

June, 2019

# URFA Update

## Strike Avoided

Mobilizing the membership during U of R Academic negotiations



The U of R budget:  
Time for serious investment in PSE

# Contents

President's Message **2**

Executive Director's Message **3**

2019/2020 URFA Executive **4**

Cover Story- Mobilizing the Membership **5**

URFA News **11**

Member Retirements **13**

Collective Bargaining Updates **14**

APT Member Highlight **15**

Commentary- Re-invest in PSE **16**

Exploring Restorative Justice **17**

CAUT President Commentary **19**

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# A message from your PRESIDENT



Dear URFA members,

It has been less than three months since the U of R Academic Bargaining Team reached an agreement with the University of Regina. As you probably recall, we came very close to a strike, reaching an agreement in the few days between URFA serving the strike notification to the University and the day we were planning to walk out. In this edition of URFA Update, there is an interview with members of the URFA Job Action Committee. These hard-working folks laid out the groundwork to prepare for a strike. They planned for pickets, secured a strike headquarters, answered countless member and student questions, and mobilized the membership. Perhaps most important, they allowed the bargaining committee to focus on their work negotiating an agreement with the University. A big thank you once again to the URFA Job Action Committee, the Bargaining Committee, and URFA members across all bargaining units for your support in reaching an agreement with the University and avoiding a strike.

As we are getting closer to July 1st, the date for Career Growth Increments and other financial changes brought in by new collective agreements that have recently been negotiated, we are starting to notice some divergences of language interpretation between URFA and the employer when it comes to the new and recently ratified U of R Academic collective agreement. A few weeks ago, we communicated to our members a significant issue with the “add one/drop one” clause regarding Career Growth Increments. We are working with our legal counsel and will update members on this issue soon. We have also received some reports of lecturers having their years of accumulated CGI erased because the employer decided to “reset” the floor salary. As you receive your letter of employment, please check if the numbers add up. If they don’t, please contact HR and make sure you

know where every penny comes from. If you find irregularities, please contact the URFA office as soon as possible.

As we are entering the Summer months, activities on campus are slowing down. Starting on the last Friday in June and until the week before class starts, the URFA office will be closed on Fridays. However, URFA still remains busy throughout the summer months, as the URFA Executive and URFA committees continue to meet, and the URFA office remains active working on negotiations for four of our collective agreements, as well as handling regular member issues. Of course, you can still contact the URFA office for help and assistance at any time during the summer months.

Have a great summer everyone!

**Sylvain Rheault**  
**URFA President**

# A message from your EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The idea of membership outreach was truly taken up in the 2018-2019 academic year. It led with the President's regular door-to-door meeting with members, and was admirably followed up with the Sessional Advocacy Committee social gathering nights, the Equity Committee's leadership of its Equity Week and of course the countless meetings and tabling done by the U of R Academic Bargaining Team and Job Action Committee during negotiations throughout the winter and into the spring.

In the end, a new collective agreement was reached and ratified for U of R Academic Members. The agreement also saw the settlement of all outstanding arbitrations approved by the Executive. The next steps will be to bargain new collective agreements with Champion College and Luther College Academic, First Nations University of Canada Academic and First Nations University of Canada Sessional units. The process for negotiating these agreements has already begun, as bargaining committees have been formed or are in the process of being formed and URFA is working with them to prepare to begin negotiations in the coming months. You can read more about this in the Collective Bargaining Updates section of this newsletter.

Going into the next academic year, the Council of Representatives is embarking on the development of a multi-year strategic plan. This is a new process for URFA, as your Association has not developed a strategic plan in the past.

A survey identifying strategic planning priorities was sent to members in May and was well responded to. Thank you to everyone who took the time to give us your feedback and suggestions. As COR moves forward with the strategic planning process, we will continue to engage with members for feedback. As mentioned be-

fore, your engagement in this process is vital as it will define the areas that your Association will focus on in the coming years. Building upon the constitution, the strategic plan will be a living document that will continue to evolve with your Association in the coming years.

As we depart the 2018-19 academic year, I wish to you a safe and enjoyable summer and will see you all this fall!

