

**NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL CANADA (NRC)**

**MINUTES OF THE 99<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

**OF THE**

**NRC – JOINT CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (JCC)**

**DATE:** March 20, 2019  
**TIME:** 9:30 AM  
**LOCATION:** Room S-303, Building M-58

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**Chairperson:**

Michel Dumoulin, Vice-President, Engineering

**Representing NRC:**

Michel Dumoulin, Vice-President, Engineering  
Emily Harrison, Vice-President, HRB  
Amy Campbell, Director Labour Relations and Compensation, HRB  
Leah Kennedy, Labour Relations Officer, HRB

**Representing Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC):**

Christine Poirier, Labour Relations Team Lead  
Patricia Loder, President, NRC-PIPSC Consultation Team  
Cathy Cheung, President RO/RCO Group  
Dominique Charbonneau, President LS Group  
Stephan Grosse, RO/RCO Group Executive

**Representing Research Council Employees' Association (RCEA):**

Cathie Fraser, President  
Joan Van Den Bergh, Negotiator

**Guests:**

Erin Skrapek, Director, Corporate Secretariat  
Paul Wagner, Chief Information Officer, KITS  
Megan Yukich, Executive Advisor, VP HRB

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>99<sup>th</sup> JCC - MINUTES - DISCUSSION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>99.1</b>	<b>Approval of Agenda</b> Agenda was approved as drafted, although to ensure unresolved issues of importance to members be adequately address, RCEA requested that the Committee prioritize these discussions by quickly reviewing completed action items.	

ITEM	99 <sup>th</sup> JCC - MINUTES - DISCUSSION	ACTION
99.2	<p><b>Minutes of the 98<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the JCC</b></p> <p><b>Changes requested by Bargaining Agents (BAs) to titles of Status of Local Labour Management Consultation Committees (LLMCCs) in Research Centres (81.8) and reference to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee (95.5), additional details under Outsourcing (96.10), reference to asbestos in Safety Concerns (97.RT) as well as amendments to the role of Human Resources Generalists (HRGs) and obligations under Official Languages.</b></p> <p>In relation to the role of HRGs, RCEA noted members should be directed to their respective Bargaining Agent (BA) as some fear reprisal and it is believed that situations can be worsened by involving Human Resources and in turn management without BA participation. <b>Management asked for specific scenarios.</b></p>	<p>M.Marchand</p> <p>C. Fraser</p>
99.3	<p><b>Follow-up Action Items of the 98<sup>th</sup> Meeting</b></p>	
81.8	<p><b>Status of LLMCCs in Research Centres</b></p> <p>BAs reiterated request for all-staff communication encouraging LLMCC participation and establishment at local sites with appropriate managers to improve communications and address labour relations matters.</p> <p>In Management's view supporting individual requests for LLMCCs is more effective in addition it is hoped that the forthcoming wellness program will address some issues giving rise to the appeals for LLMCCs.</p>	
88.9	<p><b>Performance Improvement Plans (PIP)</b></p> <p>Given the manner in which PIPs are used to address performance not meeting expectations they remain an ongoing concern for members and their BAs, <b>a meeting to be scheduled shortly with BAs and Senior Advisor responsible for Commitment to Excellence Program.</b></p>	<p>M.Marchand</p>
91.8	<p><b>Electric Car Charging Stations</b></p> <p>Management reported, as communicated to staff, electric vehicle charging stations is an initiative being explored through Greening Government Strategy.</p> <p>RCEA questioned if a fee-based vehicle charging system would be provided via cost recovery or other structure?</p>	
93.5	<p><b>RO/RCO Promotions and RCO Criteria Review</b></p> <p>Meeting is scheduled in March regarding ITA promotion criteria. Work on RCO promotion criteria to follow.</p>	
95.5	<p><b>Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)</b></p> <p>First quarterly meeting took place March 5<sup>th</sup> with representation from both BAs. All were keenly engaged on a work and personal level and developed a draft EDI strategy to be reviewed by VPs and then SEC.</p>	

