



President's Activity Report for the 2017 Annual General Meeting

April 10th 2017

Dear Colleagues,

It has been three years since I first took office as Association President. These years have been a time of transition for the Association. In particular, the certification vote in 2014 meant the Association acquired new and significant fiduciary responsibilities towards its membership. The below report outlines how the Executive Committee has since been working to build the Association's capacity to exercise these responsibilities effectively.

Strategic Plan

At a strategic planning retreat in the spring of 2014, the Executive Committee identified a number of key areas for strengthening the Association (Strategic Plan), including:

- Enhancing operational capacity and service to Members
- Improving internal and external communications
- Improving Association governance
- Strengthening Member engagement

While achieving these goals is a work in progress, I would like to take this opportunity to report to you the advancements we have made thus far.

Enhancing Operational Capacity and Service to Members

Professional Office Space: During the summer of 2014, we successfully negotiated with the University Administration for a significant improvement to the office space that was occupied by the Association. The University agreed to fund renovations as well as the required asbestos remediation to University House 2. As a result, the Association now has a reception/administration area, several professional offices, and a boardroom where we can host committee meetings, host other meetings at the request of Members, as well as hold confidential Member consultations.

Professional Staff and a Sustainable Human Resource Plan: Prior to certification, the Association had only one full-time staff member and relied heavily on outside consultants in order to provide Membership Services and general assistance. One of our long-term goals was to move away from this practice and create a sustainable human resource plan, with a focus on building and enhancing the in-house capacity of the Association (i.e. through investing in training for full-time continuing employees).

The Association now has three full-time continuing employees (a General Manager and Communications Officer; a Membership Services Advisor; and an Administrative Assistant). In addition, we budget for the hiring of co-op and summer students – some of whom are funded by the Federal Summer Student Jobs



Grant - to work on special projects and provide vacation coverage. The result is a predictable and fiscally sustainable staffing plan.

Both the General Manager and the Membership Services Officer report to the President, while the Administrative Assistant reports to the General Manager. The Sustainable Human Resources Plan and general staffing issues are managed by the Association's appointed Human Resources Committee.

Enhancing Internal Governance: One of the weaknesses identified in the 2014 Strategic Plan was that the Association made decisions primarily on the basis of committee motions and the Association bylaws, and that there were relatively few policy documents available to guide how those decisions were made or implemented. We have now developed a relatively comprehensive Policy Book, covering such important matters as Terms of Reference for Committees, Membership Services, and internal Association governance (such as travel and financial policies). In addition, we clarified and expanded job descriptions for the Officers and adopted a portfolio system in order to assign specific duties for the Elected Directors of the Association.

We have also worked to strengthen relationships between the Executive Committee and the Standing Committees. This includes adopting a more formal reporting structure for the Standing Committees, as well as providing ongoing administrative support (e.g., facilitating and coordinating meetings, organizing membership engagement events, providing general operational advice, etc.) The work and support of the Association's General Manager has been crucial to enhancing and strengthening internal governance; the General Manager coordinates all communications, keeps meeting records and minutes, and ensures continuity and consistency across committees in terms of meeting practices and decision-making.

Membership Services: The most immediate effect of certification was that the Association acquired new fiduciary duties vis-a-vis our Members. A lack of operational or financial capacity is not sufficient grounds for not providing fair representation to Members. To this end, the Executive Committee has successfully worked to revitalize the Advising and Dispute Resolution Committee (ADRC) as an effective and deliberative body to assist and advise the Executive Committee on Member disputes, grievances, and arbitrations. We also have a full-time Membership Services Advisor who supports the work of the ADRC as well as provide in-person counselling and representation services to Members.

Looking forward, the Executive Committee has identified that there is a need for one additional membership services staff.

