



University of Victoria Faculty Association

THE

F.A. RELAY



RECOGNITION AWARDS FOR MEMBERS OF THE BARGAINING TEAM - OGM 2019

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PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Welcome to the first issue of our new FA Relay! We're planning to send out a short newsletter about every six weeks, which will include a President's Update, an additional article of current interest, and a list of upcoming FA events.

Dear Colleagues,

Let me begin by introducing myself. I've been at UVic in the History Department for 28 years, teaching and researching in the areas of Canadian gender and religious history. Recent research projects focus on irreligion in 20th-century BC and the broader Pacific Northwest, and on Canadian second-wave feminism, secularism and motherhood. I have two children, the older one now a UVic student in Physics and Astronomy.

Since my early years at UVic, I've been trying to make change—or make trouble, depending on your perspective. I served on the FA Executive Committee for two years in the mid-1990s, when it was a very different organization, and when Jamie Cassels was FA Vice-President. I subsequently sat on the FA Equity Committee, when it successfully pushed for improved maternity and parental leave. I was also Chair of the Academic Women's Caucus and the UVic Childcare Action Group. I then put my energies into making change in my own department, serving as Chair of



History from 2010-2014, before returning to the FA Executive Committee in 2015.

My experience has shown me that UVic has many strengths. What I find most valuable is our long tradition of collegial governance, including the unique Petch Procedures, which give faculty members a strong voice in selecting their leaders. In recent years, the FA has built on these democratic traditions, working from the ground up to build membership support.

As President, I strive to maintain the FA's commitment to working with and for our Members. In recent months, I have heard from many Members engaged in implementing the changes brought about by our new Collective Agreement. This is not easy work. Collective agreements are written at a very high level, and your questions (and my own) have led to many discussions with Faculty Relations about the exact meaning of certain sections.

UNIT STANDARDS

Most recently, I have been working with the FA team and with Faculty Relations to offer [guidelines](#), a [template](#) and workshops to assist Members in revising the Unit Standards. It is worth remembering that we are contributing to UVic's strong tradition of collegial governance as we develop equitable workload standards, and clear criteria for salary evaluation and promotion that fit within our particular disciplinary and unit cultures.

I encourage you to be bold in building on the possibilities of this new CA—that is, not to pre-judge what is possible, but to craft a Standard that reflects the needs and voices of your members. If your Dean requires revisions that cause you concern, or if you have other concerns about your new Unit Standard, I encourage you to consult with the FA. While this transition poses a variety of challenges, my hope is that it will move us all towards fairer and more transparent processes.

Thank you,



Lynne Marks
presidentfa@uvic.ca

UPCOMING EVENTS

Joint Drop-In Session on Unit Standards

- Thursday, March 19, 2020
- 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
- Michael Williams Building, 120

New Chairs & Directors Forum

- Monday, April 6, 2020
- 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM
- University House 2

Annual General Meeting

- Wednesday, April 8, 2020
- 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
- David Turpin Building, A102

UVICFA MESSAGE TO MEMBERS: COVID-19

The COVID-19 virus is causing a great deal of concern on university campuses across Canada and around the world. The UVICFA has met with members of the Administration who are working on UVic's response to the situation. UVICFA Officers will continue to be in communication with the Administration, to provide them with feedback on any plans that may impact the research, teaching, travel and other professional activities of our Members. UVic will keep you updated on any developments at <https://www.uvic.ca/covid-19>, and we will provide further information where appropriate. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us at uvicfa@uvic.ca.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HELGA'S TERM AS FA PRESIDENT



The following is a condensed version of current FA President Lynne Marks' letter nominating our past President for CAUT's Donald C. Savage Award, which recognizes outstanding achievements in the promotion of collective bargaining in Canadian universities and colleges.

Dr. Helga Hallgrímsdóttir has transformed collective bargaining at the University of Victoria since her first involvement with the UVic Faculty Association in 2011—particularly over the past five years, as President and Chief Negotiator. Helga's strong, wise and strategic leadership can be credited with moving the Association from a fractured and weak new union, with salaries at the bottom of the scale for comparable comprehensive universities, to a union with a strong and united membership, which in July 2019 ratified by 93% a collective agreement that dramatically improved salaries and other conditions of employment for UVic faculty.

When the Association certified in January 2014, the certification vote was only 64% in favour of unionization. Helga realized that she could not transform this situation overnight, but had a clear vision for the future of the Association, and went to work to achieve it. She knew she had to create a "big tent" union, where everyone could agree on basic issues of common self-interest. She realized that a united membership was key to gaining credibility, and more importantly bargaining power.

Helga is a charismatic leader, but charisma alone is not enough. Hard work, bravery, deep and strategic intelligence, and a willingness to address the legitimate concerns of those hostile to the Union made a tangible and lasting difference. Following the 2014 round of bargaining, Helga went to work with many of those who had been most vocal in opposing the union. She supported bylaw changes adding

a Finance and Investment Committee to assist the Treasurer, and a Council with representatives from every unit on campus. She also hired membership services staff to provide Members with professional and timely support.

A year out from the 2019 bargaining round, Helga developed a comprehensive strategic campaign to build a unified bargaining mandate. She and the Chair of the Collective Agreement Committee (CAC) visited every department on campus to ask Members about their "points of pain" with the existing Collective Agreement. Helga worked closely with staff and the CAC to survey the membership, host workshops on survey results, and seek input on equity considerations. She developed an airtight bargaining mandate grounded in the consensus that emerged, which Council passed unanimously, and Members approved with nearly 100% support. Helga built a strong negotiating team, with representation from across campus, including members who developed persuasive arguments rooted in statistical analysis.

Years of hard work and meticulously crafted strategy paid off. The new Collective Agreement includes major gains for the Association—gains sought for many years, even decades. One Member noted that when he first received Helga's email detailing the impressive gains from bargaining, he thought it was a joke. Helga's work in uniting, consulting and mobilizing the Membership made these gains possible, and her skills and hard work as a negotiator made them happen.

