

Fulcrum Publishing Society
Board of Directors
MINUTES

Sunday, October 30, 2022
Zoom, 10:00am-1:00pm

Present: Kalki Nagaratnam, Brendan Keane, Ludvica Boota (ex-officio), Jasmine McKnight (ex-officio), Hailey Otten (ex-officio), Emma Godmere, Amit Shanbhog, Keelan Buck, Chaymaa Nadi, Erik Chin

Partially Present:

Absent (with reason): Claire Liu, Mark Asfar, Sam Coulavin

1. Commencement of Meeting

In the absence of S. Coulavin, K. Nagaratnam called on the Board to see if anyone would like to volunteer as a temporary Chair for the October meeting. K. Buck volunteered as Chair.

The meeting commenced at 10:01 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

K. Nagaratnam amended the agenda. The in-camera session, Treasurer and Finance Committee reports, and Policy Manual Amendment were removed from the agenda. K. Nagaratnam motioned to remove these items. B. Keane seconded the motion.

E. Godmere motioned to approve the agenda. K. Nagaratnam seconded the motion. The motion passed.

3. Kahoot Quiz

E. Godmere presented the October Kahoot quiz.

4. Approval of September 2022 Meeting Minutes

K. Nagaratnam motioned to approve the September 2022 Meeting Minutes. E. Godmere seconded the motion. The motion passed.

5. Standing Actions List

“Explore new pro bono lawyer options” item was removed from the Standing Actions list. A target deadline of November 6th to update the Policy Manual available on the website to include the two new Governance Committee policies from September’s Board meeting was set.

6. Board Work Plan

“Town Hall,” “Board Holiday Social,” and “Approve Revised Current Year Budget” were added to the Board Work Plan.

7. EIC Report

J. McKnight presented the EIC report.

Staff Update

The Fall semester intern has settled into their role, taking on one or two articles a week. They have been a positive addition to the team.

Volunteers

The contributors and freelancers have officially joined the Fulcrum team, handing in articles for various sections this in October. S. Rashid has taken charge of the onboarding process and is keeping track of freelancers. The sign-up period for the Fall semester closed earlier in October, though sign-ups for the freelance program will reopen in January.

Content

For News, the month began with post-Panda parties and the community’s response. Y. Mutombo also covered a former University of Ottawa student’s creation of a grassroots non-profit for Black and racialized nature lovers, the Ottawa People’s Commission’s public hearings, and how students can carry truth and reconciliation forward year-round.

In Arts, V. Drybrough, G. Kim-Shin, and contributors have put out many movie reviews, including a new series for October: The Fulcrum’s favourite Halloween movies. The arts section has also found interesting exhibits and events to cover, on and off campus

In Sports, the Fulcrum team did a great job putting out a quality article quickly for the Panda game. Some Gee-Gee’s teams are seeing the end of their seasons while others are getting started. J. McKnight wrote a detailed preview of the basketball teams’ upcoming seasons.

M. McConkey has been consistent in devising a variety of topics for the Opinions section and utilizing the different subsections. Some highlights in October include a point/counterpoint about the great Starbucks debate and an article discussing the reasons students should not be forced to buy a U-Pass.

Features had a piece on the metaverse and digital consumerism by G. Kim-Shin, where a University of Ottawa professor weighed in on the possible effects and lingering questions of the future of digital shopping.

In Science, E. Williams consistently brought new ideas and topics. In October, she wrote an article on the locomotion of amphibious centipedes, and touched on the Soapbox Science 2022 event.

By the 31st of October, there were two full virtual issues (PDFs). K. Holub has put much time and effort into the redesign and biweekly editions. Earlier in October, the second issue heavily focussed on Panda Game, and the second issue featured most of the special Halloween content.

8. ED Report

L. Boota presented the ED report.

Finances

PayPal

Due to the EFT rejections on September 3rd and 17th, as mentioned in my September report, L. Boota had to pay the full two weeks salary from the PayPal account which is why the PayPal is low. There will need to be a transfer of \$1,500 in the account to cover the freelance payments and the upcoming Zoom charge. This will be voted on at the end of the ED report.

