

Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity & Accessibility (PACHREA)

Monday January 23, 2012

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Gzowski College, Room 345

## Minutes

Present: Mike Allcott (Chair), Willow Burns, Dana Capell, Cath D’Amico, Karen Derian,
Tara Harrington, Lon Knox, Paul McCann (by telephone), Matt McGill, Robyne Shedden, Julie Smith and Braden Freer (Secretary)

Regrets: Joeann Argue, Nadine Changfoot, Stephen Horner, Suha Jarrar, Kristi Kerford and Eunice Lund-Lucas

## Open Session

### Chair’s Remarks

The Chair welcomed members and wished everyone a happy New Year, noting that it was Chinese New Year’s day. He noted that TCSA representative,
Suha Jarrar, would no longer be sitting on the committee due to a timetable conflict. There would be follow-up with the TCSA for a new representative. The Chair acknowledged with sadness the recent death of Indigenous Studies faculty member Lorne Ellingson.

### Minutes

The minutes of the December 12, 2011 meeting were approved.

### Draft Academic Plan

Further to PACHREA’s last meeting, the working group had met and developed a submission to the Academic Planning Committee which was forwarded on December 20th (as circulated). Unfortunately, the updated draft of the Academic Plan (No. 9) just released did not incorporate any of the suggested wording changes. There was further opportunity to provide feedback on the updated draft. The committee discussed what strategy to take which depended on whether or not the Academic Planning Committee had given consideration to the original submission. Perhaps recommendation 6 was not seen as central to the Plan. There may have been confusion over some of the terminology used or the committee could have been put off thinking that the intention was to hijack every staff orientation or development activity.

Possible strategies included resubmitting the original proposal or reworking wording and submitting a concise “cut-and-paste ready” paragraph no longer than the one in the draft (which would mean omitting the three recommendations, which did not follow the Plan’s format). Support was expressed for the latter, though it was important to find out whether consideration had been given to the original submission. It was noted that “immigration status” was preferable to “visa status” (intention to identify international students as a distinct group). Rationale should be provided for any unusual wording.

The Chair, Julie and Robyne would meet to re-work the submission and would report to the committee before the next meeting. [Note: report given by email January 26, 2012 – see circulated material.]

### Federal Government Proposal

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the representative from the TCSA (Brea Hutchinson) was unable to be present regarding the proposal. The Chair briefly reviewed the presentation that had been circulated. The proponents were looking for endorsement from the committee to strengthen the proposal. Committee members commented that they were impressed with the proposal. Motion: A motion to provide an official endorsement and offer help and support for the proposal was passed. A letter of endorsement would be drafted.

### Update on Discrimination & Harassment

Julie informed the Committee that a meeting with TUFA and a representative from Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) had been held on January 19 to discuss the draft policy and procedures. TUFA had raised some philosophical and tangible concerns focussing on four issues including the definition of sexual harassment and the provisions with respect to Academic Freedom. TUFA was also requesting mandatory notice when a member was involved in a complaint which raised privacy concerns. An undertaking had been given to continue work on the drafts by email in the following weeks. A timeline had been circulated which aimed to have the Board of Governors approving the documents in March. That was probably optimistic given the need for TUFA ratification which would not likely happen separately from upcoming bargaining ratification. It was noted that a lot of focus for TUFA’s remained on the academic planning process.

### Subcommittee Updates:

#### Accessibility Subcommittee

The subcommittee would be meeting next on February 8. Robyne provided updates on recent accessibility initiatives:

* Accessibility Audit: Robyne was working with the procurement office on a Request for Pre-Qualification (RPQ). Ideally the audit would take place in the Spring contingent on funding.
* Emergency Procedures: As per document circulated this was the first requirement under the AODA Integrated Standard. The procedures had been collated into one accessible document to achieve compliance. Persons for whom the emergency procedures create a barrier are asked to self-identify so that a personalized plan can be developed. Robyne had spoken about the process at the manager’s meeting, and would be meeting with Student Affairs and the DSO. Paul asked to meet with Robyne about Oshawa and Dana indicated that the initiative could be added to the OPSEU newsletter.
* Robyne advised that the Accommodation Policy for students would be returning to the University Policy Committee in February. She informed the committee of recent accessibility issues which had arisen (one regarding the height of the parking ticket dispensers, and another where an instructor had changed the format of an exam at a late stage).

#### Employment Equity Subcommittee

Lon provided an update further to the meeting on January 16. At that meeting an update had been given on data tracking (self-identification by employees). Unfortunately, due to a computer glitch, data was not as complete as was thought, however work was being undertaken to improve numbers. The subcommittee discussed the equity statement language Trent should use in job postings and looked at statements from other institutions with the intent of synthesizing a statement for Trent’s purposes.

The subcommittee had been informed that the Board of Governors was considering developing a Diversity Policy. There were no such formal policies at other institutions. Some statistical research had been conducted [circulated to PACHREA with December mailing]. The idea was to have targets, not quotas, as skills came first. Lon noted that the Board of Governors was currently gender-balanced.

The subcommittee was looking at whether self-identification data should continue to be collected from applicants, and whether for substantive job consideration purposes or for statistical purposes (or both). Currently, non-academic applicants were invited to self-identify for job consideration purposes. Discussion to continue. Finally, the subcommittee had considered a recent newspaper article about the biases regarding foreign-sounding names and international credentials. Members recognized that the biases exist and discussed possible strategies including blinding names on applications.

Brief discussion followed about the hesitancy of people to self-identify in the employment equity process and the education required to make Trent a welcoming environment for a diversity of applicants. It was noted that TIP and the ESL program had had good success attracting diverse applicant pools through active advertising. Also noted that the diversity process for the Board of Governors could be used for future Chancellor searches.

#### Educational Events Subcommittee

Dana advised that the subcommittee had met on January 18 with the goal of creating one program for the Winter term. 12 students had expressed interest in the subcommittee and two had attended the meeting. The subcommittee had settled on two ideas: the first a film from Carleton University about Indigenous students in the classroom. The second idea was to bring in a speaker from Cambodia who had immigrated to Canada accompanied by a panel. Dana informed the committee that early April would be the best time for the event as February is too soon to adequately plan an event. Brief discussion followed about budget and sponsoring an event that was in line with the committee’s mandate.

### AOB

Karen raised the issue of how we engage and get people aware when it comes to issues of inclusivity and equity. A starting point would be the Academic Plan. Other ideas: circulating articles for discussion at PACHREA, inviting speakers to meetings of e.g. Faculty Board and engaging in the World Affairs Colloquia. It was noted that a strategic planning process was planned for OHREA in the summer.

Reframe International Film Festival to take place January 27-29.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.