



Representing Faculty, Librarians,
Veterinarians & College Professors

News & Views

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Equity Issues



2017 UGFA Negotiation Team

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The UGFA has always been committed to ensuring the fair and equitable treatment of our Members in terms of their hiring, salary and benefits, opportunities for promotion, and working conditions in general.

Since unionization in 2006, the UGFA has sought to obtain salary data from Management multiple times, to identify structural inequities and to propose solutions. In every case, Management was unable to provide consistent, reliable data. During the past year, the UGFA has formed a Gender and Race Equity Committee, conducted an equity survey of our membership, and gathered and analyzed various data. The UGFA has now entered into a joint initiative with the University to address issues of equity in salaries and benefits, hiring, and promotion opportunities. A joint memo to this effect has been issued by the Provost and the President of the UGFA which asks Members to self-identify in order to provide more robust data. We urge you to use the survey link (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/diversity-human-rights/survey-area/diversity-matters-count-yourself>) to update your employment equity information. Please note that while The Ontario Human Rights Code does not define creed, and it is not included in this survey, if you believe it is appropriate to list creed, we would encourage you to place in the 'comment' section of the survey a statement that you identify with a creed. (Courts and tribunals have often referred to religious beliefs and practices. Creed may also include non-religious belief systems that, like religion, substantially influence a person's identity, worldview and way of life. People who follow a creed, and people who do not, have the right to live in a society that respects pluralism and human rights and the right to follow different creeds.)

While this survey is an important initiative, it cannot address immediate issues. For this reason, we hope Management will work with us in the short-term to address specific, egregious issues while the data is being gathered. Based on evidence provided by individual Members, we also identified the University's very poor record in nominating faculty from visible minorities, Aboriginal faculty, or faculty with disabilities as Canada Research Chairs (CRCs). The UGFA asked Management for the processes involved in nominating Guelph faculty members as possible CRCs, and to explain how CRC evaluation committees are constituted and trained. Unfortunately Management was unable to provide the required processes. As a result of this inquiry, the Office of Faculty and Staff Relations is now working on processes which would be consistent with the collective agreement, human rights, and the CRC guidelines, to ensure a fair process for the nomination and selection of CRCs, including visible minorities, Aboriginal faculty, and faculty with disabilities.

At the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Council meeting in May, we learned that the Government of Canada plans to withhold funding from universities that fail to meet their equity targets for CRCs. Universities with five or more CRC positions must submit an equity plan by December 15, 2017, and implement targets by 2019. The 2015-17 sector-wide target percentages for women, members of visible minorities, persons with disabilities, and Aboriginal peoples are 31%, 15%, 14%, and 1% respectively. The University of Guelph is allocated 29 CRCs, so its 2015-17 targets were 9, 4, 1 and 0, with delivered results of 12, 0, 0, and 0. Given the timeliness of the UGFA intervention, we are hopeful that the University will ensure that they have met their required obligations for Members and for the CRCs and will thus not have funding withheld by the government.

The Globe & Mail newspaper ran an article on Tuesday, May 9 about the sector-wide CRC inequities and the government's plan to address them. The article credited Malcolm Campbell (VP Research) with saying that the University of Guelph "only meets one of its four CRC equity targets," but that as positions come up for renewal, "the university is increasingly filling those spots with more diverse candidates." While this language suggests some on-going improvements, the policies and process have not been developed so nothing has yet changed from the time that the UGFA first raised the matter with Management, other than Management becoming versed with the government policies. It is true that the University appointed two more female CRCs in December 2016, well exceeding the target based on gender, but it has yet to make progress for the other designated groups. The UGFA will continue to push management for a fair and transparent process consistent with the CA and CRC guidelines.

In negotiations for a new Collective Agreement (CA), one of the UGFA's key objectives is to achieve gender and race equity in Members' salaries and benefits, as well as in CRC, University Research Chair (URC), and academic leadership positions, and to ensure that nominations for such chairs and positions are made in an open, transparent, and timely manner. We are also committed to ensuring equity for Members with disabilities. The fair and equitable treatment of all Members, like the defence of their academic and professional rights, can only be achieved with a strong CA. Please support your UGFA negotiation team as it prepares for collective bargaining with the University.