AASUA report to The Western Regional Conference

Alberta Bill 9:
The UCP government passed Bill 9 to delay wage negotiations set for this fall that were agreed to previously in collective bargaining by some public sector unions, including in the post-secondary sector. Major public sector unions (e.g. AUPE) took this to court and there was a temporary stay recently handed down by the court regarding the delay in negotiations, allowing relevant labour arbitrations involving public sector unions to proceed. The battle continues in the courts, with the Government appealing the temporary stay.

MacKinnon Report:
The UCP government commissioned a “Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta’s Finances”, the report from which has just arrived. Key relevant information is that it recommends that salaries for public sector workers be legislated, and as such would bypass collective bargaining. It also suggests closing some unspecified number of post-secondary institutions. Further recommending that government support for the surviving institutions be reduced. The Panel was not asked by the UCP government to look at the revenue side of the ledger.

Replacement of Members of the Board of Governors:
In August, the UCP government replaced dozens of Board of Governor members at several Alberta post-secondary institutions, including the University of Alberta where the Board Chair and other BoG members were replaced. Backgrounds in Finance, the Oil and Gas Industry, and Utilities as well as conservative candidates who lost in their ridings made up the majority of new Board appointees at Alberta post-secondary institutions.

Bargaining:
AASUA heads into bargaining in the spring of 2020 (March). We have been organizing a bargaining planning committee, and are in the process of selecting the negotiating team. Bargaining priorities are being established within our seven constituencies (Regular Faculty, Academic Teaching Staff, Administrative Professional Officers, Trust Research Academic Staff, Faculty Service Officers, Librarians, and Temporary Librarians and Staff). It remains to be seen how and to what degree Government legislation and decisions will affect bargaining.

University President Search:
We are in the midst of a search for a new University President to assume the role in July of 2020. The president of AASUA (Kevin Kane) sits on the search committee. The Chair of the BoG of the University chairs the President search committee. Given that the Chair of the BoG was recently replaced as were other Board members on the search committee, it remains to be seen how the “culture” of this important committee may be altered in midstream. The next search committee meeting is in mid-September.
AUFA report to the Western regional Conference of Faculty Associations

Oct 2019

AUFA has had a busy 2019. Some of the highlights include:

- Conclusion of a very tense round of bargaining, our first under the new strike/lockout legislation. While things looked for a while like we might be headed to a strike, after AUFA declared impasse in January, after informal mediation in June we were able to come to an agreement. This agreement is 2 years, expires in 2020, and included taking the government mandated 0s that all public sector workers in Alberta were expected to take, and in exchange we were able to procure some good conversion language for our long time term staff. We will be bargaining again in Spring of 2020.

- Some of the highlights from our strike prep that the work stoppage committee undertook as a two pronged attack to both support the bargaining team and build member solidarity included 4 lunchtime info pickets, the biggest of which attracted 60 people, strike signage making luncheons, and days of action. All of this worked to move us toward a credible strike threat. The work stoppage committee did incredible work to invent the wheel so to speak on how to conduct workplace action in a dispersed and semi-virtual work environment.

- Recently, our bargaining team and some other AUFA members took part in the CAUT bargaining training. Jeff McKeil from CAUT came to Athabasca to conduct a two day training session and this experience I believe has set on off to a good start for bargaining prep for the next round.

- Grievance and discipline cases are quite high, probably the highest they been in years. This is due to a very aggressive employer and an unwillingness on the part of the employer to deal with situations as they arise and before they need to become formal grievances. A couple of trends: harassment allegations, privacy breaches and a refusal to accommodate members on general illness leave or on medical accommodations are a few of the disturbing trends we are seeing. Discipline cases are also increasing despite the excellent language AUFA has in the collective agreement which puts a heavy financial burden on the employer if they want to discipline a member.

- AUFA continues to face challenges with regards to the university’s refusal to maintain staffing levels at the Athabasca town location of the university. This is
due largely to the employer refusing to hire to that location (claiming that they can’t find any one willing to live in Athabasca- we know this to be untrue). Also, for the first time in the history of the university not a single executive management person lives in the town. At one time they all lived there.

- Staff engagement in the university is reportedly very low, according to a recent survey. On the flip side, the union is experiencing excellent engagement from members as a result of efforts to build solidarity as a response to a credible lockout/strike threat last spring. In order to keep this momentum going, AUFA has struck a membership engagement committee which will undertake various union engagement efforts as we look towards bargaining again in 2020.

- As you are aware, we in Alberta are suffering under the Kenny Government and we are bracing ourselves for the budget, which has yet to be released. AUFA believes that AU should be able to weather even moderate cuts well for a few reasons: AU receives very little funding from the government to begin with (I believe we are the lowest funded PSI in the province); enrollments at AU have been steadily increasing for well over a year now, and the university is posting very healthy surpluses. Additionally, the university’s reserves are now back up to the levels that they were before they were nearly drained by a former President. However AUFA is concerned about the effect a sudden and drastic jump in tuition will do to the excellent enrolment trends we are experiencing. AUFA will commit to working with the students’ unions.

Respectfully submitted by

Jolene Armstrong, President, AUFA
Report from the Brandon University Faculty Association (BUFA)

There have been two major developments and activities BUFA have been engaged with over the past year:

1. **Full Time Member Services Officer** – On April 1, 2019 BUFA hired Shari Maguire as our first full-time Member Services Officer (maguires@brandonu.ca; 204-727-7347). Shari has been instrumental in facilitating and coordinating all our normal association duties. It is fair to say the executive couldn’t have dealt with the myriad of issues over the past six months without Shari.

