards” or “phone stickers” outlining steps to be taken in cases in which an allegation of sexual violence is reported. The Association also commented that it will be important not to focus solely on the Keele campus but to consider the University’s other campuses as well, including Glendon and the downtown campuses and Hyderabad.

The Association raised other issues, including the decision making process depending on whether the complainant and/or respondent is a student or employee, privacy in regard to the information that is shared during a complaint investigation, and the obligations of faculty who become aware of or receive a complaint of sexual violence. The Association also noted that there appear to be multiple paths for reporting/addressing allegations of sexual violence under the interim guidelines and raised a concern about whether circumstances could arise in which multiple complainants elect to follow different paths.

The Employer indicated that these issues and concerns will be shared with the Working Group.

Course Outcomes and Syllabus Reporting Requirements

Two faculties were originally mentioned in regard to this matter: Lassonde and AMPD. The faculty in Lassonde who raised the issue have brought their concerns forward in a complaint stage meeting and they will be addressed through that process.

The Vice-Provost Academic described the general context for course learning outcomes as part of the University’s degree-level expectations framework. She noted that the degree-level expectations

framework emerged from the Council of Ontario Universities which established the Quality Assurance Framework. York's institutional version was approved by Senate in 2011. The framework was established for approval and review of university programs leading to a credential and brought graduate and undergraduate education together. The Vice Provost Academic made mention of a series of memos that were distributed following Senate approval of the Framework asking that Programs develop degree-level expectations according to the Framework. She noted that a memo that was distributed in 2012 specifically addressed the need to develop program learning outcomes mapped to the curriculum and that program learning outcomes are an important component of the cyclical program review process.

The Association indicated that the information requirements relating to course learning outcomes raise potential workload concerns in Engineering as they appear to go beyond accreditation requirements in the level of detail and the breadth of programs and courses involved.

The Vice Provost indicated that the University has agreed to participate in a Provincial pilot project to explore viability and value of an on-line tool to assess general skills, but the project has been deferred to 2017-2018 due to the fact that we are participating in NSSE this year.

Availability of Course Outlines with Grading Scheme at Least Two Weeks Prior to Start of Classes (Notice of Motion by ASCP)

The Association expressed concern that the requirement of instructors to provide a limited syllabus at least two weeks prior to the start of the term as set out in the notice of motion could create extra workload for faculty and, in the case of courses starting in the Fall Term, interrupt faculty research. The Vice Provost Academic noted that students have long been raising concerns about not knowing what types of evaluation will be included in their courses. There has also been a high volume of request for course changes. The new requirement to have a limited course outline available prior to the start of the term described in the notice of motion provides a mechanism by which students will be provided with information about course requirements to better assist them in planning their schedules.

The Association raised concerns about the implications for intellectual property of the electronic distribution of course outlines. The Vice Provost Academic pointed out that the limited course outline required under the notice of motion is not intended to replace the standard or "full" syllabus distributed by instructors. The Vice Provost Academic confirmed that syllabi were rich documents that were the intellectual property of faculty members and that this proposal in no way required the early submission or dissemination of that document. A template for limited syllabuses has been developed and will be brought to JCOAA before being shared with Faculties.

The Vice Provost indicated that at present individual Faculties will look after making the limited course outlines available and calls for limited course outlines can be expected to come from the Deans through chairs and directors (in Faculties with departments and schools).

A question was raised about the request for course outlines in AMPD. The Association indicated that faculty members are being asked to use a new template for course outlines. The Employer will follow up.

SSHRC Internal Grants

B. Miller provided the Association with a copy of a memo from the VPRI describing changes to internal SSHRC conference and research opportunity grants. These changes were undertaken to align with changes in Tri-Agency funding guidelines. The memo from the VPRI was addressed to the research community.

GA Rates

YUFA reiterated concerns regarding the recent change in the posted cost of extended health care benefits for GAs under the CUPE 3903 Unit 3 collective agreement. As indicated in last month's meeting of JCOAA, the posted cost from the Department of Finance reflects an increase from 20% to 80% of salary. The Association indicated that this increase in cost would dissuade faculty from applying for grants where GA support may be required. The Association also expressed concern about the timing of the changes, as they were informed in August and some faculty members had to adjust their proposals for Tri-Agency funding very late in the process. The Association also noted that these increases in cost has dissuaded faculty members from hiring York University graduate students. The unfortunate result would be hiring students from other universities to fulfill needed roles.

The Association suggested that the University consider assessing whether any possible diminution in grant income as a result of the extended healthcare benefit cost increases might be greater than the cost of the extended health care benefits. The Association raised concerns as to whether the University knew if the amounts would be accepted by SSHRC and enquired whether the VPRI had written to SSHRC to explain York's costs so that faculty members' budgets would not be unduly scrutinized. Faculty Relations agreed to follow up.

The Association additionally raised the uncertainties experienced by faculty members with respect to the graduate student funding model as it pertains to graduate assistantships, research assistantships and research monies. In Lassonde specifically, despite being more than halfway through the term, the funding model for graduate students remained unknown. This absence of information has a negative impact on the ability of members to plan for research activities and grant writing, it has demoralized graduate students, and has hampered research intensification efforts by the University and by units. Faculty Relations committed to following up on the specific issues in Lassonde and addressing a future JCOAA meeting.

Affirmative Action Plans

The Employer confirmed that unit self-identification data relating to women and members of visible minorities (racialized groups) have been made available to the units, with a number of the units receiving the data in September.

Self-Identification Forms

The Association indicated that it has no concern with the revised self-identification form. The Association indicated that in its consultation it received a recommendation for a minor change to the form which it will forward to Faculty Relations for consideration.

Changes in Reimbursement Policy

The Employer provided the JCOAA with a draft memo from Finance Department advising that the Tri-Council has announced that home internet charges will no longer be eligible for reimbursement under its grant programs effective October 1, 2016. According to the University's reimbursement policy, its guidelines for eligible expenses are harmonized with Tri-Agency guidelines with the result that home internet charges will also cease to be eligible for reimbursement from University funds. In order to provide a transition, home internet charges will continue to be eligible for reimbursement until December 31, 2016. The intent is for the memo to be distributed to all faculty by the end of the week.

The Association indicated that this change should also be noted in Concur, which has an entry for internet expenses. The University confirmed that internet expenses can still be incurred and reimbursed while travelling.

Leaves and Fellowships Adjudication

It was noted that the Sabbatical Leave Fellowship and Teaching Release Fellowship Committees need to be struck for this year's competition. The employer will follow up with its Committee representatives.

CV Exercise

The Association raised concerns about two aspects of the call for updated CVs and reports on outside professional activities. The first is the indication that faculty "should" highlight new information in their CVs. The Association noted that it has raised a concern about this issue previously. The Employer indicated that this element of the call was discussed through JCOAA prior to its inclusion in the call and that "should" rather than "must" has been used to address concerns raised by the Association. The Association indicated that the use of "should" is not appropriate because highlighting is not required. The Association suggested that, in future, the Employer should clearly inform members that highlighting is optional. The Association also raised a concern about the inclusion of phrasing in the call indicating that the Deans will be reviewing the CVs and providing feedback and queried its implications. The Employer noted that this phrasing should not be taken to indicate that the Employer has established a new annual performance review program. Deans are genuinely keen to see the varied and rich activities of the faculty and the phrasing helps convey that the CVs will indeed be read. The Employer noted that at the same time, if the Deans identify any concerns about whether given faculty members are fulfilling their professional responsibilities through their review of the CVs they can be expected to follow up on those concerns.