Ads

The “big box” Ad for the NCC ran for 2 week and we received \$150.

The City of Ottawa ad will be taken down Oct 31 and they will be invoiced for \$300/flat rate for one month (31 days).

The Embassy of Japan has bought “big box” ad space for one and half months for \$450. They will be invoiced in December.

Audit

C. Liu and L. Boota will be meeting with the auditor in late October or early November to go over some questions and adjustments that they suggested.

Change in Signing Authority

K. Nagaratnam, K. Buck, and L. Boota met with TD and completed the paperwork for the change in signing authority.

Otter.ai Reimbursement

K. Nagaratnam's Visa was charged \$58.88 in July and \$144.24 in September for the Otter.ai license. K. Nagaratnam's Visa card was used during the ED transition period in 2021 and was never removed. K. Nagaratnam's Visa card has been removed and L. Boota's has been added for now. A credit card is necessary to have a paid account.

A cheque will be issued in the amount of \$203.12 to reimburse K. Nagaratnam for the expense.

Annual Website Payment

Fullerview Design received their payment for services from January 1st, 2022, to December 31st, 2022.

The total monthly fee currently with HST is \$169.49. The total cost with HST included for 12 months of service is \$2,033.88.

Canada Summer Jobs

A cheque for CSJ in the amount of \$13,113.00 has been received and deposited.

HUB Insurance

L. Boota spoke with Hub insurance to tell them the Fulcrum will go ahead with the renewal premium of \$2,805 + \$95 Policy Fee + 8% Tax. L. Boota awaits final confirmation from their broker and instructions on payment.

Human Resources

Winter Business Intern

The Fall business Intern asked if their internship could be extended for the Winter term. Because we are in the middle of projects, L. Boota agreed because the Fulcrum is in the

middle of projects. L. Boota is working with the connections program to complete the paperwork for the Winter internship.

Editorial Board

All certificates have been completed. The only one being waited on is the safety representative.

L. Boota will attend the Editorial Board meeting on October 31st to remind everyone about the Townhall and discuss the upcoming performance appraisals.

The EIC's have discussed possible team bonding activities as well as a holiday dinner. They have decided to hold the holiday dinner at Craft on December 5th at 7 p.m. \$25 per staff member for food will be allocated for a total of \$375. L. Boota will work with the restaurant to figure out the best way to address this.

Town Hall

The 2022 Town Hall will take place on Sunday, November 20th, 2022, between 10 p.m. to 3 p.m. The meeting will take place in FSS 1005.

The agenda for the Town Hall is in progress. In addition to the Professionalism and Harassment in the Workplace Workshop, L. Boota spoke with E. Godmere about bringing in another speaker or a panel in the journalism field. If that does not happen, a round table discussion about how to expand the website will be held instead.

Webmaster

The Webmaster position has been advertised on LinkedIn and L. Boota will also have it up on Indeed the week of October 31st. There have been several applicants on LinkedIn and L. Boota is sorting through them.

Operations

Partnerships

P. Akarasewi, the Community Outreach Coordinator for CHUO (89.1 FM), reached out about partnering with them for the news. They asked if the Editorial Board would be interested in a spot for 30 minutes to one hour once a week to either read the news, have a debate, or a weekly program.

The start date would be January and in return, the Fulcrum would have a radio station ad for the show on their site. The Fulcrum had a past partnership with the radio station. This initiative is still in the development stage.

Website

H. Otten notified Fullview Design that the website went down on October 27, 2022. The security certificates had expired and were not renewed. Security certificates are part of the service with Fullview Design and listed in the contract. Fullview took care of the issue and will be reviewing their relationship with the third party provider that deals with the certificates.

L. Boota would like to approve to add \$1,500 to the PayPal account. K. Nagaratnam motioned to transfer \$1,500 to the PayPal account. E. Godmere seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Keelan will sign for Kalki's reimbursement cheque for the fees incurred for Otter.ai subscription.

9. President Report

K. Nagaratnam presented the President Report.

Board Matters

Board Seats

There are two vacant seats remaining on the 2022-23 Board: Student Representative and University Representative. K. Nagaratnam urged the board to invite anyone they know who would fit the vacant roles to apply.

