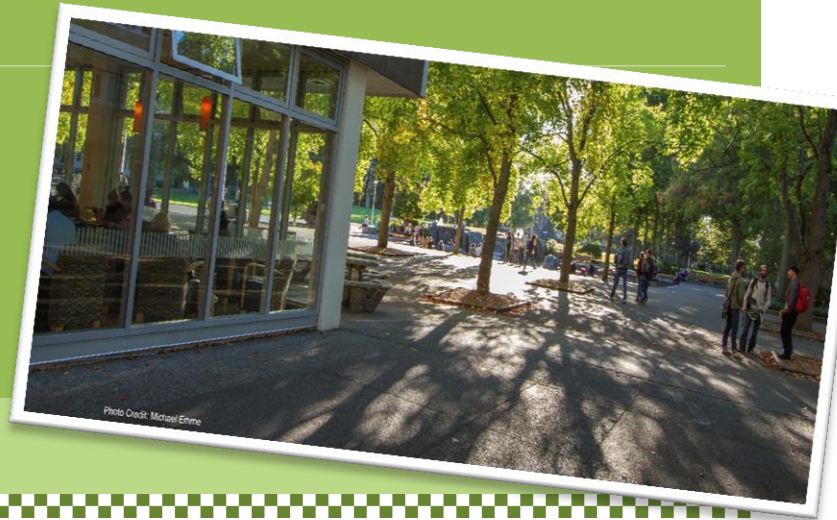


UVic FA Newsletter

Connecting the members of
the University of Victoria
Faculty Association

September 8, 2014



In This Issue

- Page 1 President's Message
- Page 2 President's Message, Continued
- Page 3 Chief Negotiator's Update
- Page 4 Upcoming Ballot: Mil-Rate Increase
- Page 5 CAUT Defense Fund
- Page 6 Notice of General Meeting

President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

A warm welcome from your Faculty Association to a new fall term. In this issue we highlight a number of activities and areas of interest that the Faculty Association is pursuing. In particular, I bring your attention to two important upcoming votes: on increasing the mil-rate of the Faculty Association, and on joining the CAUT Defense Fund. In addition, this issue includes a report from the Chief Negotiator on the status of the negotiations for our first Collective Agreement, an update on the FA office staff, as well as on the Gender Equity exercise, and a list of upcoming events that the Faculty Association is organizing. With all of this, I hope to convey to you that in addition to a new beginning as a certified organization, the Faculty Association has also embarked on some internal renovation, with the goals of professionalizing our organization, increasing our capacity to engage with our community, and strengthening our presence at the bargaining table. (Continued on page 2.)



Celebrating your accomplishments!

A celebration will be held on October 3rd at 6.30 pm at Swans Hotel for all colleagues who have been promoted or received tenure this year. If you have received an invitation, please RSVP by September 8, and indicate if you plan to bring a guest. Come to be lauded, and stay for live music at Swans after 9 p.m.

pg. 3



President's Message

(Continued from page 1.)

Our major task this year is, of course, to negotiate with the University a first Collective Agreement. This work began last year, commencing with a survey to assess our priorities (results of which are forthcoming in the next Bargaining Bulletin), and with much preparatory work on the part of the Negotiating Team, especially the Chief Negotiator, in distilling the survey results to a series of proposals, and translating these proposals into Collective Agreement Language. It is important to note here that the Negotiating Team does not work in a vacuum; it is supported in its work by a larger Compensation and Benefits committee, but, even more importantly, the Team requires the support of our membership to have strength at the table.

Finally, as we embark on our new year as a certified Faculty Association, we also need to think about what kind of organization we want to be. Certification has imposed new responsibilities on the Faculty

Association, as well as heightened expectations from the membership. It is in response to this that we have conducted a search for (and hired) an Executive Director with extensive experience in managing non-profit organizations, as well as in bargaining and negotiations. We are also in the process of hiring a Membership Services Officer who will serve as a grievance officer and aide in dispute resolution, as well as work in outreach and membership engagement. With our office support person, we will have a staff complement of three, which, while a significant addition from past practice, will still put us among the smaller organizations, in terms of staff support relative to the number of members.

