



THE FACULTY  
ASSOCIATION *of the University of Calgary*

# ACADEMIC VIEWS

March 2025

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## President's Message

**Good day, dear colleagues,**

The spring equinox fell on March 20 at 3:01 a.m. this year, and with it, we can soon look forward to April showers and warmer days. Spring brings change, and that is also true in our Association.

I wrote to you a few months ago saying, "[A great deal has happened.](#)" That certainly remains true today. In new announcements, the Association's elections have taken place, and we have a president-elect and several new members on our Board of Directors, those currently directors will continue with the new members taking office on July 1. Our interim executive director's new 5-year contract has been affirmed, we will be reinstating our Association's annual general meetings, and Dr. Tavis

Campbell represented me at the Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) Forum for Presidents in Ottawa.

Updates to my previous message address last May's police action, as well as the Job Action Task Force, which now has its subcommittees staffed with members. Our bargaining team reports some progress in its negotiations with the University's Board of Governors and will report to the membership in due course. Following up on the Association's November Board retreat, our bylaws have, in part, been amended. In addition, a general meeting of members regarding the strategic plan has been scheduled for Monday, March 31 and the final day of our Board retreat will occur on Saturday, May 10 in order to finalize the strategic plan. The long-awaited regulations under the Provincial Priorities Act, formerly Bill 18, will take effect on April 1. We continue to advocate in the courts for an expanded view of academic freedom by seeking intervenor status at the Court of Appeal in opposition to Alberta's Privacy Commissioner's attempt to restrict that right and Justice Nicholas Devlin's comment that [research does not include political action](#). The situation concerning the suspension of programs in the Faculty of Arts remains challenging, with the number of grievances reaching three and Rajan Sawhney, the minister of advanced education, being asked to [intervene](#). Negotiations with the University have begun regarding the contractual breaches of the University having entered into contracts with Alberta Health and Alberta Precision Laboratories without consulting our Association, [as determined by an arbitrator](#) on May 27 of last year, and are expected to take a significant amount of time as we navigate this complex situation. Negotiations with the United Steelworkers (Canada), representing our Association's employees, continue under the very capable leadership of both our chief negotiator, [Professor Leighton Wilks](#), and our president-elect, [Professor Francine Smith](#).

On February 27, the Association completed its first recorded webinar for 2025, which dealt with [academic freedom](#). Two more webinars are planned: one in May on sexual and gender-based violence and another in June on understanding grievances under the Collective Agreement.

Just breaking in the news is the concern expressed by the Canadian Association of University Teachers regarding the litmus test imposed by the American administration upon researchers regarding matters of DEI, climate, and gender. In correspondence this Thursday, Peter McInnis, President of CAUT, said to us,

[We] are in Ottawa today meeting to discuss plans to resist the Trump-inspired attack on Canadian researchers with the distribution of the US government questionnaire. Both David [Robinson, Executive Director] and I

continue with media requests to explain this new challenge in what amounts to an American academic tariff on collaborative research grants.

Here is the link to the [Globe and Mail article](#) by CAUT's Executive Director, David Robinson, on this issue.

All that said, let's dive into the details.

## A. The President-Elect and Your Board of Directors

Congratulations to Professor Francine Smith on winning the election for the presidency of our Association and the following candidates for the Board of Directors all of whom take office July 1, 2025. These re-elected members remain in the Board while the newly elected member will take office on July 1, 2025.

[Teri Balsler](#) - Biological Sciences

[Myles Leslie](#) - Community Health Sciences

[Melanee Thomas](#) - Political Science (re-elected)

[Tavis Campbell](#) - Psychology (re-elected)

[Denis Onen](#) - Electrical & Software Engineering (re-elected)

[Dora Tam](#) - Social Work (re-elected)

## B. The Appointment of Executive Director



It is my pleasure to announce that, effective March 1, Jennifer Garrison was offered and has accepted a 5-year contract as our executive director. The Board is delighted that Jennifer is in this administrative leadership position, as she has

demonstrated her professional, efficacious, and ethical approach to the role since joining us in September 2024.

