



Department Representatives Bulletin

Following is a recap of the Department Representatives meeting of October 5, 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, phone: (403) 220-5722

The meeting was 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.

Role of Department Representatives

Department Representatives are Faculty Association members who are elected annually from each department (or, in the case of non-departmentalized Faculties, each Faculty). The role of Department Representatives is to act as a liaison and maintain two-way communication between the Faculty Association Board of Directors and their departments.

Meetings of Department Representatives are important for sharing news and concerns among the diverse academic communities that comprise the University of Calgary. Issues and concerns raised by representatives are often investigated further by the Faculty Association and can inform future activities of the Association.

Department Representatives are not shop stewards like other unions might have. Representatives might be approached by members of their departments or units with questions or problems in relation to academic staff matters and asked for advice. Answers to many such questions and problems have complexities, ramifications, and implications legal and otherwise of which the Department Representative may not be aware. Therefore, the Department Representative should always refer such questions, problems, and requests for advice to the Faculty Association office.

Bargaining

In June, the Board of Governors and the Faculty Association ratified the new *Collective Agreement* for 2020 to 2024. There were many changes to the Agreement, which took time to integrate, but it has been signed and is now posted on the Association website. There are some outstanding issues that the Association and Governors have agreed to continue working on. Specifically, the parties agreed to create new joint committees to review three issues that are important to academic staff: workload, benefits, and merit assessment.

While the agreement is disappointing, it was the best settlement for the time. The University has a mission to be among the top five research universities in the country, compensation for academic staff (among the lower third in U15) is not reflecting this.

Over the upcoming year and with a provincial election on the horizon, the goal of the Association is to raise awareness of the issue both within the University community and with politicians and public.

Bargaining is cyclical and the next round will be starting in a little more than a year from now. The Association collects issues and ideas for bargaining on an ongoing basis and Department Representatives are encouraged to forward suggestions and issues they have to the Faculty Association for review before bargaining.

Partisan Political Activities Policy

The U of C's Partisan Political Activities Policy is being updated. The Association was told that proposed changes were minor updates

to align with recent legal developments. However, draft revisions went way beyond what was required to update the policy and seemed to deal with any political activity rather than focusing on partisan political activity. The Association believes it is important that academic staff be able to engage in all sorts of issues as part of our mission to improve society.

The Association recognizes that aspects of the policy have merit such as using University resources in support of a specific candidate or political party but does not agree with extending the definition of partisan to other groups like Alberta Teachers Association, the Alberta Medical Association, the Council of Alberta University Students, and the Faculty Association at the University of Alberta.

The Association is also concerned about the impact the proposed changes to the policy may have on the normal activities of the Faculty Association and communications we might have with our members about the impact of government policies or those being proposed by electoral candidates.

Department Representatives shared the concerns that President, David Stewart outlined and some expressed concern that the proposed changes could negatively impact their work as academics and the community. The Association will continue to work on this issue.

Fair Employment Week

The Faculty Association is participating in Fair Employment Week again this year from October 17 to 21. Fair Employment Week is a national event, designed to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by members of the sessional academic staff including inequities further worsened by the pandemic.

Fair Employment Week is coordinated, in-part, by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). There will be a special edition of Academic Views during this period, highlighting some of the Collective Agreement provisions that apply to sessional academics.

Administrative Changes

The Governors announced that President McCauley has been reappointed to a second term which will run through to December 31, 2028.

Almost immediately following the announcement of McCauley's renewal was the announcement that the Provost, Teri Balser, would be leaving her post and return as an academic staff member following an administrative leave.

In the aftermath of the Provost's departure, there has been confusion as to roles and responsibilities without a clear timeline on when the search for a new Provost will begin. There is concern with what the leadership void means for the next year; how willing the Administration will be to tackle difficult policy issues, and what their priorities will be.

Board of Governors

On the recommendation of the Association Board of Directors, former Principal Negotiator Hamid Habibi was nominated by the Association and appointed by the Minister of Advanced Education as a member of the Board of Governors.

The Association is entitled to nominate a member and the Government normally follows through.

“Podification” of Faculty Administration

Department Representatives raised concerns with what has been referred to as the “podification” of Faculty administration. The concern was raised from the Faculty of Arts but was echoed by representatives in other Faculties.

Concerns were raised that the centralized administrative model has reduced the autonomy of departments and undermines decision making of academic staff, infringing on principles of good governance.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Thursday, November 17, 2022

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

By ZOOM

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