Fall Town Hall

K. Nagaratnam reminded the board that the 2022 in-person Town Hall is Sunday, November 20, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. K. Nagaratnam sent the Board a placeholder calendar invite.

Commercial Insurance Policy Renewal

K. Nagaratnam mentioned that an electronic vote was held to approve the renewal of the FPS's commercial insurance and the motion passed. L. Boota filled out the paperwork and the general liability limit has been increased for the new policy term.

Audit

The auditors sent a draft audit earlier in October which was reviewed by the Finance Committee. However, L. Boota and C. Liu have questions about some of the entries and so they will meet with the auditors. When the revised audit has been reviewed by the Finance Committee, it will be sent to the Board for approval, most likely through an electronic vote.

Board Holiday Dinner

K. Nagaratnam proposed a holiday dinner for December for an in-person Board social which will be open to ex-officio directors. K. Nagaratnam asked the Board to respond to a poll to inform her of Board members' interest and availability.

10. Committee Reports

HR Committee

K. Nagaratnam presented a verbal report for the HR Committee.

K. Nagaratnam stated that the HR Committee has not had any meetings lately, but that the committee's work is getting done by email. The committee has two new policies to present today. A key focus of the HR Committee right now are the performance evaluations and exit interviews.

Marketing and Community Relations Committee

E. Godmere presented a verbal report for the Marketing and Community Relations Committee.

E. Godmere stated that the 80th-anniversary project now has a winter timeline. The Marketing and Community Relations Committee intends to meet again in the current calendar year.

Governance Committee

A. Shanbhoug presented a written report for the Governance Committee.

Committee met on October 19th and discussed the draft By-law and Policy Structure Documents. A. Shanbhoug mentioned that the Meeting Minutes for this meeting are not yet finalized, but they should be available in the Google Drive soon.

The next Governance Committee meeting is scheduled for 18 January 2022. The Committee may meet in mid-to-late November, schedule permitting.

Action Required is required for the Board Ratification of provisional By-laws amendment. The proposed amendment will allow for the ratification of committee members during any board meeting, since current By-laws stipulate members must be ratified at the first meeting after the AGM.

Action is also required for review of FPS Policy Structure Document by Committee Chairs. As all committees are in a period of policy review and updating, this document will serve as a map for existing policies and suggested changes. This will ensure: Committees are in sync to avoid duplication of policy review/development; the Board can track, in tandem, the proposed By-law changes; and the Board can assess volume of work and outsource if needed.

A. Shanbhog mentioned that the draft ByLaw should likely be ready to present to the Board by January.

11. ByLaw Amendment

Amendment for ByLaw 2 section 5.01 (n). As per section 12.05. A. Shanbhog motioned to make the provisional amendment to section 5.01 (n). The motion was seconded by B. Keane. The motion passed.

The change to the above section is as follows: *The Board shall appoint, **at its earliest convenience not later than its first meeting following the Board taking office**, all individuals to sit on any committees that are required **and may amend this membership from time to time**.*

12. Approval of New Committee Members

C. Nadi stated her interest in joining the Governance Committee. A. Shanbhog motioned to approve C. Nadi for the Governance Committee. E. Godmere seconded the motion. The motion passed.

E. Chin stated his interest in joining the Governance Committee. A. Shanbhog motioned to approve E. Chin for the Governance Committee. C. Nadi seconded the motion. The motion passed.

13. Approval of New HR Policies

Fitness for work policy is focused on setting and defining the FPS's expectations that all employees report to the workplace and remain fit for work, able to perform the essential duties of their job safely and effectively.

Workplace Accommodation policy is focused on the steps taken to adjust rules, policies, practices, and/or situations that negatively impact an individual or group. The FPS is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where all employees are treated with respect and dignity, so this policy ensures the FPS will act in a manner consistent with its obligations under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. The FPS will provide workplace accommodation to ensure that individuals who are otherwise able to work are not discriminated against by being excluded from doing so when working conditions can be adjusted without causing undue hardship to the employer.