Improving Internal and External Communications

We have engaged in a series of initiatives to improve communications with Members. First and foremost among these has been a campaign to create a network of Departmental Liaisons to represent each academic unit across campus. The Executive can now communicate directly to each department in order to get input on Association initiatives and campaigns, as well as proposed University Policy changes. The Departmental Liaisons also enable the Association to be in touch with any unit-based concerns, specifically regarding the interpretation and application of the Collective Agreement and issues that may need to be considered for upcoming bargaining rounds. We achieve this by hosting two semi-annual workshops, by maintaining a dedicated listserv, and by sending out regular monthly updates of the Association's activities. This initiative was led initially by Patrick von Aderkas,



elected Member-at-Large, and is now managed by Judith Clarke, Association Vice President and Monica Prendergast, Association Secretary.

We have initiated *Faculty Feedback Cafés* – a monthly drop-in event open to all Faculty and Librarian members held at the University Club. Each café is organized around a particular theme and they have provided us with invaluable insight into Member concerns. We will continue to host these events next year and expect to gradually transition their focus toward collective bargaining items.

We have initiated a dedicated listserv for Chairs, with a particular focus on using this as an effective way to communicate the deliberations and decisions of the Joint Committee on the Administration of the Agreement (JCAA), which is the committee that resolves questions with regards to the Collective Agreement in between bargaining rounds.

In addition to regular updates, calls for participation and invitations to all member events via our main listserv, we have revamped our regular newsletter, the *F.A. Relay*. It now has regular columns (e.g., Member Sound-Off, Membership Services, Best of the Blogs, etc.), as well as general Association updates (Message from the President), Member profiles, and other committee updates and news.

Finally, it is important to note that our entire suite of initiatives to improve communications with Members is made possible by our office staff, in particular our General Manager and Communications Officer, Esme Friesen.

Improving Association Governance

The 2014 strategic planning exercise also identified an urgent need to revise the Association Bylaws. Our current bylaws not only pre-date certification, but have also not kept up with changes to the Association Membership or our operational and membership engagement needs. In particular, the Executive Committee identified that there was a need to revitalize the Association's governance infrastructure in order to better support a high-level of internal democracy while still maintaining and enhancing the Association's ability to provide effective and efficient services to Members.

The process of revising the Bylaws has been led by the elected Standing Committee on the Constitution and Bylaws (chaired by Martha McGinnis). We are now – after three years of consultation, research, and revision – ready to present the revised Bylaws to the Membership for ratification.

Strengthening Member Engagement

In general, strengthening member engagement is supported through all of our initiatives described above. However, we have also engaged in a series of initiatives that are explicitly focused on member engagement.

In the 2014 Fall Term we hosted our first *Annual Promotion and Tenure Celebration* at Swans Brewpub, to which we invite Members who have received advancement or tenure, along with their Chair and/or faculty mentor. This event is the only one held university-wide to celebrate the career milestones of our Faculty and Librarian colleagues. As such, we invite the University's senior executive, including President Jamie Cassels, to join us in recognizing their achievements.



In the 2016 and 2017 Spring Term, we held Merit Increment Mentoring events to help Members better understand the process under the Collective Agreement as well as provide tips on enhancing evaluation submissions. Similar events were also held for Department Chairs.

Also in the 2016 and 2017 Spring Term, we hosted open panel discussions on Academic Freedom.

Other Updates

Policy Consultation

Article 14 in the Collective Agreement requires the University to consult with the Association on any new University policies or revisions to existing University policies that impact working conditions of faculty and librarians. In 2016-17 the Association and the University have consulted on the following policies:

The revised Procedures for Research on Animals (Policy RH8110): We have met twice with the Administration with regards to proposed revisions to this policy and consulted with Members who would be affected by the changes and provided feedback to Research Operations on the results of these consultations.

