



Message from the President



Dr. Paul Siakaluk

*Professor, Psychology Department
President, UNBC-FA*

Dear Members of the UNBC Faculty Association,

The UNBC Faculty Association is pleased to present our Newsletter for the Fall 2024 semester. I will briefly outline the important information you will find in this Newsletter, and I encourage all our members to carefully read and consider what is presented.

Dr. Rheanna Robinson, a member of the CAUT Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Working Group, provides an insight synopsis of the 2024 CAUT Aboriginal Academic Staff Conference, *Beyond Words: Translating Indigenization of the Academy into Practice*, held on October 4-5 in Regina. **Dr. Jacqueline Holler**, our new Chief Negotiator, introduces the Faculty Association's 2025 bargaining team (spoiler alert: we have an excellent

bargaining team!). She also outlines what to expect in the coming months as the bargaining team solicits what our members' priorities are for the next round of bargaining. The **Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)** has provided a useful and timely analysis of *Understanding an Instructor's Role in the Duty to Accommodate Students*. The **FA Insight of the Month** provides important information for all our members who will be applying for Tenure or Continuing appointment in the near future (or who would like to get constructive and formative feedback regarding different aspects of their teaching) with an article titled *Teaching Evaluations by Peers and Peer Reviews*.

Also, in this Newsletter you will find information about: our revamped website (www.unbcfa.ca); a Pancake Breakfast to be held on Tuesday, January 21st (I'm from Calgary and Pancake Breakfasts are awesome!); **Dr. Ted Binnema's** being awarded the CAUT 2024 Donald C. Savage Award; the FA Events Committee and the FA FC; the upcoming election for the 2025-2027 FA Executive Committee; nomination information for the CUFA BC Distinguished Academics Awards; and the current Executive Committee members.

I would like to thank all of you for your efforts in making UNBC a great place to work and learn. Thank you to the Executive Committee for the important work you do on behalf of all our members. I would also like to especially highlight the tireless efforts our Executive Director, Donna Sindaco, and Professional Services Officer, Wendee Copeland, exert on our behalf.

On behalf of the UNBC Faculty Association Executive Committee, we hope you have a restful and joyful holiday break and come back renewed in the January 2025 semester.



Gabrielle Daoust (Assistant Professor, Global and International Studies at UNBC) joins the flying pickets for the Association of McGill Professors of Law strike.



Mark your Calendars for our next Membership Social Event:

Pancake Breakfast

Tuesday, January 21st 8:00 am – 10:00 am
Bentley Centre



Come on out and enjoy a pancake breakfast with your colleagues. Drop in any time between 8:00 am – 10:00 am and meet your new colleagues or connect with ones you haven't seen in a while. The Faculty Association will also have information on opportunities for you to get involved with the Faculty Association, from serving as an FA Officer on the Executive Committee - to planning social activities on the Events Committee - to advancing equity initiatives on the Equity Committee – to labour solidarity initiatives. Looking forward to seeing you there!



Indigenizing the Academy: Reflections from the 2024 CAUT Aboriginal Academic Staff Conference



Dr. Rheanna E. Robinson

Associate Professor, Department of First Nations Studies

As a member of the CAUT Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Working Group, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to help plan and participate in the 2024 CAUT Aboriginal Academic Staff Conference, *Beyond Words: Translating Indigenization of the Academy into Practice*. Held in Regina, Saskatchewan, October 4 – 5, 2024, the



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conference acknowledged, “[t]he journey toward Indigenizing the academy, beginning with the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action, has been underway for close to 10 years [and although] progress has been made, it is clear more work lies ahead to transform the Commission’s call to Indigenize universities and colleges into practice” (<https://www.caut.ca/event/aboriginal-academic-staff-conference>). This conference offered a significant opportunity for “Indigenous scholars and their non-Indigenous allies to join with one another in the spirit of reconciliation, build networks and peer support, take stock of what has been accomplished, and identify what more needs to be done” (<https://www.caut.ca/event/aboriginal-academic-staff-conference>). Given some of the goals within UNBC’s Strategic Plan [Ready](#) are to, “Act on Truth and Reconciliation” and “attract and retain outstanding people for our community,” the CAUT Aboriginal Academic Staff Conference was an important occasion for knowledge sharing and relationship building as UNBC continues to mobilize its own efforts towards Indigenization.

