

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
All Stewards in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

FROM: Brian Gould, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

DATE: February 22, 2008

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
ERC Minutes – September 12, 2007**

Attached, for your information, are the minutes of the above captioned meeting.

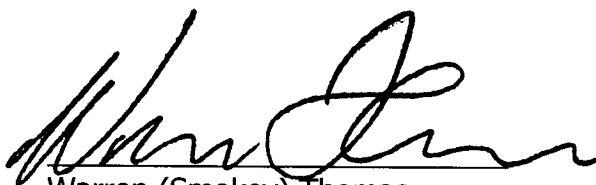
Please post or otherwise make them available to the members in your workplaces.

Also attached is a MERC referral form which should be used when referring unresolved local issues to the ministry level. The referral should be sent care of the Job Security Unit with all the supporting documentation, (e.g. minutes, correspondence, etc.), with any referrals.

PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President



Brian Gould
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

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att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

**MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINISTRY OF TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

MINUTES

**Wednesday, September 12, 2007
Ottawa Room, MacDonald Block
9:00 a.m. - noon**

For the Employer:

Lisa Sherin (Co-chair)

Peter Armstrong
Richard Jackson
Jamie Bruno

Guests:

Sarah VanDuzer
Jan Hughes
Bill Craig
Yolanta Stachow

For the Union:

Mickey Riccardi (Co-chair) *
Maurice Blais
Sophia Ambrose
Stephen George
Observer: Nancy Thompson

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

The agenda was reviewed, amended and approved.

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Both parties reviewed and signed the February 16th MERC Minutes.

BUSINESS ARISING:

1. New Forms (TQAA and ACA)

At the last MERC, the Union raised concerns that these forms were not being signed by the Training Consultants, as is required. The Union alluded to the Client Service Manual which specifies that Training Consultants must sign any Contract of Apprenticeship. Management indicated that forms would have to be changed because of the new branding.

Management is still in the process of determining appropriate steps to address this issue. Management committed to providing a response prior to the next MERC.

***Commitment:* Move to Standing item**

2. Transforming TCU

Management indicated that as part of Phase 2 of the TCU Transformation, OPSEU staff were made aware on July 30th about the impact of the transition. The effective date of these changes will be September 24th. Management also committed to providing information regarding the recently-created Labour Market Negotiations Branch, noting that the two governments continue to engage in negotiations.

Classification Review

Management also communicated that Phase 1 of the Classification Review is underway and that the ministry has held a number of discussions with Directors and managers to identify positions for priority sequencing. Management provided the Union with a copy of the Phase 1 roll-out. The following dates were also identified as expected completion targets for the four phases:

- Phase 1: November 30, 2007
- Phase 2: March 31, 2008
- Phase 3: July 31, 2008
- Phase 4: November 30, 2008, with the month of December for final wrap-up.

In response to the Union's inquiry, management indicated that the ITO-1 classification is expected to form part of Phase 2. The Union also questioned how this exercise would reconcile with the OPSEU-MGS Job Evaluation. Management responded that the ministry is consulting with MGS as this exercise progresses, adding that there is no intent to duplicate efforts but, should discrepancies arise, the matter will be addressed at that time.

3. Extension of CWW days for EBSM staff

The Union requested direction for staff who are interested in participating in a compressed work week. Management communicated that any ministry employee with such an interest should speak with their manager. Agreements for Eastern, Western and Northern have been sent to OPSEU for signature. Any outstanding CWW agreements from the four regions, including Central are being identified and will be sent to OPSEU for signature. Management suggested that they would include this item in Q's and A's.

Both parties agreed to remove this item from the Agenda.

4. Asbestos Abatement Worker and Supervisor Programs

At the last MERC, the Union expressed disapproval over the current administration of these tests, stating that this is a modular exam that should be administered by the ministry.

Management communicated that the two new programs are not apprenticeship programs and do not lead to a journeyperson's certification; they are modular training programs. Much like the exemption tests that are administered by third party delivery agents, these two assessments test theoretical knowledge (in-school learning) and not on-the-job training. These programs confirm that an individual can work safely but does not result in a Certificate of Qualification. The theoretical knowledge that is tested represents only a fraction of the program.

Management also explained that these two tests are in fact exemption tests where an individual has received prior theoretical learning or has had previous experience.

The Union raised the issue of Exam Invigilators administering exams for TSSA (engineering exams) and questioned why these tests could not be administered under the same process. Management indicated that these exams were in fact parallel with journey-person exams (i.e. leading to a certificate or license to practise an occupation).

The Union identified a recent job posting for Exam Administrative Clerk (OAD 9) which stated, "...support in the administration and invigilation of trade/modular examinations" as part of the requirements of the position. The Union also noted that the corresponding job specification incorporated the same language and inquired as to why this group of staff is not administering the Asbestos Abatement Worker and Supervisor Programs tests.

