

Department Representatives Meeting Bulletin – March 26, 2026

Thank you for attending the meeting on March 26. A special thanks to representatives who submitted questions for discussion beforehand. The meeting was organized by Sarah McKenzie (TUCFA Professional Officer) and facilitated by Dr. Francine G. Smith (TUCFA President) and Dr. Christopher Sears (TUCFA Executive Officer-at-Large: Communications).

Please find below a summary of the main discussion topics.

Equity Pay Gap

The Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) recently completed a new gender pay equity evaluation, replicating the 2019 methodology established by a joint working group that included members of the Faculty Association. After accounting for factors such as rank, years in rank, department, discipline, and appointment type, there is no statistically significant salary gap. This result is consistent with efforts by the University and the Association to achieve pay equity, including targeted salary adjustments and the elimination of starting-salary differentials. There is a commitment between the Governors and the Association to continue tracking pay equity data annually. The Association will request further information on the analyses that led to these findings.

Leaves in the Collective Agreement

Articles 16 and 17 of the Collective Agreement outline specific leaves, including eligibility criteria and application procedures. Most leave provisions are found under Article 18. Additional details on vacation, sick leave, self-funded leave, and Reduced Duties Leading to Retirement are provided in Schedule A.

Members have access to both discretionary and entitlement-based leaves; understanding the difference is important. For discretionary leave, the University plays a decision-making role, and formal approval must be obtained. A discretionary leave requires an application, supporting information, and coordination of the process. For entitlement leave, a member is entitled to the leave once the eligibility criteria are met. While entitlement leave involves a process of notification, documentation, and coordination, the focus should be on confirming eligibility rather than obtaining permission.

These leaves are described in the following sections of the Collective Agreement:

Entitlement Leaves:

- 18.3 Leave for Urgent Personal Reasons (first 10 workdays)
- 18.8 Leave for Compassionate Reasons
- 18.9 Maternity and Parental Leaves
- 18.10 Political Leave
- 18.11 Military Leaves
- 18.12 Court Leaves

Discretionary Leaves:

- 18.2 Leaves of Short Duration
- 18.3 Leave for Urgent Personal Reasons (after the first ten workdays)
- 18.4 Assisted Study Leave
- 18.5 Special Leaves
- 18.6 Secondment
- 18.7 Career Stop-Out Leaves

Leave application forms differ depending on the type of request, but the “Absence from Campus” form is the most common (used solely to report vacation, business travel, etc.). All such forms should serve as administrative tools, not decision-making frameworks, and are meant to record and coordinate leave, not to redefine eligibility or impose additional criteria. The presence of a signature line does not alter your rights or the structure of the leave provisions. If a request is denied or there are concerns about discretionary decisions, members should contact TUCFA.

International Travel

A member recently noted that passport information is a mandatory field in the University’s international travel registration system. However, upon review, the policy does not explicitly require members to provide passport details to the University.

The University has advised that passport information is requested for risk management purposes, including coordination with the Canadian Embassy in case of an emergency. The university has clarified that:

- Registration with the University is strongly encouraged, but not mandatory
- Members may instead register directly with the Government of Canada

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- Not registering with the University may limit their ability to provide support
 - There may be cost implications for a member if an emergency occurs without registration

Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program (VRIP)

Several questions were raised about the VRIP. One concern was that some members did not receive the VRIP invitation. All eligible applicants should have received an email from People and Culture on February 17th, 2026 (and a reminder on April 7). The email included reference to information sessions, a link to a website for additional information, and a dedicated email address for questions (vrip@ucalgary.ca). Applications will be accepted until April 13 at 11:59 p.m.

The VRIP is a one-time opportunity to voluntarily transition into retirement, with incentives to support this transition, including financial incentives beyond those available through a regular retirement. To be eligible, specific requirements must be met, including 10 years of continuous employment by June 30, 2026, and eligibility for a UAPP pension as of June 30, 2026. In addition, the member must not have already submitted a retirement notification. Members with questions about the VRIP should direct them to the VRIP email address (vrip@ucalgary.ca).

The VRIP is not a TUCFA program; it is a retirement incentive initiative created by the University. TUCFA negotiated to protect members' rights and secure the best package for our members, but it has no role in managing the program.

Faculty of Arts Policy Grievance Updates

Several inquiries addressed ongoing issues in the Faculty of Arts. While a new (interim) Dean of Arts, Dr. Leslie Reid, has been appointed, leadership changes do not impact grievances that have already been filed or advanced. Under the Collective Agreement, those matters continue through the established process. The grievances involving the Faculty of Arts have already progressed beyond the Dean's level. There are three policy grievances scheduled for arbitration in June 2027. These are:

Curriculum Renewal Process (Lack of Consultation) Policy Grievance

This grievance concerns the alleged failure to conduct meaningful consultation during curriculum renewal processes in SCPA, SLLLC, and CLARE. The Association's position is that consultation was presented as having occurred, but in practice, key decisions, including those concerning program suspensions, may have already been made, limiting the opportunity for meaningful faculty input.

Unreasonable Exercise of Management Rights Policy Grievance

This grievance relates to process concerns during Faculty of Arts Council meetings, including allegations of bias by the Chair (former Dean of Arts) and the refusal to allow certain motions from the floor, raising questions about fairness and neutrality in governance proceedings.

APS Meeting and Program Suspension Rationale Policy Grievance

This grievance alleges a breach of the consultation requirements under the Collective Agreement. Concerns have been raised that statements about program quality and the rationale for suspension were introduced at the APS meeting without being included in advance briefing materials or shared afterward, potentially limiting faculty's ability to respond before proposals were advanced externally.

TUCFA will continue to provide members with updates on these grievances as they progress, within the limits of the arbitration process. Members are encouraged to contact the Association if they have questions or observe related concerns.

Update on Access to Information Requests Regarding Campus Protests

On October 2, 2024, TUCFA submitted an Access to Information request to the University of Calgary for the period May 1-24, 2024. The request sought security footage, documentary materials, memoranda regarding the campus protests, and documentation related to management team decisions and actions. On October 29, 2024, the University FOIP office (now the Access and Privacy Office) requested a revision to the scope, reducing the time frame to May 1-13 and limiting it to specific individuals. TUCFA submitted the revised request on November 20, 2024, and received a response on January 29, 2025. TUCFA is reviewing the large amount of material provided and will update the membership after completion of the review.

Discussion of Priorities, Issues, and Concerns

The meeting included an informative discussion of several issues and concerns shared by Department Representatives. The Association is following up on these concerns:

- Implementation of DORA principles in tenure and promotion assessment
- Authority of Department Heads (policy vs. practice)
- Changes in workload/teaching load for units in the Faculty of Arts
- Cuts to Sessional Instructor budgets for units in the Faculty of Arts

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- Intellectual Property Policy at the University

The Association thanks all Department Representatives for their valuable engagement.