### C. Annual General Meeting

For years the Association did not hold an annual general meeting. The Association will reinstate its annual general meeting. It is anticipated that the meeting will be in June of this year on a date to be determined.

### D. CAUT Forum for Presidents



[Photograph of Dr. Tavis Campbell, David Robinson (Executive Director of CAUT) and Peter McInnis (President of CAUT)]

The CAUT Forum for Presidents is held every January. The forum brings together faculty association presidents from across Canada to discuss matters of regional and national concern. I was unable to attend this year, but fortunately, [Dr. Tavis Campbell](#) attended on my behalf on January 17 and 18. He has provided this brief report.

This past January, I had the opportunity to attend CAUT's Forum for Presidents on your behalf. This meeting is an important opportunity for

presidents and presidents-elect of academic staff associations to discuss key political and organizational challenges and priorities.

I participated as a panelist for a session focused on sharing updates from various bargaining tables across the country. Given our current efforts to secure a fair and equitable new agreement following (among other issues) years of stagnant salary growth, the discussion of trends, themes, strategies, and outcomes emerging from recent contract negotiations was extremely helpful. The leadership at CAUT has been extremely helpful during our current bargaining process in terms of providing us with everything from comparator statistics to policy advice and legal opinions. Participating in these meetings ensures that other faculty associations in Canada are well-aware of what we are up against, and it was heartening to receive their unanimous offers of encouragement and support.

## **E. The Encampment and Police Action of May 9, 2024**

As mentioned in my [earlier message](#), the University's Board of Governors has rejected the General Faculties Council's request for an independent investigation into the events of May 9.

We have received 800 pages of internal communication emails and documents from the University administration, which, although partially redacted, provide insight into the decision-making process leading up to and during the incident on May 9. We have submitted further Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) requests for additional internal University documents to gather a more comprehensive understanding of that process. The Calgary Police Service has temporarily denied our FOIP request for materials and recordings, stating correctly that those items are evidence in a matter before the courts and thus not releasable until the legal action has been completed. We are also awaiting a response to our FOIP request for the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team's (ASIRT) report; we wrote to [Mike Ellis](#), deputy premier and minister of public safety, on December 19 to ask for the release of the latter.

That said, our opinion—subject to the receipt of further information—is that the MNP “Crisis Management Team Review” is not sufficient to address the reasonable concerns raised regarding the actions leading up to the police action on May 9. In particular, there are concerns about the constitutional right to freedom of expression, as the events of May 9 have implications for speech on our campus

and beyond, which cannot be adequately considered without a legal analysis of the facts, something that was not part of the Review. The statement by Mark Herman, speaking as chair for the Board of Governors, that “we are satisfied that there are no more material facts that we need to gather.... We are satisfied that management exercised sound judgment in a difficult no-win situation” is, on its face, a conclusion drawn without a full understanding of the context within which the facts are embedded. As Justice C. Adèle Kent stated in her report for the University of Alberta concerning that institution’s response to the encampment on campus:

[The Encampment](#), and the decision by the administration to call police to respond, could be looked at in isolation. That limited perspective would not tell the whole story. *Context is always important.* [emphasis added]

Without knowing the context of the events leading up to and surrounding the May 9 incident, drawing a conclusion regarding “sound judgment” in the exercise of administrative action is premature.

To understand the context within which decisions were made and actions carried out, an independent investigation of the events from a critical analytical perspective ought to be initiated by the Board of Governors. Such a critical analysis would examine, for example, why the policy that was, we believe to be, part of the basis for the application for the trespass order from the Court of King’s Bench was revised by the Crisis Management Team before the encampment but, again as we understand it, was not posted on the University’s website and therefore could not reasonably be known to those in the encampment prior to their actions. Seeking a court order based at least in part on a policy that had been amended but not widely publicized is concerning and problematic. Other factors also argue for a deeper review of the events leading up to and on May 9, 2024, not the least of which is the consideration of the alignment of administrative actions—with a full understanding of the context of the events—with the values espoused by the Academy: transparency, due process, fundamental fairness, free expression, and freedom of association. Additionally, Justice Kent’s report indicates that in order to better understand the context she consulted the University of Alberta’s Faculty Association, whereas MNP failed to interview our Association in producing its “Crisis Management Team Review.”

