URFA’s Fall Semester General Meeting was held Tuesday November 28 at the Shu-Box Theatre in Riddel Centre and available to URFA’s members in Saskatoon, Prince Albert and other locations via Zoom.

Order of the Day

Kent Pederson, University of Regina alumni and Strategic Advisor / Communication Officer with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour provided an interesting presentation on Bill 40 (which allowed for up to 49% of a Crown Corporation to be sold without a public process and states that winding down a Crown Corporation is not privatization).

Saskatchewan citizens were very concerned about this and started a petition under SaskCrowns – Our Crowns our Saskatchewan. This petition is in the form required by The Referendum and Plebiscite Act to force a vote on the question of whether the Saskatchewan government must follow a public consultation process before it can privatize a Crown corporation.

Recently, the Saskatchewan government indicated they would repeal Bill 40 but not the winding down portion. Therefore, SaskCrowns is continuing the petition; which can be found at http://saskcrowns.ca/

URFA members’ are encouraged to sign the petition by other printing off the form from the SaskCrowns website or going to the URFA office to sign the petition.

President’s report

The President provided a report that spoke to: pensions, collegial governance (fiduciary duty of the elected faculty Board member) and University budget narrative (actual surpluses in the University Operating Fund).

URFA has modeled the defined contribution plan and found it wanting. The Association will be investigating all options available to improve members’ pension benefits. This may include increased contributions and/or a movement to a hybrid pension plan

Treasurer’s report

The Treasurer’s report noted that as with the previous year, URFA is projecting a deficit budget this year. On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Executive Committee, for the second year in a row, agreed to cut expenditures and use the accumulated surplus before going to the membership for a dues increase. The projected deficit (currently 168,942.23) will use most of the accumulated surplus from the operating fund.

The Finance Committee had put forward a proposal for a dues increase to the Executive Committee to consider. The Executive Committee will consider it at their December 5, 2017 meeting.

Key differences between the 2017-18 budget and current projections:
• Dues are coming in slightly under budget, however, negotiations are underway (with APT and later with Academics at UofR) and there may be some recovery depending on any back-pay that may be negotiated.

• Personnel – URFA had budgeted to hire a full-time communications officer in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. This position was not filled until January, 2018 so there are some savings being realized in this area.

• LEGAL/Member Services – we anticipate a lower arbitration expense this year just because of the timing of arbitrations. One that was scheduled to be heard in this fiscal year will not be heard until the next fiscal year.

Other than these 3 items, the expenses seem to be coming in as anticipated when the budget was first drawn up.

Just a reminder, anyone wanting to see the full budget documents are welcome to come to the URFA office to review them.

**Auditors Report 2016-2017**

Members already received the Auditors Report in October. A new firm, MWC, conducted the URFA audit and provided a clean statement. There were some suggestions for improvements in process and procedures which are currently being reviewed and will likely be approved.

The statements are for the three funds held by URFA – Operating Fund, Bursary Fund and the Trust Fund. The operating fund is used for day to day expenses. This fund posted a $139,422 deficit last fiscal year. That deficit was covered by accumulated surplus.

The Bursary Fund has investments that pay interest annually and contribute to the three URFA Bursaries. For a number of years the annual interest has been unable to cover the full cost of the bursaries and, rather than reducing the size of the bursaries, they are topped up from the operating fund in the amount of approximately $2,700. URFA provides 3 bursaries in the amount of $1500 each.

The Trust Fund is funded through Employment Insurance (EI) rebates from the University of Regina and Campion College. This fund was set up in 1978 for the general good and welfare of the membership. This was further interpreted to mean: a defense fund, legal expenses and extraordinary expenses. The fund currently sits with a balance of $2.78 million.

**Executive Director’s report**

The Executive Director noted that since starting with URFA in January 2017 that it has been very busy time assisting members and learning all the aspects of the Association. At a recent Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) conference heard from delegates from across Canada, United States, Argentina, France, Great Britain and Ireland. Common themes were increased precariat social class within post-secondary, continued affronts on Academic Freedom and increased workload (usually accompanied with austerity messaging). URFA staff are proud to work for the Association in meeting and working with / representing its members and they look forward to continuing this work, on its members’ behalf, in countering these themes.
Chief Negotiator’s report

Michael Kozdron spoke of the Academic and Administrative Professional Technical (APT) Bargaining Teams that he leads and of the developments leading to current APT bargaining. Bargaining is proceeding for APT and next bargaining dates are December 11 and 13.

First Nation’s University of Canada (FNUniv) APT Bargaining Team report

Amy Morris, FNUniv APT Bargaining Team member spoke that they have been ready to bargain since April but the FNUniv Board of Governors did not provide a bargaining mandate to its bargaining team. URFA is presently reviewing its option to move this matter forward.

Committee and Conference reports

From this point forward, there were no further speakers to the reports provided in the meeting package, nor were there any questions to those reports.

The next general meeting of the membership will be in the Winter Semester during the first week of April, 2018.