

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

Fall 2016 Newsletter

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Greetings from your President Mike Eklund - FA President

Dear Faculty Members,

Welcome back to the new Academic Year. I hope you all had good summers! And welcome to our new members (see list in page 9) to UOIT and/or the Association! I am delighted to report that we had a very strong response to our calls for membership on our various committees this past Spring, and that we currently have the highest level of engagement by our members ever! I would like to thank all those members who have volunteered to participate in the various Association committees.



The Executive Committee has also been busy this summer preparing for the coming year, including coming up with an annual workplan and supporting these committees as they ramp up for the year.

There have also been some unfortunate events that have occurred, including the FA being named in an Ontario Human Rights Tribunal complaint by an off-campus organization regarding the Student Association's Social Justice Week. We have posted a public statement regarding this on our website, and will add to that statement to you, our members, that we are committed to equity, human rights and fairness, and, as indicated in that statement, we have never taken a position on the issue that is the subject of the complaint.

And as we get started on the 2016-2017 Academic Year, we plan to focus closely on our primary issues at hand, namely:

- Preparing for bargaining for our Teaching Faculty Members
- Supporting our members through grievances and other ways such as described in the Post-Bargaining Update (also in this newsletter)
- To promote academic freedom and to advance teaching, research, and other pursuits of the academic staff at the University
- To foster democratic and collegial decision-making within the university

I look forward to consulting with you on these and other issues during the year!

In service,
Mike

For more information, please visit www.uoitfa.ca

Post-Bargaining Update

Mike Eklund - FA President

For the new 2015-2018 Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Collective Agreement, a number of issues and Letters of Understanding (LOUs) were agreed to and signed, some of which affect all faculty members. I write this piece as the former Chief Negotiating Officer for that round of bargaining.

Employment Equity and Systemic Discrimination

One result was the creation of a joint Committee on Employment Equity which is to look at systemic discrimination at UOIT as it may affect faculty members. This committee is to come up with an Employment Equity Action Plan over the next several months and then oversee its implementation. The Association is represented on this committee by myself (FEAS), Kamal Smimou (FBIT), Kimberly Nugent (FS), and Wesley Crichlow (FSSH). I look forward to updating you on our progress on the issues, but if you have any thoughts or experiences to share on this important matter, please feel free to get in contact with myself or the FA office.

Student Opinion Surveys

A working group was established by an LOU to look at the student opinion surveys and how they are used. Shanti Fernando (FSSH), Kamal Smimou (FBIT) and myself (FEAS) are representing the Association and I am pleased to say that we have made some good progress already on this important issue.

Workload

The last item that I would like to report on is the issue of workload. As many of you will know, we issued an estoppel letter on workload. An estoppel letter essentially gives notice to the administration that we will be enforcing the CA on this issue. This means that we are now in a position to file grievances for the TTTF Members based on the language of Article 16, and have commenced the process of doing so.

General Membership Meeting

Tuesday November 8th G213

If you wish to submit a constitutional amendment, please fill out this form:
<http://www.uoitfa.ca/constitutional-amendment-form/> and submit by Friday October 7th, 2016

The Association currently has 11 grievances advancing through the grievance and arbitration process, with over 30 faculty members directly involved in a grievance. Most of these center on workload issues for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty (TTTF) Members following the issuance of an estoppel letter in bargaining to enforce the workload language in the Agreement. We must now continue upholding this language through the grievance process to ensure it is followed by the University when assigning teaching duties.

We look forward to the year ahead advancing a fair and equitable workplace environment for all UOITFA members. Should you have a question about your Collective Agreement and legal rights in the workplace, please contact Christine McLaughlin at director@uoitfa.ca. Should you wish to pursue a grievance, please contact Hannah Scott at grievanceofficer@uoitfa.ca.

Grievance Committee Report

Val Kapoustine & Tony Waker
(Grievance Committee co-chairs)

The new UOITFA Grievance Committee has been very productive, meeting to discuss a number of grievance and arbitration issues, along with completing its annual orientation session. The committee has welcomed a number of new members to its ranks. Hannah Scott, from the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, has assumed the role of Senior Grievance Officer, while Josh Lowe, from the Faculty of Business and Information Technology, has taken on the position of Junior Grievance Officer. Both have been busy advancing faculty member's workplace rights through the grievance process.

Another new member to the committee is Kerry Johnson from the Faculty of Health Sciences, and we also welcome back returning members Kimberly Nugent from the Faculty of Science and Wesley Crichlow from the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities. The committee reviews ongoing grievance issues, and makes recommendations to the Executive on whether or not to proceed to arbitration.



