



President's Activity Report for the Ordinary General Meeting

December 6, 2018

By Helga Hallgrímsdóttir

Below I provide a brief update on some of the issues that we have been focusing on since the spring Annual General Meeting. In addition to regular Member services, our central activities have been focused around two areas: preparing for bargaining; and outreach and engagement with Members, including visiting individual departments and working with specific constituent groups, including librarians, indigenous faculty, faculty appointed to teaching-intensive positions, early-in-career faculty and chairs and directors.

In general terms, the workload of the Association office remains high as demand for Member support continues to increase. In addition, the increased need for Member support as well as more engagement with the Administration and our continuing commitment to transparency and accountability of Association operations to Members, places operational strains on the Association office. Bargaining is also a very work-intensive time period, involving additional research and member consultation, as well as communication.

Representative Council

The fall meeting of Council was held on October 22nd. Council has ratified the Negotiating Team and will meet in January to recommend the Bargaining Mandate to Members for a general ratification vote. At the February Council meeting, Council will approve the initial bargaining positions that the Negotiating Team will put forward.

Member Engagement and Education Events Fall 2018

Our engagement and education focus has shifted towards bargaining preparations. We have held three Faculty Feedback Cafés this fall dedicated to soliciting input for the purposes of developing a bargaining mandate that reflects member concerns and priorities around three separate constituencies: teaching-intensive faculty, indigenous faculty, and early-in-career faculty and librarians. We have also held bargaining consultation events with Chairs and Directors, and consulted specifically with the Chairs and Directors of professional programs to identify common areas of interest for the next bargaining round.

The Association has also participated in a few joint initiatives with the University Administration over the last year, including the orientation session for new faculty and librarians, and a workshop on tenure and promotion for chairs and RPT committee members.



Bargaining 2018-2019

Preparations for Collective Bargaining: Collective Bargaining Preparation is being led by the Collective Agreement Committee (CAC), chaired by Lynne Marks, and the Negotiating Team (NT). The NT consists of Caterina Valeo (Engineering), Elisabeth Gugl (Economics), Anthony Vickery (Theatre, Teaching Faculty), and Susan Strega (Social Work). Susan Strega chairs the NT, while I will serve as Chief Negotiator. The NT has been assembled so as to have both a mix of skills (statistical analytical skills, labour relations, and dispute resolution) and bargaining experience, as well as represent the diversity of our Membership.

This fall, the CAC and the NT have been working on conducting bargaining-related research (i.e. looking at salaries and working conditions at our comparator Universities) and developing and analyzing Member surveys in order to develop a bargaining mandate. Currently, two all-member surveys have been completed (workload and evaluation), with another on Salary and Benefits soon to be launched (before the holiday break); a survey for teaching-intensive faculty has also been completed; a survey for librarians has just concluded; and a survey for Chairs and Directors soon to be launched.

While we have not yet analysed all the results on the evaluation survey, I can report in a preliminary way on issues related to workload, as well as salary.

Workload: The results of the survey show that workload is a pressing issue for most faculty (this survey was not sent out to librarians, as their dedicated survey has questions concerning librarian workload). A majority of faculty report working in excess of 40 hours a week. While that in itself is perhaps to be expected given that long hours are a standard feature of academic work, many faculty also reported that even working these hours did not give them adequate time to dedicate to engaging in scholarship. Service work, teaching, and administrative work associated with teaching and research are significant elements of faculty workload. It is clear that the Association will need to seek some gains in this area for faculty in this next bargaining round. We are exploring the possibilities here by looking at how other Canadian research-intensive universities manage faculty workload, i.e. through offering more course release and overall lower course loads, more flexibility in assigning workload, more effective support for research administration, and explicit recognition of the value of research in the way that workload and duties and responsibilities are assigned to Members. It is also the case that improving study leave remuneration will also provide more support for the research activities of faculty. We welcome further input into this area as we develop our bargaining mandate.

Workload for faculty in teaching-intensive positions: Faculty in teaching-intensive positions report that while they are expected to engage in scholarship of teaching and learning, their course loads (which are among the highest in Canada) are such that they effectively preclude any activity but teaching. In some Faculties, teaching is assigned year-round, and there are faculty in these positions who have not been able to be away from campus for more than two weeks in over a decade. There are clear areas of inequity that also need to be addressed



through bargaining, and the CAC and NT are actively exploring possible bargaining proposals to this effect.

Compensation: The PSEC mandate (the government directions for bargaining) will most likely be for a three-year contract, with a 2% raise in each year. This is a higher across-the-board raise than we received during the last round, although it is slightly lower than inflation this year, and will not move us out of the bottom third in terms of faculty salaries in Canada.