ITEM	99 <sup>th</sup> JCC - MINUTES - DISCUSSION	ACTION
96.11	<p><b>Re-hiring of Terms</b></p> <p>RCEA noted that Hiring Managers should be cognizant of the negative impacts from short breaks in service on their members leading to extended Phoenix delays from stopping and then restarting pay and plan accordingly. Extensions of short-term to the maximum of one year less a day is preferred to avoid Phoenix pay issues or if a break in service is necessary it be limited to the weekend. The same was requested for extension of term contracts.</p>	
97.5	<p><b>Pay and Benefits Department</b></p> <p>Some PIPSC members had outstanding pay queries and overpayment recoveries were continuing despite members' retro pay calculations not matching. Outstanding issues related to transfers were raised along with enquiry as to whether members were still owed pay.</p> <p>Both BAs requested the development of an overpayments process which is fair, with flexible options, rather than first available funds, and with open communications. RCEA commented that members are still experiencing pay issues, have trouble understanding their pay stubs, and requested accountability for accurate pay, stating it is unfair to continue to place blame solely on Phoenix. They questioned why NRC is not delaying the recovery of overpayments in the same manner as the Core Public Service.</p> <p><b>Management is encouraging compensation issues to be raised so would follow up with PIPSC on cases and look for ways to improve the recovery of overpayment process.</b> Overtime backlog was addressed with improved controls and hiring Compensation Advisors. <a href="#">How to read your pay stub</a> is available from Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).</p>	A.Campbell
97.8	<p><b>CTEs in SuccessFactors</b></p> <p>RCEA enquired whether employees can leave comments in their CTE and if it can be printed.</p> <p>Management demonstrated online form where employees can leave comments which cannot be deleted and confirmed CTEs can be printed on Green and Black networks. New functionality, <b>Ask for Feedback</b> and <b>Get Feedback</b>, available to supervisors to solicit feedback from colleagues, former supervisors, as well as internal and external clients for performance review process has launched.</p> <p>PIPSC viewed online version as improvement over paper process.</p>	
98.4	<p><b>Official Languages – Supervision in Bilingual Region</b></p> <p>PIPSC expressed concern that some members in unilingual French positions were asked to prepare English reports for clients and projects.</p> <p>RCEA believes this issue is not being addressed for those who are in unilingual French positions whose supervisor does not meet the position's language requirements and cannot supervise them in the language of choice. To address concerns about bilingual Human</p>	

ITEM	99 <sup>th</sup> JCC - MINUTES - DISCUSSION	ACTION
98.4 (cont.)	<p>Resource (HR) services, a list of local HR staff who can provide services in French was requested.</p> <p><b>Management committed to providing bilingual HR services and will ensure employees know which resources they can contact to obtain service in their language of choice.</b></p>	E.Harrison (M.Marchand)
98.5	<p><b>Compensatory Leave Management</b></p> <p>PIPSC raised situation of employees told unused compensatory leave would not be cashed out and instruction was to change vacation time.</p> <p>Management asked for case details as HRGs remind managers to follow-up with staff regarding compensatory leave.</p>	
98.7	<p><b>Nepotism</b></p> <p>RCEA requested direction from the Senior Ethics Officer regarding scenarios involving a couple who are in a functional reporting relationship with formal administrative supervision via a more senior manager in the context of the larger team. Mandatory dialogue with Senior Ethics Officer warranted in each case.</p>	
98.8	<p><b>Support for Retiring Employees</b></p> <p><b>Planning for Retirement and the Ready for Retirement courses to be scheduled including in select regions</b> upon budget confirmation.</p> <p>RCEA noted that National Association for Federal Employees (NAFR) offered free retirement training. PIPSC commented that NRC's retirement courses are helpful, although many wait until too late to benefit. RCEA offered to post upcoming training dates on their website.</p>	E. Harrison
<b>Recurrent Business</b>		
87.15	<p><b>Membership Notification – New Hires</b></p> <p>A form was provided by RCEA containing information on new members desired from all HR teams.</p> <p><b>Management to look into the matter.</b></p>	M.Marchand
90.4	<p><b>Mental Health at NRC</b></p> <p>Management stated a wellness strategy is currently being developed by HR in response to real needs in the area of wellness and mental health along with consideration for its inclusion as part of EDI Committee mandate. Further discussions and consultations are forthcoming. Additionally a dedicated position is being staffed and Echo articles focused on wellness tools have been issued. Working Minds training, which has been well received, is also under consideration for NRC.</p> <p>RCEA reminded the Committee they have been requesting a wellness strategy since December 2016 and are dissatisfied by the lack of movement. They affirmed the appropriateness of the EDI Committee to champion this initiative.</p>	