FA Grievance Committee meeting (September 2016)

Teaching Faculty Bargaining Prep

Kim Nugent - FA Vice-President

The Teaching Faculty (TF) Collective Agreement is set to expire on June 30th, 2017, and preparations are already underway for the next round of negotiations.

The Collective Bargaining Committee (CBC) has met on several occasions over the summer. If you were a TF member this Summer, you have received our first Bargaining Survey. This was a very important first step in highlighting your priorities.

Over the coming month you can expect to receive invitations for the following:

Bargaining Town hall meeting

A forum for all TF members to inform themselves of the bargaining process and priorities. Take a look at the ad on the right for townhall dates and times.

Coffee Hour Chats

Drop-in time for members to meet and speak with members of the CBC. To be held on both campuses.

Bargaining Survey #2

The second survey will be lengthier, but will assist us in identifying specific concerns or issues that you would like addressed in this round of negotiations.

We are looking for more TF members to join the CBC. The function of the CBC is to support the Bargaining Team by researching proposals, information gathering and data analysis. If you would like to get involved in various aspects of the bargaining process, please contact us at office@uoitfa.ca.

Help build a resource library!

Your FA is working on building a resource library for members who are preparing for Third Year Review, Tenure, Promotion and Continuing Appointment, and we need your help. We receive many inquiries on how to create a strong teaching dossier and/or review committee package. The best way to illustrate this is to provide concrete examples. A few of our members have donated successful examples to the FA office, but demand continues to outstrip supply. We are also looking to build a wider disciplinary range of examples as standards and expectations can vary accordingly.

This is a wonderful opportunity to mentor and support your colleagues while helping to ensure their successful career advancement at UOIT. If you are willing to donate a sample teaching dossier and/or review committee package, please drop us a line at office@uoitfa.ca. We would also appreciate hearing about any resources you've come across that you have found helpful as we work to continue building our FA resource library.

Teaching Faculty Bargaining Townhalls:

Tuesday October 11th at 11am
DTB 524
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Thursday October 13th at 10am
ERC 1058

OCUFA holds final Board of Directors meeting of the 2015-16 Academic Year

On May 7, 2016 in Toronto, OCUFA held its third and final Board meeting of the year. It was an opportunity to review progress made on the organization's key priorities – faculty pensions, contract faculty and faculty complement, and university governance. It was also an opportunity to recognize those who have made important contributions to OCUFA, and to award the 2016 Mandelbaum Fellowships to two deserving graduate students.

"We also conducted a survey of our members on governance issues, the first step of developing principles and best practices for effective collegial governance."

The 2015-16 academic year was a busy one for OCUFA, particularly in its priority areas. Work continues on the University Pensions Project, an initiative aimed at creating a multi-employer jointly sponsored pension plan (JSPP) for interested faculty associations. OCUFA is also active in developing pension solutions for associations not interested in a JSPP option.

On the contract faculty/faculty complement front, OCUFA launched a new web pledge as part of the We Teach Ontario campaign. The pledge allows faculty, students, and community members to show their support for good academic jobs for all. A conference examining precarious academic work was held in February, alongside a province-wide day of action. OCUFA's ad hoc Contract Faculty and Faculty Complement Committee is now planning its activities for 2016-17 with a focus on campus-based initiatives.

University governance continues to be a concern of OCUFA's members. In 2015-16, OCUFA provided support and resources to local associations dealing with campus-specific governance challenges. We also conducted a survey of our members on governance issues, the first step of developing principles and best practices for effective collegial governance. This work will continue in the coming year.

The May meeting is also when new members are elected to OCUFA's Executive Committee. President Judy Bates (Laurier) and Vice President Gyllie Phillips (Nipissing) are halfway through their two-year terms, and will continue in their roles. The following positions were elected by the Board:

- Treasurer: Glen Copplestone (King's)
- Members-at-Large: Sue Wurtele (Trent), Michael Attridge (Toronto), and Rob Kristofferson (Laurier)
- Chair of Board: Brian E. Brown (Windsor)

The Board was notified that there would be a proposal, for Board consideration at the October 2016 meeting, to transform OCUFA's Status of Women Committee into a Status of Women and Equity Committee. The proposal will include changes to the committee's mandate and composition.