Evaluation: Your NT is currently developing proposals around *performance evaluation* for Merit and Career Progress Increments. In advance of the evaluation bargaining survey, we sent out a briefing note to offer some background on evaluation as it relates to compensation. This briefing note focused on how merit increments (MI) and career progress increments (CPI) form part of **total compensation** at UVic. We also developed a [salary calculator](#) on our website, where Members can estimate how their salary would grow over the next three years. *Effective compensation proposals must also address how salary growth occurs through performance-based evaluation.* Our system of performance evaluation directly contributes to the fact that our salaries grow more slowly than those of our colleagues at our comparator Universities.

Our goal at the bargaining table will be to achieve fair and reasonable increases in salary and benefits, in line with what has been achieved at our comparator universities, and as is required for recruitment, retention and adequate compensation of excellent faculty.

We will also look for changes in workload language, both to recognize the time commitment and resources required to excel in research, and to prevent excessive workload from having a major negative impact on Members' health and well-being.

It is important to remember that it is the work of faculty and librarians that drives this University. UVic's success in terms of national and international rankings, student recruitment, and research impact is not driven by the work of administrators, but by our work — as scholars, researchers, teachers and mentors. The Maclean's 2019 University rankings place UVic once again at the top end of the list of comprehensive Universities — ranked 2nd overall, and 1st in terms of medical/science grants, and 2nd in terms of overall research dollars.

During this next round of collective bargaining, the Association expects the University administration to prioritize the needs and interests of its academic staff, regardless of the PSEC mandate. Academic staff at the University of Victoria need a working environment where we have the time and resources to strive for continued excellence in research and teaching. Academic staff deserve fair increases in compensation that help us keep pace with our colleagues at comparator universities, as well as with the rapidly increasing cost of living in Victoria.



Website

We are about to provide all members with access to the Member-only portal of our website prior to January 2019. In the meantime, please continue to request individual access to this password-protected area of our website. All information related to bargaining will be posted on this area.

Policy Consultation

Article 14 in the Collective Agreement requires the University to consult with the Association on any new University policies or revisions to University policies that impact working conditions of faculty and librarians. The following consultations have been initiated or are in process:

Intellectual Property Policy: The Association is represented by myself and Nick Dechev (from Mechanical Engineering) at consultations to changes to the IP Policy. The Association and the Administration last met to discuss revisions to the IP policy in January. At this meeting, the Association learned that the Administration had incorporated some of our requested revisions with respect to the language on revenue sharing that had initially been less favorable to our Members. However, we still have some remaining areas of disagreement, pertaining to mechanisms for dispute resolution. The Association's position is that any disputes around IP should be resolved through grievance and third-party arbitration. The University first proposed an in-house arbitration mechanism with the VPR as the decision-maker. They have now proposed a compromise solution, with an academic arbitration body, also constituted in-house but not by the VPR. We have not yet seen the details of this proposal.

In the meantime, the current IP policy, Appendix D in our Collective Agreement, remains in effect until the FA agrees to a new version.

Other policies under formal or informal consultation, current or expected:

- Revised Policy on the Appointment of Chairs and Directors
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Bookstore Policy
- Travel Policy

The Joint Committee on the Administration of the Agreement

The JCAA meets every two months. The current membership of the Committee is Judith Clarke, Patrick von Aderkas, and myself for the Association, and Michele Parkin (AVP Faculty Relations and Academic Administration), Susan Lewis (Dean of Fine Arts) and Chris Goto-Jones (Dean of Humanities) for the Administration. Minutes of the JCAA will be available on our website soon, in the meantime, please request a copy from the Association office at uvicfa@uvic.ca.



Grievance and Arbitrations

Disputes over the interpretation of the Collective Agreement as they pertain to Association Members rights are referred to the Association's Advising and Dispute Resolution Committee (ADRC). This Committee has been chaired for the last two years by Teresa Dawson (Geography). Chris Bose (Mathematics) was recently elected Chair of the ADRC for a one-year term (2018-2019).

The role of the ADRC is to provide guidance to Association staff on all matters related to Dispute Resolution. ADRC's preference is to rely on informal dispute resolution. Formal dispute resolution mechanisms are grievance and arbitration. Grievances are approved by the ADRC; if the Administration refuses to engage in settlement discussions, the question of whether to refer these grievances to arbitration goes to a sub-committee of the Executive Committee (normally the President, the Vice-President, and the Chair of the ADRC). Decisions to go to arbitration are only made after the Association has received legal advice. In general, the Association chooses to be prudent and conservative when going to arbitration, as evidenced by the Association having won both of the two completed grievances that it referred to arbitration (2013 and 2017).

Advocacy and Support for Departments and Schools

In addition to individual Member services, the Association provides support on various fronts to academic units on campus. Areas that we have been working on include advocacy and support for units facing resource constraints, and advice and consultation on governance.