After being welcomed to Treaty 4 territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and the homeland of the Métis Nation, the conference began with an incredible keynote presentation from Dr. Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, Professor, Indigenous Studies, University of Manitoba. This was followed by a fulsome and dynamic representation of plenary sessions and group discussions that celebrated the knowledges and experiences of diverse peoples and voices from across Canada. Plenary sessions like, “Navigating Indigenous identity claims” and “Building pathways for Indigenous scholars through collective bargaining” provided an opportunity to hear about emerging best-practices and what more still needs to be done. The smaller group discussions offered a unique space for conference participants to come together to share their individual experiences regarding matters related to Indigenization in their respective institutions as well as some of the successes and limitations scholars continue to experience with Indigenous research. Indeed, the breadth and depth offered to conference participants through the CAUT Aboriginal Academic Staff engagement was an ideal space to collaborate and learn.

The conference builds on the other good work already undertaken by CAUT to support academic Indigenization efforts. To name a few, this includes the CAUT Indigenizing the Academy [Policy Statement](#) (2016, 2021), the [Indigenization of the Academy: A Checklist](#) (2021) document, and the [Bargaining for Indigenization of the Academy](#) (2020) Bargaining Advisory. UNBC’s Dakelh (Carrier) motto of ‘En Cha Huna’ (respect for all things) reminds me of the foundational commitment UNBC has made to Indigenous Peoples, our knowledges, and academic aspirations. I look forward to witnessing how the outcomes from conference experiences like *Beyond Words: Translating Indigenization of the Academy into Practice* will inform strategic directions, institutional policies, and Indigenization priorities at UNBC and beyond.



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A Message from the Chief Negotiator



Dr. Jacqueline Holler
Professor, Department of History
Chief Negotiator, UNBC-FA

Introducing your 2025 bargaining team...

As you will know from our October *Insights* Bulletin, we are nearing the end of the 2023-2025 Collective Agreement, which expires on 30 June 2025, and preparing for a new round of collective bargaining in spring.

The retirement of former Chief Negotiator Ted Binnema in June 2024 left big shoes to fill and a vacancy at the helm of our team. (See the picture of Ted receiving a CAUT Donald Savage Collective Bargaining Award in this newsletter issue.) We thank him for many years of dedicated service to the association.

I am honoured to say that the Executive Committee of the UNBC-FA has appointed me as Chief Negotiator. For those of you new to UNBC, I am a member of the History department and a long-serving member of the UNBC Executive Committee. I have served in numerous roles within the Association for the past eighteen years, including being part of bargaining since 2010.

A bargaining team ideally contains a mix of previous and new members to ensure both continuity and renewal, and it's always good news if someone wants to return and do the heavy lifting again! We are fortunate to have Dezene Huber (Ecosystem Science and Management) returning to the team after his first round in 2023. Dezene and I will be joined by Jean-Sebastien Bernier (Physics), making his bargaining debut. And finally, as always, UNBC-FA Executive Director Donna Sindaco will be an essential part of our team, bringing her stellar collective-agreement knowledge and negotiating acumen. Our four-person team offers a good mix of institutional memory, broad university experience, bargaining expertise, modelling and quantitative skills, and member-services focus. We are eager to get started.



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Dr. Ted Binnema (retired Professor Department of History, past UNBC-FA Chief Negotiator, and UNBC-FA Honorary Member) awarded the 2024 Donald C. Savage Award in honour of Ted's outstanding achievements in the promotion of collective bargaining in Canadian universities and colleges.



We can't do that, though, until we hear from you. Therefore, you will see the roll-out of our member consultations in winter 2025. First up will be a member survey aimed at hearing your priorities and wishes for our new collective agreement. Look for that survey in January. Later in the winter semester, watch for targeted focus groups. Please participate in both the survey and in-person consultations, which will help us shape proposals that truly represent our members' needs.

Once we have heard from the membership, we will finalize our bargaining plan and proposals, which will be presented to you at a general membership meeting in spring. Thereafter, we will be able to present our proposals to the Employer knowing that we sit at the table not as individuals, but as the representatives of the will and solidarity of hundreds of members of the UNBC-FA. We anticipate that the face-to-face bargaining sessions will take place in May and June; once

those occur, we'll communicate regularly with you on the progress we are making and any challenges we face.

