U of R Academic Votes for Strike Mandate

Social Media and the Workplace: What You Should Know

APT Member Highlight
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URFA President’s Message

Since September, I have been meeting one-on-one with URFA members. I started with First Nations University, then Luther College, then Campion College, then Kinesiology and Health Studies. Not everyone was in their office, and I might go back to meet those I missed. But it is a very enjoyable experience. Meeting with APT members gives me a different perspective on the university. Talking with sessionals helps me understand their unique situation and the important role they play on our campus.

A lot happens in the life of a university faculty association between two issues of “URFA Update”.

Things are moving along in bargaining, with grievances and with the various committees of URFA: the Equity Committee, the Sessional Advocacy Committee, the Pension and Benefits Committee, and many others. I will let you read the updates from these committees, and if you have a chance, please take a few minutes to say thank you to our members who volunteer their time on URFA’s committees.

I also want to send special thanks to Michael Kozdron, for his tireless work in bargaining for URFA over the last several years, negotiating the most recent APT agreement, and bargaining on behalf of the U of R Academic Staff.

Every month, a lot happens in the life of URFA and I would like to speak more about the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).

You may know CAUT because you receive the monthly newspaper, but CAUT is a lot more than that. As a delegate of URFA, I travelled to Ottawa from November 22nd to 25th in order to attend the Fall Council. CAUT was established in 1950 and has now grown to over 72,000 members. CAUT provides effective resources to its member associations to bargain, to defend academic freedom, to promote and expand collegial governance, to defend the important values that lie at the core of post-secondary education.

During the three days of Council, I heard many stories from Universities across Canada, about their struggles and their successes. Recently, the Université de Montréal opted to join CAUT in order to better fight back measures imposed by their administration. In Ottawa, CAUT provides resources to effectively lobby government and help member associations to network, thus establishing strong links between all of us. This helps detect trends, like the academic planning exercises that invaded universities a few years ago, allowing members to provide the appropriate response.

In the past, CAUT personnel came to our campus to inform our members about grievances, bargaining, and other issues. In February 2019, a member from CAUT will come for a day long workshop on membership mobilization, entitled “Building Strong Associations.” Watch your email for more information on this exciting workshop.

For an Association to work properly, it requires two important ingredients. The first is a dedicated staff, that I will never thank enough for the work they do to run the daily affairs of the Association. The second is lots of passionate volunteers, and I will never thank enough all those who give their time to URFA.

Sylvain Rheault
URFA President
Season’sGreetings to all!

The upcoming New Year is a time of resolutions. Perhaps think about a health and well-being resolution. Some resolutions may disappear; however, health and well-being resolutions deserve commitment. You deserve to take time for yourself, be in control of your energy level, step back periodically and assess what can realistically be done in each day among the many demands and pressures. Health and well-being must come first.

I look forward to the upcoming holiday season and New Year, as well as URFA’s continued support of its members in 2019. Our first priority this New Year will be the ongoing negotiations between the employer and the University of Regina Academic bargaining unit, followed by bargaining with the FNUniv, Campion College and Luther College Academic bargaining units and their employers. Please be engaged in these negotiations as doing so provides important feedback and support to our hardworking bargaining teams.

To re-cap some of URFA’s successes in 2018:

**Putting People First in 2018** – Your Association continued to advocate the requirement to provide adequate supports so our academics and APT staff can support student success. Putting people first is a priority of your Association and should be the priority of the UofR and Federated Colleges.

**Bargaining 2018** – One (UofR Academic) is in active bargaining and three (Campion College, Luther College, FNUniv Academic) will be bargained in 2019. A huge thank you to past, current and upcoming bargaining teams. Their volunteer efforts directly benefit you and your Association.

**Labour Relations in 2018** – Your Association worked toward a more pro-active, resolution focused labour relations relationship with the four employers it works with. This provided an enhanced service to our members while reducing the number of arbitrations.

**Committee Support in 2018** – Your Association continued to provide support to the various volunteer committees. The committee work is invaluable to the functioning of the Association and members are encouraged to consider joining an URFA committee.

The URFA office in 2018 saw the retirement of long serving staff, Debbie Sagel, the Association’s Professional Officer. All the best to Debbie.

In January 2018 the Association welcomed Communications Officer Eric Bell, who has been instrumental in updating URFA’s newsletter and expanding the Association’s communication reach to social media platforms. In August, Heather Ritenburg was made a permanent Member Services Officer and in October, Debbie Head joined the team as the Association’s first Financial Officer.