Given the above, our Association calls for the Board of Governors to reconsider its decision and to engage an independent third party for a critical, contextually sensitive, and legally informed review of the administrative decision-making processes leading up to and on the day of May 9, 2024. As we await a response from the Governors, we will continue seeking information from the University, Calgary Police Service and ASIRT.

Lastly, two members of our Faculty of Law, [Jennifer Koshan](#) and [Jonnette Watson Hamilton](#), recently wrote about the inadequacy of the review. It is worthwhile to read their analysis in "[Thin Gruel: The Crisis Management Team Review](#)" for a detailed understanding of the matter.

## **F. Job Action Task Force**

The Job Action Task Force will be meeting the week of March 24 to determine the membership of the subcommittees, and a report will be provided to the membership in the next edition of Academic Views.

## **G. Board Retreat Part 2**

A follow-up report on our Board Retreat is provided below by the retreat coordinator, Francine Smith, and the lead person on the strategic plan, Professor Leighton Wilks.

In November, the TUCFA Board of Directors met for a full-day retreat to start crafting our new strategic plan. This session was incredibly productive and resulted in an initial draft of our mission, vision, and values. An electronic survey was launched in January to solicit feedback from our membership on the draft mission, vision, and values, and we received 158 responses to help set our strategic direction. Our sincere thanks to everyone who took the time to provide this valuable feedback.

On Monday, March 31st, a town hall meeting will be held from 12:00 to 1:30 PM for all members to discuss the feedback received and to further refine our mission, vision, and values. A second full-day retreat with the Board of Directors will be held on May 10th to finalize our mission, vision, and values and to establish our strategic priorities, goals, and actions.

It is anticipated that the new Strategic Plan will be in place within the next few months and will align with the appointment of our President-Elect.



**Francine Smith & Leighton Wilks**

## **H. Provincial Priorities Act (Bill 18)**

In December I wrote, [“The Government has moved forward in drafting the regulations under the Provincial Priorities Act.”](#) The regulations have been written and will be in force on April 1.

Significantly, section 8 of those regulations, “Exceptions for Public Post-Secondary Institutions,” defines “research”<sup>1</sup> and states in part that in certain circumstances, “the public post-secondary institution is not required to obtain prior approval to enter into, amend, extend, or renew that agreement with a federal entity.” The complete section should be read by members who conduct research involving federal entities. The link to the regulations is noted [here](#). It appears that the provincial government has heard the cri de coeur of Alberta’s post-secondary institutions.

## **I. Academic Freedom and the Alberta Court of Appeal**

As a brief update on the status of the Association’s application for intervenor status at the Court of Appeal, I am happy to report that CAUT and possibly the Canadian Association of Law Teachers have joined us in this effort. Additionally, professors Jennifer Koshan and [Shaun Fluker](#) from our Faculty of Law have been, and continue to be, instrumental in providing expert assistance with the intervenor application. It is expected that the appeal will be heard in the next several months, depending on the Court’s docket.

The decision of Justice Devlin at the [Court of King's Bench](#), the [Privacy Commissioner's and University's factums](#) may all be found on the Association's website as indicated in the links.

## J. Challenges in the Faculty of Arts

The challenges to the suspension of programs in the Faculty of Arts continue as two more grievances have been issued, bringing the total to three. [The first grievance](#), dated November 27, 2024, alleges, among other things, a failure by the Arts administration to properly consult under Article 21 of the Collective Agreement before and during actions associated with the suspensions.

[The second grievance](#), dated January 28, 2025, alleges that an abuse of process occurred at the Faculty of Arts Council meeting of January 15 and that bias was evident in the discussion of the suspensions. [The February 6, 2025, grievance](#) alleges that at the General Faculties Council Academic Program Subcommittee (APS) meeting of January 20, oral information was provided to APS that was not included in the advance materials and that unfounded allegations were made about the provision of the impacted academic programs.