Finally, the 149th Board meeting was an opportunity to celebrate a few exceptional individuals. Former OCUFA Presidents Constance Adamson (Queen's) and Kate Lawson (Waterloo) were presented with OCUFA Service Awards at a lunchtime ceremony in recognition of their leadership and dedication to protecting the rights of faculty and the quality of Ontario's higher education system. The 2016 Mandelbaum Fellowships were also awarded at the luncheon. This honour was established in memory of former OCUFA Executive Director Henry Mandelbaum to recognize exceptional young scholars using their research to make a difference in their communities. This year, the fellowships went to Chérine Stevula at the Master's level and Karen Marie Olsen Lawford at the Doctoral level. They both will be invited to give presentations on their research at the meeting in May 2017. Abena Kwatemaa Offeh-Gyimah, last year's Doctoral winner, also presented her research during the ceremony.

The next OCUFA Board of Directors meeting will be held on October 29-30, 2016.



FA Executive

President
Mikael Eklund

Vice-President
Kimberly Nugent

Secretary
Yuri Bolshan

Treasurer
Ruth Simpson

Member-at-Large (TF)
Val Kapoustine

Member-at-Large (TTTF)
Tony Waker

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Past President
Gary Genosko

Senior Grievance Officer
Hannah Scott

Junior Grievance Officer
Joshua Lowe

FA Staff

Executive Director
Christine McLaughlin

Executive Assistant
Denise Martins

The Software and Informatics Research Centre

As reported during bargaining and as raised by our members at Academic Council, the administration finally acknowledged openly their savings plans for a new building with the announcement of the Software and Informatics Research Centre. This represents about \$33M of surplus funds that came from the operating budget of the university saved since 2011. The administration has reported that they are trying to raise an additional \$10M or more from the provincial and federal governments to allow for the completion of the third and fourth floors.



Construction has already commenced on the SIRC building

The Association recognizes the current need for additional space for teaching and research and how this new building will address that.

What the Association does not agree with is the process - and lack of transparency - which the Administration has followed to get this building started.

For years this surplus of funds has been put in restricted funds. This was done at the expense of the operating budget (which might have otherwise been used, for example, to hire more faculty to reduce workloads and improve student/faculty ratios, improve our very poor benefits & pension, or invest in research). To do so, the Administration has clung to its growth-based financial model, used scare tactics about enrolments and demographics, and raised tuition and ancillary fees as much as possible to maintain these surplus budgets for the primary purpose of saving for this new building.

The shovels are in the ground, so perhaps the questions are:

- What are the Administration's priorities going forward budget-wise?
- Will they be open to changes in these priorities?
- Will the President and the Advancement Office be able to fundraise sufficiently to pay for the next expansion?

The other building previously announced, the Centre for Advanced Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CARIE), for instance, would require close to another \$100M to be fully realized and make full use of the previously announced FedDev money, if that is still available to the university.

And so, will the Administration and the Board change its ways in terms of consultation and transparency on the budget and the future building plans for the university?

We shall see. And do our part.

Bill 132 and Workplace Harassment

You may have been following some of the events surfacing at Ontario Universities regarding sexual violence, and the Government's response with Bill 132, Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment). The Administration promised at Academic Council over a year ago to consult widely on its implementation of this Act, and to some extent has done so. The Association is very concerned about the process and amount of consultation that has taken place, particularly with students, but it can report that the Association itself has met several times with the Administration's lead on this, most recently in August 2016 when we were provided with a draft and were able to provide some meaningful feedback. The main parts of this Act come into effect on January 1, 2017 (the parts primarily affecting students), however a lesser known part of the Act came into effect this month, on September 8th, 2016.

That part of the Act, "Schedule 4", changed the Ontario Health And Safety Act (OHSA) to, for example, add Workplace Sexual Harassment (Workplace Harassment was added with Bill 168 in 2010), and to require the employer, in consultation with the health and safety committee, to develop and maintain a written program to address workplace harassment as required in the amended OHSA.

While the Association acknowledges the stated commitment of the Administration to approve new policies and procedures that are compliant with Bill 132 as quickly as possible while respecting their obligation to consult with stakeholders in doing so, it feels that it is important for our Members and other employees at UOIT to know that the OHSA changes are in effect as of September 8th, 2016 and are significant in several important ways, for instance:

"workplace harassment" means,

- (a) engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or
- (b) workplace sexual harassment; ("harcèlement au travail")

"workplace sexual harassment" means,

- (a) engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or
- (b) making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome; ("harcèlement sexuel au travail")

Workplace harassment

- (4) A reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the workplace is not workplace harassment.