**Kevin Siebert**  
**URFA Executive Director**

## 2019/2020 URFA Executive

### President

Sylvain Rheault

### Vice President, Academic

Paitoon Tontiwachwuthikul

### Vice President, APT

Janelle Schwartz

### Grievance Officer

Hirsch Greenberg

### Equity Officer

Claire Carter

### Member at Large (Academic)

Fadi Tannouri

### Member at Large (APT)

Rachel Husband

### Treasurer

Andrei Volodin

## 2019/2020 URFA Council of Representatives

### President

Sylvain Rheault

### Faculty of Arts

Darlene Juschka  
Claire Carter  
Claire Polster

### Faculty of Business Administration

Dwight Heinrichs

### CCE/ESL

Fadi Tannouri

### Faculty of Education

Pamela Osmond-Johnson

### Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences

Rene Mayorga

### Faculty of Media, Art and Performance

Robert Truszkowski

### Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy

Vacant

### Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies

James Daschuk

### Faculty of Nursing

Melanie Goodwin

### Faculty of Science

Britt Hall  
Karen Meagher

### Faculty of Social Work

Daniel Kikulwe  
Doug Durst

### La Cite

Celine Magnon

### Librarians and Archivists

Marilyn Andrews

### Lab Instructors

Maria Davis

### Campion College Academic

Anna Mudde

### Luther College Academic

Louis Awanyo

### First Nations University of Canada Academic

Kathleen O'Reilly

### Sessionals

Bridget Keating  
Ricardo Arisnabaretta-Montejo

Dwayne Meisner  
Fang Bian

### U of R APT

Jennifer Love Green  
Stephen Wihak  
Rachel Husband  
Tamara Tucker

### First Nations University of Canada APT

Trina Joseph  
Candace Cappel

### Finance Committee

Andrei Volodin

### Equity Committee

Claire Carter

### Pension and Benefits Committee

Peter Douglas

### Sessional Advocacy Committee

Christian Thompson  
Barbara Meneley

### Bylaws and Resolutions Committee

Vacant

### Grievance Chair

Hirsch Greenberg



# STRIKE AVOIDED

URFA members mobilize to reach agreement with University

It's the closest that URFA has come to going on strike in recent memory. Strike notice was served to the University. A strike headquarters had been secured. Hundreds of students packed the Education Building for a bargaining town hall meeting. Dozens of members showed up for picket training. The wheels were in motion for a full walkout of U of R Academic staff just days before the start of final exams when, shortly after 6:00 pm on Monday, March 24, an announcement arrived from the U of R Academic bargaining committee: After countless hours of bargaining, member town hall meetings, tabling on campus, a successful strike mandate vote, and an unsuccessful mediation, they had finally reached a tentative agreement with the University.

During the many hours of nego-

tiations between the bargaining committee and the University, there was a key group of URFA U of R Academic members who dedicated hours of their time to making sure that if the bargaining committee was unable to reach an agreement URFA would be prepared for a strike.

URFA recently sat down with a few members of the Job Action Committee to discuss their experience on the committee, how they mobilized the membership, and what we can do to keep members engaged outside of collective bargaining. The members interviewed are:

**Darlene Juschka (DJ)**  
**Marc Spooner (MS)**  
**William Arnal (WA)**  
**Michael Shires (MSh)**  
**Robert Thomas (RT)**

**How did you first get involved with the Job Action Committee (JAC)?**

**DJ:** I actually first joined in August 2018, there was a small group of us that started meeting as a strategy committee. It wasn't JAC at that point, and I sort of went from there. We were bargaining and I felt it was something that I should contribute to.

**MS:** I was on the same informal strategy committee first, and then that sort of became JAC. I joined because of civic duty. I get the benefits of being part of the union, so you have to give back sometimes. Joining committees is a reluctant thing for me to do, because there are so many of them, but this one seemed important.

**WA:** I ended up on the committee because Darlene twisted my arm. But the more I found out about how negotiations were going, the more enthusiastic I became about the committee.

**RT:** I was on a previous committee, the member mobilization committee, and I joined that because I think the bargaining process is very important for the health of the bargaining unit, and the university as a whole. I sort of started there, and ended up on the JAC because of that.

**This is the first time URFA has come close to a strike in a long time. When talking with your colleagues about potential job action. How did you find their response?**

**DJ:** Because people knew I was a point person on the committee, I was contacted a lot. Mostly what I did was try to diffuse anxieties as things were building up. I really took what I was doing when we were tabling on campus, and shared that with my colleagues. One thing I didn't do though, was diffuse things to the point where they shouldn't be worried. I really emphasized that everyone needs to step up, and that it was a real possibility. I made sure everyone knew that we were organized and we knew what we were doing. I think one thing we did well was when we came out with fact sheets for faculty and students. I was bowled over with how relieved everyone was, and then how ready to move they were.

**MS:** I think for a long time, in my faculty we were sort of sleep-walking through negotiations. We assumed things were going right, until the real breaking point came when we saw how outrageous some of the proposals were. When you're talking about things like getting rid of tenure, at that point I think people were in shock and were willing to take up action.

**WA:** I was pulled into JAC at a later date in negotiations. When I spoke to colleagues, what I was dealing with was mostly correcting some misinformation that people had heard. So it was mostly just walking people through the steps and calming people down. I think the most resistance to the possibility of job action was coming out of fear. So it was giving them the information, and being clear about what job action looks like. I think being clear about that

really helped.

