

MINISTRY of AGRICULTURE, FOOD and RURAL AFFAIRS

MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)

**March 28, 2024
Via Microsoft TEAMS**

For Management:	For OPSEU/SEFPO:
Alaina Oda (Co-chair) Colleen Fitzgerald-Hubble Basia Florio Brendan McKay (regrets)	Marcus Rangai (Co-chair) Bethany Pate

Management Resources	OPSEU/SEFPO Resource
Jared Friesen Elif Erboke	Brenton Beeston

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
Welcome and Introductions	Marcus Rangai opened the meeting at 1:30 pm	
Additional Agenda Items / Changes to the Agenda	- N/A	
Ad Hoc Meetings	Management distributed a list of ad hoc meetings to OPSEU/SEFPO prior to the meeting.	
Disclosures	Management distributed a list of disclosures/information shares to OPSEU/SEFPO prior to the meeting.	
Surplus List	Management reported that there are no employees on the surplus list.	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
Temp Agency Staff	Management reported that they are not aware of any temp agency staff currently working in the ministry as of March 28, 2024.	
Fixed Term Staff Reports	Management provided fixed term staff reports in advance of the meeting.	
Conversion Update	Management reported on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 conversions have occurred since December/January MERC meeting. 	
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Management reported on: <p>OMAFRA Anti-Racism Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On January 22, 2024, SHRB hosted a dedicated evening EDI Townhall for Food Safety Inspectors, as they have unique schedules working in various locations. There were 39 participants with attendance from regions across the province. Positive feedback was received. - Overall, there were three EDI Townhalls, reaching over 50% of staff. - Upcoming session in April 2024: “Barrier Free Recruitment for Leaders” - ARAP InsideOPS page <p>OMAFRA’s Indigenous Internship Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SHRB continues to support the development of ministry’s seven (7) current IIP interns to learn, grow and network during their placement. - The ministry launched the third intake of OMAFRA’s Indigenous Internship Program (IIP) and advertised for seven positions across various program areas. - TBS is leading the job postings and recruitment process. <p>Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DIWG has welcomed three new members (two were from the Meat Inspection Program in FSIDB) - Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Rainbow Diversity Training – Last session was held on January 17, 2024. Over the course of eight sessions since 2023, there were more than 1,000 participants. 	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active Allyship Series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Three sessions held to date (Most recent session, “Indigenous Allyship” was held on January 25, 2024) ○ “Breaking Down the Wall Between – A Justice Centered, Human Rights View on Jewish and Palestinian Relations” was held in February. ○ Black History Month Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caribbean Cooking Demonstration: Making Curry Chicken with Leslie on February 15. ▪ Documentary Film Discussion Series: Three Episodes of CBC’s Black Life: Untold Stories - Three discussion sessions were held. ▪ Anti-Black Language Training session on March 5. ○ Upcoming Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ American Sign Language Workshop <p>Indigenous Cultural Competency Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This OPS wide training program will have no new intakes for ICCT after March 31, 2024 intake. OMAFRA had a very high completion rate throughout the program. OMAFRA is waiting to hear back from TBS on what will be offered in the future. - OMAFRA will be conducting an all leaders training in spring on Indigenous Relations. <p>Diversity Career Champions Program (DCCP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 38 Employee Partners were successfully matched with an Executive Champion. This is the highest number of Employee Partner applicants OMAFRA has ever had. - Kick off events for employee partners and executive champions were held. <p>Targets to Diversify Senior Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 2023-24 Target results will soon be communicated to ministry staff and will be posted on InsideOPS page. 	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After the 2024 OPS Employee Experience Survey (EES) scores are received, SHRB will review the results and recalibrate the targets for 2024-25 and continue to publish those for transparency. - Senior Leadership Diversification InsideOPS page. <p>Diversity and Inclusion Activities Across OMAFRA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EDD has their own division working group on EDI, called IDEAA. A big accomplishment for them is that they drew on other teams like FSED team, to create a landing page on InsideOPS, tailored to division's needs. - A common commitment for directors was shared with all staff that would be included in their FORTE plans. - On the InsideOPS page, a bulletin board was created for staff to share how they were bringing their learnings into their work. - EDD procured and implemented 519 Training which focused on tools and training for staff to respond to microaggressions/other situations related to 2SLGBTQIA+ community. - The division was successful in attracting Indigenous interns so far and plans to hire two more interns in the next intake. - LTEDB is starting discussions with branch staff on identifying their needs in the EDI topics and identify learning and development actions to fill those gaps. 	
Transition Exit Initiative	<p>One additional withdrawal since December/January MERC.</p> <p>Active: 6 Approved: 138 Non-Program Exit: 32 Withdrawn: 11</p>	
Health and Safety Update	<p>Regional Offices H&S requirements: Management advised OPSEU on the vacant H&S rep, and JHSC positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 Stone Road – One Worker Co-Chair, One Worker Member, One Worker Member (OPSEU/FSI) 	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grenville – Additional Member for Inspections - Ridgetown – HSR 	
AGENDA	FOLLOW UP	ACTION REQUIRED
Staying Well in the Workplace	<p>Mental Health & Wellness Events Various mental health events were held to support OMAFRA employees during the winter season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 16: “Leading from the Edge: Innovative Strategies for Thriving within your Spheres of Control and Influence” – session for leaders by Dr. Lisa Belanger. • January 31: “Mental Agility: How We Respond to Change, Manage Stress and Have Energy to Spare” - session for all employees by Dr. Lisa Belanger. Over 1700 employees attended the event. • March 7: “Menopause in the Workplace” by Teresa Isabel Dias, founder of MenopauseED. This session received very positive feedback from participants. • EFAP TELUS Health sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seasonal Stress – December 2023 ○ Care for the Aging – January 2024 ○ Parenting the Tween Years – February 2024 ○ Set Limits at Work and In Your Personal Life – March 2024 • March 26: “Overview of OPS Mental Health Resources” by The Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness of TBS. • Mental Health and Wellness resources 	
Future of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management advised that the OMAFRA Alternative Office (hoteling) pilot is being extended to June 30, 2024. - No further updates on this item. 	
2024 Employee Experience Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management advised that the survey was fielded January 24 - February 15, 2024. And the results will be available to staff in the Summer. 	
Strategic Planning Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No updates on this item. 	

AGENDA	FOLLOW UP	ACTION REQUIRED
AGENDA	NEW BUSINESS	ACTION REQUIRED
Support Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Article 30 related to support persons and its applications in the workplace was discussed. - A related grievance was filed on the matter which is currently active. 	
Next Meeting Date	June 18, 2024, 9:30 - 12:00 pm	

Approved by:

Marcus Rangai, OPSEU/SEFPO Co-Chair
Alaina Oda, Employer Co-Chair

March 28, 2024