The coming months will be busy as we move forward to our date with the Employer. For now, I wish you a very happy holiday, and all the best for the New Year. Whether you are a new member or a long-serving one, I look forward to hearing from you as we shape our bargaining proposals—and of course, representing you and your interests at the table.



Understanding an Instructor's Role in the Duty to Accommodate Students

Source: Canadian Association of University Teachers

www.caut.ca

Questions seem to be coming up more frequently for Faculty Associations around the issue of increasing student accommodation requests, the role or responsibility of the Instructor in supporting a student accommodation, and the impact on an Instructor's workload.



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It is very important to understand – first and foremost – that the duty to accommodate is enshrined in human rights legislation which guarantees that we are all equally entitled to freedom from discrimination and impediments so that we can participate in society, including equal treatment in education. More specifically, post-secondary institutions have an obligation to both prevent and remove barriers for students who need an accommodation so they can fully and freely participate in the academy. But when we refer to the “post-secondary institution”, what does that mean?

Ultimately the costs and the duty to accommodate a student rest solely on the institution -- or the Employer. This doesn't mean that the Instructor doesn't have an important role to play in accommodating their students, and an Instructor may be consulted in the development of the accommodation plan if the needs of the course require a specific format. In addition, each accommodation plan will need to be individualized to meet the specific needs of the student, but there are also limitations on the Institution's duty to support an accommodation request. For example, accommodations must: be reasonable (versus 'perfect' or 'preferred'); not create undue hardship (significantly impact the rights of others or create serious financial hardship for the institution); not cause health or safety issues for the student or others; and not significantly compromise academic standards.

Some of the Employer's responsibilities include:

- Having an accessible centralized office to administer accommodation requests
- Having an approved policy that is readily and easily available to staff and students
- Providing access to specialized equipment and/or technology
- Ensuring instructors and students receive necessary information on an accommodation plan
- Protecting confidentiality of students requesting accommodation
- Providing training and support to staff and Instructors

Some of the Instructor's responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and designing course materials that support inclusivity
- Participating in the accommodation plan once it is approved by the Employer (provided the plan can be accommodated and that it does not breach the Collective Agreement)
- Protecting confidentiality of the student requesting accommodation

We know that by actively participating in student accommodations, we enable our students to study and learn in a place that fosters respect and inclusivity. We also know that this comes with the challenge of balancing our workloads, and that is where Faculty Associations need to advocate for their members. The Institution is responsible to support **both** their students and their academic staff, and Employers need to find ways to support their academic staff for this additional work – either through compensation or workload reduction – and enshrine their supports in strong collective agreement language.



Insights: Teaching Evaluations by Peers and Peer Reviews

Article 21B of the Collective Agreement specifies that a peer review of teaching “*must be conducted in advance of and included in the application for and consideration of Tenure or Continuing appointment*”; however, implementation of this requirement has been delayed. Members applying for Tenure or Continuing appointment in the 2025 review period may choose to include a peer review in their application, but the requirement to include a peer review comes into effect for anyone applying for Tenure or Continuing appointment commencing in 2026.

Why do we have peer review? The peer-review requirement was added to the Collective Agreement because anonymous student surveys were removed. *That* step was taken because of mounting evidence—and a supporting high-profile [arbitration decision at Ryerson University](#), now Toronto Metropolitan—that traditional student surveys are not only unreliable and invalid, but also biased and discriminatory. The goal of the parties was therefore to implement a procedure that would be both fairer and more constructive for members’ career development.

What is peer review according to the Agreement? Peer review, as the Agreement states, aims “*to provide constructive assistance to Members with respect to teaching techniques.*” Therefore, it will be a formative process involving, for example, review of a Member’s teaching dossier, syllabi, and student work, along with classroom visits. The Agreement also provides for the possibility of interviews with students and the Member. The ultimate result of this process, as the language of the Agreement makes clear, is included in the application for Tenure or Continuing appointment along with other markers of teaching effectiveness such as the teaching dossier, syllabi, sample assignments, etc.

How does the process work? According to the Agreement, “[d]uring the academic year preceding the application, a peer reviewer shall be selected by the Program Chair, in consultation with the Member, from among a roster of Trained Teaching Members maintained by the Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Technology.” The roster will include at least one reviewer from each faculty and the DMS. Now, because the application is submitted in September, most Members will want to have the process conducted either in the fall or the winter semester (or both) of the year before they apply. That timeline means that if you are a Teaching Member preparing to apply for either Tenure or Continuing appointment, you will therefore want to discuss peer review with your chair *at least a year in advance* of your application.



