

ACADIA UNIVERSITY JOINT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Meeting March 24, 2022 – 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Teams

Present

Melanie Coleman, Admin Coordinator, Safety & Security
Eveline DeSchiffart, Acadia Divinity
Greg Deveau, Operations Supervisor & OHS Coordinator, Safety & Security
Patrick Difford, Director, Safety & Security
Amitabh Jha, AUFA
Sarah Keefe, OHS Nurse
Kathy Klein, Human Resources
Caroliina Landry, OHS Nurse
Laura Miller, Chartwells
Pat Mora, Financial Services
Ann Myers, SEIU, Library – Co-chair
Derek Parker, Physical Plant
James Sanford, Exec. Director, Student Services
Aran Silmeryn, SEIU
Sandra Symonds, AUPAT
Brian Wilson, AUFA

Regrets

Marcel Falkenham, Director, Facilities Management
Bertrand Gloeckner, Physical Plant
Nancy McMullin, Physical Plant
Michael Holmes, AUPAT
Richard Johnson, Athletics

1. **Call to order** by James Sanford at 1:32 PM.
2. **Approval of minutes** – approved by Aran Silmeryn, seconded by Brian Wilson.
3. **Approval of agenda** – approved by Brian Wilson, seconded by Ann Myers.
4. **Business arising from previous minutes:**
 - a. **COVID updates:**
 - i. Masking remains on campus in all buildings except residences and AAC.
 - ii. Increased cases on and off campus. Close contacts can go to class if they are not symptomatic, but they must isolate if they are symptomatic.
 - iii. If you are looking for vaccines, go to Shoppers- Acadia will not receive any more doses.
 - iv. The number of active cases started very low- meal deliveries were initially at five students but has increased to over 20 at last count. Numbers are changing constantly, but some fluctuation was anticipated.
 - b. **Faculty concerns on OHS issues**
 - i. No further updates from Brian Wilson. Before the strike he was receiving a lot of communication regarding heightened concerns about COVID

planning (based on ambiguous contract language in their collective agreement). Brian was asked to discuss it at the next meeting.

- ii. One member was quite upset and launched a grievance. James Sanford and Ann Myers met with the officers involved and explained the role of JOHSC: how Advanced Education worked directly with NS Public Health and received their directives through higher education framework, and concerns are addressed as they arise. Overall, Acadia's response was guided by public health and Sara/Caroliina regarding what's appropriate for the institution.
- iii. Item closed and removed from the agenda until the issue comes up again.

c. Snow removal (exits)

- i. Concerns have been resolved and a process is in place moving forward-- the library is satisfied with the solution.
- ii. A lot of reliance on building managers to communicate if exits aren't being cleared. Phys Plant will let Safety and Security know if they can clear the area or if conditions aren't favourable. Priority areas are always exits or health and life safety efforts.
- iii. Big thanks to Derek's team! This winter has been especially challenging with snow and ice conditions, and the committee unanimously passed along their thanks to the grounds crew.
- iv. Pending any disagreement or concern, this item can be removed from the active agenda.

5. New Business

i. Phys Plant safety/well being concerns - Excessive Residence Damages Cutten/Dennis

1. Marcel Falkenham contacted Greg Deveau regarding concerns from staff working in Dennis and Cutten: custodians do not feel safe performing their duties and responding to late night calls for service due to the aggressive and destructive behaviour of students. They are potentially investigating the issue as violence in the workplace.
2. In an initial mitigation effort, Safety and Security will provide additional resources for Phys Plant staff to escort custodians on late-night calls for service. This was also provided last year, though it's an extreme mitigation effort that is very resource heavy and not sustainable long term-- the underlying issues are still there, and will be addressed by Residence Life as we look for a long-term solution as a group.
3. Unfortunately, Security is not receiving immediate reports when an incident occurs. Safety and Security (and other parties involved) will action a report ASAP when they are received, but sometimes they do not hear about incidents until well after the fact.

4. Damage in both Dennis and Cutten have been documented and sent to Safety and Security. It can sometimes be difficult to gather details out in the field, but managers and shift supervisors are working to document specific details.
5. The issues go beyond specific incidences of damages, too-- the anxiety is totally understandable when staff are constantly going in for every little thing (for example, someone egging another resident's door). Each little thing piles up to drag down morale.
6. However, damage has increased so rapidly in the past three or four months that it has become a significant challenge to maintain the buildings. Students will follow trades staff: once their repairs are done, they leave and it's immediately destroyed. Typically it is the same group of students that are repeat offenders.
7. For now we will continue to mitigate and provide support to the team, and hopefully once exams start we can use the time to ensure we are better prepared for September. Greg will construct a semi-formal risk assessment with specific recommendations, and push to the VPs to action.
8. Are other institutions experiencing the same issues? Other directors in NS (such as DAL and SMU) are not seeing the same magnitude of damages we're seeing. Could potentially be a result of more to do in downtown Halifax.
9. Caroliina shared a great link in the chat:
<https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2021/06/why-is-violent-behavior-spiking-as-pandemic-ebbs/%26fj=1>
10. If it's the same group of students, does any of this fall within the criminal code or involving the RCMP? Yes, some of the damages have reached the criminal level and Security is actively investigating specific students for damages in one of the residences. Frustrated students are also providing tip-offs with video clips, but some are afraid to come forward because they don't want damage around their room or egg on their doors.
11. Going forward we will bring Residence Life in from the outset, to address everything at the start of the year. We may change how we assign students to residence. We also have to break cultural affinity (students from a certain school where it's a competition for "what to do in your first year in X residence").
12. The issue will remain an active/open agenda item, and Greg Deveau will report back each meeting. Prior to the next meeting in April he will create a scope of work.

6. Incidents reports

- a. Lab accident: a Bunsen burner injured two students. Mild burns, no first aid/medical attention required.
- b. One reported slip and fall.

7. Summary of Actions and Results Timetable arising from this meeting

- a. Interview Phys Plant staff (and potentially students in CUT/DEN) to gather information, working with Residence Life to begin a formal risk assessment.
- b. Greg Deveau will begin a “scope of work” before the next meeting in April, assembling a group together to discuss expectations for September.

Next meeting: Thursday, April 28, 1:30 PM

8. Adjournment at 2:13 PM.