**MSh:** I think it was critical that we had a strategic approach. We did pop up tables on campus first, then we did bargaining FAQs, that brought more attention, and that's I think when people started to realize that it was serious, and people started to pay more attention and I guess, rise up. The fact that JAC has a huge mandate, it's a critically important committee. For the next round of bargaining, we need to have a committee like this that can mobilize members.

**RT:** As we were approaching the strike, I spoke to quite a few members who were supportive, but had a lot of questions. And the fact that we were able to answer those questions, I think, made many people confident that whatever it came down to, we could actually succeed and get a better deal.



URFA Job Action Committee member Marc Spooner speaks to students at a town hall organized by RPIRG on March 20, 2019.



U of R Academic Chief Negotiator Jason Childs presents the tentative agreement to the membership.

**One thing that surprised many was the level of engagement across campus. Not just faculty, but students. The town hall meeting hosted by RPIRG was attended by hundreds of students and seemed to really be a turning point. Looking forward to the future, what do you think we have to do to keep students engaged?**

**RT:** I think, as we approach another round of bargaining, we definitely need to engage students, especially over the issue of sessionals, and how administrative salaries and tuition continue to rise compared to ours. I think it's important for us also to continue to build a relationship with URSU, and with RPIRG as well. Having those relationships, not just if there's going to be a strike, we need to keep talking rather than waiting until the last moment. That needs to be something that

the union needs to keep doing over time.

**MSH:** It might not hurt to do more to communicate with students about when negotiations are starting. That way, if we do get in a situation where there is a strike vote, it won't come as much of a surprise to students.

**WA:** I think that when we laid out the biggest issues to students, they recognized that they were being sold a bill of goods. I think students were able to support us to the extent that we were also able to successfully communicate with them that a strike would be uncomfortable, but that it wouldn't ruin their lives.

**MS:** I think the students were very important. There was lots of student engagement. I was talking to the Carillon, RPIRG, and URSU, almost daily. I was checking in, and

having conversations and being open with them and trusting their intelligence, and trusting that they were a partner in this. And I think that really played out in the stories that were written and the social media action that was happening. RPIRG was important, and URSU was too. All three bodies were important in this, and I think they really appreciated being communicated with and spoken to.

**DJ:** Students were partners in this, and I think that's one thing the administration got wrong. They tried to spin the students, and it didn't work. Doing things like sharing the FAQs with our students, putting them on UR Courses, sending them out in emails- we were directly engaging students. We were talking about it in our classrooms, in the hallways- they were coming up to us and asking us questions.





Job Action Committee members (L to R): Michael Shires, Robert Thomas, Darlene Juschka, William Arnal, Marc Spooner.

**This round of bargaining brought the U of R Academic unit and its members together and mobilized them in a way that we haven't seen in awhile. How do you think we can keep this momentum going forward, not just for bargaining, but for other issues on campus that affect our other bargaining units as well?**

**DJ:** I'm not quite sure, you know. We have two general meetings and they don't get good turnout. I think maybe some of us need to rethink the notion of the union and who we are. One of the things I've been saying a lot is that URFA is us. People shouldn't be saying "what is URFA doing?" but "What am I doing?" I think we might need a bit of a reconceptualization of what the faculty association is and what its here for, and start from there. We need to build new

relationships, and try to do things different.

**MS:** Giving people more opportunities to get informed, I think that's good. The more you get people to buy in from participation, the easier it is to get people to buy into the "we" part of things. When Len Findlay was here earlier this year, he mentioned that its the unions that are protecting the aspirational ideas of the university, and I think that's profound. It's actually the union that's protecting the institution.

**WA:** What binds people together is spending time together. The last thing people want to do is spend time on more committees. So if that's how we're selling URFA, it's a hard sell. We really need to work at URFA, I think, to do more when it comes to binding us together personally.

**MSH:** Many associations I think have a similar sort of volunteer deficit. There's always the conversation around how you mobilize others, and there will always be a small dedicated volunteer base. I think we have to balance the work that we do with also having a bit of fun, and working to keep members engaged and keep trying to bring new members in.

**RT:** I think the mobilization committee needs to be restarted, and we do need to focus on keeping up momentum. If we're not doing anything for months, it's going to be more difficult to get the momentum up and running again. I think, even if there is a small group of us, we can have pop ups, we can have conversations with key people in the union who are interested, even if they aren't interested in volunteering or being on a committee, we know that

they at least support URFA and they will be there if we do need them. We need to continue these efforts now that we're outside of bargaining

**What was your biggest takeaway from your participation in the Job Action Committee?**

**MS:** That there are people here who are committed, and willing to mobilize the rest of us to stand up for our values, and our rights. It was good to see so many colleagues standing tall.

