**OCUFA workshop on effective tools, resources and strategies for equity work in faculty associations** (hosted by the OCUFA Status of Women and Equity Committee)

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This event provided an opportunity for faculty association executive members and faculty association equity officers to join a participatory workshop that explored strategies for engaging in equity work inside of faculty associations. The workshop was facilitated by Toronto labour activist and equity educator Jojo Geromino. Close to 30 members of faculty associations from across the province joined together for the day long event.

The workshop was based on the document “A Leader’s Guide to Strengthen Unions: Moving Beyond Diversity Towards Equity and Inclusion” which is available here: <http://www.labourcouncil.ca/uploads/8/8/6/1/8861416/equity_handbook.pdf>. The morning was spent: setting up the conversation (group expectations, etc.); participating in trust-building activities such as sharing key moments of creative inspiration and successes in equity work; and, reviewing a number of key concepts, including anti-racist frameworks for equity work, micro-aggressions, the myth of the level playing field and so forth. For individuals who had experience with equity work, this portion of the workshop may have felt like a review; however, it was clear that it was very helpful for others in the room who were quite new to equity work. One of the key take away messages from the morning was also the importance of recognizing and celebrating successful moments in equity work. Many of these conversations continued over lunch in a more informal manner.

The afternoon was primarily focused on small group work where participants’ problem-solved two key issues: (1) increasing the inclusiveness of faculty association meetings and (2) addressing equity concerns at large group events like conferences. Key points arising from these conversations included the importance of thinking about:

1. Who is able to attend these events, and who may be prevented from attending meetings and events, for equity-related concerns (e.g., faculty with family responsibilities may be prevented from attending meetings or events that run after regular work hours or on weekends; contract faculty members are often prevented from involvement because of workload issues (teaching many courses at a number of different universities, lack of remuneration for sitting on executive committees, and lack of financial support for travel to meetings and conferences etc. Given these scenarios are there ways we can better set up meetings and conferences for participation e.g., think carefully about timing, location, reimbursement policies, remote participation options);
2. The ways in which location, geography, and travel are all potentially significant barriers for those with disabilities and other related equity concerns such as additional travel for contract faculty members who may work a multiple institutions (consider remote participation options and policies);
3. Questions regarding who determines the agenda and/or conference panels/topics, and how these means some individuals are able to choose what to prioritize and who gets to speak (e.g., is the report from the equity committee the last item on the FA executive agenda? Where is the discussion about contract faculty located? And if these items are near the end of the agenda, what does this mean if time runs out? Are these items rushed through or not talked about at all? How does the theme of a conference get determined? Who decides key note speakers/panelists?);
4. The challenges of working with faculty association executives who aren’t particularly motivated to address equity-related concerns or to bring in equity initiatives into faculty association business (e.g., how do you get executives on board to think about and incorporate equity as a key piece of association work?).

The day ended with a social where participants had the chance to interact and discuss the event in an informal environment with food. Materials were provided at the workshop, but organizers are also currently putting these into a digital format and will be emailing them out to participants in the near future for the use of faculty association equity committees. Overall it was a useful day, although even more focus on practical tools and strategies would be helpful, and holding it on a weekend day would likely increase participation even further.