Grievances must go through certain steps under Article 24 of the [Collective Agreement](#). We are now at Step 2 of the first grievance and are moving to Step 1 for the remaining grievances.

It is important to stress that the issue for our Association is not about the right of management to take certain actions that are provided for under the Collective Agreement but that the process for determining those administrative actions must be consistent with the Agreement which has not been the case.

On March 10, in concert with the grievances, [I wrote to Rajan Sawhney](#), the minister of advanced education, stating:

As President of the University of Calgary Faculty Association, I write with serious concerns about the proposed program suspensions in the Faculty of Arts which have been sent to your office for ministerial approval. The Faculty Association respectfully requests that you do not approve these program suspensions until you have instituted an inquiry into this situation under the ministerial authority granted to you by Section 8(2) of the Government Organization Act.

We will keep members informed as the matter goes forward.

## **K. The Arbitration Award in Favour of the Faculty Association**

In October's edition of the [President's Message](#) I spoke of the [arbitrator's decision](#) of May 27, 2024, regarding the contractual conflicts between the Collective Agreement and the Alberta Medicine and Health Services Program (AMHSP) and Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) agreements entered into with the University, which resulted in the Individual Medical Services Agreements (ISA) being provided to our members.

We sought comments from the clinical medical members affected by those ISAs, and we have started negotiations with the University regarding the eight matters at issue in the AMHSP and APL agreements that do not comport with the terms and conditions in the Collective Agreement: assessment, remuneration, workload, intellectual property, academic staff appointments, notices of non-renewal, holiday and vacation matters, and academic freedom. We are supported in these negotiations by both CAUT's lawyers and our own lawyer, [Kelly Nychka](#), with Chivers Carpenter. In the arbitration, our Association emphasized throughout that its objective is not to disrupt these arrangements. Its interest is primarily in disclosure, explanation, and input. It says it may well consent to provisions even if it sees a conflict. [It is not seeking any order](#) unraveling what has taken place.

The thrust of our position is to ensure that such an egregious breach of the Collective Agreement does not reoccur and to ameliorate the effects of the breach on our members. The negotiations continue.

## **L. Steelworkers Negotiations**

The negotiations between our Association and its employees, represented by the Steelworkers Union (Canada), are being carried out under the leadership of our chief negotiator, Professor Leighton Wilks, and Professor Francine Smith. They have provided the brief report below.

In the fall of last year, the TUCFA staff elected to unionize and become part of the United Steelworkers Union (USW). The TUCFA Board supported this decision without reservation. On February 5, 2025, collective bargaining commenced between TUCFA and the USW, with the bargaining units meeting on a weekly basis. Although bargaining is still underway, we have settled many of the monetary and

non-monetary issues and look forward to having a finalized collective agreement shortly.



Leighton Wilks – Chief negotiator

### M. 2025 Webinars



On February 27, [Dr. James Turk](#) presented a webinar on academic freedom in the academy to approximately 60 participants. He spoke about the nature of that freedom and how it plays out in today's post-secondary world. He then took questions and noted that although our Collective Agreement includes an academic freedom clause,<sup>2</sup> it could be improved. The webinar was recorded and can be viewed on the Association's [website](#).

We are planning to provide a second webinar in May on the [Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy](#)<sup>3</sup> and the [Procedure for Protected Disclosure](#). More information will follow when it is available.

I wish you all the very best as we move into spring and warmer weather.

**Kent Donlevy**

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<sup>1</sup> Section 8(1)(b) states that “‘research’ means an undertaking directed to the discovery, extension or application of knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.”

<sup>2</sup> The academic freedom clause reads as follows: “The University is committed to the pursuit of truth and the advancement of learning as well as to the dissemination of knowledge. The Parties to this Agreement subscribe to the principles of academic freedom, that is, the right of the academic staff to examine, to question, to teach, to learn, to investigate, to speculate, to comment, to criticize, to write, to publish and the like freely, without pressure, direct or indirect, to conform to or defer to prescribed doctrines, and recognize the right of academic staff to engage in these activities. Academic freedom includes the duty of scholarly integrity to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the responsibility to base research and teaching on an honest search for knowledge. Academic staff members also have the same general right to freedom of expression as is enjoyed by any person.”