K. Nagaratnam motioned to approve the Fitness for Work and Workplace Accommodation policies. E. Chin seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14. Revisit Standing Actions List

Add HR Policies to the Policy Manual was added to the Standing Actions List. The Governance Committee will be responsible for this action.

15. Adjournment of Meeting

K. Nagaratnam motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

16. Appendices

Fulcrum Publishing Society – Board of Directors

Editor-in-Chief Report

Sunday, Oct. 30th, 2022 10:00 a.m.

Zoom



By: Hailey Otten and Jasmine McKnight

1. Staff Update

Our Fall semester intern, Caroline, has settled into her role fairly quickly. Taking on one or two articles a week like a staff writer, she has already submitted Fulcrum-level work and made things pretty easy for both section editors and ourselves. So far, she has been a positive addition to the team.

2. Volunteers

Our contributors and freelancers have officially joined the team, handing in a number of

great articles for various sections this month. Sanjida has taken charge of the onboarding process and keeping track of freelancers. Our sign-up for this semester closed earlier this month, and we'll be reopening it for more volunteers in January.

3. Content

In news, the month kicked off with post-Panda parties and the response from the community. Yannick covered a former U of O student's creation of a grassroots non-profit for Black and racialized nature lovers, the Ottawa People's Commission's public hearings, and how students can carry truth and reconciliation forward year-round.

As usual, arts has been a very reliable section, producing plenty of articles. Victoria, Grace, and contributors have put out lots of movie reviews, including a fun new series: the Fulcrum's favourite Halloween movies. We are also happy with the fact that the arts section has found interesting exhibits and events to cover, both on and off campus

In sports, the Panda game is obviously a huge event for the U of O, and the Fulcrum team did a great job putting out a quality article quickly. Gee-Gees sports are switching gears, as some teams are seeing the end of their seasons and others are just getting started. Jasmine wrote a detailed preview about the basketball teams' upcoming seasons.

Matthew has been super consistent with coming up with a variety of topics for the opinions section, as well as utilizing the different subsections. Some favourites this month include a point/counterpoint about the great Starbucks debate, and an article discussing the reasons students should not be forced to by a U-Pass.

Features saw a fantastic piece on the metaverse and digital consumerism by Grace, where a U of O prof weighed in on the possible effects and lingering questions of the future of digital shopping.

Science has been another reliable section, with Emma consistently bringing new ideas and topics to the table. This month, she taught us all about the locomotion of amphibious centipedes, and touched on the Soapbox Science 2022 event: Meet Ottawa's top female scientists.

By tomorrow (31), October will have seen two full virtual issues (PDFs), as well. Kai has put a ton of time and effort into the redesign and biweekly editions. Earlier this month, our second issue heavily focussed on Panda Game, and tomorrow's issue features most of our special Halloween content.

4. Other

Overall, October was a pretty straightforward month where we focussed on fine-tuning the style of our articles and breaking down repeated errors so production is much quicker and smoother for everyone involved. As our writers and editors improve, so will our quality of content, so we're excited to see people getting more comfortable in their positions.

Fulcrum Publishing Society – Board of Directors

Executive Director's Report

Sunday, October 30th, 2022

Ludvica Boota



1. Finances

Snapshot of Accounts

The below financial information is accurate as of 10:30 AM on Friday, October 28, 2022.

	September 2022	October 2022	Difference
TOTAL	\$525,235.33	\$512,033.49	(\$13,201.84)
Chequing (TD)	\$373,071.54	\$359,925.03	(\$13,146.51)
Investments (RBC)	\$91,007.36	\$90,952.45	(\$54.91)
PayPal Balance	\$1,156.43	\$1,156.43	-
Canada Business Loan (COVID-19)	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000

PayPal

Due to the EFT rejections on Sept 3rd(Payroll #18) and Sept 17(Payroll #19) (as mentioned in my September report) I had to pay the full two weeks salary from our PayPal account, which is why our PayPal is low. We need to transfer \$1,500 in the account to cover the freelance payments and the upcoming Zoom charge.

Ads

The “big box” Ad for the NCC ran for 2 week and we received \$150.

The City of Ottawa ad will be taken down Oct 31 and they will be invoiced for \$300/flat rate for one month (31 days).