While Debbie Sagel’s departure leaves a large ‘historical knowledge’ hole in the Association, the new members of your office team are literally moving mountains for the members.

**Continued on Page 6...**
The URFA Executive and Staff wish you a safe and happy holiday season, and all the best in the new year.
Looking forward to 2019, there are plans for a revamped URFA website, an online grievance and case management platform, and streamlining of office processes, all of which focus on enhancing your Association’s support of its members.

Remember, if you have a question regarding your collective agreement, an accommodation, a return-to-work, your benefits, your workload, etc., please contact the URFA office to speak with one of the Member Services Officers. Those amazing people are there to help you.

Kevin Siebert
Executive Director

### Important Dates- Winter Semester

**December**

- **Dec. 8**- Start of Exams
- **Dec. 11**- Grievance Committee Meeting
- **Dec. 18**- Executive Committee Meeting
- **Dec. 21**- End of Exams

**January**

- **Jan. 8**- Start of Term
- **Jan. 8**- Grievance Committee Meeting
- **Jan. 15**- Executive Committee Meeting
- **Jan. 22**- Council of Reps. Meeting

**February**

- **Feb. 12**- Grievance Committee Meeting
- **Feb. 19**- Executive Committee Meeting
- **Feb. 18-22**- Winter Break
U of R Academic Achieves Strike Mandate

Following the last scheduled bargaining meetings with the University in October, a vote on a strike mandate was conducted via online ballot from Oct. 31 until November 2. The University of Regina Academic Membership voted 87.4% in favour of a strike mandate, overwhelmingly signalling that they do not accept the unworkable proposals that have been put forward by University management.

Outstanding issues between URFA and the University include job security for sessional instructors, protecting the academic mission of the university, maintaining the collegiality of performance review and tenure decisions, and compensation.

The bargaining committee met with the University for one half day of bargaining in November. We are encouraged by the strength of the strike mandate and tentatively optimistic about the change in tone at the bargaining table. We feel the change in tone is a direct result of the U of R Academic membership’s engagement with the bargaining process.

In November, Chief Negotiator Michael Kozdron decided to resign from the U of R Academic Bargaining Committee. We extend our thanks to Michael for all his work in bargaining both on behalf of the U of R Academic Staff and U of R APT bargaining units. In addition to his service as chief negotiator for U of R Academic Staff in both this and the previous round of bargaining, he was Chief Negotiator for U of R APT’s most recent collective agreement (ratified February, 2018).

Over 150 URFA U of R Academic Members attend an update from the Bargaining Committee in October. The U of R Academic bargaining unit voted 87.4% in favour of a strike mandate.
We thank him for all his work toward achieving a fair and reasonable collective agreement for U of R Academic Staff members during the current round of bargaining.

Jason Childs (Department of Economics) has agreed to serve as Chief Negotiator for the remainder of this round of bargaining. We do not anticipate this transition to cause any disruption in bargaining.

The bargaining committee will be meeting with the University in December for a full day of bargaining and are in the process of scheduling five multiple bargaining dates (two full days and three half days) in January.

The Bargaining Committee thanks members of the Academic Staff and the wider university community for their ongoing support, and will continue to provide members with updates on the progress made toward reaching a fair and reasonable collective agreement.

TOP LEFT: Darlene Jushka (Arts), discusses bargaining negotiations with members while tabling in the lab building.
TOP RIGHT: U of R Academic Bargaining Committee member Kate Cushon (Library) updates a member on bargaining negotiations while tabling in Riddell Centre.
BOTTOM LEFT: URFA members across campus have placed postcards on their office doors to show their support for bargaining negotiations.
APT Member Highlight
Terri Allard, Program Manager- Flexible Learning

Name: Terri Allard
Position: Manager, Flexible Learning Division

What is your educational background?: Bachelor of Arts, University of Regina
URFA APT Member Since: 2001

Provide a description of your position, and what a “day in the life” at your job might look like.

I work with Faculties, Regional Colleges and other internal and external partners to facilitate the offering of University courses outside the ‘traditional’ times of 8:30-4:30 through face to face, online, LIVE, video conference and blended in Regina, across the Province and beyond.

What about your position is the most rewarding?
Providing access to University courses to students across the Province.