2. **Negotiating and ratifying a new Collective Agreement** – After twenty-six bargaining sessions starting in late January until mid-August a new 4-year Collective Agreement was ratified on September 26th when the membership voted 85% in favour. BUFA maintains this agreement was not freely bargained as the *Provincial Government’s Public Service Sustainability Act* (PSSA) mandates salary increases to 0%, 0%. 0.75%, and 1%. BUFA is part of a class-action lawsuit challenging the Constitutionality of this Act. That being said some key improvements were made to language and other non-monetary issues including:
   
   a. Addition of four new positions (hires) over the course of the agreement with the criteria for the allocation of these positions to be determined by a working group with a majority of BUFA members
   
   b. Improvements to the Appointment article with the addition of a purely voluntary post-retirement “sunset clause” to provide members to gradually phase out of teaching. Addition of a spousal hiring option, improvement to sessional right of first refusal (RFR) language. Procedures for hiring members with “non-traditional” career paths, we view this as a real step forward in decolonizing the academy.
   
   c. Improvements to the Workload Article with another step in the transition from a standard 18CH workload to a standard 15CH workload. Improvements to the research days afforded to our Professional Associates and much stronger language for our members to get even more days than those proscribed.
   
   d. Improvements to the No Discrimination & Harassment, Evaluation, Personal Files, and Vacation & Leave Articles.
   
   e. Increases in funding and great transparency for the monies distributed by the Brandon University Research Committee.
   
   f. Signed a number of memoranda including: indigenization working group, peer evaluation working group, equity working group

   Overall, we were able to negotiate positive improvements for all our members to varying degrees.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bryan Hill, BUFA President
Government Relations

CAFA continues to meet with all the levels of the state: the governing party; the official opposition; and the bureaucrats in the Ministry of Advanced Education. We have been asked to submit policy notes on a variety of topics including the Chicago Principles, metrics, red-tape, and international education.

Our relationship with the UCP and its Advanced Education Minister, the Hon. Demetrios Nicolaides, is in its early stages. Our first meeting was cordial, and the minister seemed open to talking to us about a variety of topics. We are hoping to arrange a follow-up meeting with the Minister to talk about the new labour regime that the NDP put our sector into, and about changes we would like the government to make. Minister Nicolaides seems genuinely interested in hearing our perspective on the new labour regime, and we hope he keeps an open mind on this file. CAFA also has been pursuing connections and relationships with UCP backbenchers. The 2019 CAFA Awards Gala allowed us to follow through on this line of action.

CAFA also continues to meet with the opposition party the NDP as well. We have found them to be far more willing to engage in meaningful dialogue since they lost the election. We hope this relationship continues to grow over the next four year government term.

Labour

CAFA has also entered into a period of more formal relations with Alberta’s labour movement. This has taken a variety of forms, but the one most noteworthy is how we have been invited to participate in dialogue and information sharing meetings with what is often referred to as the big five public sector unions in Alberta (the ATA, UNA, HSAA, AUPE, and Alberta Federation of Labour). These discussions have revolved around the latest legislation that allows for one party, the government, to unilaterally change collective agreements (Bill 9) and possible future legislation that will limit labour’s ability to collectively bargain.

CAFA has also participated in the ongoing information pickets (lead by AUPE). We have sent members to the demonstrations, and had our president speak at one of these actions at the U of A hospital. We will continue to stand in solidarity with our siblings in the labour movement on they push back on Bill 9 and against the next round of austerity cuts that will affect all of Alberta.

Blue Ribbon Report

The new UCP government commissioned a report on the province’s finances and debt levels: Janice MacKinnon’s Blue Ribbon Report. Unsurprisingly, it is a continuation of her previous research and public policy papers, specifically ‘Putting the Alberta Budget on a New Trajectory’ Janice MacKinnon and Jack Mintz (2017), in which the authors claim that “a reasonable mandate might be minus two per cent in year 1, zero in year 2 and zero in year 3” (MacKinnon and Mintz 2017, p. 8). The Blue Ribbon Report does not call for draconian wage reductions like MacKinnon’s other work, but paints a picture where Alberta is in dire financial straits. The Blue Ribbon Report does suggest that “legislative mandates can be used, not as an ongoing way to conduct collective bargaining, but as a tool to be used in exceptional circumstances,
such as the current situation in Alberta where the government has committed to balance the budget by 2022/23” (MacKinnon et al. 2019, p. 49). It further goes on to suggest that back-to-work legislation and the use of the not-withstanding clause, to override charter challenges from the unions, also be used in such exceptional circumstances (MacKinnon et al. 2019, p. 49-50). While calling for public sector compensation controls, the Blue Ribbon Report also recommends that the government end the freeze on public sector managerial and out-of-scope employees’ wages and benefits (MacKinnon et al. 2019, p. 50).

Most of the data used in the Blue Ribbon Report comes from the last calendar year (2017-18), and it is not a longitudinal study of revenue, expenditures, or compensation. The alternative report released by the Parkland Institute (Ascah, Harrison, and Mueller’s ‘Cutting through the Blue Ribbon: A Balanced Look at Alberta’s Finances’, 2019) does a better job of looking at the long-term revenue and expenditure patterns to provide a historical perspective. ‘Cutting through the Blue Ribbon’ may also have issues of its own, as it does collapse K-12 and post-secondary into one category of education, but it does provide a more balanced discussion of the financial situation in Alberta.

Overall for the PSE sector, the Blue Ribbon Report makes three recommendations to the government. Each of these suggestions are quite vague, but would include movement towards “appropriate governance models,” increasing tuition while reducing government grants, and assessing the financial viability of all Alberta PSE institutions (MacKinnon et al. 2019, p. 42-43).

CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards 2019

CAFA recently hosted its annual awards gala during which we honoured Dr. Tracy Bear (U of A) with the 2019 Distinguished Academic Early Career Award, and Dr. Geoffrey Messier (U of C) with the 2019 Distinguished Academic Award. The evening was a great success.