The full Act is available here:

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=3535&detailPage=bills_detail_the_bill

The Association will continue to monitor and consult with the Administration this Fall as these policies and procedures are finalized, and to ensure that our Members receive their full rights and protections under Bill 132.

Equitable Chairing Skills

Have you ever been in a meeting where a conversation is dominated by two or three individuals? Perhaps you are one of those individuals, perhaps you are the person in charge of mediating this kind of encounter, but there is an easy solution to any meeting where participation is not being encouraged from all members: a speakers list.

Whether you are chairing yourself or simply participating, it is important to encourage equitable meeting practices in all avenues of academia. We must remember that everyone participates in different ways and not everyone will readily interrupt a speaker in order to get a turn.

A good chair looks around the room to see if there's anyone desiring to speak, especially if their voice has not yet been heard on the subject. When they note that there is an individual interested in speaking, the chair becomes that individual's advocate in ensuring that everyone is given an opportunity to speak.

It's important to challenge chairs that dismiss the speakers' list in order to give speaking rights to the loudest person, or worse, themselves. It is also important to encourage equitable meeting practices of keeping track of a speakers' list and following the order on the list.

By ensuring a speakers list is kept, we can ensure that all voices around the table are heard.

Welcoming new executive members!

Ruth Simpson

Before joining UOIT, I was employed as a Medical Laboratory Technologist working in the diagnostic division at a local hospital. During my 19 years at that hospital, I was a member of Local 348 of the Ontario Public Sector Employees Union (OPSEU) in which I held the position of steward for 16 years. I also held the treasurer position for one year. I then went for stewardship training and took courses in occupational health and safety, grievance officer, membership drives, collective bargaining, and conflict resolution. I held the position of chief grievance officer for the last six years of my time with OPSEU and was involved in central negotiations during the hospital amalgamations.

As a member of the FA, I was part of the bargaining team for the TF collective agreement, junior grievance officer, FA representative for the Faculty of Health Science, and have continued my position on the TF joint committee.

Yuri Bolshan

I started at UOIT in 2012. My initial involvement with the FA was as a Faculty of Science representative. Recently, I have been elected as Secretary. My goal is to further facilitate the relationship and communication between the Executive Committee/Executive Council and the members and vice versa. Listening to you and communicating your concerns to the rest of the Executive is just as

important as communicating information from the Executive members to you. In my opinion, respectful consultations yield better outcomes. Furthermore, the Secretary is a voting member of the Executive Committee and Executive Council. Therefore, I will strive to further improve policies and procedures of the FA so they reflect members' needs.

"My goal is to further facilitate the relationship and communication between the Executive Committee/Executive Council and the members and vice versa."

What's in a muffin? Lessons on being more persuasive

Hannah Scott - Senior Grievance Officer

For those of you who do a lot of committee work, have you noticed that more often than not there is always a snack on the table? Usually someone brings muffins, fruit, cookies, and so on? Are the people who bring those snacks just trying to be nice? Are they just hungry? Or is there something else going on?

In May, I had the opportunity of attending an OCUFA Status of Women Event on "Increasing Your Persuasiveness." It was held in Toronto at the Royal York. It was a one-day seminar with Shari Graydon (<http://sharigraydon.com/>) who is an author and an advocate for strengthening women's voices and encouraging women to have their voices heard in media, social media, leadership roles, and so on. This was a fantastic opportunity and I am always interested in being more persuasive. The workshop was humorous and enjoyable, filled with great stories of women who have had their voices heard. Although she seeks to improve the numbers of women seen in all forms of media (apparently far more men are willing to speak to the camera, reporter, and so on) the advice really is for everyone.

The seminar was filled with the offerings of a number of resources that we could pull on once we returned to work. Of particular note, she drew attendee's attention to the work of Robert Cialdini who wrote *The Psychology of Influence*. She agrees with Cialdini that the art of persuasion is not a matter of luck or a gift that individuals seem to innately have. It is a skillset that can be easily learned. Cialdini notes that there are six principles of persuasion.

Establish Reciprocity

Cialdini notes that there is often pressure to go first in a meeting. This can be done in a number of ways. He offers that a good way to start a meeting is creating a sense of obligation in the form of a gifts of some form. For example, bringing coffee, fruit, pastries, or chocolates for everyone is an excellent start. Reciprocity can also be built with free samples, handouts, and other offerings. This creates an initial positive experience in the meeting, and may encourage others at the meeting to want to give something in return.