Changes to Child Care Services: As reported in June 2016, the Administration agreed to participate in a consultation committee (as per Article 14) on the proposed changes to Centre 6 at the University of Victoria Child Care Centre. Association representatives on the consultation committee are Helga Hallgrimsdottir, Judith Anne Clarke, and Irina Paci (Representative from the Parents' Alliance). In addition, Victoria Wyatt is serving as a liaison between the Association and the University of Victoria Childcare Parents' Alliance, and Lynne Marks has taken on outreach and communication activities during the consultation process. Administration representatives are Jim Forbes (Director, Campus Services), Kristi Simpson (Associate Vice-President Planning and Operations) and Susan Lewis (Dean of Fine Arts). The chair of the committee is Tim Black (Chair of Educational Psychology and Leadership). The Committee has met five times during 2017. The Administration has requested that the content of these meetings be confidential but we hope to be able to report to the Membership soon.

One of the items that the Association raised with the Administration at these meetings is a pressing need for greater transparency around the management of the Uvic Child Care Services waitlists. The Administration refused to discuss this matter with the Association. If you have experienced challenges around the waitlist, please get in touch with us at uvicfa@uvic.ca.

Intellectual Property Policy: At the end of the last bargaining round (2014-2019), the Administration and the Association agreed to form a joint task force to produce a revised policy on Intellectual Property. As this policy consultation process was negotiated independently as part of a bargaining round, it lies outside of the provisions of Article 14. Instead, both the Association and the Administration must agree to adopt the new policy if it is to become part of the Collective Agreement.

The joint taskforce delivered its final report to the Association and the Administration in June 2016. Since then, there have been discussions and email exchanges about moving forward on adopting the policy. Nikolai Dechev, from the Faculty of Engineering, and I met with David Castles, Vice-President Research, and Rachael Scarth, Associate Vice-President Research Operations, on November 17, 2016 to



discuss next steps and any areas of. At this point, the Association is waiting for a response from the Administration with regards to a series of suggestions around the commercialization of IP and issues pertaining to on-line course materials. Once we have those responses, we will circulate the draft document to the entire Membership for feedback before meeting again with the Administration.

Research Funding Management and Financial Accountability Policy: The Association consulted widely with colleagues across campus, both individually and at two dedicated Faculty Feedback Cafés, with regards to this new policy. In addition, we circulated information about this policy and our proposed revisions to the Departmental Liaisons. The consultation committee met five times over the spring of 2016. Our final meeting was on June 20, 2017 at which the committee reached an agreement on the final form of the policy.

Following the conclusion of this consultation, the Association (through Patrick von Aderkas) has reached out to Research Services and Research Accounting in order to get these offices engaged in providing better and more transparent services to faculty members with research accounts. As a result, Research Accounting has now developed two new initiatives: dedicated FAST training for researchers; and, the new practice of sending monthly balance reports to research account holders.

Sexualized Violence Policy and Procedures: The Association met twice with the University working group on Sexualized Violence and provided feedback on the Association's concerns with the policy. Our feedback was received positively and was largely incorporated into the final draft of the policy. The Association will meet again with the Working Group on April 6, 2017 to discuss the accompanying procedures document. In recognition of the scheduling constraints faced by the Working Group and the Administration, the Association waived, on a without prejudice and precedent basis, its rights to call for a full Article 14 consultation on this issue.

Graduate Studies Supervisory Policy: This policy was approved by the Council of Graduate Studies in February 2017. The Association received a draft of the policy on February 14, 2017 and was asked to respond by February 16th, 2017. The Association provided feedback within the timeframe, but we did not receive an acknowledgement of this feedback. We have since provided notice to the AVP Faculty Relations that the Association sees this new policy as adding to the workload of faculty members and thus subject to consultation under Article 14.

The Joint Committee on the Administration of the Agreement

JCAA has met once every two months since the Fall of 2015. A summary of the 2015-16 interpretations and decisions of the committee can be found [here](#).

The Annual Report of the JCAA for 2016-17 will be available shortly. Items discussed this year include the meaning of "consultation" in Article 27 (what does it mean to say that a Chair or Director will consult with the Member when assigning duties and responsibilities), as well as whether a Chair or Director can reset the evaluation ratio for a Member retroactively.

