

Report of the Grievance and Arbitration Committee

Prepared for the SMUFU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - October 27, 2022

Governance

Co-Chairs

Since June 2021, the Grievances and Arbitration Committee has been led by two co-chairs. The two co-chairs were Marc Lamoureux (Chemistry) and Nicole Neatby (History). While in May 2022, Marc Lamoureux took on the position of SMUFU President, he continues to provide support until such time as we hire the part time grievance officer.

Members

The committee should consist of seven members appointed for a three-year term. This year we have been very fortunate in recruiting new members including Dr Rachel Zellars (Social Justice and Community Services), Dr Rylan Higgins (Anthropology), Dr Ron Russell (Biology), Dr Augie Westhaver (Sociology). We are very encouraged to be hearing from others who wish to volunteer their services. We expect the new members to attend CAUT's Grievance Handling Workshop scheduled for November 14th-18th.

The committee members are:

- Shyamala Sivakumar - Sobey's Business School (2021-2024)
- Benita Bunjun - Social Justice and Community Studies (2021-2024)
- Rachel Zellars - Social Justice and Community Studies (2022-2025)
- Rylan Higgins - Anthropology (2022-2025)
- Augie Westhaver - Sociology (2022-2025)
- Ron Russell - Biology (2022-2025)
- Hai Wang - Sobey's Business School - Department of Finance (2022-2025)

Grievance Officer

The number of complaints from members leading SMUFU to file grievances continues to increase. Presently, we are in various stages of dealing with ten (10) grievances. This situation means that we continue to have to rely more heavily on the services our lawyer which in turn explains the increase in legal fees in our budget. Legal fees are likely to increase further as a few of these grievances are now at the arbitration hearing stage. To address this situation, we have taken steps to hire a part-time Professional Grievance Officer. A short list of three candidates was drawn up, selected from a total of 25 applicants. Two interviews have been completed with the third one scheduled for October 31. The expectation is that the successful candidate can start working by mid-November.

Grievance Cases - Note: Due to issues related to confidentiality, specific information about these grievances can only be disclosed to the G&A Committee and the Union Executive.

General Overview

Most of the grievances are individual grievances, two them are group grievances. The Union has currently one grievance in arbitration, two are scheduled for arbitration, six are awaiting arbitration, one case is at step one of the grievance process (i.e., meeting with the VPAR).

The cases involve issues pertaining to a disciplinary matter, denial of promotion, pension plan, accommodation for medical reasons, course reduction for Lecturer Stream faculty and harassment.

Please feel free to ask questions.