The Embassy of Japan has bought “big box” ad space for one and half months for \$450. They will be invoiced in December.

Audit

Claire and I will be meeting with the auditor this week to go over some questions on adjustments that they suggested.

Change in Signing Authority

Kalki, Keelan and myself met with TD and completed the paperwork for the change in signing authority.

Otterai - Reimbursement

Kalki's visa was charged \$58.88 (July) and \$144.24 (Sept) for the Otterai license. Her visa card was used during the ED transition period last year (2021) and was never removed. Her visa card has been removed and mine added, for now. A credit card is necessary to have a paid account.

A cheque will be issued in the amount of \$203.12 to reimburse her for the expense.

Website payment - Annual

Fullerview Design received their payment for services from Jan 1, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022. The total monthly fee currently with HST is \$169.49. The total cost with HST included for 12 months of service is \$2,033.88.

Canada Summer Jobs

We received the cheque for CSJ in the amount of \$13,113.00, which has been deposited.

HUB Insurance

I spoke with Hub insurance to let them know we will go ahead with the renewal premium of \$2,805 + \$95 Policy Fee + 8% Tax. I am awaiting final confirmation from their broker and instructions on payment.

2. Human Resources

Winter Business Intern

The fall business Intern asked if his internship could be extended for the winter term. Because we are in the middle of projects, I agreed and am working with the connections program to complete the paperwork for the winter internship.

EDBoard

Certificates have all been completed. The only one we are waiting on is the safety rep. I will be addressing it this week.

I will be attending EdBoard on Monday Oct 31st to remind everyone about the Townhall and discuss the upcoming performance appraisals.

The EIC's have also discussed possible team bonding activities as well as a holiday dinner. We have decided to hold the holiday dinner at Craft on December 5th at 7 PM. Like last year, we will be allocating \$25/staff member for food. This would be a total of \$375. I will work with the restaurant to figure out the best way to address this.

TownHall

Date: Sunday November 20th anywhere between 10AM -3PM

ROOM: FSS 1005

The agenda is in progress. In addition to the Professionalism and Harassment in the Workplace Workshop, I spoke with Emma about bringing in another speaker or a panel in the journalism field. If that does not happen we will do a rebound table discussion about how to expand the website.

Webmaster

The webmaster position has been advertised on LinkedIn and I will have it up on Indeed this week. We have had several applications from LinkedIn and I am sorting through them. Most applications are not from Canada.

3. Operations

Partnerships:

Parujee (Mickey) Akarasewi, Community Outreach Coordinator for [89.1 FM](#) Ottawa -Gatineau's Independent Radio Station, reached out about partnering with them for the news. They asked if the editorial Board would be interested in a spot for 30 minutes to one hour once a week to either read the news, have a debate or a weekly program. Content was up to the Editorial Board.

The start date would be January and in return, the Fulcrum would have a radio station ad for the show on our site.

The Fulcrum had a past partnership with the radio station.

This initiative is still in the development stage.

Other operations projects

Completed:

- Website maintenance document
- Freelance Policy Revise & Review
- Office Procedures: Create a clearly defined office process for things like signing out equipment, submitting expenses, etc. * needs to be reviewed and maintained
- Developing new training material and packages
- Integrating the offline /online office and making the most of Google workspace. (Hybrid office model) * needs to be reviewed and maintained
- Creating a set schedule for the publishing year (beginning/end dates, evaluations, team dinners, etc.) *needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure on track or to make changes
- Professional development opportunities
- Team Bonding activities

In progress:

- Website Revamp - requires Board approval before moving forward

4. **Website**

Hality notified Fullview Design that our website went down on October 27, 2002. The security certificates had expired and were not renewed. Security certificates are part of the service with Fullview Design and listed in our contract. Fullview took care of the issue and will be reviewing their relationship with the third party provider that deals with the certificates.

Fulcrum Publishing Society – Board of Directors

President's Report

Sunday, October 30th, 2022



Kalki Nagaratnam

1. Board Matters

Board Seats

There are just two vacant seats remaining on the 2022-23 Board:

- Student Representative
- University Representative

Please invite anyone you know who would fit these profiles to apply.