**WA:** We've got a tremendous amount of power, if we choose to use it. It's our members and our people that stand up to make these sorts of things happen, and it doesn't happen without that.

**MSh:** Observing the last bargaining session, I was there in the afternoon, and all the work the bargaining team did until the last minute to reach an agreement—that was an incredible afternoon and experience.

**RT:** When I think of my biggest takeaway, I think of that Billy Bragg song "There's Power in the Union."

This interview has been edited and condensed.

URFA has formed a member mobilization committee to continue with efforts to mobilize the entire URFA member outside of collective bargaining. If you would like to get involved, contact URFA at [urfa@uregina.ca](mailto:urfa@uregina.ca).



U of R Academic members at the presentation of the tentative collective agreement.

# U of R Academic Bargaining Timeline

## July, 2017

Collective Agreement Expires. A bargaining committee is formed. Priority surveys are sent to U of R Academic members, and a bargaining advisory committee is formed. It is agreed that U of R APT negotiations will occur first, followed by U of R Academic negotiations.

## February, 2018

U of R APT reaches a tentative agreement with the University. Members ratify the agreement on February 26, 2018.

## May, 2018

U of R Academic bargaining with the University begins.

## May-October, 2018

Bargaining with the University continues. The University puts forward proposals that signal a concerning shift in the University's priorities away from research.

## October, 2018

Following multiple unproductive days of bargaining with the University, the U of R Academic Bargaining Committee asks members for a strong strike mandate in order to move the University towards a fair and reasonable agreement.

## November, 2018

Members vote 87% in favour of a strike mandate.

## Nov 2018-February, 2019

The U of R Academic Bargaining Committee continues to negotiate with the University

## January, 2019

The URFA Job Action Committee is formed to prepare for the possibility of job action.

## February, 2019

URFA makes a request to the Minister of Labour for the appointment of a mediator to assist in reaching an agreement for U of R Academic members.

## March 14, 2019

After over 40 hours in mediation with the University, URFA is not able to reach an agreement for U of R Academic members.

## March 15, 2019

The Mediator files their report, marking the start of the 14-day "cooling off" period before any job action can occur. The Job Action Committee begins meeting daily and making serious strike preparation plans, including securing a strike headquarters.

## March 20, 2019

RPIRG hosts a student town hall, with U of R Academic Bargaining Chief Negotiator Jason Childs answering student questions. Hundreds of students attend, packing the Rainbow Pit in the Education Building.

## March 22, 2019

Following a second student town hall organized by University Administration in response to the RPIRG townhall two days earlier, URFA serves the University with strike notice effective Thursday, March 28 at 10:00 am.

## March 25, 2019

The bargaining committee returns to the bargaining table with the University. The URFA Job Action Committee hosts a picket training session to educate members on the ins and outs of walking a picket line.

## March 25, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

The U of R Academic Bargaining Committee reaches a tentative agreement with the University.

## April 4, 2019

U of R Academic members vote in favour of a four-year collective agreement for the years 2017-2021.

## May 1, 2019

The new collective agreement goes into effect.

# New labour law amendment allows paid leave for victims of domestic or sexual violence

In May, the Saskatchewan government amended a law that allows for survivors of domestic or sexual violence five paid days of leave from work. Saskatchewan currently has some of the highest rates of domestic and sexual violence in Canada.

This is a change from the previous legislation, which allowed survivors 10 unpaid days of leave. The amendment allows for five paid days of leave in addition to five unpaid days.

The legislation allows for an employee to take time off work if they, their child, or a person they are caring for is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, and time off work is required to:

- Seek medical attention;
- Obtain services from a victims' services organization;
- Obtain psychological or other professional services;
- Relocate, either temporarily or permanently, or
- Seek legal or law enforcement assistance and attend court appearances.

To be eligible, employees must have worked for an employer for a minimum of 13 weeks. Employers must keep any personal information of the em-

ployee confidential.

URFA also supports members who have emergency circumstances due to the sudden loss or decline in remuneration from the University including members on leave without pay through our URFA Member Emergency Fund.

Please note that, even though this language is not currently found in any of URFA's collective agreements, all URFA members, by virtue of being a worker in Saskatchewan, are entitled to these leave provisions. If members have any questions about this leave or the URFA Member Emergency Fund, please contact URFA and a Member Services Officer will be assigned to you. All inquiries with URFA Member Services Officers are kept confidential, and URFA will never contact the employer without your consent.

## Research fund has \$12k available for U of R Academic sessionals

Negotiated in the new University of Regina Academic collective agreement is a research fund for sessionals. Under Article 4.2 of Appendix A in the collective agreement, the University shall make available to the Faculty Association \$12,000 per year in order to support the professional development of sessionals.

