

MINUTES OF THE CUFA COUNCIL

Held on Monday, November 18, 2024

9:40 AM – 11:41 AM in L-RF 120

PRESENT: Ciprian Alecsandru (Chair), Elena Beneli, Aaron Brauer, Simone Brugiapaglia, June Chaikelson, Mark Corwin, Patrick Delaney, Deniz Duruiz, Michael Groenendyk, Steve Henle, Loretta Hung, Laura Ivan, Tsz Ho Kwok, René Lemieux, Alex Lefter, Samuel Li, Tieshan Li, Warren Linds, Bill Lynch, Heather McLaughlin, Alexandre Morin, Heike Neumann, Maya Rae Oppenheimer, Elisabeth Peltier, Ian Rakita, Elena Razlogova, Alessandra Renzi, Shelley Reuter, Mahesh Sharma, Jeannine-Marie St-Jacques, Stephen Yeager; Chantal Bohbot, Geneviève Robichaud, Léa Roboam

ABSENT: Angela Alberga, Theresa Bianco, Roy Cross, Charles Draimin, Paul Gomme, Aiman Hanna, Kevin Lo, Jean-François Mayer, Joey Paquet, Eric Pedersen, Ingo Salzmann, Axel Watanabe

WITH

REGRETS: Georges Denès

1. Approval of the Agenda

*Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Henle, Benelli) it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda be approved with the addition of **Other business**.*

2. Approval of the Minutes of the COUNCIL Meeting of September 16, 2024

Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Sharma, Lynch) it was unanimously resolved that the minutes of the September 16, 2024, meeting be approved with corrections as discussed.

3. President's Remarks

Ciprian announced that the Executive is planning to visit departments now to gather feedback rather than wait for negotiations. Ciprian also noted that we are in the process of constituting the next negotiating team. The guidelines for academic unit heads to plan workload have been copied to CUFA, but these guidelines suggest a worrying approach, that is if a unit needs temporary positions, they should hire part timers. While there is a need to balance the budget, that should not come at the cost of favouring part time members. To strengthen our case, CUFA is asking unit heads to provide the proportion of full time to part time sections that have been offered during last five years and a projection for next year. Finally, Ciprian extended his gratitude to all members who participated in the two recent social events, that is the cocktail and the lunch with councilors.

4. Business arising

- a. Proposed amendments to the CUFA Constitution:** Shelley Reuter reported that Charles Draimin is chairing the committee. A first meeting took place last week and the committee is meeting again this week. In addition to Charles, and Shelley, Bill Lynch, Elisabeth Peltier, and Stephen Yeager are the other committee members.
- b. STRIVE Task Force:** Ciprian noted that the Liaison Committee was apprised of problems with the survey. In particular, the lack of anonymity is likely to result in low participation. At the next Liaison Committee meeting we will ask why the data cannot be anonymized.

- c. Health Plan Proposed changes:** Information sessions are planned to inform the membership about the changes that take effect on January 1, 2025.
- d. Memo from the Provost re: Political Statements by Academic Units:** Ciprian provided a summary of the legal opinion that we received from CUFA's external lawyer. The summary is as follows: 1) The CA sets out the broad principles of academic freedom as they apply to individual members of the bargaining unit. References to previous legal cases were made and nothing was found to support the idea of the academic freedom of a department as an administrative unit. 2) On the question if the memo is consistent with the faculty governance per article 4.01 of the CA, the legal opinion identifies that collegial governance explicitly refers to CUFA representation in Board of Governors, Senate and other duly constituted collegial bodies and committees. Hence, no basis to claim that the Memo is inconsistent with the principle of faculty governance. 3) Finally, on the issue of management rights, the legal opinion identifies that the duty to act reasonably and fair, as stipulated in the CA, is often considered a managerial duty. The fact that the Memo identifies enforcing a long-standing policy that protects a legitimate University interest cannot be seen as arbitrary. Hence, there is no basis for concluding that by issuing the Memo the University exceeded the limits of the management rights, as provided for in Article 5 of the CA.

5. New items

- a. New students entrance requirements:** Some departments have been pressured to lower admission standards to address dropping enrollments. The issue will be raised at the next Liaison Committee meeting.
- b. Issues with computer administration rights:** Ciprian noted that there was an IT user group that dealt with IT issues for the past two years. We noticed that this year the IITS did not reach out to schedule meetings this academic year. Ciprian will investigate and attempt to have the group start to meet again.

- 6. Appeals and Grievances:** In the case of the 1.5 credit remission, following due consultation with the affected academic units, it was decided not to proceed to arbitration. As a result of this decision, the University President has agreed to delay the implementation of the removal of the 1.5 credit remission for one year. We will again address this issue in the next round of negotiations.

7. Reports:

- a. Pension and Benefits:** Michel Magnan reported on pensions as follows.

The Pension Plan held its annual information meeting on October 10, 2024. Over 300 people registered to attend the meeting, which included a comprehensive retrospective of the plan's performance in 2023 as well as a presentation of its financial situation.

Since the Spring, there have been several changes in the Plan's governance. Our long-time chair, Patricia Saputo, resigned and was replaced by Board of Governors' member Jeff Bicher (who is also the chair of the Benefits committee). In addition, the Pension Committee (PC) independent member, Christian Rousseau, also resigned. A special search committee was thus struck to find a replacement - his name will be announced at the next PC meeting. I was a member of the search committee. There was keen interest for the position and several highly qualified individuals applied.

The PC held one meeting so far this Fall. The Investment subcommittee held two meetings. In addition, there was a special meeting of the Audit committee. Key issues discussed so far this Fall were the revision of the Plan's currency hedging strategy and model and the adoption of a climate change transition investment program focusing on critical commodities. During the summer, a private debt investment program was also adopted with a focus on the financing of health research-related facilities.

Plan performance so far this year is consistent with our long-term target (+5.9% annual return) but is undermined by the subpar short-term performance of some private market investments as well as by some adverse effects of our existing currency hedging strategy. Our currency hedging model has been revised and has been implemented for November. Regarding underperforming investments, the next Investment subcommittee meeting will focus on analyzing them and possibly terminating some relationships.

The PC is also updating its ESG strategy with the purchase of a dataset that will allow for more precise access to the carbon footprint and ESG performance of underlying investments.

June Chaikelson reported for Benefits. The Health Plan premium will increase in 2025 by 1% and the Dental Plan will increase by 8%.

- b. EDI Committee:** Theresa is actively looking to populate the committee.
- c. Treasurer's Report:** We are still awaiting the audited financial statements.

8. Other business

The representative from Mathematics and Statistics reported that they asked their members what issues they would like the Union to address. There is concern that class size will increase as units are given fewer sections. Also questioned was whether our teaching load is consistent compared to other institutions. Other issues of concern are related to the extra workload required with pCards. It was also noted that in the Department of Psychology, their workload policy will now change as a result of the 1.5 credit remission removal.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:41 PM