Fall Town Hall

As a reminder, this year's in-person Town Hall is on Sunday, November 20, 10:00am-3:00pm. I sent everyone a placeholder calendar invite. So far, we plan to have a workshop on professionalism and workplace harassment training for staff led by Project AGAPE, a brainstorming discussion led by Ludvica and the business intern, and a panel with a few individuals in the industry moderated by Emma! Please let Ludvica and me know if you cannot make it.

Commercial Insurance Policy Renewal

An electronic vote was held to approve the renewal of our commercial insurance and the motion passed. Ludvica filled out the paperwork and our general liability limit has been increased for the new policy term.

Audit

The auditors sent a draft audit earlier this month which was reviewed by the Finance Committee. However, Ludvica and Claire have questions about some of the entries. They will be meeting with the auditors next week. Ideally, the audit should be complete within six months from the end of the fiscal year. Once the revised audit has been reviewed by the Finance Committee, it will be sent to the Board for approval – most likely via electronic vote.

Board Holiday Dinner

The Board typically has one in-person social event. I propose a holiday dinner in December – open to our ex-officio directors. It will be great to see everyone in a different setting and not through a screen. Please respond to the poll to let me know if there is interest/availability.

In-Camera Matter

We will go in-camera at the end of the Board meeting to discuss updates on the office.

2. Calendar Items

Fall Town Hall

Sunday, November 20, at 10:00am

Next Board Meeting

Sunday, November 27, at 10:00am

Holiday Dinner*

TBD

Fulcrum Publishing Society – Board of Directors

Governance Committee Report

Sunday, October 30th, 2022



Amit Shanbhoug

Updates

1. Committee met and discussed the draft By-law and Policy Structure Documents.
Meeting Minutes not polished yet, should be available in the drive within the next week.
 - a. [19 October Committee Meeting Agenda](#)
 - b. [FPS Draft By-law](#)
 - c. [FPS Policy Structure](#) (Early Draft)

2. Next meeting is scheduled for 18 January 2022. Committee may meet in mid-late Nov, schedule permitting.

Action Required

1. Board Ratification of provisional By-laws amendment.
 - a. Committee proposes amendment to allow for the ratification of committee members during any board meeting. Current By-laws stipulate members must be ratified at the first meeting after the AGM.

2. Review of FPS Policy Structure Document by Committee Chairs.
 - a. As all committees are in a period of policy review and updating, this document will serve to map our existing policies and suggested changes. Will ensure:

- i. Committees are in sync to avoid duplication of policy review/development
- ii. Board can track in tandem with proposed By-law changes
- iii. Board can assess volume of work and outsource if needed

Fitness for Work Policy

Policy Statement

This policy sets out FPS' expectations that all employees report to the workplace fit for work and remain fit for work and able to perform the essential duties of their job safely and effectively. FPS is committed to supporting and accommodating employees who may not be fit for work due to disability, as required under the *Ontario Human Right Code*, and to providing a safe and healthy workplace for employees under its obligation as an employer under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Definitions

Fit for Work: A physical and psychological state that allows the employee to perform the essential duties of their job competently and in a manner which does not compromise the safety and health of themselves or others

On duty: Any time an employee is conducting FPS-related business and undertaking duties and responsibilities associated with their contract of employment.

Substance: Any substance that, if consumed, has the effect of intoxicating the user or impairing their ability to perform their job duties, including, but not limited to, alcohol, opiates, hallucinogens, cannabinoids, or medication (either prescription or over-the-counter).

Procedure

Obligations of the Employees

1. Employees must report fit for work and remain fit for work while on duty, including all scheduled and unscheduled work (overtime, etc.).
2. Employees shall immediately inform their supervisor if they are not fit for work, including situations where the employee has consumed a substance that impairs their ability to perform their job duties.
3. Employees shall immediately inform their supervisor if they become aware of or witness behaviour raising concerns about whether another employee is fit for work such that the health and safety of themselves or others may be compromised.
4. An employee instructed to temporarily cease their duties due to behaviours that indicate they are not fit for work, must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the FPS, that they are fit to work before resuming their duties.