<sup>3</sup> [University of Calgary—Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy](#) (Note that this policy is subject to updates recommended by the General Faculties Council Executive Committee in April or May 2025.)

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## Report on the Sessional Travel Fund Awards for 2024/2025

The Sessional Travel Fund had a total of \$45,328.78 to disperse for Fall 2024 and Winter 2025. 28 applications were received for Fall 2024 with 10 applicants being chosen totaling \$23,437.06. This left \$21,891.72 available left to be distributed for Winter 2025 with 44 applications submitted and 10 applicants chosen totaling \$21,890.

### Fall 2024

Ahsan, Rafee Al – Electrical & Software Engineering

Arcellana-Panlilio, Mayi – Biochem & Molecular Biology

Ishikawa, Hinako – School of LLLC

Addeh, Abdoljalil – Bio-medical Engineering

Atay, Elaine – Psychology

Nguyen, Quan – Social Work - Main

Rozanski, Chelsea – Anthropology and Archaeology

Albayrak, Gulizar – Mathematics & Statistics

Low, Jonathan – Faculty of Kinesiology

Fulton, Amy – Social Work - Main

### **Winter 2025**

Parrotta, Kathryn – School of Creative & Perf Admin

Hayes, John – Haskayne School of Business

Czuba, Mike – School of Creative & Perf Admin

McNamee, Calla – Geography

Chase, Cheryl – Werklund School of Education

Chuchvaha, Hanna – School of LLLC

Morgan, Jenelle – Psychology

Junck, Adam – Electrical & Software Engineering

Wei, Fei – Faculty of Nursing

Rozanski, Chelsea – Anthropology and Archaeology

All applicants have now been informed of the results of their applications.

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## **Promotion and Tenure Workshop Announcement**

The Faculty Association will be hosting two Tenure and Promotion workshops, via Zoom, on the following date:

- **Wednesday, April 30 – 9:30 to 11:00am**
- **Wednesday, April 30 – 1:30 to 3:00pm**

The content of the workshop is the same during both sessions, you need only register for one. This workshop is open to any individual who will be applying for tenure, promotion, renewal of a tenure-track appointment, or transfer between the streams during the 2025-2026 academic year.

Topics to be covered include the process of applying, the criteria used, and how such decisions are made within the Collective Agreement procedures. The workshop does NOT cover how to get a tenure track position if you do not currently have such an appointment.

***You must register if you are planning to attend one of these workshops.***

To register, please contact the office by email, at [faculty.association@tucfa.com](mailto:faculty.association@tucfa.com). Only those who register prior to the date of the workshop will be provided with the Zoom link. Note that the Zoom link will be sent to registered participants closer to the workshop date.

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## Retirement Planning Seminars

The Faculty Association is hosting two retirement planning seminars again. These seminars will be held virtually on Zoom with a similar format and content to past sessions. It is open to any Faculty Association members planning their retirement. Members at all career stages are encouraged to attend to benefit from starting retirement planning early.

The seminars may include general information about the University of Calgary's retirement process and where to find relevant policies but won't go into specifics about the academic pension plan.

Steve Preece will once again give his presentation on retirement planning. Steve is a Bachelor of Commerce graduate from McMaster University who has been delivering financial workshops since 2012. As this is an educational program, there will be no promotion or solicitation of financial products. Examples and illustrations will be generic, without reference to specific products or services. The Association is covering all costs associated with this workshop.

The retirement seminars will be offered on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 15 and the morning of Wednesday, April 16. Members may choose to attend either of the two sessions.

- **Tuesday, April 15: 1:00pm to 3:00 pm – on Zoom**
- **Wednesday, April 16: 9:00am to 11:00am – on Zoom**

The seminars are not recorded, and space is limited; members must pre-register by contacting the Faculty Association office by email, [faculty.association@tucfa.com](mailto:faculty.association@tucfa.com) and indicate which session you prefer to attend.

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