Commitment: Management will look into the job specification identified and provide the Union with a response.

STANDING ITEMS:

1. Orientation Package (Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention)

Management reported that a new Orientation site has been developed for the ministry's website. The ministry is continuing to update material before the formal launch and has forwarded the link to OPSEU for comments. The new site will provide comprehensive material for existing and prospective employees, including key points for employees during their first day, week and month in the OPS. The site will also include the WDHP Policy and a Fact Sheet on the policy, with the possibility of having a Question & Answer component included.

The Union stated that it feels WDHP Training should be mandatory for all staff and managers. The Union noted that this training is mandatory in other ministries and would expect TCU to follow.

Management reported that, to its knowledge, corporate direction on this issue has not included mandatory WDHP training for staff and managers. The Centre for Leadership offers WDHP Training sessions and the ministry recently released a memorandum to managers encouraging their participation.

Commitment: Management will continue to review the participation of staff/managers at upcoming WDHP Training sessions. Management will provide the Union with a copy of the memo that was sent to ministry managers regarding upcoming training sessions. Management will also find out if WDHP Training is mandatory for certain employees (i.e. new hires).

2. Redeployment

Management reported that no surplussing is being contemplated at this time.

3. Seniority, True Vacancy Report and Unclassified Contracts Report

These reports were distributed at the meeting.

4. OAG Learning and Development Initiative Update

Management distributed a draft copy of the OAG Pilot Learning Program, with a brief outline of the six learning modules included. Management indicated that the Program will be piloted in Toronto for GTA-area OAG staff. There will be 25 participants in the pilot program and the Program is expected to launch in the fall.

Commitment: Management will provide the Union with confirmed dates of program sessions once finalized.

5. Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA)

The Union questioned the staffing of a position within the Employment and Training Division.

Commitment: Management will look into the matter and provide a response.

6. OSAP IT Renewal Project

Work on the project is currently about one week ahead of schedule. Business Rules Definitions documentation has been completed for all OSAP Programs with the exception of the Ontario Student Opportunity Grant (OSOG) and the various communications products that are produced for program applicants and recipients.

It is anticipated that the new system should be ready for implementation by October 2009.

In response to comments received from staff, the Project Team was asked to make more frequent and shorter project updates at unit meetings rather than at all-staff meetings. Lynn McWilliams will start to attend unit meetings in Thunder Bay on a regular basis, beginning this week, to provide updates.

Branch culture focus groups and surveys were conducted in June in Thunder Bay. There is a consistency among staff and managers on the most effective organizational culture: more supportive and less hierarchical. Our change management consultant will be presenting an analysis of the results of the focus groups and survey with the Management Team in Thunder Bay on September 13th. Management will be sharing them with staff shortly.

The Union asked about any potential impact on the project should a new program need to be implemented. Management responded that depending on the details of any new program the project timelines may need to be revised.

7. Apprenticeship Support Application (ASA) Project

Management informed the Union that Philip Fournier continues to serve as the Project Manager despite the project now being integrated as part of the Business and Systems Management Branch (BSMB). The plan is to wind down the ASA as a project by December 2007 but the continuing support for the project will become part of the BSMB's ongoing work. All but one position (Business Coordinator) are temporary contracts.

A new online service launched on May 28 allows journeypersons to renew or replace their certificates via the Ministry public website. The online service verifies their identity and allows journeypersons to submit payment online for these services.

A future release of the ASA is under consideration that would allow the employer access to the system to review registered apprentice contracts and the employer's own profile. More information will be provided as business decisions are made on this release.

The Union suggested that a refresher course might be helpful for staff who have been outside the work unit for a considerable length of time. Management responded that this idea is already being considered.

8. Regional Employee Relations Committee (RERC)

At the last MERC, the Union recommended that Regional ERCs should include staff across the entire ministry, not just the Employment and Training Division. Management agreed.

Management re-drafted a proposal for the structure and framework of Regional ERCs and presented it to the Union. The Union committed to reviewing the proposal and responding with further recommendations.

9. Walk-in Service for Trade Exams

Management communicated that construction delays at 33 Bloor St. has prevented the use of that office as a site to administer trade exams. In response to the delay, management is considering an increase to the Church St. office by using the existing boardroom as an exam site. Should the increase occur, an extra Exam Invigilator will be hired which, at present, would likely be a full-time position.

Management also confirmed that an Administrative Clerk (OAG 9) was hired in the summer on a six-month, unclassified contract.

The Union recommended an 'appointment-only' process if management plans to expand the boardroom for additional exam writing capacity.

