



Representing Faculty, Librarians,
Veterinarians & College Professors

News & Views

September 2020

As the semester begins, we hope that everything goes smoothly for all UGFA Members. If any issues arise, please do not hesitate to contact the UGFA at facassoc@uoguelph.ca.

The UGFA has been very busy over the summer. Since June 1, we have dealt with 13 grievances, 10 requests for accommodation, 7 disciplinary investigations, and 18 other issues, including, but not limited to, appeals and arbitrations. We have also provided assistance to a number of our Members seeking assistance in navigating human rights processes.

OpenEd, SAS, Academic Freedom, and Workload

We would like to remind all UGFA Members that remote-mode teaching should not represent a diminishment of your academic freedom. While OpenEd may send emails with recommendations, Members maintain the right to determine how best to deliver their courses, including whether to make available videos of their synchronous lectures, for example. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) remains responsible for arranging student accommodations. A particular issue has emerged with regards to students who have a hearing disability. The Administration has agreed with the UGFA that Members are not required to provide closed captioning for on-line lectures and videos — SAS is responsible for resolving such matters (without downloading the task to faculty).

Salary Equity Review

In the fall of 2016, the UGFA first approached the Administration about conducting a salary equity review, and the Administration chose to undertake this on their own. We urged the Administration to consider both race and gender, as well as significant salary differentials by college and rank, in this review. The Association also reached out to all Members asking them to aid the review by completing the “Diversity Matters Census” run by Diversity and Human Rights in June 2017. Ultimately, the Administration chose only to consider gender in its salary equity review. In June of 2018, the Provost announced that all full-time faculty members who identify as women or as non-male would receive an across-the-board salary increase of \$2,050, while ignoring similar librarian and veterinarian members. The UGFA immediately grieved this exclusion, among other things, but the Administration denied our grievance. The UGFA had to pursue the matter all the way to arbitration in late January of 2020, when we finally achieved a mediated settlement awarding our librarian and veterinarian Members who identify as women or as non-male the same salary adjustment as other such UGFA Members. This matter took 18 months to resolve, was a topic of continual focus for UGFA (as evidenced by reports at Executive and Council meetings), and required the meaningful involvement of lawyers. All the while, the Administration made frequent announcements of its commitment to gender equity.

In a disappointingly similar fashion, also while broadcasting its commitment to equity, the Administration has continued to drag its feet on undertaking the joint salary review required by our current Collective Agreement. The UGFA believes that this review can address salary anomalies for racialized Members, who were overlooked by the Administration's initial study, while also being based on data, factors, and a methodology that is jointly agreed-upon. As those who attended our AGM know, the Joint Salary Review Committee has met twice, once on January 15, 2019, and next on May 1, 2020, while 10 other such meetings were cancelled. This sort of analysis needs actual base salary values (i.e., with any stipends removed), but, even more importantly, related data, such as years of service, starting salary, years since Ph.D., and so on, plus identifiers for equity-seeking groups. Over the last two and a half years, the UGFA has sought numerous times to obtain salary and related data from the Administration, perhaps excluding sensitive equity-related identifiers that we could hopefully generate ourselves through a member survey, in order to identify inequities and to propose solutions. In every case, the Administration has failed to provide useful (if any) data.

We hope that the Administration will turn its attention to the Joint Salary Review Committee work. In the meantime, we ask Members who belong to racialized and other equity-seeking groups, and Members whose salaries are significantly different than those of their colleagues with the same rank and in the same college, to contact the UGFA.