Present: Peter Barr, Terrence Birmingham, Sara Cressman, Tony Giovinazzo, Michael Herz, Dennis Huber, Ranjini Jha, David Saunders, David Taylor, Marilyn Thompson, Ken Vetzal, Rebecca Wickens (secretary)

Regrets: James Rush

Consultants/Resources: Linda Byron, Sarah Hadley, Lee Hornberger, Joan Kennedy, Sue McGrath, Allan Shapira

Organization of Meeting: Peter Barr took the chair, and Rebecca Wickens acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present. The agenda was accepted as distributed.

OPEN SESSION

1. APPROVAL OF THE 22 OCTOBER 2021 MINUTES (OPEN SESSION) AND BUSINESS ARISING
There was a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. Giovinazzo and Huber. Carried.

2. EXECUTION AGAINST THE WORK PLAN
This item was received for information. The secretary noted that there are adjustments to make in order to reflect the relative roles of the Pension Investment Committee and Pension & Benefits Committee. The chair noted that he and the chairs of Pension Investment Committee and Finance & Investment Committee had their annual meeting and agreed to review the mandates for all three committees with a view to clarifying responsibilities and increasing efficiency.

3. UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT PENSION PLAN INITIATIVES
Members heard: Trent University was just approved to join the University Pension Plan (UPP) for one of their pension plans; the universities that participated in creating the UPP have either joined or are considering it; others may join, but the bargaining process takes time.

4. Q3 PENSION DASHBOARD
Members heard: results are positive for this quarter – going concern deficit, risk-free deficit and solvency deficit decreased; drivers included asset performance in line with expectations, increased contributions, and an increase in the effective interest rate; this represents a significant turn-around over the last twelve months; in early 2022, the committee should be prepared to discuss filing the valuation. Discussion included: benefits of filing the valuation if the results continue in a positive direction; inflation expectations – potential impact on the valuation, the indexation provision in the plan and the possibility of inflation exceeding the 5% cap. Aon Hewitt will look at inflation trends.

5. POLICIES 23 AND 59 – FOLLOW-UP
Kennedy provided an update on a meeting with representatives from Finance, Legal & Immigration Services and Human Resources, reporting: following a review of the data, the cost of moving eligibility for full benefits from three years to two would cause total compensation costs to exceed 1% per year during the moderation period (from Bill 124); the university is seeking a formal legal opinion to confirm the analysis and options.

6. INDEXING OF PLAN MAXIMA
Kennedy took members through the report, noting: the adjustments were calculated by Aon Hewitt; the ongoing annual cost of the increases to health and dental benefits maxima will be $99,300; the flat benefit amount for retiree life insurance coverage will increase from $5,700 to $5,900. In response to a question about how the university’s retiree life insurance coverage compares, Byron reported: some universities do not offer this benefit; of the nine that do, Waterloo is fourth or fifth.
There was a motion to approve the cost of living adjustment to the health and dental benefit maxima as presented, effective 1 January 2022. Birmingham and Vetzal. Carried.
There was a motion to approve the cost of living adjustment to the retiree life insurance coverage as presented, effective 1 January 2022. Jha and Saunders. Carried.

7. EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UTILIZATION
Kennedy reviewed the data in the presentation and report distributed with the agenda, highlighting: the current services provided; Homewood will maintain their rates until 2023 when the university will go out to bid for these services; utilization rates are trending upward; the university’s utilization rates are above Homewood’s benchmark data for all institutions and for higher education clients; counselling has higher utilization than life coaching; crisis management services was trending downward, but is expected to go back up. In discussion, members requested: the data be shown as a percentage of total eligible population, not only an absolute number; reasons that the university’s utilization rates exceed Homewood’s benchmark, including different demographics and how the program is marketed; whether and when services will return to in person or a hybrid of in person and online.

With no further business in open session, the committee moved into confidential session.

NEXT MEETING
The next regular meeting is scheduled for Friday 10 December 2021, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon.