



## Department Representatives Bulletin

*Following is a recap of the Department Representatives meeting of February 24, 2022.*

*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@tucfa.com](mailto:faculty.association@tucfa.com), phone: (403) 220-5722*

### Welcome and Call to Order

President David Stewart acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

### Pandemic Issues

*The Faculty Association welcomes comments and questions from its members on issues related to COVID and encourages academic staff to raise individual or general issues with the Association office as soon as they are of concern.*

Stewart said that many members have contacted the Faculty Association about the expected return to in-person teaching on February 28. The understanding is that proof of vaccination will no longer be required to be on campus, although the Administration will require masking through the remainder of the winter term.

Given that masking will no longer be required by the province or the City of Calgary as of March 1, it isn't clear how the Administration will enforce the masking requirement. Stewart has told the

Administration that policing mask use shouldn't fall to academic staff.

Many members have said they don't feel comfortable returning to the classroom given the current situation with COVID. Stewart said if members haven't received an accommodation for the winter term and they or family members have health restrictions preventing them from teaching in person, they must get medical evidence and submit it urgently to be accommodated by February 28.

Given the lack of access to laboratory testing, the Association is seeking clarification from the Administration related to what happens for people who have symptoms, particularly how academic staff should deal with students who display symptoms. In general, everyone should isolate if they experience symptoms or test positive for COVID. Academic staff who show symptoms have sick time available, while sick time has been extended to sessionals during the winter term. Stewart also noted people who are sick are not expected to teach online.

Meanwhile, at a recent meeting of GFC, Stewart expressed his displeasure with the actions of the provincial government. In particular, he said that a letter and

tweet from the Minister of Advanced Education directing universities to adopt government policy on COVID measures was inappropriate, though he was pleased that the Administration decided to keep masking requirements remain in place.

Stewart pressed the Administration and Board of Governors to tell the Minister the letter was an intrusion on the autonomy of the university. He also told them that more pushback on other government actions – such as secret bargaining mandates – is needed because a strong university must be autonomous.

The Association has been engaged in discussions with other campus unions on the government and ministerial action and the university's response. These talks are ongoing, and more clarification is being sought on the Administration's response and the path forward. Stewart also mentioned he asked for a meeting of the Academic Crisis Management Task Force and at that meeting he raised the concerns he's heard from members.

Because the Administration has not addressed the issue of government interference, Stewart wrote a letter to the Minister of Advanced Education; [a copy letter](#) can be found on the Faculty Association website.

### **Board Elections**

Association Executive Director Sheila Miller said the deadline for nominations has passed and she reported on the nominations received.

There was only one nomination for President and Chair of the Board of

Directors, so Stewart is declared elected by acclamation.

For the Board of Directors, only one sessional nomination came in, so Polly Knowlton Cockett from the Werklund School of Education was declared elected in the designated sessional seat.

Miller said that for the remaining Board positions, there are five three-year terms available, and the association received seven nomination forms. This means there will be an election with the following candidates:

- John Baker – Department of Philosophy
- Tavis Campbell – Department of Psychology
- Kent Donlevy – Werklund School of Education
- Dora Tam – Faculty of Social Work
- Karen Then – Faculty of Nursing
- Mary-Ellen Tyler – School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape
- Morgan Vanek – Department of English

The office will be pulling the materials together and sending out an electronic ballot in early March. The deadline for voting will be noon on Friday March 18.

### **Update on Strikes**

Stewart reported on labour actions happening across Canada.

The strike at the University of Lethbridge continues. The Association has sent picketers to both Lethbridge and the Bow Valley location in Calgary. In addition, the Association has sent the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA) two donations totalling \$5,000.

Stewart said there are several opportunities to show support for ULFA members, including flying pickets and driving tickets. He asked if anyone would be willing to travel to Lethbridge or join the picket line at the Bow Valley.

Other strikes have taken place across the country, specifically the Acadia University Faculty Association and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology Faculty Association. The Faculty Association sent a donation of \$2000 to each of these associations.

Stewart travelled to support the University of Ontario Institute of Technology Faculty Association. Since then, there's been a tentative agreement between the association and the university.

In Alberta, several other faculty associations are reaching an impasse with their administrations but have not yet moved into a strike position. These include Athabasca University and the University of Alberta. The Mount Royal University Faculty Association announced this week that its members ratified an agreement it reached with the University. How these bargaining tables unfold may depend on what happens with the Lethbridge strike.

Finally, the association has received a letter of thanks for our donation and support on the picket line from Concordia University of Edmonton Faculty Association.

### **Bargaining**

Meanwhile, Miller reported that the Association is convening a special meeting for Department Representatives with the Faculty Association bargaining team on March 4, 2022, to report on developments.

### ***NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING***

***Friday, March 4, 2022***

***12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.***

***By ZOOM***

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