Social Proof

Cialdini notes that often when people are making decisions, they will look to others for reaffirmation of that action. In other words, it is hard for individuals on a committee to go against the will of the majority. For this reason, social proof can be offered as a form of persuasion if one can demonstrate that their actions are in line with others at the table or within the group.

Commitment and Consistency

Once individuals have committed to a plan of action either verbally or on paper, they are less likely to back out of the plan even if they have reservations.

FA Faculty Representatives

Science

Sylvie Bardin

Education

-vacant-

Engineering & Applied Science

Ahmad Barari

Energy Systems and Nuclear Science

-vacant-

Business & Information Technology

Kamal Smimou

Health Sciences

Elita Partosoedarso

Social Science & Humanities

Andrea Braithwaite

Welcome new members!

Science

Azar Shakoori

Engineering and Applied Science

Khalid Hafeez

Business and Information Technology

Amir Akbari

Garrett Hayes

Saad Khattak

Karolina Krystyniak

Brent MacRae

Theresa Miedema

Ashfakuddin Rubel

Santoso Sugianto

Loutfouz Zaman

Social Science & Humanities

Vivian Stamatopoulos

Health & Safety Committee

Yuri Bolshan

In the wake of numerous campus and school shootings UOITFA raised concerns regarding the inability to lock classrooms in the event of a lockdown. We requested to equip the classrooms with panic buttons. While it has not been broadly advertised yet, panic buttons were installed in the Science building. Upon activation a big red button will lock the door, making the classroom inaccessible from the outside, while the door can still be opened from the inside. We will continue monitoring and updating you on the installation of panic buttons. We wish you a safe academic year.

Individuals also seek consistency with the world around them and, therefore, will often tend to make decisions that are consistent with others. Of interesting note, older people are more likely to place a higher value on consistency than are younger individuals.

"These applications have largely been used in marketing and advertising campaigns can be transferred to other places where arguments are in need of persuasion."

Liking

People tend to be more agreeable to those they like. Increasing likability can be done by using various elements including one's physical attractiveness, tallness, offering complements, and so on. More generally, people are more likely to like people who are more like themselves. The author notes that even something as simple as finding common ground such as having the same name, or coming from the same school can affect your likeability. It is important, then, at meetings to find common ground with those around you in order to increase your persuasiveness.

Authority

In a nutshell, people respect authority. Individuals are more likely to defer to the opinions of experts, or the opinions of those in leadership roles. One application of this element is that one can bolster one's argument by referring to studies or data (although not a lot of research and data, as those you are trying to persuade may fall asleep!). Alternatively, one could encourage leaders in the group to openly back your plan to bring others on side.

Scarcity

Cialdini proposes that those things that are rarer are more desirable. If there is a chance that someone may not be able to get something, it will probably increase the desirability of the object. Cialdini suggests that by emphasizing the rarity or the potential loss of something (such as an opportunity) we can increase attachment to the idea, widget, opportunity, and so on.

These applications have largely been used in marketing and advertising campaigns can be transferred to other places where arguments are in need of persuasion. Cialdini warns that these practices should not be used for malicious purposes as his research shows that the long-term losses incurred by promoting bad-illegal/unethical ideas far outweigh the short-term gains.

This is not to say we have to use these tools, but as a social scientist it is really interesting to note when they are being used, and by whom.

For more on this seminar, Ms. Graydon has put her workshop into a short and humorous book: *OMG! WHAT IF I REALLY AM THE RIGHT PERSON?* More about this book can be found here: <http://sharigraydon.com/books/omg-what-if-i-really-am-the-best-person/>**

Closing the Gendered Wage Gap

In August of 2016, the Ontario Government's Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee issued its final report and recommendations (https://www.ontario.ca/page/final-report-and-recommendations-gender-wage-gap-strategy-steering-committee?_ga=1.77355740.897580276.1469821091). You can read the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association's response to this report here: <http://ocufa.on.ca/blog-posts/equity/ocufa-response-gender-wage-gap-steering-committee-report/>

This comes in the wake of some exciting progress that has been made in reducing the gendered wage gap at other Ontario Universities. Pay increases for female faculty to bring earnings in line with their male counterparts have been instituted at McMaster University (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/mcmaster-university-to-increase-female-facultys-pay-after-review/article24161859/>) and more recently, at Waterloo (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/university-waterloo-female-faculty-wage-gaps-raises-1.3711694>)

A persistent gendered pay gap exists at UOIT. We have taken promising steps towards identifying systemic discrimination at UOIT for equity-seeking groups with the creation of a joint Committee on Employment Equity, which is tasked with creating and implementing an Employment Equity Action Plan. We still have a long way to go in fostering a fair and equitable workplace. If you are interested in helping achieve this, please consider volunteering for the UOITFA Equity Committee by contacting office@oitfa.ca.