UAPP

CAFA is investigating questions about the indemnification of our members’ sponsors on the Universities Academic Pension Plan (UAPP). We are examining this at both procedural and legal levels. We have received one opinion on this question, and we are commissioning another before making our final decision on how to proceed.

Pancakes with Professors

CAFA is starting a new educational initiative with the objective of educating politicians and policy makers about the process and scope of research at the post-secondary level in Alberta. The event will be in the form of a breakfast meeting with a brief presentation by one of our eminent researchers on a specific topic. The presentation will be followed by a Q & A. We envision it to be ‘soft’ lobbying around research funding, in a similar way that our Distinguished Academic Awards gala is used by the organization. The first event will be in early 2020 and be about mental health research. The second event will be in the spring and it will be about oil and gas research.
CUFA BC has been active with a number of initiatives as well as government relations.

Internal Matters

The CUFA BC office has been busy over the course of the summer and into fall. A number of time-intensive research projects have been completed and meetings held with various levels of government. Despite the busy and productive work, the summer hasn’t been without its ups and downs, and one ongoing development is assessing the staff needs of the organization following changeover in the office. In the interim, CUFA BC has hired a temporary staff as it finalizes decisions about a potential office relocation and long-term staffing needs.

CUFA BC has adopted a position statement on Student Evaluations of Teaching as well as a number of requested reports comparing member associations' benefits, search committee composition, and institutional policies governing academic behaviour (such as respectful workplace policies, sexual violence policies as they relate to academics, etc). CUFA BC has finalized its bargaining manual resource for members. Finally, CUFA BC is in the early stages of organizing a conference for fall 2020 on the topic of climate change and the academy.

Our most recent CUFA council meeting took place on 3 October in Prince George—the first time CUFA has met in that city. Looking ahead, the spring council will take place 16 and 17 April in Vancouver with the Distinguished Academic Awards gala on 16 April. We will be engaging in a one-day visioning meeting for our members on 15 April, at which time we will examine our mission, constitution and bylaws, and policies as part of our strategic planning for the next five years.

Government Relations

CUFA continues to engage in substantial and meaningful government relations with the NDP government. At the invitation of Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training Melanie Mark, we attended the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) banquet in Victoria and the stakeholder discussion on Sexual Violence Prevention Campaign in Richmond. Between August and October, we have had meetings with the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training Melanie Mark, the President of the Public Sector Employers’ Council (PSEC) Christina Zacharuk, the Minister of Labour Harry Bains, and MLA and BC Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver.

We have attended numerous announcement events of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training. In June 2019, we made presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services and were pleased to see a number of our recommendations find their way into the report on the Budget 2020 Consultation Report. This was an extremely early budget
consultation. We initially thought this might mean that the NDP will drop the writ before it is obliged to do so (16 October 2021). However, it now seems that the NDP is merely implementing lengthier and more substantial consultations, which can only be a positive development. We continue to push for a reinvestment in higher education, urgently needed after more than a decade of stagnation in investment under the previous Liberal governments. We will also continue to push the government to complete its promised investment in graduate scholarships.

As previously reported, CUFA BC continues to lobby for change in BC’s highly partisan system of university board appointments. We will continue to lobby for change: not merely to the current boards, but also to the process by which BC’s board members are named.

Fortunately, the NDP government, in contradistinction to its Liberal predecessor, continues to be willing to meet with CUFA BC; therefore, we look forward to continued lobbying opportunities.

**Collective Bargaining**

With all of our members’ collective agreements having expired on 30 June 2019, only one member, the University of Victoria Faculty Association, has ratified a new collective agreement. The agreement was negotiated under the PSEC mandate, but has resulted in good progress for the UVic faculty, including the diminution of a widely unpopular merit scheme. The other four members of CUFA BC remain at the table having made varying degrees of progress. Given that the last round (2014) was marked by painfully protracted negotiations, three arbitrations, and a strike at UNBC, our members are hoping that the remaining tables will settle this autumn. That said, PSEC’s current mandate (three-year agreements, 2/2/2 and additional funding for "Sustainable Services") continues to impose challenges. The degree of leeway available to find solutions within the collective agreement to address existing financial and language issues remains unclear. It seems PSEC is closely monitoring some bargaining tables more than others and weighing in on matters of language as well as money in much the same way as it did under the former Liberal governments.

Limiting PSEC incursions on free collective bargaining and institutional autonomy has long been a policy priority for CUFA: something we will continue to stress with government.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Holler, President, CUFA BC
Collective Bargaining

We ratified our two-year collective agreement in June, as did the UofL Board. The agreement was consistent with others in our sector (0% COLA for each of two years), but we did make some gains on the language front. In particular, we did improve the language for sessional lecturers, and we did (finally!) get a foothold in our CA for equity language which should serve as a useful starting point in future bargaining rounds.

The agreement comes to an end on June 30, 2020, which means our negotiating team will be back at the table this winter. As a preliminary step, over this semester we plan to systematically canvass and mobilize our membership in order to build a bargaining mandate.

Executive Retreat

As we've done in past years, we've held a retreat for our executive members in advance of the fall semester. This gives us an opportunity to review our ULFA code of conduct, refresh awareness of by-laws and policies, and entertain discussions that would fall outside the usual scope of our fortnightly executive meetings during the cold months.

This year, the retreat straddled two days, the second day being given over to a workshop on member engagement, facilitated by Christina Muehlberger from CAUT. At the close of the day, we emerged with the broad outlines of two membership engagement campaigns, one on building a bargaining mandate (which as I've mentioned, we'll implement straightaway), and one on collegial governance, which will likely be a spring (or later) project.