It is a beginning, however, as we move to creating a professional and effective organization; in addition, expanding our capacity to serve our members is a recognition of the fact the work environment of university faculty and

librarians is increasing in complexity, due for the most part to a changing regulatory environment at the levels of the University administration as well as government.

In other words, while the certification drive provided the impetus to re-imagine how we wanted the Faculty Association to organize, the reorganization and expansion of the scope of the organization would have been necessary regardless.

This is your Association, and your elected representatives want to hear from you, whether your feedback is positive or negative. Contact the Faculty Association's office at uvicfa@uvic.ca or email us individually. Our unmoderated discussion listserv is also available, should you wish to open a wider conversation. Contact the office to subscribe.

Helga Hallgrímsdóttir
President

fapres@uvic.ca



Chief Negotiator's Update

It has been heartening to see that the two sides have a shared recognition of many of the challenges facing our Association colleagues, even if we often have different solutions to propose about those challenges.

Last winter's excitement about certification continues to animate the activities of the FA's Negotiating Team, because unionization has a more immediately concrete impact on negotiations than on most of our daily duties. Rather than reopening the existing Framework Agreement, we are instead engaged in seeking a first Collective Agreement, under the auspices of the BC *Labour Relations Code*. Everything could be on the table, and it's a very exciting time.

As of August 29th, the two sides have exchanged virtually all their proposals, and have begun the long task of walking each other through their own materials in the form of joint discussions, one topic at a time. Quite independently, each side elected to present a complete Collective Agreement at the table: the FA presented the draft contract as a single document, broken in two

pieces for ease of presentation, while the administration divided theirs into twenty-four proposals. It has been heartening to see that the two sides have a shared recognition of many of the challenges facing our Association colleagues, even if we often have different solutions to propose about those challenges.

In the lead-up to presenting these proposals, the Negotiating Team was deeply indebted to the ad-hoc Negotiations Support Group for its hard work to develop the survey (a bulletin about which will be out shortly). In the next few weeks, as the Negotiating Team formulates responses to the administration's proposals and (where necessary) refines our own proposals, we look forward to discussing issues with the FA's Compensation and Benefits Committee.

As we have said in each communiqué to date,

members of the Negotiating Team remain keen to hear from our colleagues about contract-related issues they face in their lives at UVic. Please don't hesitate to drop us an email through any one of our separate addresses, or via our team address:

uvicfaccb@uvic.ca

Richard Pickard, Chief Negotiator
Douglas Baer
Carol Gordon
Helga Hallgrímsdóttir



Upcoming Ballot: Increase to mil-rate

On September 22nd, an electronic ballot will be opened on the question on raising our current mil-rate of 5.00 to 7.5. The ballot will close one week later, on September 29th, at 5 p.m. Raising the mil-rate will require a Constitutional Amendment, which, as stipulated in Article 5.4.1 iii, requires a 75% vote in favour, following a Special Resolution passed at a General Meeting.

The Executive Committee voted on July 11th 2014 to recommend to the membership that the mil-rate be increased. The mil-rate was last raised in 2010, from 4.25 to 5. Our current mil-rate is tied with McMaster for the lowest mil-rate among CAUT member institutions, and is half the value of the modal mil-rate for Canadian Universities. CAUT generally doesn't permit the electronic distribution of their mil-rate survey, but any member who wishes to review the details of the survey may do so in the FA Office during regular office hours.

Why is an increase in the mil-rate necessary?

The issue of the mil-rate increase has been raised at the last several Annual General Meetings of the Faculty Association. There are several confluent factors that, together, are leading to an ongoing strain on the finances of the Association. The most significant of these are the increasing legal costs associated

with exercising our fiduciary responsibilities to our members. Over the past several years, the Association has seen a significant increase in both the number and the complexity of cases brought to it by Faculty and Librarians. This has led to increasing use of volunteer time and consultant time, as well as outside legal counsel. As a result, the Association has been in deficit budget position for the last two years.