What is the most challenging?
Providing enough courses via flexible delivery to meet the demand.

What’s your favorite part of working at the University of Regina?
The people!

What’s something interesting about your job that most people might not know about?
For courses administered through Flexible Learning, we have roughly 10,000 enrolments per semester!

Do you know an APT member who should be profiled? Contact URFA Communications Officer Eric Bell at eric.bell@uregina.ca, and they could be featured in the next issue!
The Sessional Advocacy Committee recently held two socials at the Owl. The first was a gathering to mark Fair Employment Week in October. The week is organized by the Canadian Association of University Teachers to bring awareness to the issues faced by sessionals and contract staff at universities across Canada.

The SAC Social was well attended by sessional URFA members from across the U of R, Campion, and FNUniv campuses and members discussed how the committee can continue to find ways to “Make it Fair” for sessionals across campus.

The second social at the Owl was at the end of November to mark the end of the semester. This event was also well attended, and the committee looks forward to planning future events to engage sessional members and network with colleagues across the campus.

In November, Sessional Advocacy Committee Chair Marianne Jacobsen decided to step down after several years as chair. We thank Marianne for her many contributions and for her tireless work to make sure that all sessionals are treated with fairness and that the rights afforded to them by their collective agreements are upheld.

The committee is active while we search for a new chair and is meeting monthly to discuss future plans and activities. We would also like to extend an invitation to any sessional members interested in joining the committee. Sessionals who are committee members receive a stipend for their participation.

If you would like more information about the SAC Committee or you would like to get involved, please contact URFA at urfa@uregina.ca.

Members of the Sessional Advocacy Committee at a social at the Owl to mark Fair Employment Week in October.

Notary Public Services Available at URFA

Did you know that URFA offers Notary Public services for all members?

URFA Executive Director Kevin Siebert is a Notary Public and is able to administer oaths, receive declarations, issue deeds and contracts, make notarized documents for official purposes, sign passport documents, certify copies of birth certificates and more.

The service is provided at no cost for URFA members. If you wish to make use of URFA’s Notary Public service, please contact the URFA office.

For more information on services provided by a Notary Public, visit https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/notary-public
URFA Equity Committee Update

Bridget Klest
URFA Equity Committee Chair

The second annual Equity Week at U of R will be held Monday, March 18, 2019 until Friday, March 22, 2019. Start thinking now about how your unit/department/group would like to participate! Things to consider include the type of event you would like to organize (e.g., a talk, a panel discussion, a participatory event, etc.), the date, time, and location of the event, and what you will need to do to organize it (e.g., invite speakers, secure a room, etc.).

The URFA Equity Committee will be soliciting proposals and event descriptions, and will be involved in the promotion and advertising of Equity Week events. There may even be some money available for proposals that include a budget. Stay tuned for more Equity Week details!

The Equity Committee has also been working actively on a number of projects and initiatives including creation of a policy surrounding breastfeeding/parenting spaces on campus, the campus sexual assault policy, gendered violence, and accommodation and accessibility, to name a few.

If you have equity-related concerns or ideas, I would love to hear from you. I can be reached at Bridget.Klest@uregina.ca.

URFA Grievance Committee Update

Hirsch Greenberg
URFA Grievance Committee Chair

The Grievance Committee has been busy over the fall semester, with a number of projects underway for the Grievance Committee to review, including:

Election of a Vice Chair
To ensure an orderly succession plan, the grievance committee is seeking a vice-chair. Prior to May 2018, the committee was without a chair for some time. This placed additional responsibility of chairing meetings on staff. Thus the role of committee as an oversight body could be compromised. Efforts continue to search for a Vice Chair.

Communications Plan
There are ongoing discussions with the URFA Communications Officer and URFA Member Services Officers to develop a Grievance Report as an educational tool to keep members informed of the activities of the committee as well as highlight grievance trends and educate members on the grievance process.

Systemic and Structural Issues
There are certain systemic and structural issues that at the University that the committee has been looking into. For instance, should the Respectful Work Place office and the Sexual Violence and Harassment office report to the University senate or board of directors? Such offices in a parliamentary democracy typically act as an ombudsman. Both offices report to HR. An issue of objectivity and/or conflict of interest could arise should a complaint involving those (HR) who have oversight.

Training
The Committee has agreed to training sessions that would speak to protocols, policies and procedures. Dates for training are currently being arranged.