Grievance Matters

We have a few possible grievances waiting for us this fall. One concerns the duties of members while on study leave (sabbatical), one concerns an attempted use of an instructor in the library in a capacity that should be done by a professional librarian, and one concerns a possible age discrimination case of a faculty member not able to obtain travel insurance by dint of age. Two of these will fall in the category of a policy grievance, and one might be more in the category of human rights legislation.

We have also had two major discipline cases in play over the summer months, both involving allegations of sexual misconduct by faculty members. Both cases have been dismissed.
we have been working with a faculty member who has been placed on a temporary unpaid leave pending the resolution of immigration visa issues. Our goal is to minimize the amount of time that the member is without pay and eventually have the member made whole through the grievance process.

**Staffing**

The biggest story in ULFA since our last report is the turnover in our office. As we've pointed out in the past, we lost our ED and professional officer last winter, and we've been rebuilding our office since then. We're delighted to report that we are now back to full strength with our administrative officer Aaron Chubb (who you've met before), our new ED Sean Hayes and our administrative support person Eva Cool. Sean, in particular, is a labour lawyer and we look forward to having his expertise inform our work in the coming years. Eva was temping for us for some months before coming on as staff in an enduring contract.

**Meeting with Rachael Notley**

On September 24, Rachel Notley, and Shannon Phillips (MLA for Lethbridge West), were on campus and asked to meet with the ULFA Executive Committee and general members. Discussion centered on aspects of the Mackinnon report that may negatively affect post-secondary education in Alberta. Key areas of concern related to the report’s recommendations regarding unfreezing of tuition rates, increased recruitment of international students, the potential for increased commercialization of research, and the potential for freezes and cuts to the post-secondary education system.
MRFA Report for 2019 Western Regional Conference (October 17 – 19, 2019)

Submitted by: Melanie Peacock PhD, MBA, CPHR, SHRM-SCP
President, Mount Royal Faculty Association

Association and Membership Overview:
The Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) represents all for-credit academic faculty, both contract and full-time, at Mount Royal University, an undergraduate, degree-granting institution in Calgary, Alberta. The MRFA has approximately 800 members as of the Fall 2019 semester. Roughly just over 50% are contract faculty.

We are proud of the high level of engagement of our membership. We host (almost monthly) regular meetings which typically have an attendance of 80 to 100 people. As well, our last annual general meeting (May, 2019) had over 170 members in attendance. Through a variety of committees, professional development events, and social activities the MRFA provides our members with a variety of ways to remain engaged in, and committed to, the work of our Association.

Current Initiatives:
The following high-level overview notes some of the key work currently being undertaken by the MRFA:

- As our current collective agreement expires on June 30, 2020 we are preparing to enter active negotiations commencing in February, 2020. To engage and inform members our negotiations team is currently visiting each department and a survey pertaining to collective bargaining priorities will be distributed to our members later in the Fall term.
- To be diligent and strategically prepare for possible outcomes from negotiations, a detailed Job Action Plan has been prepared. This document, and associated operations, communication plans and budgetary implications are continuously reviewed and updated by our Job Action Preparedness Committee.
- Given the uncertain and complex political and economic environment within Alberta, we are actively seeking ways to ensure that the public is aware of the value of post-secondary education and the work we perform as educators. As such, we are constantly looking for opportunities to support other unionized workers and form alliances. To this end, we participated in an AUPE information picket on October 10th.
- Communicating with government officials is also a critical component within our advocacy strategy and we have recently had a meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education where we addressed various concerns, including the potentially incorrect and inappropriate use of labour market indicators. The recently released McKinnon report has caused anxiety within our sector and we are also preparing to respond to the provincial budget which will be announced on October 24, 2019.
- A new Code of Conduct was implemented as of July 1, 2019 in response to government-mandated requirements. Conflict of interest (definitions of and required declarations from all employees) formed a significant component of the amended code. Our Association will continue to monitor potential consequences to faculty members based upon these new procedures.
- Mount Royal University (MRU) received a directive from the Minister of Advanced Education advising of the requirement to demonstrate MRU’s commitment to free expression through an adoption of the Chicago Principles or through the adoption of a Policy that met specific government mandated qualifiers. This new policy must be developed, approved by the government and implemented by mid-December, 2019. Based upon this tight timeframe management has informed our campus community that a policy will be implemented by the deadline and opportunities to review and amend this will occur after the fact. A presidential task force on Freedom of Speech is currently being populated and will spearhead this work, with our Association taking an active role in this process.
- The government of Alberta recently made significant changes to the Boards of post-secondary institutions across our province. Given the oil and gas background of many of these appointees, concern has been expressed by numerous parties that this is yet another indication of the corporatization of PSE.
- A great deal of the MRFA’s time is spent working with Human Resources and members seeking various forms of accommodation. There have been ongoing requirements for employees to take leaves and/or have adjustments to their working conditions.
- The MRFA continues to monitor management’s upholding of the collective agreement. Overall, the number of grievances has remained at a consistent level over the past year. Grievances largely pertain to management’s incorrect interpretation of processes as agreed to, and documented within, our collective agreement.
- The MRFA officially joined the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA) in July 1, 2019. The strategic alliance with other Faculty Associations across our province is beneficial and provides opportunities for collaboration and for a stronger voice when addressing mutual strategic objectives and concerns.
- Since our last report to this group, Dr. Tim Rahilly was appointed as Mount Royal University’s tenth president and first vice-chancellor on May 1, 2019.

