

**PDFA Executive Council Meeting  
September 19, 2024  
Teleconference Meeting**

**Present:** AKM Shahid Ullah, President  
MD Shaheen, VP Internal  
Alsayed Mostafa, VP External  
Henry Prown, VP Communications  
Razieh FirouziHaji, VP Operations  
Simran Kaur, VP Finance

**Staff:** Samantha Spurrier, Executive Assistant  
Scott Harris, Communications  
Joy Correia, Director of Operations  
Terry Sway, Labour Relations Officer

**Guests:** Abdullah Mohiuddin, PDFA member  
Cagri Ayranci, Associate Dean, GPS Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Admin  
Tracy Raivio, Vice-Provost and Dean, GPS Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

**Regrets:** Kayanna Reff, Administrative Assistant

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 11:15am. The President introduced the meeting guests and thanked everyone who has served on the PDFA Executive Board this year.

**2. Land Acknowledgment**

The President acknowledged that the PDFA is in Treaty 6 territory.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

<b>MOTION:</b> To approve the agenda for September 19, 2024 Razieh/Shahen	<b>CARRIED</b>
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**4. Approval of Minutes**

<b>MOTION:</b> To approve the minutes for August 15, 2024 Simran/Razieh	<b>CARRIED</b>
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**5. Member Presentation**

The member gave a presentation recommending that the PDFA system requires an overhaul. Work of the PDFs includes lab operation, research mentorship, research, grant writing, and documentation. These tasks all contribute to attract undergraduate students to the university, generating revenue. He outlined career deficiencies in the current system, including recognition of grant writing, guaranteed teaching assignments, recognition of supervision, and a career progression plan. Monetary deficiencies include an insufficient salary

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and incomplete CPP contributions due to a low salary. The member shared that the university administration needs to acknowledge these deficiencies and better advocate for post doctoral fellows rather than continuing to exploit members. The member expressed hope for stronger language in the next bargaining round and Collective Agreement. He will be added to the PDFA Executive WhatsApp group.

*The PDFA member exited the meeting.*

**6. Director of Operations/Labour Relations Officer Report (Joy Correia & Terry Sway)**

The Director of Operations shared that the requested changes have been made to the website.

The bargaining survey has been prepared and the PDFA needs to select who will sit on the bargaining team. The current agreement ends December 31, so notice will be shared with the employer within the next couple of weeks. This notice usually includes the team members.

The Labour Relations Officer has been working with Sunlife staff to simplify processes for PDFA members. A link has been added to the website. Sunlife is unable to add a PDFA member's dependent and the LRO will be inquiring with university administration about this process. The PDFA website will be updated with more information.

**7. Communications Strategist Report (Scott Harris)**

Several changes were made to the website: a new benefits tab, PDFA appreciation event information, and an election page were added. has been added to the website.

The PDFA election was setup using Election Runner; the voter list will be updated based on the most recent member update from the university. The Chief Electoral Office callout was shared. Ballots will open on Monday at noon and close Friday before midnight. The results will be shared in the monthly newsletter and on the website.

The next newsletter will be sent on October 2. The VP External will send content to the Communications Strategist.

**8. President's Report (AKM Shahid Ullah)**

The President thanked the VP Finance and VP Communications for their work preparing for the PDFA Appreciation week. Handouts and posters have been prepared; the VP Finance will post posters in her area. Dinner registration is open; the VP Finance will share final registration numbers with the caterer and the President to share with the venue. Last year there were 100 attendees to the barbecue; this year there will be closer to 140 attendees. The barbecue has been expanded to include a halal option. The VP Internal asked for Executives to arrive at 3pm. Photos will be taken for social media. The VP Finance has organized the game day. Board games are available in SUB and can also be purchased at Dollarama. The VP Operations has organized the Research Day, which may be split into two groups due to the number of registrants. Approximately three judges are needed for each group; an email will be sent requesting judges.

*The Associate Dean and Vice-Provost and Dean from the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) joined the meeting.*

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**9. Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) (Cagri Ayranci and Tracy Raivio)**

The President introduced staff from the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies. They shared that they want to learn how to best support post-doctoral fellows and are developing a plan for GPS. This will include community building and events. The staff shared a presentation about the overview of current fellows backgrounds and fellowship duration. The GPS office helps to develop onboarding support for incoming PDFs, provides awards and scholarships, writing support, and professional development. They also provide academic advising and dispute resolution support and collaborate with the PDFA. UAPPOL documents are being developed for PDF Trainees and Guests. The PDF office is also currently reviewing their website, searching for funding for travel awards and emergency fund, developing a survey on funding and working hours, and will be offering a monthly hour with the Postdoctoral Affairs Office Director.

Concerns were shared regarding funding opportunities, professional development feedback, PDF recognition, travel grants, the funding model, and transparency. It was suggested that an annual report with statistics be created.

*The Associate Dean and Vice-Provost and Dean from the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) exited the meeting.*

**10. VP Finance Report (Simran Kaur)**

The VP Finance informed everyone of the banking fees for electronic bank transfer. But noted that cheques are less convenient. Further discussion was tabled for the next meeting.

**11. Member-at-Large Report (Shui Jiang, Sarita Bassil & Thinh Nguyen)**

**The Members-at-Large sent their regrets.**

**12. VP Operations Report (Razieh Firouzi)**

The VP Operations had nothing to report.

**13. VP External Report (Alsayed Mostafa)**

The VP External requested that email lists be shared; further discussion was tabled to the next meeting. He shared information about the CAPS event.

**14. VP Internal Report (MD Shaheen)**

The VP Internal had nothing to report.

**15. VP Communications Report (Henry Prown)**

The VP Communications had nothing to report.

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**16. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**17. In Camera**

There was no in-camera session.

**18. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12pm

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AKM Shahid Ullah, President & Chair

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Samantha Spurrer, Executive Assistant