Sessional lecturers with priority status may apply to this fund for costs associated with creative, scholarly, or professional works. Acceptable expenses may include registration, travel, publication fees, or discipline specific equivalents.

Funds will be distributed by URFA three times per year, with applications being submitted to the URFA office on April 1, September 1 and December 1.

URFA is currently working with the Sessional Advocacy Committee to develop an application form and finalize the process for applying to access these funds. More information will be made available to members soon.

# Three students receive URFA bursaries

Three students have received bursaries from URFA over the past academic year. Combined, the bursaries are worth \$4,500. The awards are given out each year by the scholarship committee on the basis of financial need as well as academic achievement.

URFA has three bursaries that are awarded each year:

The **Dr. Sarah Shorten Memorial Bursary**, valued at \$1,500, was established to support the participation of women in the profession of engineering and in scientific fields. It was named to commemorate the contribution of Dr. Sarah Shorten to the status of Academic women in Canada and to her legacy of leadership with the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

The recipient of this year's Dr. Sarah Shorten Memorial Bursary was **Chiagoziem Imegwu**. Chiagoziem is a Bachelor of Applied Science student majoring in Petroleum Systems Engineering.

The **Dr. Peter Hemingway Bursary**, valued at \$1,500, is named to recognize the exemplary contributions of the late Dr. Peter Hemingway to the creation and effective functioning of the University of Regina Faculty Association.

The recipient of this year's Dr. Peter Hemingway bursary was **Akabom Ekpenyon**. Akabom is pursuing a Bachelor of Applied Science degree with a major in Environmental Systems Engineering.

The **Faye Rafter Bursary**, valued at \$1,500, was established by the University of Regina Faculty Association to recognize the contributions of Faye Rafter for her work as Executive Director of the Association during a time of growth and change. The bursary is awarded to a single parent on the basis of financial need as well as academic achievement.

The recipient of this year's Faye Rafter bursary was **Alexandria Powalinsky**. Alexandria is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Social Work.

The Faculty Association congratulates the recipients of this year's bursaries, and wishes Chiagoziem, Akabom, and Alexandria all the best with their studies.

# URFA suspends membership in 3 organizations

The URFA Executive has made the decision to temporarily suspend payment of membership with the following organizations for one year:

**Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL).  
Regina and District Labour Council (RDLC).  
National Union of the Canadian Association of  
University Teachers (NUCAUT)**

The decision is purely financial. It is a one-year, temporary measure to help URFA balance its budget and avoid depleting our trust funds, which have been patiently grown by our predecessors.

Members can be assured that, as soon as we balance our budget, we will resume payment of our membership dues. In the meantime, URFA intends to collaborate in all possible ways with organizations in the labour movement.

If you have any concerns, please contact URFA President Sylvain Rheault at [urfa.president@uregina.ca](mailto:urfa.president@uregina.ca) or 306-585-4317.

# Member Retirements

The following URFA members have retired or will be retiring from their positions at the University of Regina after years of dedicated service.

**Dr. Hafiz Akhand (Arts)**

**Vivian Haskin (Social Work)**

**Phyllis Bend (KHS)**

**Randy Laughlin (Information Services)**

**Dr. Stephen Bend (Science)**

**Patricia Miller-Schroeder (Arts)**

**Donna Bowman (Library)**

**Loanne Myrah (CCE)**

**Dr. John Conway (Arts)**

**Carmen Robertson (MAP)**

**Myra Froc (CCE)**

**Dr. Randy Widdis (Arts)**

**Peter Gutiw (Engineering)**

**Dr. Yuchao Zhu (Arts)**

On behalf of all URFA members, congratulations on a successful career!

Your years of hard work has led to the ongoing success of this institution. Your efforts have helped to shape and define the University and has made our campus a better place.

We wish you all the best as you embark on a new chapter.

# Collective Bargaining Updates

Following the ratification of the U of R Academic Collective agreement, the URFA Office has hit the ground running working on negotiations for four collective agreements that have expired or will expire later this year. The agreements for Campion and Luther Colleges, and FNUniv Academic units have expired, and the FNUniv Sessional agreement expires at the end of this year. Below is a short update on negotiations:

## **Campion College Academic**

A call for volunteers for the Bargaining Committee and Bargaining Advisory Committee was sent to members in the spring. The membership was surveyed on bargaining priorities and a membership meeting was held in early May. A Bargaining Committee has been formed and is currently working with URFA to prepare for negotiations later this year.

## **Luther College Academic**

A call for volunteers for the Bargaining Committee and Bargaining Advisory Committee has been sent to members, and it is anticipated that the committees will be formed soon. Once the committees are formed, they will begin working with URFA to prepare for negotiations later this year.