Moving Forward:

As progressive educators pursuing excellence, the MRFA is committed to representing the interests of our members while protecting the long-established values that have made Mount Royal University a stellar, student-focused, institution. We welcome various opportunities to learn from, and with, our fellow educators and encourage you to connect with us to share ideas, collaborate and advance the state of post-secondary education across our respective locations.
Western Regional Conference | FPSE President Terri Van Steinburg Report

The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC is the voice of 10,000 faculty and staff in BC’s colleges, institutes and teaching universities. The federation has 19 locals representing members in the public and private sector.

Public sector members’ contracts expired on March 31, 2019. In the leadup and time after contract expiration, members have been bargaining with employers on a number of issues; the highest priority of which is achieving fair pay for contract faculty.

**Fairness for Contract Faculty**

FPSE’s position is that fairness for contract faculty is both a bargaining issue, as well as a public policy issue. Therefore, action has been taken to raise the profile of this issue among elected officials in BC, as well as the general public.

Our federation participated in Fair Employment Week (Oct 7-11) with a series of actions and digital communications. Our thanks go out to the members of FPSE’s Non-Regular Contract Faculty Committee for their efforts in holding events on campus to educate colleagues and members of the public on the working conditions experienced by contract faculty.

As president, I contacted all municipalities in BC with a request that they recognize Fair Employment Week in support of fairness for contract faculty. Thank you to FPSE Executive members Sean Parkinson, and Shirley Ackland who attended the Union of BC Municipalities convention to discuss this issue further with mayors, councillors, and city staff. Seven (may increase up to eleven over next couple days) municipalities have thus far recognized Fair Employment Week, including the 2nd largest city in the province, Surrey BC.

In addition, the FPSE Presidents’ Council held a series of meetings and events in Victoria during Fair Employment Week to raise the importance of fairness for contract faculty with Members of the Legislative Assembly.

**Anti-racism and Decolonization**

The FPSE Decolonization, Reconciliation, and Indigenization Standing Committee has now begun its third year since being formed in 2017. Composed of majority Indigenous educators, our federation is grateful to committee members for their thoughtful consideration, analysis, and discussion of issues related to decolonization within our unions and on campuses. We look forward to receiving more recommendations and updates from the committee as they continue their work.

Our federation is also continuing to expand access to the book Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization, which we’ve been proud to produce. This year we will be producing and releasing an audiobook and French translation of the book, both of which will also be released for free. Find the free e-books here: [https://fpse.ca/decolonization_manual_whose_land_is_it_anyway](https://fpse.ca/decolonization_manual_whose_land_is_it_anyway)

**Next Year FPSE Celebrates 50 Years**

Finally, next year FPSE will celebrate our 50th anniversary. We’re hard at work collecting first person accounts and historical materials, and are looking forward to sharing our history and achievements with our fellow union members and the public next year.
CUFA-BC – Bargaining Report – September 25, 2019

Bargaining calendar:

(i) preparation prior to joining the table

We first met, as a team of six and with extensive bargaining and association leadership experience at Royal Roads, in August 2018, and prior to the commencement of bargaining, convened weekly to research, write and edit proposals. We had two day-long training sessions with Allan Black, well known to BC associations as a lawyer and bargaining consultant, in August 2018 and May 2019 respectively. Jeff McKeil at CAUT provided us an audit of our agreement and a day-long session in September 2018 also devoted to our preparation, and has been reliably helpful in phone calls during our process since. We also developed a series of in-person consultations with our academic departments, and delivered an extensive online survey, all leading toward a mandate meeting with our 75 faculty and librarian members in January 2019.

(ii) bargaining

After several weeks of protocol negotiation, we first met with the employer to table and discuss proposals on June 4, 2019. We have spent a total of 14 days in actual bargaining since that early June date, and currently have 9 days scheduled for the remainder of September and the month of October. As has been the case the last several rounds, the employer has come with a modest package of proposals, whereas we arrived with a comprehensive reform of our agreement and any number of new articles. Chief among the employer’s proposals this round has been the creation of a teaching-only appointment category (i.e., a teaching-track); this item was also tabled in a previous round in a different form.

We look forward to, and are grateful for Annabree and CUFA-BC’s role in making it possible, the Lancaster House workshop this November.

Major proposals:

We are tabling approximately 20-25 proposals this round, our fifth round since RRUFA certified in 2006. Our priorities this round, among many incremental improvements to existing language, are as follows:

• The reconstruction of our appointment, conversion, and promotion language,
notably with an institutional commitment to tenure (we have tenure-like protections at RRU, but are obliged to use the word “conversion” in how we represent ourselves contractually)

- The evolution of our workload model, with the major change being the introduction of a guaranteed period of time (called “professional sustainability”) free from other obligations to think, write and undertake professional development
- The rewriting of our existing “dismissal without cause and with notice” article, creating a “program redundancy and financial exigency” alternative that restores some balance to the RRUFA-employer relationship in the event of a department’s closure or a financial crisis
- The refinement of our sabbatical language, bringing it up to the same standard with our sister institutions among the other CUFA/RUCBC universities. Our sabbaticals are half as long at 3 (100% salary) or 6 (80% salary), and only available every 6 years. We only achieved sabbatical language in our 2014 round.
- A new article defining and outlining the work done by school directors (i.e., department chairs) and program heads (i.e., undergraduate and graduate officers who administer a specific program in a school).
- A new article providing for time release for our FA executive and our bargaining team; in years past, we have had to negotiate course remission on an improvised basis.

**Culture and activity at the table:**

The culture at the table has been generally positive and congenial, though on several occasions the employer has refused to counter at all on new language we've tabled on the grounds that they don’t believe it has a place in our agreement. (An example here is an article on our learning, teaching and research model at RRU.) We sensed some “hard bargaining” here, and brought it to the attention of the employer’s chief negotiator off-table.

