



Department Representatives Bulletin

Following is a recap of the Department Representatives meeting of March 18, 2021.

The meeting was chaired by Faculty Association President, David Stewart.

For further information on any item, please contact the Faculty Association office:

Email: faculty.association@tuca.com, phone: (403) 220-5722

Stewart thanked the participants for their attendance today and he also thanked the Department Representatives for participating in the Bargaining Town Hall meetings.

Stewart reminded Department Representatives that there is no recording anything electronically and asked that no one record anything beyond written note taking.

Faculty Association Board Elections

Miller reminded Department Representatives that today at 4:30 p.m. is the last opportunity to vote in the Board of Directors Election.

COVID-19 MOA/Pandemic Issues

Stewart reminded the Department Representatives that the Covid-19 MOA which was recently put in place is, what the Faculty Association believes, the best outcome they could negotiate. He recognized that the Agreement is not the ideal solution and that he has heard a number of comments both for and against the Agreement. He reminded the Department Representatives that the Merit process is a “zero sum” process and that if one person receives a higher increase, then another must receive a lower one. The Agreement was an attempt to deal as fairly as possible with the entire membership given the unequal impact of the pandemic on different members.

Stewart also reported that in regard to some other pandemic related discussions,

specifically, whether or not classes will be face-to-face in the Fall, the Association is still in discussions with the Administration. The Association is trying to ensure that the members who have scheduled RSLs to begin in July will have the opportunity to defer their leave if the pandemic has affected their plans. He noted that discussions are being held regarding the impact on Tenure applications, and the impacts of Covid on the tenure process. He noted that there are also discussions happening regarding teaching evaluations for the upcoming cycle.

Stewart reported that the Association is in discussions on course delivery for the Fall Session. He noted that the Association is aware that the Administration will be providing an announcement on this, but that the Association is not aware of the details of that announcement yet. He noted that the Association will try to convince the Administration to allow individual members the ability make an appropriate decision based on their individual and course needs.

A Department Representative asked if the Administration is working with the Association on this decision or if the Association is simply forced to work with the decision. Stewart noted that the Administration has said that they will follow any recommendations from Alberta Health Services (AHS) regarding a safe return. He believes that the Administration is working on the logistics of class size, classroom

availability, etc., in order to meet the AHS guidelines. He noted that the Administration and the Association disagree about the level of negotiation necessary for this shift to work effectively.

A Department Representative indicated their concern regarding posting and hiring for the Fall term, especially related to Sessional members. Stewart noted he believes that the Administration wants to make this decision as quickly as possible so they can include information related to course delivery in any hiring processes for the Fall/Winter terms.

A Department Representative asked about the impact of the pandemic on the promotion process. Stewart noted that the ongoing discussions are primarily focused on the Tenure process and promotions tied to it as that process is limited by a strong timeline. Other promotions do not have the same time constraints and each individual member can make an independent decision on whether or not to apply in those instances. He noted that the Association's members are not required to delay their applications; that decision is up to the individual. He encouraged the Department Representatives (and members in general) to contact the Faculty Association to discuss their individual needs. He noted that a number of members have moved forward with the process this year.

A Department Representative indicated that she believes there are implications to delaying the process. She noted that the possible changes to the Collective Agreement (as presented by the Administration at the bargaining table), specifically related to Retrenchment could leave the Tenure process in jeopardy. Stewart reminded the participants that the Association is working very hard to protect Tenure.

Growth Through Focus

Stewart reported that there seemed to be somewhat of a change of heart from

Administration related to the Growth Through Focus initiative after the recent Congresses. He noted that after the congresses the consultation process was extended. He noted that the congresses seem to have altered the Administration's position related to the disclosure of the participants of the working groups. They have also agreed to release the feedback provided (as far as is possible) that they have received on the initiative. He believes that the congresses have caused the Administration to step back and pause due to the amount of dissatisfaction. He expects the revised plan to be released sometime in April.

Stewart encouraged the Department Representatives to let the Association know if the summary of responses is not what they have experienced with regards to the feedback they are aware of.

A Department Representative indicated that they were aware that the working groups for GTF are being reconstituted.

Provincial Budget

Stewart noted that the Provincial Budget was released and that there were several institutions, including the Faculty Association, who expressed their concerns with the cuts to Post Secondary Education (PSE). He noted that the common theme was to consider PSE as an investment and not an expense. He noted that the total PSE cut was \$90million (with the University of Calgary's share being \$30million). He noted that the amount seems to be in line with the expectations the Administration had and the Budget will proceed to the Board of Governors without any changes.

Stewart noted that he has had conversations related to the participation of the GFC in the University's budget process. He is planning to push to have GFC provide more advice on the University budget (he noted that the PSLA gives this power to GFC). He also noted that the Administration (and the Budget Committee) do

not have to discuss their budget with the Faculty Association. He noted there are two academic members on the Committee. He is on this committee as a non-voting member, so his impact is limited.

A Department Representative asked what the \$30million cut will mean to the University. Stewart noted that the Administration will say that a bulk of their spending is on salaries and benefits. He noted that the Association has no illusions related to the possible impact of the upcoming budget. He encouraged the Department Representatives and the Association membership to take advantage of the institutions of collegial governance to let the Administration know of their concerns.

Public Interest Alberta

Stewart reported that this group has been set up to increase public awareness of the impact that cuts to Post Secondary Education (PSE) will have on the community. He noted that the group with which he is mainly interacting consists of all the Faculty Associations of the universities and colleges in Calgary as well as, staff associations and student associations. He indicated that there is another drive-by protest set for Saturday, March, 27 focusing on the McDougall Centre. He will provide more information regarding that protest early next week.

He reported that the webpage for Stop PSE Cuts has an email “tool” that people can use to send a note to their local MLA (www.stoppsecuts.ca/action). He encouraged the Department Representatives (and members in general) to use the tool and let their MLA know their concerns. He also noted that the Stop PSE Cuts has a “request a lawn sign tool” available. He did note however that the lawn signs are in short supply and the group is working to ensure there are enough.

He noted again that the purpose of these events is to provide the public with information on the effect of cuts to PSE.

A Department Representative wondered why, if the target is not necessarily the Government, why the focus on government (MLA offices). Why not more public spaces? Stewart noted that suggestion is a good one and that the group did have some debate on the location. He noted that the group is working with other groups and that the consensus was the McDougall Centre, to address concerns related to safety and for media accessibility. Keeping this topic in the minds of the public is the main purpose of this group/event.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Wednesday April 28, 2021

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

ZOOM

Details of the ZOOM meeting to be distributed prior to meeting.