*number based on Faculty Association membership (e.g., Deans, Associate Deans are not members of the FA).

FAST FACT:
Only 11% of Full Professors* are women.

Why the “Free Homa” campaign matters to all faculty

If you haven't been following the “Free Homa” campaign, we encourage you to do so. Homa Hoodfar is currently a professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University. In March, she was prevented from leaving Iran and in June, she was arrested. She has been in solitary confinement ever since.

Professor Hoodfar has been held in solitary confinement for over one hundred days, accused of “dabbling in feminism.” (<http://www.homahoodfar.org/press-release-14-september>)

Her research was seen as an affront to the state of Iran and as such, she has been confined and access to her file are not being shared even with her own counsel.

No professor should be detained, by any state, for doing their work. Please consider joining the call to support Homa Hoodfar by signing on to this petition.: <http://www.homahoodfar.org/#!petition/ler5z>



Teaching and Learning at UOIT

As you may be aware, the Teaching and Learning Centre at UOIT offers a number of resources to help enhance your skills in the classroom. Regular programs are offered, as well as on demand, one-on-one skills development by request. The centre offers support in three main areas: educational development, strategies and design, multimedia, and technology support (for example, Blackboard and TurnItIn). The centre also offers teaching certificates for successful program completion.

One of the Teaching and Learning Centre's most popular programs is Teaching Squares. This presents a great opportunity to learn from the expertise of your peers directly in the classroom. Groups visit each other's classroom to observe successful teaching strategies in practice. The Centre is always looking for new ideas for programs, so please consider sharing your ideas, successful strategies in the classroom and/or your time towards increasing teaching excellence at UOIT.

The centre also operates a teaching innovation fund that offers up to \$8000 in funding. To learn about this, or anything else about the Teaching and Learning Centre, please visit their website.: <http://tlc.apa.uoit.ca/>

UOITFA Coffee Hour Chats

Wednesday October 19th 3pm to 4:30pm
(Location TBD - North Campus)

Tuesday November 15th 12:30pm to 2pm*
Riley's Pub (104 King Street East)

Thursday December 15th 3pm to 4:30pm
(Location TBD - North Campus)

*a previous newsletter had this event scheduled at the same time as the Academic Council

Academic Freedom

In the last round of bargaining, the Association greatly improved Article 14 – Academic Freedom – for the Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty (TTTF), and hope to do so for the Teaching Faculty soon. But what is academic freedom? It is a concept unique to universities, and that is generally not well understood by the public, often not by administrators and staff, and in many cases not even by Faculty Members.

It is a concept that goes beyond the more well understood right to Freedom of Speech: <https://www.caaut.ca/about-us/caut-policy/lists/caut-policy-statements/policy-statement-on-academic-freedom>)

This freedom includes many things beyond the right to free speech. It includes the right to teach and discuss, to carry out research and disseminate the results, to engage in service to the institution and the community, and to express one's opinion about the university, and to be free from institutional censorship.

Do note that the new TTTF Collective Agreement does not explicitly include all of these freedoms, and the TF Collective Agreement has even fewer provisions, so please refer to those Articles or speak to the Association if you are unsure of what your Collective Agreement rights are.

The principles of academic freedom have been developed over the past hundred or more years in the Canadian context. In the early days of Canadian universities this principle was not as strong as it is today. Then, for example, a Board of Governors could pressure a University President to fire tenured professors for their public comments, or even perceived affiliations. Often Presidents would successfully fight these attempts based on the value of Academic Freedom, but sometimes not. For a good read on the subject, see Academic Freedom in Canada: a History, by Michiel Horn.

Academic Freedom has since been clearly established, in large part by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the actions of faculty members and Faculty Associations across the country.

Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), for example, was found through adjudication to not to apply to Faculty Members' records if created or received in the exercise of their professional responsibilities and were protected by academic freedom, and therefore not within the custody and control of the university.

The adjudicator also found that the relationship between a university and its academic staff was different than a standard employer-staff relationship because of the impact of academic freedom (Eileen Vanderburgh, blog post 7 Dec 2011).

We hope this short article is helpful in understanding Academic Freedom, which we will continue to try to improve upon in our Agreements. And we encourage you to be more familiar with and talk about this special freedom that we, as faculty members, are entitled to.