The employer team has made use of several professional chief negotiators at table: one, Dan Bradshaw, now moved onto a new position in Ontario, was an HR specialist; the current negotiator, Geoff Tierney, is an employer-side lawyer from Hamilton with experience consulting and negotiating at McMaster, Lethbridge, and the U. of Alberta. This use of outside negotiators is a new feature of bargaining at RRU, and we have adjusted as needed.

We are in the middle of a major transition in academic leadership at Royal Roads, with a new president as of early 2019, and our long-serving vice-president academic
indicating that he is resigning in early 2020. How, if at all, this might affect bargaining remains unclear, though we are attentive to changes in perspective and strategic opportunities as the RRU executive the employer team is representing at table is reconstituted.

**Duration of bargaining:**

We are preparing to bargain into 2020, but are assessing our stamina and momentum at table this fall.
October 7, 2019

Saint Thomas More Faculty Union
Saint Thomas More College,
1437 College Drive
Saskatoon, SK.
S7N 0W6

Report to the Western Regional Conference

STMFU is about to start bargaining. Our previous contract ended over two years ago. However, in the past, STMFU has followed the compensation packages agreed to at the U. of S. So we had been waiting for the USFA to reach an agreement. Congratulations to the USFA on their new agreement. In our last agreement STMFU bargained a retirement incentive plan. We have found this provision to be useful to our members. We expect on-line instruction to be a large issue in the upcoming round of bargaining. Any advice for handling on-line instruction will be appreciated. Thank you.

The STMFU Executive Committee has four members:

    Bryan Wiebe, President
    Charles Smith, Vice President
    Saeed Moshiri, Treasurer
    Paulette Hunter, Recording Secretary

Our Chief Negotiator is Bryan Wiebe

Bryan Wiebe
President, STMFU
Presidents report for western regional conference Academic year 2019/2020

Hello peers,

Not much new to report on since we last met at Athabasca we have had several inquiries to our LOU on the workload appeal process in our CA

Al Brown (SAFA LRO) and I did file a policy grievance on the use of Adjunct instructors during regular daytime grant funded program instruction it was extended to mid-May from sait as they seem to be knee deep in AUPE negotiations

AUPE ratified their agreement with members at SAIT

It now looks like our Adjunct policy grievance will advance to arbitration

We have a harassment grievance in the school of business may go on to level 3 arbitration waiting on a legal opinion

We will ramp up our negotiations team for the 3rd year wage re-opener for the end of April

Updated we have met and proposed a 2% across the board increase Sait countered with 0%

The non-paid instructors that attended the mandatory TEF or ISW course in August last year will now be paid if they come forward before June 1st and lodge a formal complaint with safa this circumvents the grievance process and my shame tactics seemed to work on Dr. Ross (SAIT president) and Brad Donaldson (SAIT VPA)

The theory pay = work and work = pay seemed to rub those two pretty hard and in fact might have been a big CRA issue if someone wanted to take it there

Seems the right threats run deep with VPA and president of the institution so a win on that front

Looking forward to the conference
See everyone there

Always, in service of membership.

Regards,
Blair Howes
SAFA President
University of Northern British Columbia Faculty Association

CAUT Western Regionals Report

17-19 October 2019

Presented by Paul Siakaluk, Vice-President, UNBC-FA

The UNBC-FA, incorporated in 1994 and certified as a union in 2014, is the sole bargaining agent for UNBC’s tenured, tenure-track, limited-term and sessional faculty members; academic librarians; and senior lab instructors at the Prince George and regional campuses.

The 2019-2021 Executive Committee members are:

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
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<td>President</td>
<td>Stephen Rader</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Catherine Whalen</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Paul Siakaluk</td>
<td>MAL (Faculty)</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>MAL (Term)/S</td>
<td>Monica Mattfeld</td>
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<td>Trina Fyfe</td>
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<td>MAL (Faculty)</td>
<td>Brian Menounos</td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<td>Past President</td>
<td>Jacqueline Holler</td>
<td>History</td>
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<td>ED</td>
<td>Donna Sindaco</td>
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<td>Jenia Blair</td>
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<td>Art Fredeen</td>
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<td>MAL (Term)/S</td>
<td>Nathan Andrews</td>
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<td>Bruce Bidgood</td>
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<td>Janina Blair</td>
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<td>MAL (Faculty)</td>
<td>Christa Florell</td>
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MAL = Member-at-Large; S = Secretary; PSO = Professional Services Officer

1. Bargaining Part 1: EROs and VEPs

The UNBC-FA agreed to an Early Retirement Offer/Voluntary Exit Package for our members. The ERO was for anyone who whose service + age = 70. The VEP was for anyone in the School of Education, which in retrospect was a mistake, as it was clear to them that the administration was singling them out, and we allowed it to be public. To everyone’s surprise, 24 of our members, about 10% of our membership, accepted the retirement offer, many of them choosing to take it as of July 1, 2020 (there was some flexibility as to the start date). With more money at the table than had been anticipated, the employer was suddenly very sorry to have signed an MOU to the effect that every penny would go into our compensation package. Since signing the MOU, the employer has stated there will be a cap on how much of these salary savings would be put into our compensation package. They have reported three different numbers for the salary savings to our Board of Governors, all of them higher than what they have presented to our bargaining team. We are presently litigating this signed agreement with the Labour Relations Board.

2. Bargaining part II: the Ultimatum

At 3 pm on what we had said would be the last day of summer bargaining, the employer tabled a "final offer" package proposal that included many unacceptable provisions, some of
which we had not seen before. For example, they wanted us to agree to drop all of our grievances. This “final offer” was presented on the Friday of a long weekend. As we had told them there would be no more bargaining, we did not respond to their proposal. The employer’s lead or co-lead negotiator (things change on that front) directly emailed their proposal to our entire membership, which was a dubious tactic, as some of their proposal had never been discussed at the table. This ploy backfired. At a membership meeting that week, we received a unanimous vote to stay the course and our bargaining team received a standing ovation for their efforts.