A town hall meeting for members was held recently, and it was decided that another meeting would be held in July to discuss bargaining priorities.

## **FNUniv Academic**

A call for volunteers for the Bargaining Committee was sent out earlier this year, and a committee has been formed. A bargaining priorities survey for FNUniv Academic members was sent out earlier this spring.

For negotiations, the committee intends to work with the employer using an interest-based model. This model of negotiating was successfully used during FNUniv Sessional Academic Staff Member negotiations and last year's FNUniv APT negotiations. The two parties negotiated through the assistance of a facilitator provided through the Ministry of Labour to come to agreement on non-monetary articles. When negotiations moved to monetary articles, the parties returned to a more positional bargaining format. Negotiations for FNUniv Academic are expected to begin later this year.

## **FNUniv Sessionals**

The FNUniv Sessional contract expires at the end of 2019. A Bargaining Committee has been formed, and a bargaining priorities survey was sent to members in the spring. Membership meetings will occur later in the year as the committee and URFA prepare for negotiations as early as this year.

## **U of R Academic**

The U of R Academic collective agreement, 2017-2021 officially went into effect on May 1.

There still remains an issue re-

garding implementation of the “add one/drop one” increment in the new Collective Agreement. When the bargaining committee agreed to include an “add one/drop one” in the collective agreement, they believed that, based on the representations made at the bargaining table, every term, tenure track and tenured academic staff member of the URFA Academic bargaining unit would receive a benefit of the “add one/drop one” in year three of the contract. This is exactly the position that URFA is taking going forward as we make every effort to resolve this matter.

URFA has engaged our legal counsel in this matter and will continue to update members as we work to find a resolution to this issue.



# Benjamin Freitag, Faculty of Graduate Studies

U of R APT members are a vital part of the day-to-day operations of the University of Regina and First Nations University of Canada. Each issue of URFA Update features an APT member profile that highlights our members and the different roles they play within the Universities.

**Name:** Benjamin Freitag

**Position:** Manager of Special Projects

**URFA APT Member Since:** April 2009

**Provide a description of your position, and what a “day in the life” at your job might look like:**

My main job is to provide supports for graduate students. I try to coordinate different services on campus and let students know what opportunities are available to them. My day in the life does not follow a routine. I always have a number of special projects on the go (program review/development, web design, data analysis, event planning, etc) so I am managing the different priorities as they come in.

**What about your position is the most rewarding?**

I get to try to make students’ lives better.

**What is the most challenging?**

I always have a number of projects on the go, so it is hard to give the smaller projects my full attention.

**What’s your favorite part of working at the U of R?**

I have been fortunate to work in environments where a thoughtful approach is appreciated. I like being able to investigate topics and try to do what is best, even if that isn’t what is easiest.

**What’s something interesting about your job that most people might not know about?**

The U of R has a high retention rate for graduate students.



# It's time for serious investment in PSE

In May, the University of Regina Board of Governors approved its 25th consecutive balanced budget, made possible once again by rising tuition fees for the 11th consecutive year in a row, asking students to pay more and faculty and staff to do more with less.

As URFA has said in the past, we do not support the University balancing its budget on the back of our students, who are finding it more and more difficult to make ends meet, with many taking on higher debt loads as they face a further 2.8% tuition increase this fall. Tuition has now increased by almost 40% since 2008, and the University of Regina is ranked as the fourth most expensive University in Canada, according to Maclean's. URFA stands with students, and urges the University to consider the impact that yearly tuition increases have on our students, and on the affordability and attainability of post-secondary education in this province.

URFA also recognizes the role that the provincial government plays in the development of this budget. A decade of austerity and underfunding of post-secondary education have led to yearly

tuition increases and cuts at the U of R. For the third year in a row, Universities in Saskatchewan either saw cuts or a zero per cent funding increase from the provincial government.

A significant re-investment in post-secondary education, combined with a tuition freeze, would have enormous benefits for students and for the working conditions of University faculty and staff. URFA will continue to work to build partnerships with URSU, RPIRG, the CUPE locals on campus, and other groups to build student and worker solidarity and advocate for much needed investment in post-secondary education.

While it is important to invest in the infrastructure of a growing University, the people who work to support the mission of the University continue to face increased workloads since the number of faculty members is not increasing while the number of student is.

It is time to make re-investing in post-secondary education a priority. The continued success of our institution depends on it.



# Exploring restorative justice in PSE institutions

Existing grievance protocols cannot adequately resolve all member complaints. There is no one light approach that can meet all the needs of our members to address complaints. URFA undertook to explore possible alternatives under the umbrella of restorative justice. This approach defines complaints (e.g., conflicts; disputes; etc.) first as a relationship problem rather than a breach of a collective bargaining agreement. Restorative justice is not a replacement for existing grievance procedures but affords members an option to resolve complaints. Importantly, following a restorative justice approach does not eliminate the option of the formal grievance procedure.

