

Minutes of the SFUFA Executive Meeting
Held Thursday, November 8, 2018
Halpern 114
9:30 - 12:00 noon

In attendance:

Kumari Beck (Education)
Sherryl Bisgrove (Biology)
Russell Day (Psychology)
Dan Laitsch (Education)
Krishna Pendakur (Economics)
Janice Regan (Computing Science)
Michael Sjoerdsma (Chair, Engineering Science)
Alexandra Wieland (Archives)
Brian Green (Executive Director)
Melanie Lam (Recorder)

Regrets:

Ronda Arab (English)
Genevieve Fuji Johnson (Political Science)
Steeve Mongrain (Economics)
Jennifer Scott (Member Services)

1) Agenda

Approved as circulated.

Moved: Russell Day/Alexandra Wieland

Carried.

2) Approval of October 18th minutes.

Approved as circulated.

Moved: Russell Day/ Krishna Pendakur

Carried.

3) Business Arising – pension plan.

- The executive held a special meeting on Tuesday October 23rd to discuss the electoral threshold for the pension plan vote and the legal opinion from SFUFA legal counsel. After reviewing the Constitution and Bylaws, SFUFA legal counsel has recommended two choices, a) a straw poll – which is not binding and would constitute advice to the executive or the bargaining team. In this case the executive can set any threshold as it would be advisory, and (b) a referendum, which would cover any matter that is to be binding and would have immediate effect. Under the constitution, the threshold for referenda is spelled out explicitly to be 50 percent plus 1 and SFUFA is bound by that. Since some exec members were not present at the special meeting, the executive conducted an electronic vote on October 25th on the following motion:

Motion:

That SFUFA conduct by electronic vote a referendum of members to run from Nov. 13 to Nov. 27, 2018, and that the question asked of members be:

Are you in favour of SFUFA formally requesting that SFU make application to join the BC College Pension Plan? Yes or No and that the SFUFA Executive recommends a “yes” vote.

The motion was carried.

4) Presidents report – Mike Sjoerdsma

- Mike gave an update on the Western Regional Conference he attended with Jennifer in Athabasca, Alberta. Some topics included unionized workplaces in Alberta, the Canada Post strike, what’s new in Human Resources.
- As mentioned in business arising, the executive had a special meeting on October 23rd to discuss the voting threshold for the pension vote. SFUFA will proceed with the lawyer’s recommendation to hold a referendum with a simple majority vote. The vote opens on November 13th for two weeks and the results will be announced at the GM on November 28th.
- Although SFUFA is not expecting any labour action following the next round of bargaining, Mike recommended that SFUFA start to think about establishing a strike policy and to think about where the office would relocate to in the event of labour action and how defence funds will be disbursed etc... Please send any thoughts or information you might have to Mike or Brian.
- It appears that some people’s key FOB’s for SFU Print are displaying other users’ names, which means the PIN may not be a unique identifier. SFUFA has already raised this at a previous consult meeting but will raise it again at the next meeting under business arising.
- Although the new SFU budget reflects a 2% increase in student tuition fees (local and international) the University has noted that it is facing significant fiscal challenges.

5) Executive Director report

- The bargaining team has drawn up a schedule and it looks like bargaining will commence in early March. The SFUFA team is trying to meet over the reading break in February to attend to some housekeeping items.
- The bargaining survey will be circulated to members following the pension vote. The executive recommended reviewing the survey and providing feedback before it goes to the bargaining committee for final review. The executive will consider conducting a quick poll of members top 3 issues at the December social.
- Reminder: The Fall GM is scheduled for November 28th at 2:30 and this year’s winter social will take place at the DAC on Monday December 3rd which is the last day of classes.
- Brian gave an update on his and Jennifer’s advocacy cases.
- The AGM is scheduled for April 30th but SFUFA may need to have an additional GM earlier on to discuss bargaining.

6. MSO report – Jennifer Scott is away and this item was postponed to the next meeting but Brian gave an update on ongoing advocacy cases.