We assumed that part of the employer’s bargaining team’s panic to get an agreement in June was that they probably knew that UVic was about to settle on excellent terms for their faculty, terms that would make it even harder for UNBC to stonewall on salaries and CDIs. Yay U.Vic! Our team submitted a response on September 6th to their June proposal, with a deadline to respond by the 11th. Hearing no response, and with their continuing refusal even to cost our proposal [also probably illegal], our Executive Committee unanimously voted on September 16th to ask the membership for a strike mandate. Voting started on Sept. 19th and ended on Oct 4th. Of our members who voted, 84.2% voted in favour of strike action. This enables our Executive Committee to declare a strike with 72 hours notice. The newest update is that the employer has requested mediation, which may delay when a possible strike could take place.

4. Are We Winning the Grievance Race?

It appears that administration at UNBC has taken the approach of often disregarding provisions in our CA. This tendency has led to the necessity of filing many grievances on behalf of our members. We are up to ~30 grievances filed to date, a new, and unfortunate, record at UNBC. These grievances are often dealt with at the very last moment before arbitration. Even if a quarter of these grievances go to arbitration we’ll go bankrupt, but they all seem too important to drop.

6. UNBC-FA Elections

Our 2019 Spring elections brought a couple of retirements (from the Executive) and a couple of fresh faces. Big thanks to our firebrand (Kristen Guest, English) for her long service and sustained outrage, to Sylvia Barton (Nursing), our outgoing Treasurer, and to twice Acting VP, Paul Sanborn (Forestry), our official button-maker, who has made many excellent buttons for faculty and our supporter to wear. New members include Nathan Andrews (International Studies), a fresh young face at UNBC, Brian Menounos (Geography), recent recipient of the Distinguished Academic Award, and Catherine Whalen (Education), our new Treasurer. Finally, Jacqueline Holler, who is not only continuing as Past President, but who has also signed up to be our Assistant Grievance Officer, a new position created to help us stay on top of grievances.
Executive Committee Members 2018-2019

President: Lynne Marks
Vice-President: Monica Prendergast
Treasurer: Elisabeth Gugl
Secretary: Martha McGinnis
Past-President: Helga Hallgrímsdóttir
Teaching Faculty Rep: Suzan Last
Librarian Rep: Daniel Brendle-Moczuk
ADRC Chair: Chris Bose
MAL: Vicky Wyatt
MAL: Eric Cormier
MAL: Colin Goldblatt
MAL: Teresa Dawson

Association Staff
General Manager: Esme Friesen
Membership Services Advisor: Reuben Kellen
Membership Services, Research & Communication Advisor: Ben Johnson
Administrative Officer: Penny Murray

President's Report

Bargaining:

After significant work consulting with and surveying the membership in the fall of 2018 regarding their priorities for bargaining, the Collective Agreement Committee developed a bargaining mandate that received overwhelming support from the membership. The FA Negotiating Team (Helga Hallgrímsdóttir, Chief Negotiator, Caterina Valeo, Susan Strega, Elisabeth Gugl, Anthony Vickery and Bill Blair, NT members) worked very hard between February and June of 2019 in bargaining with the administration. For the first few months the administration put forward proposals that would not have been acceptable to the membership, for example regarding the need to get permission to work off campus, and limitations on the rights of members to criticize the university. However, in the last few days of bargaining the administration put forward a number of much more positive proposals, accepting, at least in some form, a number of the most important FA proposals. As a result, the NT signed a tentative agreement at the end of June, which was overwhelmingly ratified (93%) by the membership in early July. This agreement includes a much improved salary structure, with much higher career progress increments, which are highest for more junior faculty, but remain far more robust than the previous CPI system, even for more senior faculty. A merit component remains for those ranked in the top 30% each merit cycle. This new salary structure should help to remove UVic from the bottom rank in salary in relation to comparator universities. We bargained important new language regarding workload, which should help ensure greater equity in workload within departments. In addition, the NT was able to bargain a tuition benefit fund, which we have been asking for for several rounds of bargaining with no success, as well as 90% study leave for all faculty, taking us from the bottom in study leave compensation to a very competitive level in relation to other universities. We also made a number of important gains for teaching faculty, reducing their teaching load by 10%, and eliminating the requirement that they owed a course when going on study leave. Other positive elements of the new CA include a conversion fund for those departments that wish to convert continuing sessionals to teaching stream faculty and another fund to assist in the hiring of Indigenous faculty members. We also gained paid ceremonial leave for Indigenous faculty, and paid sick, maternity and parental leave for limited term faculty. Of course, we made a few concessions to make these important gains – the most important of which is that after the next two years it will no longer be possible to gain tenure without promotion at UVic. Nonetheless, FA members all across campus are very pleased with the new Collective Agreement, and very grateful to Helga and the NT. In my 27 years at UVic, I have never seen the FA so popular with the membership.
Changes in Leadership

After two terms as a very successful Chief Negotiator, as well as five years as President, in which she transformed the UVic FA from a fractious new union with a vocal anti-union minority and a limited ability to serve the needs of its membership to a united faculty union with a professional membership services staff, Helga Hallgrimsdottir has stepped down as President. The FA had a big party to celebrate her impressive achievements last week.

In other leadership news, UVic’s President Jamie Cassels announced he will be stepping down as President in June of 2020, after seven years as President (and a previous 10 years as Provost). Valerie Kuehne, current Provost, also announced that she will be stepping down, at the end of June 2021. So UVic will soon have new leadership. Since UVic has significant faculty representation on the President’s search committee, we are encouraging our members to nominate strong advocates of faculty rights and collegiality to the committee, to try and ensure a positive choice in the new President.