ITEM	99 <sup>th</sup> JCC - MINUTES - DISCUSSION	ACTION
90.7	<p><b>NRC IT Systems Update</b></p> <p>Paul Wagner, Chief Information Officer indicated the Black network is secured and remains accessible. Migration is ongoing to the Green network, including the blue corporate and orange research networks.</p> <p>PIPSC raised concerns regarding slowness, backup of files, and VPN access on the Green network. They also enquired about iPhones.</p> <p>RCEA enquired about maximizing printer access with migration to green, web monitoring and <a href="#">Policy on Acceptable Network and Device Use</a> (PANDU).</p> <p>Mr. Wagner responded testing is underway to verify IT system meeting user and security needs. Printers are shared between 20 or more employees and in future same unit to be used for both Black and Green. Cloud storage and usage of iPhones are under consideration. There are less VPN licenses on Green and are first come first served. Communication of VPN status during heavy usage is being investigated. Green and Black computers are monitored via Blue Coat for violations of PANDU. Employees are required to use their Green laptop when travelling and if needed contact Security or Client Services Centre for information.</p>	
93.5	<p><b>RO/RCO Promotions – January 2019 Round</b></p> <p>PIPSC requested data on last round, including degree 3 and 4 cases not submitted to Human Resources Promotions Committee and D1 cases not approved by local management for RO/RCOs with a Met or higher CTE rating. D1 is believed unnecessary in light of the CTE and <b>will forward D1 cases of concern</b>. Recommended standardized process and tracking system. Career ending points are viewed as unfair and statistics on number and duration was requested.</p> <p><b>Management will look into data and standardized process requested.</b> Discussions of how to streamline D1 and CTE are underway.</p>	<p>P.Loder</p> <p>E.Harrison</p>
94.9	<p><b>HRB Response Times</b></p> <p>The BAs experience frequent lack of timely responses from the HR community. Worse is when there is no reply at all, This is deeply concerning and affects the BAs ability to help members.</p> <p><b>Management will encourage timely replies;</b> however, if lengthy delay please contact VP, HRB.</p>	<p>E.Harrison</p>
96.11	<p><b>Re-hiring of Terms - Benefits</b></p> <p>PIPSC troubled by impact of breaks in service related to re-hiring short-terms after reaching the maximum duration of one year less a day for a subsequent period of less than 6 months which could limit access to benefits (dental, maternity and parental) and recommended improved planning along with 6 month minimum contract. Frequent re-hiring of short-terms is an unacceptable practice and difficult for RCEA members.</p>	

New Business		
<b>99.4</b>	<p><b>Ombudsperson and Informal Conflict Resolution</b></p> <p>Erin Skrapek, Director Corporate Secretariat and Senior Ethics Officer, provided update on governance, ethics, Research Excellence, harassment prevention, Bill C-65 and the creation of an autonomous Ombudsperson as well as Informal Conflict Resolution Practitioner. Ethics, Integrity, and Respectful Workplace processes and tools to be developed in consultation with employees, BAs and management.</p> <p>BAs appreciated new roles and enquired about staff communications and extent of decision powers including wrongdoing and corrective measures. RCEA noted NRC's Violence in the Workplace policy was co-developed yet never implemented and expressed need for management accountability including nepotism and for PIPSC fear of reprisal.</p>	
<b>99.5</b>	<p><b>Alternative Work Arrangements (AWAs) – Working from Home</b></p> <p>Bargaining Agents Comments:</p> <p>Disability accommodation cases tends to be handled well by local management but the same is not the case for AWA requests to work from home commented RCEA. Flexibility is required given sandwich generation and the smaller, open workspaces of Workplace 2.0. Many members, especially those in more junior positions, will not request AWA for fear of management reaction so VPs need to advocate.</p> <p>Unclear criteria for approval / renewal, subjective operational requirements, manager's personal stance against, unnecessary disclosure of personal information and time to adjust to non-renewals are AWA issues for PIPSC.</p> <p>Management:</p> <p>Management confirmed accommodation different from AWA but managers should not unilaterally deny all requests as this flexibility supports productivity, EDI, wellness as future Employee Value Proposition. <b>Committed to raise with HRGs.</b></p>	E.Harrison (M.Marchand)
<b>99.6</b>	<p><b>2018 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) Results</b></p> <p>RCEA recognized the Pay office for high rankings in comparison to public service. NRC results also indicated many employees are not reaching out when feeling harassment or experiencing mental health / wellness difficulties which is very disconcerting to RCEA given they raised the need for a wellness strategy in December 2016 but nothing has been implemented.</p> <p>Management acknowledged need for action to address wellness and mental health and noted that a strategy is forthcoming.</p>	
<b>99.7</b>	<p><b>Staffing of Replacement TOs and OPs</b></p> <p>RCEA has heard reports that only one out of two TOs and OPs retiring or leaving are being backfilled or positions are not replacing at all, mainly</p>	

ITEM	99 <sup>th</sup> JCC - MINUTES - DISCUSSION	ACTION
<b>99.7 (cont.)</b>	from two areas of NRC. This leads to negative impact of additional work redistributed amongst remaining staff, who are already at full capacity.	
<b>99.8</b>	<p><b>Phoenix E25 Implementation – Union Dues</b></p> <p>RCEA raised concern that Public Services and Procurement Canada’s (PSPC’s) proposed six month pause in implementing union dues changes in Phoenix will create hardship for BAs and negatively impact employees with potential overpayments related to inaccurate union dues should transfers in and out be put on hold.</p>	
	<b>Roundtable</b>	
<b>99.RT</b>	<p>PIPSC enquired about retro pay for pension calculations.</p> <p><b>Management will look into applicability of form T1198 for retro pays that span multiple years.</b></p>	M.Marchand
	<b>Next meeting is scheduled for <u>Thursday</u> June 13, 2019</b>	
	<b>Meeting adjourned at: 2:00 pm</b>	