

Joint Financial Information Subcommittee Update for YUFA members: October 25, 2023

The Subcommittee met for an hour on October 12, 2023. Meetings take place without prejudice to the parties' position with respect to YUFA's September 8, 2023, policy grievance. The next meetings are scheduled for November 17 and December 8.

Agenda for the October 12, 2023

1. Discussion of the University's multi-year budget approved in June 2023 (8:30-9:00)
2. Discussion and response to information requested by YUFA (9:00-9:30):
 - i) Update on the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's Value-for-money audit
 - ii) Details for faculty-level revenues and expenses
 - iii) Financial Information related to Decolonizing, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (DEDI) Strategy
 - iv) Financial Information related to Faculty Complement Renewal
 - v) The University's income tax returns from 2020.

Given the number of questions about the multi-year budget, no time was left for the second item on the agenda. The administration will review these new requests for information and respond.

The administration did provide in advance of the meeting a statement by President Lenton to the September Senate meeting with respect to the audit by the Ontario Auditor General: 'We are expecting to receive the draft report from the AG's office by late October where they will share with us their recommendations affording us an opportunity to respond. It is expected that the AG will table their report to the Ontario Legislature in late November or early December.'

Summary of the October 12, 2023, Meeting Discussion

As a helpful way to confirm the answers we received to our questions concerning the multi-year budget and to ensure follow-up by both parties, YUFA members of FISC provided the following summary of the October 12, 2023, meeting to the employer, who is now reviewing it.

i) Faculty Enrolment Targets and Budgets

We were informed that the enrolment targets for each faculty are set through the enrolment management steering committee consultations in the spring with finalisation of faculty enrolment contracts the following fall. A student enrolment demand team looks at how additional programs could generate enrolments. **Follow-up:** we understand that faculty enrolment targets will be communicated to us, once finalised, this fall. Please confirm.

We asked for faculty-level budgets and were told that the University does not have faculty budgets. **Follow-up:** Given budget preparation deadlines for Faculties and Shared Service Units' multi-year budgets – February 15, 2023 for submission and February 28, 2023 for approval by the Divisional Senior Executive Officers (<https://www.yorku.ca/bam/wp-content/uploads/sites/92/2022/10/2023-24-Budget-Call-Guidelines-Shared-Services.pdf>) and that some faculties have provided budget updates (<https://www.yorku.ca/laps/faculty-council/wp->

<content/uploads/sites/265/2023/06/Budget-Update-LAPS-Faculty-Council-June-2023.pdf>) would the administration like to revisit its response to this request?

We were told that a lot of work is going into a presentation for union groups. When we asked whether this presentation would include data on faculties, schools, and divisions, we were told that this could neither be confirmed nor denied. **Follow-up:** Could we know the position of the administration?

In answer to our request to know the percentage of budget cut imposed on each faculty, we were told that all faculties, schools, and divisions had to share in cuts from 2.5 to 4%. No specifics were given as to how the cuts would be attributed. We were told only that any services related to revenue generation, such as SEM, would not be cut. When asked whether this was in contradiction to the dismissal of recruitment personnel at Glendon, the answer was that the administration was seeking to rationalize services that can be shared. **Follow-up:** Would it be possible to have a breakdown by faculty, school, and division of percentage cuts?

ii) Faculty Transfers to other funds (Capital, University Fund)

We were told that transfers to the University Fund are set at 8% of each faculty's revenue. The total amount of the transfer by all faculties is indicated in Appendix 8 of the multi-year budget document. There are budget lines in Appendix 7 for transfers by faculty to other budget lines, but no information is given there for the transfers to the University Fund. **Follow-up:** Could the history of the amounts transferred by each faculty to the University Fund be provided?

With reference to the decline in transfers from the University Fund for faculty operating support and strategic investment, we were told that strategic investments will include the Connected Minds project. We asked whether, given the projected faculty deficits, the administration considered reducing the percentage contribution by faculties to the University Fund. We were told that this was not on the table, but that some refunds were being considered. **Follow-up:** could we be given the breakdown of the approved commitments from the University Fund (Appendix 8)?

We noted that while faculty budget deficits were growing the amounts of transfers to the University Fund and Restricted Funds, in particular capital funds (Appendix 2) were also increasing. We were told that capital transfers were not discretionary but were required to pay for projects already on the way. **Follow-up:** would it be possible to receive the breakdown of the projected use of capital funds?

We asked whether these funds would be used for the projected School of Medicine. In response, we were told that, if provincial approval was given (which is expected), there would be a planning grant. **Follow-up:** would it be possible to know what funds are being set aside for the School of Medicine?

iii) Markham Campus

It was confirmed that the projections that Markham would be self-sustaining in 2028-2029 related only to the operating budget and did not include reimbursement of the capital costs for

building the new campus. We were told that the operating budget for Markham would include payment of interest on the loans for building the campus and maintenance costs, but no provisions for reimbursing the capital debt. We were also told that the University has not set aside any funds for reimbursing the capital debt for the Markham campus, but that debt reimbursement was handled generally through the 'sinking fund.' According to the Senate Presentation of the Multi-Year Budget Plan, with respect to the Institutional Fund, provision has been made to transfer amounts from Fund 300: Ancillaries to the sinking fund (p. 25) and from Funds 300 and 700 to reserves. **Follow-up:** Do these funds represent the total amounts being set aside for debt reimbursement? If not, what other funds are being put aside to reimburse the University debt?

iv) SHARP model

In the context of three faculties (AMPD, EUC, Glendon) with continuing deficits, we asked what plans were in place to redress the situation. The VPFA indicated that faculties could apply for transition funds if they provide a plan to redress the deficit. **Follow-up:** Could we be provided with the faculty plans for budget redressment for these three faculties?

We asked how faculty costs in general had been determined on implementation of the SHARP model. The VPFA indicated that this information could be provided. **Follow-up:** Could the SHARP information be shared?

v) SSRP

When asked about the rational for the substantial costs required for the SSRP, the VPFA indicated that these amounts were absolutely necessary, on the basis that the employees responsible for tracking student information and knowledgeable about the programs used were close to retirement. No information was given concerning the cost over-runs necessitating a new approval by the Board for this project or whether a cost-benefit assessment had been carried out. **Follow-up:** Would it be possible to have a breakdown of the costs committed to this project?

vi) Decisions on information requests

We made a number of information requests as part of the second item on the October 12, 2023, meeting agenda. In our view, these were new requests and did not overlap requests that had previously been refused. Since the meeting did not cover the second item on the agenda, we will be putting forward this item as part of the agenda of the next meeting. To facilitate preparation for the next meeting (if requests are declined, this affects the discussion at the meeting), we asked for an undertaking that we be told by October 26, 2023, what the status on these requests is (declined, approved, pending decision). We were told that the administration will do its best to get back to us as quickly as possible but did not commit for the October 26, 2023. On our part, we indicated that we will provide any new information requests by October 26, 2023, under the same rational to facilitate discussion at the next meeting. **Follow-up:** Could the administration commit to a date when the answers will be available? YUFA will provide new information requests by October 26, 2023.

vii) Next two meeting times and Request for Confirmation

Despite requests by email on September 22, 2023, and October 10, 2023, the administration had not confirmed availability for two further meetings this fall to ensure that the requirement of the Collective Agreement is met. The administration has now confirmed availability, and new meetings have been set for November 17, 2023, and December 8, 2023.

YUFA members of the Joint Financial Information Subcommittee,
Philippe Theophanidis
Shanker Trivedi
Agnes Whitfield (Chair)