Otherwise known as the “*party committee*”, the UNBC-FA Events Committee’s mandate is to organize social gatherings for the Faculty Association. In Fall 2024, the FA-Events Committee organized an October *pizza lunch* and two *Coffee & Tea Events* held in September and November. With fresh faces every month, the opportunity to socialize remains an important part of

the Faculty Association. Stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to socialize with your faculty associates, including a pancake breakfast in January 2025.

Another important opportunity to meet with one another has been on the soccer pitch. The **FA FC**, our Co-Ed soccer team organized by Rylan Graham, plays a game every week. The team of 15 members has representatives from all corners of the university. With 2 wins, 2 ties and 4 losses, "TEAMWORK" has been the rallying cry behind steady improvement over the term. We'll be on the pitch next term too!



This year, the UNBC FA's Events Committee comprises: Joanie Crandall, Rylan Graham, Max Hamon (Chair) and Wootae Chun. If you have ideas or suggestions for the Events Committee please let any of us know, or send an email to hamon@unbc.ca.

Here's what's coming up in the new year.....

February call for nominations from active members of the Faculty Association who are interested in standing **for election to the July 2025–June 2027 Executive Committee:**

President

The role of the President is to preside at all meetings of the Association and of the Executive Committee and be an *ex-officio* member of all committees of the Association unless otherwise noted. The President is the chief executive officer of the Association and supervises the other officers in the execution of their duties and ensures the Executive Committee and the Association meet frequently enough that constitutional obligations of the Association are met. (see attached "*Terms of Reference - President*" for more information)

Vice-President

The role of the Vice-President is to carry out the duties of the President during the President's absence. The Vice-President may be assigned other duties determined by the Executive Committee. (see attached "*Terms of Reference – Vice President*" for more information)

Treasurer

The role of the Treasurer is to keep the financial records, including books of account, necessary to comply with the Society Act, and render an account of financial position of the Association, including financial statements, to the Executive Committee when required and to the membership at general meetings. (see attached "*Terms of Reference – Treasurer*" for more information)



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Members at-large:

- (3) Members holding tenure-track or tenured appointments (Faculty representatives)
- (1) Member holding an appointment as a Term Member (Part-time Instructor, Instructor, or Regular Term Member)
- (1) Member holding an appointment as a Senior Laboratory Instructor
- (1) Member holding an appointment as Senior Instructor
- (1) Librarian Member
- (1) Regional Member holding a Tenure-track, Tenured, Regular Term, Senior Instructor or Senior Laboratory Instructor appointment and whose primary regional campus is located in Quesnel or Terrace

Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC)

CUFA BC's Distinguished Academics Awards series honours the outstanding scholarship of academics and the impact scholarly research has beyond the academy. Winners receive a plaque, \$2000 cash, and a celebration gala.

Nominate a colleague today: www.cufa.bc.ca/awards

Closing date for nominations: January 31, 2025

We've revamped our website and we're excited for you to check it out! We are especially excited to welcome all our new members and encourage you to check out their bios.

Go to: www.unbcfa.ca



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UNBC FA Executive Committee

<i>President:</i>	Paul Siakaluk
<i>Vice President:</i>	Danie Erasmus
<i>Past President:</i>	Jacqueline Holler
<i>Secretary:</i>	Gabrielle Daoust
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Catherine Whalen

Members at-large:

<i>Faculty rep</i>	Shauna LaTosky
<i>Faculty rep</i>	Emmanuel Chilanga
<i>Faculty rep</i>	Gabrielle Daoust
<i>Librarian rep</i>	Susie Wilson
<i>SLI rep</i>	Maik Gehloff
<i>SI rep</i>	Jason Lacharite
<i>Term rep</i>	Meghan Costello
<i>Regional rep</i>	Amy Klepetar

Ex-officio Members:

<i>Grievance Officer:</i>	Catherine Nolin
<i>Executive Director:</i>	Donna Sindaco



The Faculty Association Offices are
located in
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Please feel free to contact us by email or
phone, or stop by our office.

Donna Sindaco, Executive Director
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***Wendee Copeland, Professional Services
Officer***
wendee.copeland@unbc.ca, 250-960-5313

visit our website: www.unbcfa.ca



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