



Athabasca University

www.athabascau.ca

OPPORTUNITY PROFILE | Director, Labour Relations

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

As Canada's leading open university, Athabasca University's (AU) approach to accessible yet transformative education and research is truly distinctive. Its academic mission is to remove barriers to post-secondary education for learners, regardless of their age, location, career, or educational background. Almost 70% of undergraduate program students are the first in their families to get a degree.

Based in the beautiful region of Athabasca, with staff located throughout Alberta, AU is one of four Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities (CARUs) in the province. AU is a public, board-governed, open, and online university serving more than 35,000 student learners across Alberta, Canada and around the world.

With Faculties spanning health, science, humanities, and business – AU provides more than 70 undergraduate and graduate programs in ways that are uniquely accessible and responsive to today's demands of life and work.

AU seeks to be an agile and inclusive workplace in which all team members can grow, make their highest contribution, and each make a difference to our academic vision and mission. AU is strongly committed to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and with Indigenous Peoples and communities, conciliation.

Approaching an exciting new phase of strategic planning in late 2023 and guided by a new President, Alex Clark, AU is now seeking to build on its 50 years of growth as Canada's leader and innovator in distance and online education. With a newly established and highly inclusive Senior Leadership Team, who are committed to supporting all team members contribute and grow, and focussed on building an innovative growth-oriented working culture: AU is primed for an exciting and bold next phase.

To learn more about Athabasca University visit www.athabascau.ca

TOWN OF ATHABASCA

A vibrant rural community in which to live, work and relax, the town of Athabasca is nestled in the picturesque Athabasca River Valley, just 150 km north of Edmonton, Alberta.

The Town of Athabasca serves as the health, education, shopping, and service-centre for the region. The surrounding area offer something for just about everyone: nature lovers, cottagers, campers, fishers, hunters, golfers, sports enthusiasts, history buffs, retirees, business entrepreneurs and those seeking to escape the frenetic pace of big-city life.

During the fur-trade era, Athabasca Landing, as the town was then called, became known as the "Gateway to the North," a jumping-off point for those travelling along the Athabasca River north to the Peace River and to Fort Chipewyan. Today, the town is the modern gateway to the new North Country, its economic prospects, natural resource industries, tourism opportunities, and natural beauty. While the Town of Athabasca is steeped in history and tradition, it is very much focused on the future.

AU will offer relocation assistance for the right candidate, should you decide to relocate to reside in the Town of Athabasca. As a resident of the town or county of Athabasca, or elsewhere in Alberta, you can elect to work virtually from your home or in our offices on our beautiful campus.

To discover the Town and Region of Athabasca, please visit <http://www.visitathabasca.ca> and <http://www.athabasca.ca>

THE OPPORTUNITY

Reporting to the Chief Human Resources Officer, this senior leadership position is responsible for the development and implementation of Athabasca University's long- and short-term Labour Relations strategy, framework and action plan by championing operational excellence and ensuring alignment with pertinent legislation, policies and procedures, collective agreements and AU's mission, vision, and values, while managing risk and financial liability for the organization.

The Director will lead the University and oversee the collective bargaining process for all unions to ensure consistency and stability in delivering reasonable outcomes that are informed by the University's strategy and the best interests of its employees.

The Director is responsible for developing collaborative strategic relationships with unions and AU leadership, advising on collective agreement administration, employee relations matters and providing training, education, and support to AU's managers and supervisors.

KEY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director will:

- lead labour relations functions including collective bargaining, grievance administration, collective agreement interpretation, employee relations, workplace investigations, and responses.
- represent Athabasca University at grievance and arbitration hearings, working on behalf of the organization with legal counsel and other relevant stakeholders.
- lead annual budget process for the labour relations unit. Ensures that budget strategies are operational, fiscally responsible, and proactively identifying hidden/underlying costs associated with budget decisions.
- monitor and audit legal and grievance costs and provide advice and options to the CHRO to support cost-effective decision-making by the organization, to maintain the prudent use of the University's resources, while protecting the organization from legal and financial risk.
- monitors grievance and arbitration trends and identifies the potential monetary impact, monitoring or amending the University's labour relations policies and HR practices to mitigate financial risk.
- manage the design of the labour relations team structures and resources to ensure that priorities and standards are reflected in the services delivered in alignment with HR's service delivery model and mandate.
- continued implementation of AU's Designation as Academic Policy.
- develop and deliver policies, frameworks, and processes to enable effective and consistent labour relations practices across the organization.
- ensure consistent application of collective agreements and HR policy throughout the organization.
- develop and implement quality improvement and lead practice initiatives that deliver enhanced value to stakeholders.
- establish their role as a strategic partner providing expert consultation to all faculties and services and HR to ensure consistency and efficiency in the resolution of complex labour relations matters while ensuring adherence to collective agreements and all relevant legislation.
- lead the design and development of education strategies and training to further develop the knowledge and skills of the University leadership team, the HR team, supervisors, and managers, in the areas of employee management; including attendance, discipline and conflict resolution; labour relations, collective agreements and interpretation, LR policies and processes, employment legislation, and workplace investigations to minimize grievances and establish a culture of transparency and accountability.