Strike Votes, Essential Services and BC Exceptionalism

In July the sessional union (CUPE 4163, component 3) had a successful strike vote, after the university refused to consider their proposals regarding increased job security for both continuing and term sessionals. This meant that UVic FA’s new President received a crash course in Essential Services legislation, taught by Allan Black. Since there has not been a strike on campus since the UVic FA unionized five years ago, the administration thought that they could teach us themselves how it worked, and they did not even send us their proposed list of union members they thought should be designated essential services until three weeks after these lists had been sent to the other unions on campus. This gave me an opportunity to meet FA members in Nursing, Social Work, Child and Youth Care and the Island Medical Program whose work the administration thought could not be disrupted without causing immediate danger to the health and welfare of British Columbians, although we (and many of the relevant members) did not agree. Just before we were to go into mediation through the Labour Board over essential services the sessional union came to a tentative settlement with the administration, but this deal has not yet been ratified. Three other unions are still bargaining, so we may yet go back to the essential services process this year. But next time we will be more prepared.

In the lead-up to a possible sessional strike the administration also told us that those of our members who refused to cross a picket line of another union (as allowed in our CA), would not only lose salary – as described in the CA – but also benefits. We therefore sought the support of the CAUT Defence Fund to provide “picket pay.” This is provided by both CUPE and PEA to those of their UVic members who do not cross the picket lines of other unions, and enables the unions to cover the benefit costs of those members who do not cross. I discovered that BC is apparently the only province in Canada that has legislation that allows members of unions the right not to cross the picket of other unions that are on strike. Since such a right does not exist in Ontario, the CAUT Defence Fund was very concerned that our request might be seen as abetting an illegal strike (as well as setting a precedent). Perhaps as a result of a certain Ontario-centric vision, the CAUT Defence Fund trustees refused to discuss our request for picket pay at a conference call this week, and instead delayed the discussion to their meeting in Toronto on October 5th. This is an important issue that potentially affects all BC faculty unions, and I hope it is one that can be discussed by CUFA-BC.

Education and Member Outreach

Over the fall the FA is doing a great deal of work to educate the membership about the provisions of the new Collective Agreement. Our Chief Negotiator and our President are in the process of visiting all departments on campus to discuss the new CA and answer questions about it. We are also hosting a number of workshops on the CA, some for all members and some just for Chairs. In addition to FA sponsored events, we are also co-sponsoring several workshops for Chairs with Faculty Relations on the new agreement.
URFA represents seven bargaining units who are employees of four different employers: the University of Regina, Luther College, Campion College, and the First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv). We represent academic staff members at all four institutions and administrative, professional, and technical (APT) employees at the University of Regina and the First Nations University of Canada. In all, URFA administers seven separate collective agreements and has approximately 1,400 members in a variety of occupations.

**Collective Agreements**

**Current Bargaining**

Out of the seven collective agreements, three are still in effect: First Nations APT until the end of June 2021, University of Regina APT until March 2021 (4 years), University of Regina Academics until the end of June 2021 (4 years).

At this point, four collective agreements have expired: University of Regina, Luther College and Campion College since the end of June 2017, First Nations University of Canada Academics since the end of June 2018 and First Nations University of Canada Sessionals since the end of December 2019. Usually, Campion, Luther and FNUniv wait for the UofR to settle and then use the agreement as a template for their own bargaining.

You will note that the trend for new contract is now 4 years instead of 3 years. It took so long to reach an agreement this time that 4 years made sense.

In March 2019, URFA came very close to have the first strike for its UofR Academic Bargaining Unit. A 6-day notice of strike was served to the Administration on March 22\textsuperscript{nd} and an agreement was reached on March 25\textsuperscript{th}. It was a quasi-strike.

Just before signing the UofR Academics agreement, it came to URFA's attention that there was a huge divergence in interpreting the Add one / Drop on clause on career growth increment. During bargaining, it was accepted as a fact that every member of the contract would get a bump up, but for the administration, this was seen simply as adding an increment at the top of the scale and removing one at the bottom. Following legal advice, URFA's strategy was to sign the contract and then grieve the language. This grievance is now due for arbitration.
General observations

In order to increase membership engagement, the president decided to spend two hours per week to meet with members. It will take a little while to meet all 1400 members, and it is challenging to meet with the sessionals, who simply come on campus to teach and then are gone. But there seems to be positive results so far.

URFA is now engaged on a “where we want to be in five years” exercise. Members don’t really like the word “strategic planning”, but it is important to take the time to reflect on the future of our Association. A day-long retreat has been planned for Saturday, October 26th, involving members of the Council of Representatives, and consultation with the whole membership will follow.

URFA announced in April 2019 that it would temporarily suspend its membership with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL), NU-CAUT and the Regina District Labour Council (RDLC). This is a temporary measure that will be lifted as soon as our budget is stabilized. It is not something we decided to do lightly.

Thanks to an initiative from the Grievance Chair, Hirsch Greenberg, URFA is now engaged in exploring an alternate solution to conflicts in the form of restorative justice. The university administration is slow to consider this option, but progress have been made.

URFA Officers and Staff

Sylvain Rheault, President  Kevin Siebert, Executive Director
[Vacant] Vice-President (APT)  Frank Mentes, Member Services Officer
Paitoon Tontiwachwuthikul, V-P (Academic)  Colin Tether, Member Services Officer
Hirsch Greenberg, Grievance Chair  Heather Ritenburg, Member Services Officer
Andrei Volodin, Treasurer  Eric Bell, Communication Officer
Claire Carter, Equity Chair  Debbie Head, Financial Officer

Kathy Sthamann, Admin Assistant II
Dana Tarnes, Admin Assistant I

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