The Grievance Committee will be busy with many of these ongoing projects during the winter semester, and we will be sure to provide members with future updates on committee activities.
Social media and workplaces have had a complicated relationship following the growth of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram over the past decade. While some employers initially responded to the growth in social media by attempting to ban it the workplace, many have since accepted it as an inevitable part of the day-to-day activities of their employees. Many employers, including universities, have also realized the benefits of having their employees actively engaged on social media as a way to promote and build upon their reputation. However, as an employer, they may also be wary of any postings they see on social media from employees that they may perceive as negative or damaging towards that reputation.

Universities are a unique workplace, where open debate and discussion on controversial subjects is encouraged both within the institution and online. While full time and tenured academic staff have strong language in their collective agreements pertaining to academic freedom, many URFA members, including those in APT units, do not. While Sessional members also have academic freedom, it can be argued that it is not to the same degree as full time members, as they have less job security and rely on the University to continue offering teaching contracts from one semester to the next.

Many of us are actively engaged on social media in both our work and personal lives, and plan on continuing to be for the foreseeable future. As our lives become increasingly tied to our online presence, what can we do to maintain the balance of personal and work on social media?

Social Media and Academic Freedom
The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) recognizes social media in their policy statement on Academic Freedom, Electronic Communications and Social Media. The policy notes that “The rights of academic staff to exercise their academic freedom do not
vary according to the medium in which they are exercised. These rights are as essential to academic activities undertaken electronically as to those undertaken in speech, writing, and/or other media.”

In other words, for those who do have academic freedom, the right to express your own opinions and viewpoints should be treated with the same degree of academic freedom online as they are in person.

Though not all URFA members have the same protections in their collective agreements when it comes to academic freedom, everyone has a right to their own privacy and freedom of expression. Members should be aware that the usual standards for professional conduct apply when interacting online with colleagues and the public, especially if comments can be taken as being representative of the university.

One recommendation often made is to post a disclaimer somewhere on your profile, such as “Opinions are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.” While a disclaimer makes it clear that you are not posting anything on behalf of the employer, they can also provide a false sense of security. The same standards of professional conduct still apply, with or without a disclaimer.

The University’s Policies

None of University of Regina, First Nations University of Canada, or the affiliated colleges have specific social media policies for employees. However, the University of Regina has a set of “Social Media Guidelines” available on the university’s website intended for those who “appear to be speaking as a representative of the University of Regina.”

The University also reminds employees of the respectful university policy which extends to behavior on social media as well.

Adjusting Your Social Media Settings

The easiest way to ensure your social media stays within a comfortable balance of personal and professional is to be aware of who has access to it. If you have open privacy settings, anyone, including your employer, has the ability to see everything that you are posting, retweeting, and liking on social media.

There are several steps you can take to ensure your privacy:

“Lock” your Twitter and Instagram accounts

This can be done in your profile settings. This means that only those who you have approved to follow you will be able to see and engage with your posts. However, remember that if someone followed you before you updated your settings, they will still be able to see your posts. Those who you have not approved to follow will not be able to see or interact with your posts.

Update your Facebook Security settings to make sure that only your friends can see what you post.

Don’t be afraid to use the “block” button. If you don’t want someone following you, block them from being able to see your feed. If someone is using social media to harass you, block them and then report them to the social media site and appropriate authority.

Consider Multiple Accounts to easily make the distinction between work and personal activity on social media.

Trust your own judgment

In the end, how you behave on social media is your own responsibility. While some will opt to make their social media settings private, many want to keep them public in order to engage and network with a wider audience. But be sure to remember that if you choose to leave your social media settings public to be mindful about the content you post, and who might be looking at it.
PHOTOS
URFA Around Campus Over the Fall Semester

ABOVE: (L-R): Members of the U of R Academic Bargaining Committee tabling in Riddell Centre. Right: FNUniv Academic members Andrew Miller and Kathleen O’Reilly during a visit on campus. BELOW: URFA President Sylvain Rheault speaks at a rally in support of CUPE 2419 Teaching and Research Assistants.
ABOVE: (L-R): URFA President Sylvain Rheault continues door knocking across campus, reaching out and listening to member concerns and feedback. SFL Strategic Advisor Kent Peterson gives a presentation on using rules of order in meetings at the November COR meeting. BELOW: Members of COR at their November meeting.
News from CAUT
Some thoughts on Academic Chains

James Compton
CAUT President

Academics are trained to be free, and everywhere they are in chains. Or so thinks Ontario Premier Doug Ford. It’s unknown whether Ford has read the famous first lines from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Social Contract, but it’s clear he’s decided that professors across Ontario are shackled when it comes to freely expressing their ideas.