Responsibilities of the Supervisor

5. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees under their supervision are fit for work.
6. Supervisors shall consult with the HR Committee if they observe possible signs of fitness to work concerns with their employees (e.g., changes in attendance, performance, behaviour).
7. If an employee advises they are not fit for work or demonstrates behaviours that indicate they are not fit for work, the supervisor will instruct the employee to temporarily cease their duties to allow for an appropriate assessment. This assessment may include leaving the workplace in a safe manner to attend to their healthcare needs and to seek medical attention as required.
8. Supervisors shall immediately report the incident to the HR Committee so that appropriate next steps can be identified.

Accommodations

9. FPS will support and accommodate employees who disclose a disability (e.g., substance dependence or other medical issues affecting their fitness to work) to the point of undue hardship as per the Workplace Accommodation Policy.

Workplace Accommodation Policy

Policy Statement

FPS is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where all employees are treated with respect and dignity. FPS will act in a manner consistent with its obligations under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

FPS will provide a workplace that ensures equal opportunity free from discrimination based on race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex (includes pregnancy or child-birth), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability (includes mental or physical disability, disfigurement and dependence on alcohol or a drug) or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended.

FPS will provide workplace accommodation, to the point of undue hardship. The purpose of accommodation is to ensure that individuals who are otherwise able to work are not discriminated against by being excluded from doing so when working conditions can be adjusted without causing undue hardship to the employer.

Definitions

Accommodation: Steps taken to adjust rules, policies, practices, or situations that have a negative impact on an individual or groups, protected under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Undue Hardship: When accommodation adjustments to the workplace would be prohibitively expensive or create undue risks to health or safety. Each situation will be viewed as unique and assessed individually. A claim of undue hardship must be supported with facts and a detailed analysis of options, impressionistic or speculative reasons will not suffice.

Procedure

Accommodation for Job Applicants

1. When contacted for an interview, job applicants will be advised that FPS has an accommodation policy and asked whether they require accommodation to participate in the hiring process.
2. The hiring team will evaluate the job applicant's request for accommodation and may request more information from the applicant to facilitate the accommodation.
3. If a request for accommodation is denied, the reasons why will be clearly communicated to the job applicant.

Accommodation for Employees

4. An employee may request accommodation by notifying their supervisor. Alternatively, accommodation needs may be identified through supervisor and employee collaboration in response to concerns raised by the supervisor.
5. The supervisor will document the request, including the employee's name, position and date of the request, any details provided by the employee and any accommodation options suggested by the employer or employee.
6. The supervisor may request supporting documentation from the employee to identify accommodation needs and options (e.g., details of restrictions or limitations). When dealing with an accommodation request based on disability, the supervisor should refer to Appendix A which provides guidance on asking for medical information to support the accommodation request.
7. The supervisor will consider accommodation options including, but not limited to, workstation adjustments; reassignment of job tasks; changes to scheduling or hours of work; leaves of absence; and temporary or permanent reassignment.
8. The supervisor will discuss available accommodation options with the employee. The accommodation preferences of the employee will be considered. However, the supervisor may proceed with an option that is less costly or easier to provide, when it meets the employee's accommodation needs. The supervisor will clearly communicate the reasons for his or her decision to the employee.
9. The supervisor will review the accommodation measures with the employee on a regular basis to confirm they continue to be necessary and effective.
10. If the available accommodation options raise the likelihood of causing undue hardship, the supervisor will refer the matter to the HR Committee for decision.

Appeals

11. If an employee or applicant has been denied accommodation, is not satisfied with the accommodation offered, or believes that their request has not been handled in accordance with this policy, they may request a second opinion from the Board of Directors.
12. An employee or applicant may also file a discrimination complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Privacy and Confidentiality

13. All records associated with accommodation requests will be maintained in a secure location, separate from employees' personnel files, and will only be shared with persons who need the information. All individuals involved in the accommodation process will comply with the requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to protect personal information.