The Executive has elected to take a two-pronged approach to this issue: first, we are recommending a small increase in the mil-rate, to get us out of a deficit situation and to allow us to start rebuilding our legal reserves. Second, we have embarked on a process of professionalizing our office and creating in-house capacity for handling our fiduciary responsibilities to our members, through the hiring of an Executive Director with legal training (as well as significant negotiation experience) and the hiring of a full-time Grievance Officer, skilled in informal and formal dispute resolution. These hiring decisions are intended to not only reduce significantly our reliance on outside counsel and consultants, but also increase the number of disputes and grievances that are resolved through mediation, both of which will have the long-term effect of reducing our overall legal costs.

What are the consequences of not raising the mil-rate?

The most immediate

consequence of not raising the mil-rate will be that the Association will have to continue operating a deficit budget and draw on its legal reserve funds to balance the books. Over the long term, however, if we do not increase our fiscal capacity, the Association will have to engage in a discussion on whether it is able to exercise its responsibilities to its members. As a Member-Association we have fiduciary obligations that include duty of fair representation, as well as the duty and responsibility of bargaining for salary and working conditions for all its members.

The increase in the mil-rate would have been necessary whether or not we had certified. The strain on Association finances has been building over several years; as well, the provisions for salary arbitration in our Framework Agreement were quite poor and necessitated very expensive processes. In fact, certification has, in some instances, reduced costs of running the Association. This is because, as a certified labour union, we now have access to a series of processes, including the ability to grieve all decisions related to the interpretation or application of the Collective Agreement, that have the result of lowering the legal costs associated with exercising our duty of fair representation.

Cast your ballot on this issue between September 22nd and 29th, via electronic vote.

Should we join the CAUT Defence Fund?



Tracy Samra appointed as Executive Director

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Tracy Samra as the Association's Executive Director. Tracy brings an extensive background in administrative law and treaty negotiation, including management experience with the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. Originally from Victoria, Tracy has an LL.B from UVic and an LL.M from the University of Ottawa.

Thanks to outgoing interim Executive Director Michael Litchfield

We want to acknowledge the tremendous service provided by our outgoing Interim Executive Director, Michael Litchfield, who will be focusing again on his work as a consultant in the nonprofit sector. He has been a very important figure in his relatively short time with us, and we wish him very well in every future endeavor.

On September 22nd, an additional electronic ballot will be opened on the question of whether or not the University of Victoria Faculty Association should join the CAUT Defence Fund. The ballot will close one week later, on September 29th, at 5 p.m.

While it could be argued that the decision to join the Defence Fund is within the authority that is vested in the Executive Committee by the Membership, the Executive Committee of the University of Victoria Faculty Association has decided not to take an official position on this issue. There are both costs and benefits associated with joining, and the ultimate decision should lie with the Membership, and not with the Executive Committee. As joining the Defence Fund does not require a constitutional amendment, a simple majority is all that is required.

In order to help the Membership make an informed decision, we have assembled some information on our website.

As well, Brian E. Brown, President of the CAUT Defence Fund, will be on campus on September 15th to speak about the Defence Fund and answer questions

that any of us may have. Following Dr. Brown's Presentation, a motion will be brought forward to enable the ballot on the matter.

To learn more about the costs and benefits of becoming a member of the CAUT Defence Fund, watch for more information on <http://www.uvicfa.ca> and explore the Defence Fund's website at <http://defencefund.caut.ca>, which includes a downloadable fact sheet detailing the purpose of the Fund, benefits for members, and a list of member associations.



Electronic Voting System Licensed

The Faculty Association Executive has voted to adopt an electronic voting platform that would allow greater control over elections and ballots. After evaluating the options, Simply Voting was licensed and will debut in September.



Faculty Association General Membership Meeting

Monday, September 15, 2.30-4.30 pm

Guest Speaker: Brian E. Brown,
President, CAUT Defense Fund

Two key items to be discussed are our current mil-rate and the CAUT Defense Fund. A full agenda will be posted on the Association's website at <http://www.uvicfa.ca/> and distributed to members by internal mail in advance of the meeting.

David Turpin Building, A102

(Formerly Social Science and Math)

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