

Labour Management Relations Committee (LMRC)

March 11th, 2020 @ 1:00 pm in Karla's Office, UCC

Present: Jeff Armour, Noah Austin, Nina Joyce, Karla Pacheco

1. Staff Plan Benefit Update

Notes from Campus Trust:

After December's nearly break-even position, the health plan's claims unfortunately increased back up to their recent levels. The result was a deficit of just under \$2,500, bringing its year-to-date level to a deficit of \$17,815. Although it still feels weird to say it, the dental plan was a bright spot. Although it also experienced a slight deficit of just \$683, it is still in a positive position after eight months: a surplus of \$1,749.

Updated break-even rates (pre-tax) using the most recent 12 months of claims:

Health plan - \$86.77/\$216.93 (\$68.03/\$169.07 currently)

Dental plan - \$50.95/\$127.37 (\$52.25/\$128.63 currently)

We are still in a hole so we probably will not recover this year. Claims have increased again from last month. An independent consultant is looking at the numbers and potential causation as well as some other options. More money needs to be put in the health plan side especially if we are building up a reserve for unplanned expenses. The increase in paramedical coverage is more than likely not the problem. The little spike that we need to rectify the situation could be a matter of both the employer and employees putting a little bit in. Health was not dealt with at the same time as dental when the first increase was required.

An increase would not represent a huge amount of money considering the value of the plan overall. With salary increases coming up, it might not be as much of an issue to most people. It is possible to look at taking some benefits away as alternative but it could be something that someone really needs and that would not be good. Exposure is very low on most things. We need the reserve to cover the bigger exposure pieces. Our benefits are what attracts people to the USC. We could ask people about what they think is better; decreasing coverage or increasing premiums. It would have to be based on something people use regularly in order to get appropriate numbers.

Vision would be a good one because it impacts almost everyone. Karla will get data in the meantime and then we can figure out where we need to go. It would be good to talk about it at union meeting. We will do a survey or call a full meeting. As long as everyone does it the survey it should be helpful. It should not be a surprise to anyone anyways that the plan needs help. It is just a matter of what things are valued more by people.

Karla will send information about what the most highly used aspects of the plan are. It is a matter of what people perceive they use versus what people actually use. Vision is the benefit most highly used next to drugs. Only one person caps out on drugs so it is no to excess, it is just that people are using it regularly.

2. Pandemic Planning – COVID-19

The situation will be handled on a case by case basis with alternative work arrangements being part of the plan. We do not want people to be afraid to tell us if they are feeling unwell or know that they have the actual virus for fear of being stigmatized. It is important for us to know if they are not comfortable being around a lot of other people because of immunity issues or they do not wish to infect vulnerable family or other people. Having open conversations and being flexible is key. Everyone should try to use common sense and make changes within the confines of the CBA etc. It might make sense for the LMRC to meet more regularly about it and following direction from Western. Jeff will send an e-mail out about where we are at currently. We have to be able to accommodate everyone and have a plan in place if schools close etc. It may be a matter of finding things people can do from home. We will need to be creative about ways we can perhaps do work from home. We will also look at whether people use sick time or vacation time if they are off. EI would be looked at as a last resort. It will be a matter of evaluating the person, the job, and the situation.

3. New Business

We will be posting the Digital Media Coordinator position next week. It is good to get the job under a full time staff member with the new Executive just coming in. The plan is to get the position hired by April. The job will be posted internally first and will not overlap with any external posting.

Update on SCI – The fees will be mandatory for this year and the money will go into the reserves should the fee be optional next year.

Town hall – Scheduled for March 31st.