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Presentation to the Bargaining Committee

An overview to inform
collective bargaining

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- This presentation provides some insight into:
 - The general environment impacting post-secondary education;
 - The challenges facing the University of Lethbridge in that environment; and
 - The Board's objectives in collective bargaining.



OVERVIEW

We appreciate most of this information is familiar.

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Some will be new.

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Providing information from the outset that is informing collective bargaining comprehensively rather than piecemeal throughout the process is helpful in our view.

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Questions are welcomed as we proceed.



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GENERAL ENVIRONMENT: ENROLMENT

- Declining domestic enrolments in AB since 2012-2013 (~6%; 2.6% domestic UG enrolment)
- Since 2019 Fall domestic enrolments have declined at most AB Institutions except U of A (+16.2%) and U of C (+8.9%)
 - University of Lethbridge: -23%
- Cost of living/other challenges mean students often take a reduced course load, which impacts revenue
- Fall 2024 forecast is for a ~3.7% increase in undergraduate enrolments, all due to international students
- International student cap from IRCC, issues with visas and work permits

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IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Challenges:

- Losing domestic enrolment to other Alberta institutions
- Increasing international enrolments is positive but the conditions are unstable & unreliable (e.g. issuing visas, IRCC cap etc.)
- Declining provincial funding
- Declining public interest in advanced education in Alberta and other Canadian provinces

Key question:

- How do we work efficiently and effectively towards the greatest degree of success within the resources that we are certain of?

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GENERAL ENVIRONMENT: OPERATIONS

- Provincial operating grant has declined 20.1% (20.2 M) since 2019
- Recent government funding has been short-term targeted funding
- Reliance on academic term appointments (short term, increased labour/frequency for hiring, unstable funding)
- Greater expectations around provincial accountability has resulted in a significant increase in administrative work
- Unprecedented demand for student support & recruitment (e.g. WIL, student services, wellness, advising etc.) requiring increased need for non-academic hiring

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IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Challenges:

- Reliable revenue streams have declined making operations more challenging
 - Impacted by both external funders and by declining and unpredictable enrollment
- Current conditions make innovation challenging but necessary (e.g. new programming, strategic hiring etc.)
- Workload distribution needs to be equitable but also operationally viable
- **Adaptation is necessary**



KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN BARGAINING

- How do we work effectively towards the greatest degree of success within the resources that we are certain of?
- How do we create more nimble and efficient systems that serve the people and university well?

Examples

- Grievance process
- Supervision/Discipline
- PAR

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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING



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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Summary of previous discussion

- We have agreed to meeting face-to-face two to four days per month.
- We will devote additional time in caucus to prepare for our sessions.
- The Committee will be devoting up to six days a month to collective bargaining while continuing to carry out regular duties.
- This represents a serious commitment to this process.
- In addition, the Board's Negotiations Team will communicate with others in the organization to ensure we maintain a broad consensus on our approaches.



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Most of our proposals are presented in a "positional format" to accommodate ULFA's stated preference.
- Some of our proposals adopt an "interest based" approach.
These proposals largely concern procedural matters that have been matters of ongoing dialogue.
 - In this regard, the goal is to work collaboratively to accommodate shared interests rather than adopt positional approaches.
- After some brief dialogue, a formal proposal will be tabled.
- This will not impact the decision-making framework.
- We are committed to accommodating shared interests throughout this process and hope and trust ULFA is as well.

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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Our goals include:
 - Reasonable economic adjustments – inclusive of any changes to our benefit plans – having regard to all of the circumstances.
 - Comparable institutions.
 - Funding challenges.
 - Domestic enrollment.
 - International uncertainty.
 - Inflation and projections.



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Our goals include:
 - Ensuring the University Administration has the flexibility it needs to utilize the workforce and address the challenges it faces and will face in the future.
 - Hope is to increase enrollment to sustainable levels.
 - Hope is to attract research funding.
 - Hope is not a plan.
 - The University must accept it might have to do less more efficiently.

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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Our goals include:
 - Improving the processes and procedures we use to address matters that arise in a timely and efficient way - whether that involves the grievance procedure, alleged misconduct, or performance evaluations or concerns.



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Our goals include:
 - Long term labour relations stability.

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SHARED INTERESTS AND GOALS

We all share a commitment to reasonable pay and benefits that ensures we can attract and retain a strong workforce.

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Flexibility ensures the University can respond to the challenges it faces in an uncertain and evolving operating environment.

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Nimble and reasonable processes and procedures reduce time spent on unproductive activities that do not add real value, lead to quicker decisions, without any discernable impact on outcomes.

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Long term labour stability is good for students, Academic Staff, and the community.



QUESTIONS



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