Report of WURA Pension and Benefits Committee

WURA AGM, December 3, 2024

Members of the WURA Pension and Benefits Committee: Mary Lou Drake, John Meyer, Ihor Stebelsky , and Lucia Yiu (for health benefit review).

The main objective of this Committee is to complete the review of faculty retirees’ Green Shield health benefits started in 2021 and interrupted in 2022-23 (see previous report of November 29 2023). Its ongoing function is to represent WURA and the retiree interests on the WUFA Retirement and Benefits Committee.

Regarding the restart of health benefits review, we made it a point to attend the retirement reception for Cheryl Paglione (Director of Employee Services) on June 14, there to meet the HR personnel, and to determine who would replace Cheryl’s function in facilitating our health benefits review with Green Shield and the mailing of our proposed change to health coverage preference survey to our retirees. The lead person, it turned out, would become Jody Fraser (Associate Vice President, Human Resources).

The office of Jody Fraser arranged for a Teams meeting on September 27 at 11am to 12 noon between Green Shield, her office and this committee (6 accepted, 1 declined, and 3 did not respond). At the Teams meeting I was the only person representing WURA. I presented an electronic copy of the health benefits review table that Cheryl Paglione had generated so that it could be updated with current Green Shield costs. Jody Fraser forwarded this table to the Green Shield representatives for updating.

Our follow-up meeting was held in-person on October 29, 10-11am (300 Assumption Hall). In attendance were the Green Shield facilitators, Stephanie Bouman and Barbara Sadai, our Human Resources personnel, Jody Fraser and Brittany Rife, and all members of the WURA Pension and Benefits Committee, plus ex-officio, our WURA President, Gwen Ebbett. We received the Green Shield information, asked follow-up questions, and then stayed for some preliminary discussion amongst ourselves. It was a good start.

Our objective is to complete our proposed change to health coverage preference survey questionnaire, along with our letter of transmittal to our retirees, in January 2025, so that it would be submitted to Human Resources for formatting, printing and mailing out by the beginning of February and received for analysis of responses by the end of February 2025 to make fair decisions and subsequent implementation of changes by Human Resources and Green Shield.

Regarding our participation in the WUFA Retirement and Benefits (R&B) Committee (details are in their minutes), we have attended three meetings in 2024: March 18, April 23 (both on Teams) and October 7 (changed from in-person to Teams). The fourth one is scheduled for November 20 (in person).

On March 18 (10:30-11:30 am) the R&B Committee provided feedback to the Contract Committee relating to the WUFA Collective Agreement. It also received and discussed the reports of: the HR update, the D2 Committee, the Board of Governors’ Pension Committee, and the WUFA Ad Hoc UPP Committee.

On April 23 (10:30-11:30 am) the R&B Committee met and discussed requests of the WUFA Contract Committee with its two members present, Larry Glassford and Roger Reka. For the retirees, it was essential to preserve the Health Care Subsidy Plan annual contributions of $100,000 by the University.

On October 7 (1:30-2:30 pm) at the R&B Meeting, the HR update acknowledged upcoming October 29 meeting with WURA and Green Shield representatives for discussing changes to the retiree portion of the benefit plan. Other reports included the Board of Governors Pension Committee, the Board of Governors Investment Committee, and the WUFA Ad Hoc UPP Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Ihor Stebelsky,

WURA Pension and Benefits Committee