7. Committee reports & community engagement

- Senate: There were questions from Senators regarding the violence on campus in general and the recent student death and communication around that incident. Mental health staffing on campus is also on the radar.
- Safety committee: Mark Lalonde, Chief Safety Officer spoke about the recent incident/death on campus. The university is reflecting on their procedures and policies and are thinking about how to improve on current procedures.
- BOG: Dan will be away for the November 22nd BOG meeting and encouraged another executive member to attend in his place.
- CUFA: The Executive Director of CUFA will be leaving for a new opportunity in Ontario and CUFA is in the process of recruiting for this position. Dan noted he would circulate the job description and encouraged executive members to circulate it. The posting will be kept open until around mid-December, interviews are being planned for January and the start date for the new incumbent will be March 2019.
- Equity: The SFUFA equity committee held a retreat last week. Names for the salary anomaly process have been submitted to Brian Green. Catherine Stoddard will be meeting with the committee to discuss EDI initiatives.
- EDI committee: The advisory group meetings are back on track and getting things done. They are working on principles, definitions, Genevieve Fuji Johnson is working on a census document and a survey document. The group is also planning a retreat and is also considering holding a series of talks throughout the year.
- Parking: There are new complaints about the parking situation in the West Mall Complex and Parking has been notified. The number of parking tickets issued have tripled since September and there appears to be more monitoring in the North Lots. Some staff from the Faculty of Education have moved back from Discovery to their home building and parking issues seem to have been resolved here.

8. Update on pension vote

- A message was sent to members on October 30th and Brian and Mike have responded to many queries from members. Most queries were about the cost to buy back years etc but overall it has been positive feedback. Some members are concerned that there is no opt out feature for the DB plan. Executive members who receive queries from members are being asked to forward these to Brian and Mike.
- The vote will open on Tuesday November 13th to the 27th. The email will contain a short preamble plus a question with a “yes” or “no” vote.
- SFUFA will be holding a couple of drop in session for members during the vote and David Broun and Julian Christians will be available to answer questions about the new plan but not to provide financial advice. SFUFA did approach Accountant Richard Marsh about attending the sessions but he noted he isn't qualified to give financial advice related to pensions.
- It was noted that SFUFA will be sending at least two reminders to members before the vote closes on November 27th.

9) SFUFA Defence Fund Trustees

- SFUFA needs 3 trustees given our membership numbers. There is a meeting once per month via phone and an annual meeting held in Ottawa usually in October and the costs are covered by CAUT. Volunteers so far are Enda Brophy and Janice Regan, from the executive. It was recommended that in the future, that one of these positions be tied to either the SFUFA Vice President position or to the Community Engagement position.

Motion:

That Enda Brophy from the School of Communication and Janice Regan from the SFUFA executive be appointed as SFUFA Defence Fund Trustees.

Moved: Russell Day/Dan Laitsch

Carried with one abstention.

- The SFUFA executive recommended that the trustees pull together some information regarding best practices regarding organizing picket lines, how to disburse the funds, assign alternate duties to those who cannot fulfill picketing duties etc.. and report back to the executive.

10) Discussion on contract employment

- A recent report in The Sun newspaper placed SFU has having the highest percentage of contract faculty appointments in Canada in 2016-2017 (78%) and this was concerning to SFUFA. It appears that the data is incorrect since it included staff that are not faculty such as and TA's and it did not include continuing faculty in non-tenure track positions. The Sun newspaper has since retracted their story but SFUFA would like to know what went wrong and how this can be prevented in the future and will be raising this issue at the next consult meeting.

11. Items for Consultation – November 15th

- i. Office garbage collection and cleaning: (carried over from last month)
we are noticing a reduction in services related to garbage collection, in addition to charges being made to academic units for cleaning. Our concerns are related to both a general reduction in services and an offloading to already-budget- tight academic units of maintenance costs that ought to be borne by the university centrally.
- ii. Construction priorities (carried over from last month).
- iii. CCPA study – the incorrect information in the study of contract faculty is a concern for all of us. We would like to hear from SFU what went wrong, and what can be done to prevent such a thing from happening again.
- iv. Somewhat related, in recent months there have been numerous problems with internal and external communications. Internally, we have been left out of processes related to our return to work program and employee and family assistance program, and have not been informed when our members confront violence or tragedy in the workplace. Externally, incidents of student violence, a student death, and the CCPA study have all raised questions about the communications protocols in place. We understand that these are complicated matters and that SFU cannot control information flows. We do think, however, given the

number of issues that have caught us off guard recently, that some kind of review is in order, and we would like to have a forum to share our own concerns.

- v. our outstanding invitations to the AVP LT, the Human Rights Officer, and ARC.

10) Other business

- Alexandra noted that the SFU/UBC Good Neighbour Summit will be taking place next June, and as in past years, SFUFA will be approached for a donation towards catering for the event.
- The CAUT Harry Crowe Foundation conference is taking place on February 22, 2019 and will focus on “Free Speech on Campus”. SFUFA will review its budget and advise as to how many people they are able to sponsor but currently, 3 executive members are interested in attending.
- SFU Psychology has been ranked in the top 10% worldwide by the Times Higher Education World University subject rankings – congratulations to the Psychology department.

11) Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 11.40 am