Commitment: Management will provide a response to the Union's inquiry.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Change Management Office – TCU Reference Group

The Union requested information on the TCU Reference Group.

Commitment: Management will forward information about this group within one week.

2. Review of Compulsory Certification

The Union requested information regarding this initiative.

Management responded that the Government of Ontario wants to ensure that Ontario's apprenticeship and certification system continues to meet proper safety standards, provides value to consumers and serves the needs of the province's growing economy. To support this objective, the government has committed to review whether compulsory certification should be expanded to include trades for which certification is presently voluntary.

Tim Armstrong has been appointed by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (Minister) as the Advisor to lead this review.

The mandate of the Advisor is to review the impact of expanding compulsory certification to trades that are voluntary and to submit a report to the Minister with his findings and recommendations on this issue.

3. Vacation Requests

The Union wanted clarification on the policy for vacation requests since some managers are reportedly requiring employees to secure back-ups before approving their request.

Management informed the Union that employees and managers should work together when a vacation request is submitted to identify workload issues, upcoming deadlines and necessary processes that need to be managed in their absence. Management also communicated that vacation requests are not automatically approved, as managers must assess the operational impact during the requested time off. Ultimately, it is management's responsibility to identify and ensure that back-ups are in place for vacationing staff. However, in the absence of a back-up, managers will consider the operational impact prior to approving a vacation request. Management confirmed that it is not up to the individual employee to find a backup.

4. HR Transformation

The Union requested a general overview of this exercise.

Management communicated that the proposed new model for HR service delivery in the Ontario Public Service will include three distinct elements:

- i. Strategic Business Units**
These units will not be directly involved in the delivery of day-to-day support for ministries, but will support the management of the ministry's executive talent and workforce information. This unit will also be responsible for analyzing workforce trends, gaps and opportunities; designing and implementing change management, capacity building and employee engagement strategies; and implementing HR plans and programs at the ministry level.

- ii. Enterprise Centres of Expertise**
These centres will include specialized work units providing support to ministries in areas such as Executive Services, Labour Relations, Health & Safety/Wellness, HR Service Delivery Centre, and Leadership and Learning.

iii. Regional Recruitment Centres

These centres will be steered by the Enterprise Recruitment Centres and will be located in each of the four geographic regions with an additional centre in Toronto. Among other things, these centres will be responsible for preparing job descriptions; coaching managers on employee performance management and employee development; interpreting HR policies and procedures; and conducting orientation services for new employees.

The implementation of the new HR service delivery model will begin with Regional Recruitment Centres which are expected to be phased-in beginning sometime this fall. Management indicated this exercise is not a downsizing exercise. Future implementation dates are unknown at this point.

Management indicated that ministries across the OPS will have access to these centres/resources to improve services available to managers. The new model includes a plan to have each MERC co-chaired by the HR Director.

Management confirmed that information is being shared with the corporate bargaining agents.

Commitment: It was agreed to move this to Standing Items.

5. Conversion of Unclassified Staff

The Union indicated that the staffing complement in the Waterloo office of the Western Region, Employment and Training Division is not sufficient for the volume of work. The union requested the number of Fulltime funded positions in that office. The Union also indicated that this is one of the offices with a workload issue. The Union explained that an insufficient number of Training Consultants cannot result in staff at a lower classification filling in on 'Office Days'. The Union inquired as to why this position was transferred to Owen Sound? Why was not all staff in this office given the same opportunity? Why was the Lateral Procedure/Policy not followed?

The Union also indicated the Ministry did not follow the necessary disclosure requirements involving staffing decisions that occurred last year.

Commitment: Management will provide the Union with more information of current staffing levels at the Waterloo office and the ministry's position on the staffing concerns raised by OPSEU.

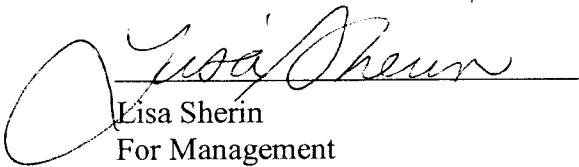
6. Timing of the Minutes

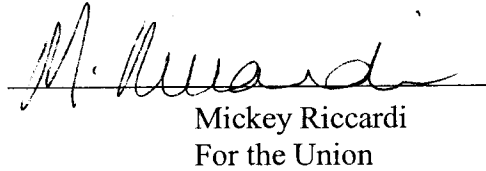
The Union asked that the Minutes be submitted in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ten working days from date of meeting).

Next Meeting

It was previously agreed to that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 13, 2007 in the Ottawa Room, MacDonald Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto.

The meeting was adjourned:


Lisa Sherin
For Management


Mickey Riccardi
For the Union

Date: Feb 21/08