**Status of Women and Equity Committee Meeting (SWEC), OCUFA**

September 21, 2018, Toronto, ON (Westin Harbour Castle)

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SWEC is a newly formed committee of OCUFA. This is the second year it is meeting. Previously OCUFA had a small Status of Women Committee, but it did not operate as a full standing committee of OCUFA. I was elected as Vice-Chair of SWEC last year, and then Chair of the committee for this year, so I have served in these roles alongside being Laurier’s representative on the committee. Meetings during the last year (2017-2018) were primarily focused on establishing how the committee would run, and a few broad-based, introductory education seminars. As such there weren’t many things to report on, although I did share key resources from the seminars with the WLUFA Diversity and Equity Committee (of which I was a member of last year, but am no longer this year).

The first SWEC meeting of this year had half a day dedicated to a workshop led by colleagues from the University of Waterloo titled “Get uncomfortable, do the work: The role of faculty associations post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission”. The focus was on how to start taking steps within faculty associations themselves in order to contribute to reconciliation efforts with Indigenous communities. Key principles that were emphasized during the workshop included:

- a key role faculty associations can play is to help members of their associations take “baby steps” in doing work related to the TRC by both modelling appropriate practices and behaviours, as well as providing faculty members with resources;

- be cognizant of placing the burden of reconciliation efforts on Indigenous faculty, staff and students (i.e, non-Indigenous faculty need to be taking up the work of reconciliation);

- while taking up this work, non-Indigenous individuals need to make sure that we “stay in our lane” which involves a commitment to listening, reading and learning, as well as centering Indigenous knowledge and voices.

In addition to these principles, a number of practices and strategies were discussed and shared in order to move the work of reconciliation in faculty associations forward. Here are a few key ideas from that discussion:

- provide *meaningful* and context-specific land acknowledgements at the start of meetings and events (note: there was much discussion about the tokenism of land acknowledgements that are just one line; meaningful land acknowledgments go beyond this basic statement to talk in more depth about what it means to acknowledge the land, to recognize ongoing processes of colonization, and the connection of the meeting/event to land and Indigenous communities - I can provide more information and examples can be provided if interested);

- faculty associations can/should volunteer to make a soup once a term for soup lunches at the Indigenous Student Centre, and encourage all faculty members to attend these lunches on a more regular basis to learn and build relationships;

- create a page on the faculty association website that provides a meaningful land acknowledgement and lists resources for faculty members regarding Indigenous initiatives on campus (e.g., how to get in touch with the Indigenous curriculum specialist, information about soup lunches on each campus, links to the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, as well as documents, videos and more that will increase learning opportunities);

- organize a faculty association reading group or discussion group that commitments to reviewing key resources (for example, this MOOC about reconciliation through education: <http://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/reconciliation/)>, comes together to talk about lessons learned, and then writes a review for the faculty association website and/or newsletter;

- work on expanding tenure and promotion language in collective agreements to better represent and account for Indigenous scholarship.

I would be happy to discuss any of the above actions in more detail and/or can provide links to additional resources. Please don’t hesitate to be in touch.

The afternoon involved the business portion of the SWEC meeting. The committee introduced new members and reviewed the guidelines and rules of engagement for meetings. The Chair’s report reviewed what the committee had done last year, and key updates from OCUFA including the following key issues:

- free speech on campus – there was much discussion about the Ford government’s directive regarding free speech policies at universities and a review of OCUFA’s initial statement about this directive; since this meeting OCUFA has released an additional joint statement (<https://ocufa.on.ca/press-releases/ontario-universities-and-colleges-coalitionstatement-on-government-mandated-free-speech-policies/)> and has sent a backgrounder document to faculty associations with key messages related to free speech to assist with FAs with media and other requests that they may receive (also attached to this email);

- student evaluations – soon to be released is the OCUFA report on student questionnaires on courses and teaching, and this was discussed within the context of the Kaplan decision regarding teaching evaluations at Ryerson – it was highlighted these both significantly address equity issues in relation to teaching evaluations and have significant implications for collective agreement language and particularly for contract faculty hiring practices which heavily rely on student evaluations of teaching;

- accessibility and accommodation – there is a newly released OHRC *Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities* that has several specific recommendations for colleges and universities (for more information: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/ohrc-releases-new-policy-and-recommendations-accessible-education)>;

The remainder of the meeting was spent on deciding priorities for the upcoming year. Committee members decided to focus the February meeting on developing FA capacity to respond to what the Ontario government may propose in relation the post-secondary sector (which is still to be announced/clarified), and the May meeting will focus on accessibility and accommodations for faculty members.