

TORONTO METROPOLITAN FACULTY ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

December 5, 2023 – 12:00 p.m.

Zoom Video Conference

MINUTES

1. PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

A couple of weeks ago, I attended CAUT's Fall Council. At that assembly, I spoke to a number of other Faculty Association presidents where I discussed the struggles that we face with our Administration. Unsurprisingly, I found much sympathy from other Faculty Associations presidents because they too faced similar struggles with their Administrations. After CAUT, I found myself reflecting on what I heard and the commonalities that we shared with other Associations.

The first is the need for constant dialogue with our Administration. As you've seen in recent communication through your TFA reps, on TFA-announce and on our website, the Executive has been in conversation with the Administration on a number of policies since the beginning of this year. Namely, the AAA (Appointment of Academic Administrator's), the Social Media policy, and most recently the Sexual Violence Policy. At various stages, the TFA Executive and its staff worked tirelessly to provide feedback on these policies to not only help improve them and the procedures that it informs, but also provide fair and reasonable protection to all our members who might find themselves engaged under one of these policies. While we've talked about each of these policies in our communications bulletins over TFA-announce and in my President's report in the Bulletin, I wanted the membership to know that our suggestions on improving each of these policies was based on our own careful deliberation, consultation with our counsel, and discussions with other faculty associations and OCUFA. While we made some gains and progress on these policies, there came a moment where the Administration no longer engaged us on each of those policies; if not refused to continue dialogue with us, leading us to impasse on some key issues for each of these policies we've named. The lack of dialogue at the end gives the TFA Executive the strong impression that the Administration is callous to our bonafide concerns. While the Administration has ceased having discussions with us, they have now moved into the community consultation phases. Quite recently, the University elected to seek out electronic feedback on the AAA policy on November 20th. We urged you all to provide your own feedback on that policy. We understand that no town halls have been scheduled. As for the other two policies on social media and sexual violence, we are awaiting to hear when they will move forward with their community consultations. When we find out those dates, we will certainly let you know. I want to encourage again the membership that making your voice heard

is important. Using your voice will make it difficult for the Administration to dismiss us and disengage with the dialogue that the TFA has tried to maintain.

The second commonality that we have with other Faculty Associations is the difficult search for common goals and interests with our Administration. Other presidents of Faculty Associations have discussed how trying to find common ground with the Administration, as employer, has been a difficult endeavor as the Administration adamantly refuses to see an Association's position. Instead of the Administration listening from a position of 'not knowing' or trying to understand the Association, they have instead taken a patronizing approach is what I hear other Faculty Association presidents describe. This is no different here at our own institution where the Administration has provided, for example, the Association with messengers to bargain with us who are not truly empowered to negotiate the next Collective Agreement. This is both worrisome and disingenuous when the Administration describes themselves as being fair and reasonable partners in bargaining. How can we find common interest with the Administration when they do not empower those who are sent to bargain with our negotiations committee? This dynamic that the Administration creates is ultimately disappointing and finding a shared interest with the Administration is illusory at best. If the Administration refuses to find a shared interest with us, the Association has no other choice but to rely on binding arbitration.

Despite these struggles, I have heard from other Faculty Association presidents that it is making connections with those that have common cause with us that has helped them and their membership. Where possible, the TFA Executive has done the same. Whether it has been supporting our CUPE 233 colleagues through several picket visits during their strike at the beginning of the summer, or coordinating with the other campus unions and coalitions on shared concerns, like our pension, our joint health and safety committee and the looming presence of third-party organizations on our campus like Navitas. Such connections have assisted us in placing pressure on our Administration to meaningfully engage with us and engage in our issues. Similarly, those same connections are also made at the provincial and at the national level where OCUFA and CAUT have been instrumental in coordinating efforts with the broader academic labour movement, particularly around CCAA and BIA or on our joint efforts with OCUFA and other faculty associations who have made submissions to the Blue Ribbon panel who just recently released their report on funding recommendations for the post-secondary institutional sector. OCUFA and its president are here today and I hope you provide them with a warm reception as they speak to the importance of finding and making connections with other faculty associations across the province on all of these issues that we face as a sector.

Before I close, I wanted to state that I believe that these ideas of continuing dialogue, finding shared interests and making connections can help us with our employer and each other. Continuing to be in conversation with each other, finding shared interest amongst ourselves and making connections with each other can foster a stronger community. That is my wish for all of us. Finally, on behalf of the Executive I want to wish you all well during this upcoming December break.

2. ONTARIO CONFEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS - ([OCUFA](#))

SPEAKERS – OCUFA President, [Nigmendra Narain](#) and OCUFA Executive Director, Jenny Ahn

Nigmendra Narain: Brief description of OCUFA's roles. President Narain discussed OCUFA's roles related to Bill 26 in light of Dec. 6, which is the The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Also, described the response to Bill 124, which circumvents faculty members' collective bargaining rights. Shared video entitled "Solidarity is our strength": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-tChG48050>

Read OCUFA's public statement on academic freedom and campus safety:

<https://ocufa.on.ca/blog-posts/campus-safety-and-academic-freedom/>

Jenny Ahn: Presented the OCUFA board motion related to the situation at Brescia/Western:

<https://ocufa.on.ca/blog-posts/ocufa-board-motion-solidarity-brescia-western/>

OCUFA's statement on merger:

<https://ocufa.on.ca/blog-posts/statement-western-merger-announcement-alarms-ontario-faculty/>

For OCUFA's complete statement, please visit our website to review our response.

<https://ocufa.on.ca/press-releases/after-years-of-work-ontario-faculty-say-major-victory-achieved-on-protecting-public-universities/>

Reach out to OCUFA if you have any [questions](#).

3. MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING, May 8, 2023

Motion to approve the [minutes from May 8, 2023](#): Ron Babin moved. Jesmen Mendoza seconded. Carried.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Mendoza brought to members attention that the notice put forward at the last AGM by David Checkland has now been withdrawn.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT - [Financial Statements](#)

Jesmen Mendoza presented the audited financial statements.

Decrease of spending on grievances this year, but expect spending to increase as more grievances are going to arbitration next year.

Increase in spending on release time as negotiations committee has availed themselves of release time to perform their substantive role.

Statement of Changes in Reserves with special attention to Note 4.

The TFA Executive recommends the membership's approval of the 2023 Audited Financial Statements.

BIRT, the TFA Audited Financial Statements of the Year Ended August 31, 2023 be approved. (Motion by Mendoza, Second by Gingras) – CARRIED

6. NEW BUSINESS

None put forward

7. CALL FOR NOMINATIONS - TFA Executives & Standing Committees - 2024/2026

Members will receive packages for nominating colleagues for positions on the TFA Executive. The vacant positions are listed [here](#). Nominations are due Jan. 16 by 4 pm.

8. REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS

Ian Sakinofsky provided an update that the process is going to arbitration. Bargaining has progressed to arbitration since 2011 and the arbitrator has been the same person.

9. COMMITTEE CHAIRS' AND OFFICERS' REPORTS - (reports are included in "[Faculty News Link](#)" - Fall 2023, Vol. 39, No. 1).

10. OTHER BUSINESS

None put forward

11. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 pm