

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CUFA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Held on Wednesday, April 21, 2021

1:00 PM – 4:06 PM by Zoom Videoconference

PRESENT: See attached list.

1. Approval of the Agenda

*Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Katsanis, Ravi) it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda be approved with the removal of **New items**.*

2. Approval of the Minutes of the COUNCIL Meeting of March 8, 2021

Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Katsanis, Sharma) it was unanimously resolved that the minutes of the March 8, 2021 meeting be approved.

3. Motion to move IHRA Definition of antisemitism from 6. Other business to 5. Other Business

Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Razlogova, Karimfazel) it was resolved that Other business be moved up on the Agenda to precede Business Arising.

4. President's Remarks

Ian noted, that in spite of the University's added financial burden owing to the pandemic, our compensation and salary increases are quite good. This may change when the current Collective Agreement expires. It is expected that the next round of negotiations will be challenging owing to the financial repercussions that the University has had to manage during the pandemic.

5. Other business

IHRA Definition of antisemitism: The representative from the Department of History provided the context for the motion that she was proposing. Ian and June noted that CUFA does not take a position on political matters. A lengthy debate ensued during which time members voiced their opinions. The question was called and with a two thirds majority in favor to vote, the following motion was adopted (68% in favour, 17% against, 15% abstained)

CUFA unequivocally supports the academic freedom of its members. This freedom includes the right to pursue research and open inquiry in an honest search for knowledge that is free from institutional censorship, including that of the government. While CUFA opposes antisemitism and all forms of racism and hatred, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism poses a serious threat to academic freedom in our university. The IHRA definition of antisemitism misconstrues antisemitism to include a broad range of criticism of the State of Israel. The IHRA definition thus undermines important anti-racist and decolonial initiatives in Canadian educational institutions. It can also be used to censor political speech and restrict the academic freedom of teachers and researchers who have developed critical perspectives on the policies and practices of the State of Israel. Such targeted attacks will have a chilling effect on the academic freedom of our members in the classroom, in their research, and in campus politics more broadly.

6. Business Arising

- a. **Academic Freedom:** The motion adopted at the general meeting (**IHRA Definition of antisemitism**) pertained to academic freedom and was discussed extensively. Ian concluded that the general meeting is a forum where members can express their opinions.

- b. **PDA carry over:** Ian clarified the rules on the PDA carry over, explaining that the total sum of \$4800 can be accumulated in the PDA account until the end of May 2022. Members will not lose funds up to the carry-over but deadlines for expense submissions etc., must be respected.
- c. **Motion to return to campus:** A motion to return to campus was raised by a member who was not present at the meeting. Ian pointed out the conditions that need to be in place before safely returning to campus. The motion that was raised will be circulated again at any appropriate moment if the situation warrants it. The representative from Mathematics and Statistics shared information he received as Chair regarding the fall semester and especially what elements need to be considered such as classrooms size, ventilation, and time lapse between class. He concluded that most professors should expect classes to be taught remotely next fall unless they teach a small class. Another representative asked if CUFA could address making proctored exams mandatory.

7. Reports

- a. **Standing Committee on Elections:** Hua Ge reported the following members were elected by acclamation; Ian Rakita as President, Elisabeth Peltier as Treasurer, June Chaikelson as Member at Large, Charles Draimin as Member at Large.
- b. **EDI Committee:** Nicola Nixon provided a brief report stating that the CUFA EDI Committee meetings are ongoing. Members are identifying where EDI language can be strengthened in the Collective Agreement. They also drafted a recommendation on the use of sensitive language in the classroom. The recommendation was given to the CUFA executive for consideration and will be brought to Council in the fall.
- c. **Pension and Benefits:** Michel Magnan provided highlights on the Pension Committee meeting. Despite the pandemic, the pension plan did well last year with returns above 10%. Over the past five years, the plan exceeded results needed to support our current and future pensioners. These positive returns allowed for a small indexation. Current pensioners will see a small raise in their pensions. The investment policy is on track to integrate ESG and upgrade the way investments are made to optimize value. Finally, June Chaikelson reminded members who use maintenance drugs that they can reduce the cost of the health benefit plan if they buy the generic brands and order a three-month supply when renewing prescriptions.

Treasurer's Report: Charles Draimin reported on the 2020–2021 budget. Our revenue and expenses remain stable. He also noted that the audited statements won't be ready before September. Finally, Charles reported that this was a good financial year for the CUFA investment plan with returns over 10%.

Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Draimin, Karimfazil) it was unanimously resolved that the budget as presented, be adopted.

Charles then reported on the CUFA investment policy, presenting a shorter version of last year's document. He reminded members that CUFA has its own benefit plan run by an independent committee and pointed out that the plan is moving towards investing in companies that take ESG into consideration.

Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Draimin, Lefter) it was resolved that that the revised version of the CUFA investment policy be adopted.

Charles concluded by thanking everyone for their support over his last four years as Treasurer and introduced Elisabeth Peltier, who was elected Treasurer for the period 2021-2023.

Appeals and Grievances: In the case of denial of promotion to Professor, the appeal was won and the member was promoted. There are two new grievances based on discrimination by two

members who are partnered and were not allowed to jointly serve on a hiring committee. The representative from Mathematics and Statistics, inquired about the grievance against CUPFA. Geneviève replied that the case is still pending; CUFA is willing to settle the grievance but not to drop it.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:06