As a result, the Government of Ontario has mandated that all Ontario colleges and universities put a free speech policy into place by January 2019. Failure to comply and submit an adequate annual free speech report to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario will put colleges and universities at risk of penalty. Be free or suffer state sanction. If you’re sensing a contradiction here, you’re not alone.

Universities must maintain their institutional autonomy if they are to be sites for the free and open exchange of ideas. And it’s not enough to say, as some supporters of the new policy have suggested, that “the province is respecting the autonomy of each university by requiring (and therefore permitting) it to elaborate its own system of protecting free expression.” Institutional autonomy is not supported by using such legislative hammers.

The impetus for the top-down government diktat comes from the assumption that free speech is under attack on campuses across the country from illiberal leftists. This claim is routinely asserted as common sense in many newspaper and magazine articles. And while it’s certainly true that there have been some high-profile incidents cited as evidence by Merrilee Fullerton, the Ontario Minister for Training, Colleges and Universities, and her supporters, I suggest these claims are blind to the larger threat to academic freedom on Canadian campuses: government de-funding, the increased reliance on corporate partnerships and the growing use of precariously employed academic staff.

The well-documented decline in government support for higher education has forced colleges and universities to search for new revenue streams while simultaneously cutting costs. On the revenue side, we have seen the proliferation of research partnerships between universities and corporations. As previously reported in this space, the 2013 CAUT report Open for Business documented how “… universities have agreed to various violations of their own academic integrity” by allowing “private donors and corporate partners to co-opt roles formerly, and properly, played by academic staff.” The Guardian newspaper has gone so far as to argue the “corporate capture of academic research by the fossil fuel industry is … a threat to tackling climate change.”

On the cost-cutting side, colleges and universities have grown dependent on low-paid contract academic staff. A recent report published by CAUT estimates that between 2005 and 2015 university professors working part-time, or for part of the year, increased by 79 per cent. The survey found that contract academics suffer from several “dimensions of insecurity,” including employment and income insecurity. Only 17 per cent of respondents answered positively to the statement “that they feel secure enough in their employment to make major financial commitments, such as purchasing a home.”

An overwhelming majority of those people (70 per cent) said they were employed on a course-by-course basis in 2016–2017. The survey also discovered that “35 per cent of contract academics had less than six weeks’ notice before the start of the course that they had been hired to teach.” Years of loyal service to an institution does not
guarantee one’s position. Results showed that more than “half of the post-secondary educators who participated in this survey must apply individually, each term, for every course they wish to teach.”

People working under these conditions do not enjoy academic freedom. Instructors whose livelihoods lack the security of permanent, steady employment are much less likely to introduce the controversial and challenging ideas the minister says she wants to see in the classroom. Here’s an idea: ensure that corporate partnerships contain clear language protecting academic decision making and, secondly, fund post-secondary education so that more academic staff don’t have to worry about whether they have a job each term.

Yes, some academics are in chains, but not the ones Ford has described. Perhaps the Premier should forget about pandering to his political base and focus on the real threats to our universities.

James Compton is the President of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. This has been reprinted from the September, 2018 edition of the CAUT Bulletin.

Read more from CAUT

Premier Ford Urged to respect French Minority rights
(CAUT website, November, 2018)

CAUT Condemns back-to-work legislation imposed on postal workers
(CAUT website, November, 2018)

Investigation into Potter case finds McGill violated academic freedom
(CAUT website, November, 2018)

Investigation launched into alleged academic freedom violations at Thompson Rivers University
(CAUT website, October, 2018)
Returning by popular demand, URFA calendars for 2019 are now available at the URFA office for members at no cost. These handy 18X24” calendars are double-sided and include special University dates, dates of URFA meetings, and all stat holidays.

Feel free to stop by the URFA office, Room 122, Campion College, to pick up a copy for yourself and other members in your faculty or unit! For those working at remote campuses, please let us know how many you need and we will make sure they are sent to you.

Thank You for Reading!

If you have any ideas, suggestions, or are interested in submitting an article for the next issue of Update, please contact URFA Communications Officer Eric Bell at eric.bell@uregina.ca.