The Association relies on input and suggestions from Members (through the Standing Committees and the Departmental Liaisons) for JCAA agenda items. The next meeting of the JCAA is on April 19, 2017.



2016-17 Advocacy Agenda Update

The 2016-2017 Advocacy Agenda, ratified by the Membership at the 2016 AGM, identified four areas of activity for the Association. After one year, we can report on the following initiatives and activities within each of these areas:

1. To raise faculty and librarian concerns with regards to research services and support with the Administration.

In addition to the above mentioned policy consultation in these areas, the Association pursued two broad initiatives.

First, we created an Executive Committee portfolio for Research Services and Support - Lynne Marks, an elected Member-at-Large and faculty member of the Department of History, agreed to take this on. With the support of the office, she conducted a survey of research support services at comparable universities. Lynne also met with the AVP Research to discuss how UVic compares in terms of research support services. We will be working with this baseline data to start to develop some bargaining priorities around research support in the coming year.

Second, Patrick von Aderkas engaged in discussions with staff members in Research Services about the need for better training and more awareness of faculty needs when it comes to research accounting, as well as the need for earlier interventions and supports when faculty are at risk of overspending on their accounts. This resulted in specialized FAST training sessions, as well as the new monthly balance statement.

2. To create a peer and mentorship support network for early-in-career scholars.

First, we created an Executive Committee portfolio for Early-in-Career scholars; elected Member-at-Large and faculty member of Engineering, Stephanie Willerth agreed to take this portfolio on. As part of her advocacy work, Stephanie attended (along with Rebecca Warburton, Association Treasurer, and Reuben Kellen, Membership Services Advisor) the Administration's orientation session for new faculty and librarians and presented to new Members an overview of our Membership Services. We also hosted a New Member's Social on September 15th last year, to give new Members a chance to meet colleagues from across campus, and a mentoring event on performance evaluations in January 2017.

Moving forward, we will host dedicated education events for new Members, including one on the RPT processes that will take place in the fall of 2017 (as part of the New Member Social). We will also be continuing to offer a mentoring event on the performance evaluation process in January 2018.

If you have any suggestions about other kinds of support that the Association could be offering early-in-career scholars, please email us at uvicfa@uvic.ca.

3. To enhance Association support for Chairs and Directors.

We created an Executive Committee portfolio for advocacy and support for Chairs and Directors. Patrick von Aderkas, elected Member-at-Large and faculty member (and former chair) from Biology agreed to take this portfolio for a 2-year term ending in the spring of 2018. In addition to organizing a workshop on performance evaluations for Chairs and Directors, Patrick also serves as advocate and support person for Chairs in any member-to-member disputes.



Moving forward, we have developed a dedicated Chair listserv and are organizing a Chair's forum for the fall of 2017. If you have a question or suggestion that you believe would be pertinent to this advocacy area, please email me (presidentfa@uvic.ca) or Patrick von Aderkas (pvonader@uvic.ca).

4. To advocate that the University focus its spending priorities on activities related to the core mission of the University (research, teaching, and scholarship).

This is a core advocacy objective of the Association and we have a number of initiatives that we are working on in this regard. The projects that form part of the research services portfolio are linked to this objective. In addition, we are planning a dedicated issue of the Association newsletter on the topic of University spending priorities.

One of the key concerns that our Members have with regards to this issue is that the University continue to provide strong support for the University library acquisition and retention budget. The Association takes the position that adequate library resources are a necessary condition for academic work. We continue to keep a close eye on this issue, and have raised the issue of sustainable library budgeting directly with the President and Provost.

Finally, Patrick and I, along with Reuben Kellen, have been working with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics to raise awareness among VPAC with regards to how persistent and ever increasing teaching loads in this department are posing a significant threat to their research culture. Mathematics and Statistics provides an enormous amount of service teaching to the entire University, particularly to the Faculty of Engineering. However, growth in the programs that rely on math has not resulted in the reallocation of funds to Mathematics and Statistics, thus creating significant strains on the department as a whole with both short and long-term implications in terms of the sustainability of their research programs, and, by extension, support for their graduate students.