This brief are the conclusions reached by a limited survey of our members, and other post-secondary institutions based on a report authored by Isaac Mwenga, a Police Studies' student from the Department of Justice Studies. Mr. Mwenga was asked to contact URFA committee members, Human Resources staff and other post-secondary institutions. The objective was to explore whether the concept of restorative justice is applicable and desirable in a unionized post-secondary institution.

Twenty interviews were conducted from among URFA Committee members and five post-secondary institutions. Four common themes emerged as a result of these interviews:

- Power imbalances
- Human Resources commitment
- Volunteer participation in the process by those effected
- Method of implementation

A reoccurring theme from those interviewed is the lack of an adequate early intervention culture after the initial rise of a conflict especially those of a relatively minor nature. This theme is closely related to interpersonal conflicts rather than contractual ones but not exclusively. It is suggested by those interviewed that the filing of a formal grievance is often not an individual's first choice. Attempts to resolve a conflict early on are usually by the complainant and are made to address a real or perceived harm. The issue here is dependent

on multiple factors. One example is when an individual responsible for the harm caused is unaware of how his or her behaviour may affect others and therefore he or she may not perceive any resultant harm.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) allows for informal methods of conflict resolution practices, prior to the filing of a formal grievance. However, a lack of information, training and an institutional cultural focus across the campus for problem-based-solution-focus-interventions in the past fans the conflict, intensifying the stress and harm that is experienced while awaiting a resolution. Granted there are cases when individuals informally resolve their differences quickly. However, interviewee opinions suggest there is a greater need to adopt conflict resolution techniques prior to CBA based interventions.

Understandably, breaking away from a culture that is predisposed to one method to address all complaints will not be easy, but we strongly believe that testimonials from faculty and staff will begin to allow a shift to take place in the university's culture.

Multiple interviewees commented on the importance of HR's involvement and support of any initiative in adopting a restorative justice model. Policy implementation is reliant on the cooperation of all parties, and HR is a key stakeholder.

Another concern brought up by multiple interviewees is the dynamic and power imbalance that is often present when dealing with conflicts. For example a conflict between a manager and an employee or a dean and a faculty member.

The most crucial concerns brought up by interviewees, however, was the voluntary aspect to participate in the process and the stage or degree of the conflict. Interviewees also wanted to ensure that a certified or trained facilitator in restorative justice led the process.

Despite some of the concerns raised, there is enthusiasm by all interviewees regarding the possible implementation of a restorative justice (RJ)

model to intervene, especially when interpersonal conflicts arise. Many interviewees provided feedback on the ability for a process such as RJ to resolve conflicts when still of a minor nature. There was also emphasis placed on how the current culture allows for small issues to turn into larger issues by waiting until the problem reaches a grievance stage and the interpersonal relationship remain unaddressed.

RJ practices are widely practiced in government organizations, cooperative settings, elementary and high schools, and post-secondary institutions (Cox, 2013).

For example, several universities in New Zealand have fully embraced restorative justice when dealing with student to student conflict, as well as student and faculty conflict (Cox, 2013). In the implementation of restorative justice in these institutions and others, Thorsborne (2000) argued that the restorative justice process was more successful than other policies because the problem was rarely found to be solely a single breach of a CBA article (fitting a round peg into a square hole). Thorsborne (2000) elaborates that seeking of help is often the tip of the iceberg, which slowly reveals underlying, long-term issues that have inevitably led to the breakdown of relationships. In this context, the use of RJ is successful as this practice addresses both contractual and interpersonal issues. (Cox, 2013).

Thoborne (2000) further illustrates the benefits of implementing restorative justice in the workplace and identifies nine benefits:

1. All affected staff will have the opportunity to understand the full picture of what has transpired rather than relying on office gossip as a source of truth;
2. Transforming conflict into cooperation as the staff involved come together as a community to tackle the problem (becoming 'we' instead of 'us and them');
3. It becomes the community's responsibility to decide what's to be done, rather than resting solely on management – ensuring ownership of any agreement by all parties;

4. It builds accountability within a community, and develops a sense of trust

5. It is an opportunity to review workplace culture and processes which may have contributed to the problem.

6. It avoids the necessity for industrial and/or legal involvement (reliance on outside experts) and costly legal processes and the agreement reached will stand up to scrutiny;

7. The process is relatively fast and effective;

8. Research has proven that participants in RJ processes have found them to be procedurally, emotionally and substantively fair and satisfying; and

9. The RJ intervention has a solid theory base which draws on neurobiology, psychology, political philosophy, and social organisational management theory.