Appendix A Requesting Medical Information

Consider Whether Medical Information Is Required

Over the course of our lives, many of us will need workplace accommodation at some point. Healthy workplaces are built on mutual trust. Employers should exercise restraint in requesting medical information to support an accommodation request. For example, if an employee's accommodation request is obviously required to meet their disability need, employers should not ask for a doctor's letter. It is obvious that an employee who uses a wheelchair needs automatic door openers, and elevators to access the workplace.

Gather and Consider the Relevant Medical Information

To appropriately accommodate an employee's disability the employer may require information from a medical professional about the employee's accommodation needs. Employers must keep in mind that requesting medical information for the accommodation process requires the balancing of two competing rights: the employer's right to manage the workplace and the employee's right to privacy.

When asking for medical information to support an accommodation request, employers must use the least intrusive means possible and respect the employee's privacy rights. In most cases the necessary medical information can be provided by the employee's family doctor or specialist. The medical information will allow the employer to make an informed decision about reasonable accommodation options. Employers need to know:

- a) Whether the employee has a disability; and if so
- b) What accommodations the employee needs.

Provide Relevant Information to the Medical Professional

The employer should provide the medical professional with the following information:

- Description of the employee's job function/responsibilities.
- The employee's work schedule.
- Whether the employee is in a safety-sensitive position.
- Any other relevant information that is particular to the workplace.

Ask the Medical Professional for Information

The employer should ask the following questions:

- Does the employee have a disability that requires accommodation?
- What accommodations does the employee require?
 - For example: are there any restrictions or limitations to the performance of the job?
- What is the employee's prognosis?
- If the employee is off work, are there specific recommendations for accommodation that will facilitate a safe and successful return to work?

Note: Employers are rarely entitled to the employee's diagnosis.

Medical information may come in various formats—from a hand-written note to a formal report. Based on the information provided, the employer should be able to determine whether the employee:

- Is able to perform the essential duties of their position with appropriate accommodation.
- Needs to move to a different position due to their accommodation requirements.
- Needs to be off work, and if so, for how long.

Once the medical information has been provided, the employer has the primary responsibility for accommodating the employee.

Include the Employee in the Accommodation Process

The employee has a duty to cooperate in the accommodation process. This duty can include attending appointments as scheduled, providing complete and accurate information to the medical professional, and providing the employer with the relevant medical information obtained (unless it is sent directly to the employer). The employee has the final say whether their medical information can be released.

The employee has the right to reasonable accommodation – that is accommodation that meets their needs – but they do not have the right to perfect or their preferred accommodation.

Exercise Caution When Requesting Independent Medical Evaluations (IME)

Note: Employers should exercise caution and seek legal advice before requesting an IME –particularly in the first situation – because asking an employee to undergo one infringes on their privacy rights. As with any other medical assessment, the employer is entitled only to the medical information they need to accommodate the employee.

In certain situations, employers can ask an employee to have their accommodation needs assessed by a medical professional who is not their family doctor or specialist. This process is called an Independent Medical Evaluation (IME).

The employer cannot ask for any more medical information from an IME than they can ask from the employee's own family doctor or specialist. Likewise, the employer should provide the same information given to the employee's medical professional. There are generally four situations when an employer can ask an employee to undergo an IME:

1. When medical information provided by the employee's medical professional is unclear or insufficient, the employer must go back to that medical professional,

- identify the deficiency and request clarification. If the information subsequently provided is not responsive, the employer may then consider requesting an IME.
2. When there is contractual right to request an employee to undergo an IME, provided, for example, in a collective agreement.
 3. When there is a legislative requirement in certain industries.
 4. When an employee requests the assistance of a specialist.

Good Practices for IMEs:

- Allow the employee to select the physician from a list of acceptable specialists.
- Agree in advance to accept the results of the IME.
- Provide the employee with time off work to attend the IME.
- Pay for the cost of the IME.

These practices are especially applicable to the 1st and 4th IME scenario.

Exercise Caution When Removing an Employee from the Workplace

Generally, an employee should not be removed from the workplace unless there is medical information to clearly support this. However, if an employee has health needs requiring urgent attention, or if they pose a serious risk to the safety of themselves or others, an employer should deal with this immediately. An employer should obtain legal advice when removing an employee from the workplace, and other agencies or offices may need to be contacted.