2017-18 Advocacy Agenda

For the upcoming academic year, we propose to focus our advocacy efforts on the following areas:

1. Enhancing research support and research services at both the individual and unit level.

In addition to continuing with the projects that we started this year, our goal is to start to develop some bargaining priorities in this area.

If you have any suggestions for projects or issues that you feel will fall into this area, please email me at presidentfa@uvic.ca or at uvicfa@uvic.ca

2. Education and awareness of the role of Academic Freedom at the University of Victoria.

We plan on holding one speaker or panel event open to the public around an Academic Freedom theme in 2018, in addition to bringing to Members any concerns or threats to academic freedom, particularly in the global context.



If you have any suggestions for projects or issues that you feel will fall into this area, please email Monica Prendergast (who holds the Academic Freedom portfolio) at mprender@uvic.ca or uvicfa@uvic.ca.

3. To enhance Association support for Chairs and Directors.

We plan on continuing with the projects planned in this advocacy area, with the additional goal of starting to develop some bargaining priorities relevant to Chairs and Directors.

If you have any suggestions for projects or issues that you feel will fall into this area, please email Patrick von Aderkas at pvonader@uvic.ca or uvicfa@uvic.ca.

4. To continue to provide focused support for Early-in-Career scholars at the University of Victoria.

In addition to events held last year, we are looking to develop a “handbook” for new scholars entering UVic.

If you have any suggestions for projects or issues that you feel will fall into this area, please email me at presidentfa@uvic.ca or at uvicfa@uvic.ca.

5. Review the Course Experience Surveys.

We propose to add one new area to our advocacy agenda this year. We have received significant negative feedback from faculty with regards to the CES around issues such as response rates, relevance of the questions, and the role of these scores in evaluation.

We hope to be able to present some strong proposals around these issues during the next bargaining round. In preparation for that, we will be using this year to conduct Member surveys and to research how CES are used in other institutions.

If you have any suggestions for projects or issues that you feel will fall into this area, please email me at presidentfa@uvic.ca or at uvicfa@uvic.ca.

Constitution and Bylaws

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee for 2016–2018 consists of Martha McGinnis (returning as Chair), Douglas Baer, Patrick von Aderkas and Anthony Quas (returning member). The committee presented a summary of their recommendations to the Membership at the 2016 April AGM; following this, we held a dedicated event with Departmental Liaisons to discuss the proposed revisions, and we consulted with CAUT and CUFA-BC. Subsequently, the Executive Committee prepared a Principles outlining the proposed Bylaw revisions that was endorsed by the Membership at the 2016 November OGM. This document provided a mandate for the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the preparation of revised Association Bylaws.

The revised Bylaws have since been circulated to the Membership and we are presenting a motion at this AGM to move the revised Bylaws to a ratification vote. The revised Bylaws are the product of three years of work, including extensive consultation across campus, by the Constitution and Bylaws



Committee. The ratification vote will open on April 18th, and close two weeks later. The threshold for a successful ratification is 75%.

Any revision of the Association Bylaws must be grounded in a full understanding of the mission and purpose of an Association that represents academic staff members. As with any union, our key role is to provide effective representation for Members in any disputes arising from the application of the Collective Agreement, and to bargain for salary, benefits, and workplace rights. However, an *academic staff union* has additional obligations towards its membership, with regards to our role and responsibility in defending collegial governance, supporting equity, and protecting the integrity of academic work. Our proposed revisions highlight these principles.

In addition, our proposed revisions highlight the fact that the Association is simultaneously a *civic organization* and a *service organization*. As a civic organization we must place first priority on ensuring that we are as democratic as possible; as a service organization we must also protect the Association's ability to work effectively on the Membership's behalf. Therefore, our proposed revisions are intended to balance the need for a high level of internal democracy with effective management and governance. An additional goal of the revisions is to enhance our power at the bargaining table, by giving more voice and leverage to the Membership.