There may be some initial resistance with the implementation of RJ measures (Paul, 2017; Pointer, 2017). It is encouraged that faculty, staff and HR (managers, etc.) provide critical feedback as the policy emerges.

**Note: This was an excerpt of a report by Isaac Mwenga, a Police Studies' student from the Department of Justice studies and Hirsch Greenberg, URFA Grievance Committee Chair. Due to space limitations, the list of references cited in this report has not been included. For a full list of references, please contact the URFA Office.**

# Leadership and Collegial Governance

Are universities becoming anti-intellectual? I know that on the face of it the claim seems silly. I'm not referring to research produced by faculty, or their teaching. I'm thinking more about how the academy is governed.

Over the past three years I've found numerous occasions to return to a core theme: the transition from a model of collegial governance to a top-down corporate model of utilitarian managerialism. Now, for my final column as CAUT president, I would like to revisit the theme one last time.

Leadership is not simply a matter of giving a command and expecting it be followed. That may work in the army, but not in academe. I have, on occasion, illustrated this point by asking small groups of faculty association presidents what their response would be if I were to give them a direct order as CAUT president. Cue laughter.

CAUT is a member-driven federation whose individual associations are fiercely independent. That's why CAUT Council puts in the hard work of debating policy and procedures, which then guide the work of our various standing committees and Executive. Not everyone is happy all the time, but that too is democracy. And, by sticking to our established procedures, we provide transparency and legitimacy to governance for the entire membership.

In universities, we call these same norms and conventions collegial governance. In short, this means the active participation of faculty in academic governance structures, such as departmental committees and senate. Collegiality does not mean congeniality. As our policy statement underlines, collegial governance is about ensuring all participants are provided an opportunity to engage in discussion and debate while also ensuring "that no individual is given inappropriate advantage (for example, due to power differentials) with respect to decisions." Deans and departmental chairs, for instance, hold positions of power and shouldn't be allowed to dominate or skew discussions. Collegial governance isn't perfect, but it does provide the legitimacy required to support a healthy institutional culture. Sadly,

this is not the current experience for many faculty members. Across the country we see a trend away from these historical conventions. In place of faculty-wide consultation we find diktats from above and the expectation that we applaud the announcement and dutifully execute it.

Take for example the corporatized hiring process for senior administrators. Searches used to include public job talks from shortlisted candidates. No longer. Increasingly, searches are closed and steered by corporate headhunting firms. And at the presidential level, once a decision is made the chosen candidate is revealed to the university community through a packaged PR campaign, complete with a scripted YouTube video. Cue applause.

Another tactic plucked from the business world, is the so-called "listening tour." This is a favourite of PR firms, such as Navigator, that has migrated to universities. Sometimes it's used to manage a crisis or scandal. Other times it's used to provide the patina of consultation while unrolling a pre-determined agenda. To be clear, a genuine and sincere listening tour would be welcome. But emails asking for faculty input that impose boundaries around permissible discussion topics, or that signal preferred solutions to long-standing substantive debates around pedagogy or program structures is antithetical to collegial governance.

Here's the thing. It's not the job of faculty to agree with the administration. Neither is it our job to reflexively oppose anything they recommend. Rather, our duty is to use our academic freedom, including the freedom of intramural expression, to thoughtfully engage with the substance of issues presented at committees and other decision-making bodies, and to act always in the best interest of the university's core goals — teaching and research. Sadly, these interventions are sometimes not met in good faith. And here's where we return to my opening question. Academics are trained to make arguments. For example, a draft proposal is presented to change an academic program. According to the tenets of collegial governance, faculty are obliged to assess its strengths and weaknesses. Representatives of the administration

are not obligated to agree, but one would expect a reasoned counter argument. Increasingly none appears. Instead, there is sometimes simply silence, but in most cases, there is strategic avoidance. Or, more often in the managed university, opposition is framed as an individual's problem, rather than a legitimate critique of a proposal.

Philosopher Jürgen Habermas makes an important distinction between “strategic action” and “communicative action.” His life project has been to replace instrumental forms of reason with an open and dialogical conception of communication. His so-called “ideal speech situation” is, therefore, well suited to help us understand the importance of collegial governance. Only when people come together to engage in face-to-face dialogue as equal participants, using mutually understandable arguments — made in good faith — can we reach a democratic agreement. Communicative action is thus distinguished from strategic action by its reliance on non-coercive, intersubjective deliberation. If collegial governance lacks open communicative dialogue, all that is left is power — power that lays predominantly with the administration.

Collegial governance only exists if it is exercised. My advice is to use it.

**James Compton is the President of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). This was reprinted from the June issue of CAUT Bulletin.**