- collaborate with key internal and external partners across Human Resources, review institutional Risk Management as relating to labour, collaborate with Internal and external legal counsel, proactively identify enhancements across employment policies and frameworks to mitigate risk and recommend efficiencies.
- promote client relationship management to develop credibility and influence decisions and foster a positive labour relations climate with academic and union partners.
- ensures confidential information relating to labour relations cases is properly protected and not disclosed to third parties unless permitted or required under relevant law or regulation.
- will comply with all statutory and internal disclosure requirements on a timely basis and ensures to the best of their ability, the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information.

THE PERSON

QUALIFICATIONS & EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- Undergraduate degree in Human Resources and/or Labour Relations. Master's degree in Human Resources and/or Labour Relations preferred.
- 7 to 10 years of progressive leadership experience, demonstrating advanced scope, authority, and output, in a complex multi-union setting.
- Designation as a Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR).
- Strong leadership, communication, and negotiation skills with demonstrated written, verbal, facilitation, and presentation skills are essential.
- Supervisory and leadership experience required.
- Must possess effective, confident communication (written and verbal) skills as well as strong analytical skills and attention to detail. Strong organizational skills, prioritization skills, ability to adhere to inflexible timelines and the ability to work proactively and independently are essential.
- Must have strong interpersonal skills to effectively interact with stakeholders at all levels of the organization.
- Proven ability to collaborate and build strong internal and external effective working relationships at all levels of the organization.
- Excellent computer skills, including knowledge of Microsoft Office and database programs are essential.
- An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES

Communication - Shows exceptional written, verbal, and presentation skills and is an active listener. Able to interpret and explain complex information in a clear manner. Builds trust through demonstrated objectivity and consistency in all responsibilities. Gains the commitment of other stakeholders. Strong attention to detail.

Negotiator - Has an open and engaging personal style but an active and astute negotiating posture. Is proven at completing complex agreements whereby both parties leave the table feeling positive. Well-versed in a mutual gains approach to bargaining.

Problem-Solving Skills - Has great capacity for thinking analytically and evaluating complex business and human resources issues. Focuses on the solutions rather than the problems and has a well-developed sense of reasoning.

Collaborator – Able to collaborate with stakeholders and make sound judgments based on information collected. Works proactively in developing partnerships and networking among those in a position to assist in the realization of short and long-term goals.

Leadership Skills - Able to lead, coach, and support. A mentor and positive role model with the ability to initiate, motivate, integrate, and delegate.

Visionary - Understands and interprets labour relations trends and addresses issues and organizational challenges with clarity, energy, and confidence. A progressive idea person who encourages the adoption of best practices.

Political Astuteness and Acumen - Demonstrates sensitivity to understanding of complex situations and organizations. Shows a mature and common-sense approach to dealing with labour relations negotiations.

Professional - Acts as both a leader and a supportive member of different teams. Possesses high ethical standards and an honest, open, and consistent approach to working with peers, employees and staff.

Team Player - Understands and appreciates the effectiveness of working synergistically with others. Is open and accessible.

Adaptability - Has the ability to adapt to new and changing situations. Enjoys and embraces new challenges. Demonstrates flexibility to changing priorities and remains up to date on evolving labour practices and employment laws.

Complexity - Shows a thorough understanding of complex collective agreements. Has a comprehensive knowledge of best practices in resolving labour relations issues.

COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package will be provided including an attractive base salary and excellent benefits. Further details will be discussed in a personal interview.

TO APPLY

For more details or to further explore this important strategic leadership opportunity, please contact:

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To apply, please submit a Cover Letter and Resume directly to edmonton@leadersinternational.com outlining your interest, qualifications and experience.

