

# WLUFA MATTERS

## AMPLIFYING UNITY

### Strengthening Solidarity: Full-Time Faculty Support for Contract Faculty

By Rob Kristofferson

Each round of bargaining brings new challenges, shaped by feedback from the Membership on what worked and what didn't, what got addressed in the past round, and what needs to be addressed in the future. What does not change from one round to the next is the important role that solidarity plays in achieving a new collective agreement. As Contract Faculty prepare for their upcoming negotiations, that solidarity between Full-time Faculty and Contract Faculty has never been more important.

These two groups share many common interests and priorities—job security, fair compensation, appropriate benefits, balanced workloads, and professional development. These are markers that help us maintain reasonable working conditions, which in turn ensure that we can continue to deliver on academic quality.

However, while the two groups often perform the same work, we must recognize that there are fundamental differences in their experiences of that work. The secure terms and conditions of work enjoyed by Full-time Faculty stand in stark contrast to increasing precarity of Contract Faculty work.

Despite these differences, the success of one group is intrinsically linked to the success of the other. [Janice Newson](#), of York University, has urged us to understand the proliferation of Contract Faculty in the academy since the 1970s as part of the unbundling of the professoriate. Our labour has been divided, with Contract Faculty now performing much of the teaching function previously associated with tenured positions and the remaining full-timers facing increased expectations around research outputs, service, and curriculum (re)development.

These work experiences have become more divergent over time, but they still share common roots. Members I talk to from both bargaining units speak passionately about the value of the academic enterprise, of the care they put into preparing their students for successful careers and lives of engaged citizenship.

This shared commitment underscores the need for solidarity. This is especially urgent as Contract Faculty face upcoming negotiations in a climate where the already inadequate and unfair aspects of their work will be put under extra stress by the university funding crisis manufactured by the provincial government. Budget cuts, a move to larger classes, cuts to course sections, and other shifts in academic programming further exacerbate this.

There is growing concern about the viability of academic work as a whole. Many of us face a daily deluge of negative messaging about the value of universities in today's society. I sense this acutely as I engage with Members in the hallways and offices of our university buildings—dispiritment is at an all-time high. I was heartened, then, to learn at a recent meeting of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) that public sentiment about the value of a university education and the regard in which the public holds university faculty seem much more positive than the negative views that come across on TikTok. Universities were still shown to rank among the most trusted of our public institutions. A majority of respondents viewed university faculty as hard-working, dedicated professionals who make positive contributions to society. There is still, then, reason for optimism. There is still reason to stand up for the type of university we believe in. But it is only by pulling together as Contract Faculty and Full-time Faculty that we can hope to achieve this.

I am proud to announce our Contract Faculty Bargaining Team: Anne-Marie Allison, Terry Poirier, Evren Altinkas, Brent Hagerman, Sobia Iqbal, David Meurer, and Mariette Stephenson. I look forward to the announcements we can expect over the coming weeks that will detail ways we can all support our team.



*Rob Kristofferson, Professor, Social & Environmental Justice, History; President, Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association*

Member support is the key to bargaining success.

I want to close by appealing personally to my Full-time colleagues. Please consider the ways you can lend support to this bargaining round. In the weeks and months to come, our Membership Engagement and Communications Officer, Ryan Ladner, will be sending out suggestions of how Full-time Faculty can support their Contract Faculty colleagues in achieving a successful round of negotiations. By standing together, Full-time and Contract Faculty can protect the rights of all Members, bolster our common academic mission, and ensure that the principles of fairness and equity are upheld at Laurier.



*Rob Kristofferson, MPP Teresa Armstrong, and MPP Joel Harden at Queen's Park.*



*Ryan Ladner, Jordyn-Perreault-Laird, Helen Booker, Meris Bray, Rob Kristofferson, MPP Bhutla Karpoche, Marcia Oliver, Jenny Ahn, David Porreca.*

## IN THIS ISSUE

- President's Message
- Terry's Corner
- Grievances 101
- Representative Workers Group
- Each One, Teach Two
- Supporting EDII
- The Power of Collective Action
- What's Our Flight Plan?

## Meet the WLUFA Contract Faculty Negotiating Team

As we prepare for the upcoming round of collective bargaining, WLUFA is proud to introduce our Contract Faculty Negotiating Team. After a thorough selection process, we are excited to announce the team members who will be advocating for you at the bargaining table:

- **Anne-Marie Allison** (Faculty of Science) – Co-Chief Negotiator
- **Terry Poirier** (WLUFA Executive Director) – Co-Chief Negotiator
- **Evren Altinkas** (Faculty of Arts and Balsillie School of International Affairs)
- **Brent Hagerman** (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Music)
- **Sobia Iqbal** (Faculty of Science and Faculty of Human & Social Sciences)
- **David Meurer** (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Liberal Arts)
- **Mariette Stephenson** (Faculty of Music)

This team brings diverse perspectives from across our Association. While it's not possible to have direct representation from every area, your input is crucial. We want to hear from **you** to ensure your needs are addressed during negotiations.

Ryan Ladner, our Membership Engagement and Communications Officer, will be reaching out soon. Whether you want to take action or share ideas, your involvement is essential to our success.

For questions or to get involved, contact Ryan at [rladner@wlu.ca](mailto:rladner@wlu.ca). Together, we'll secure the fair contract you deserve!

## Terry's Corner: Collective Strength in Challenging Times

By Terry Poirier

As the Executive Director of WLUFA, my role allows me to work closely with you—the Membership—bringing your concerns and questions to those in authority at the university and representing your interests through our collective voice.

Understanding the relationships within our collegial system of governance can be complex. This complexity often leads to uncertainty about how best to raise your concerns, or even whether to raise them at all. In non-unionized environments, this uncertainty is often compounded by a lack of transparency, with management controlling the flow of information. Workers often feel isolated, unsure of their standing, and vulnerable to management's focus on individual interests, which often serves to protect the bottom line.

In our unionized structure, however, you have the collective power to challenge this dynamic. Solidarity is a cornerstone of organized labour, and while it may evoke the image of a picket line or collective march, it's much more than that.

Solidarity embodies the idea of togetherness and shared purpose. Whether you're in a different faculty, at another campus, or part of a separate bargaining unit, you and your colleagues are united by more than shared interests in research or teaching. Together, you leverage your collective power to protect workplace standards, academic freedoms, and the quality of education.

One of the most common and subtle ways an employer can erode this collective strength is through individual bargaining. *Continued on page 3...*



*Terry Poirier is a seasoned labour activist dedicated to advancing the rights of all WLUFA Members. As Executive Director of WLUFA, Terry has played a crucial role in negotiations, serving on the FT Bargaining Team in 2023 and the CF Bargaining Team in 2022. He was recently appointed one of the Co-Chief Negotiators for Contract Faculty and Part-Time Librarians.*



Continued from page 2. This occurs when management seeks to offer you a perk or special arrangement in exchange for deviating from the terms of your Collective Agreement.

What may seem like a harmless or advantageous exception can lead to larger issues when viewed from the collective perspective.

Here, the principle of fairness is crucial. When one Member is granted a special exemption, others inevitably take notice. Before long, more requests are made for individual variances, and resentment, envy, and frustration may begin to take root. These sentiments, if left unchecked, can breed disunity among you and your colleagues, weaken solidarity, and undermine your collective bargaining power.

This is the essence of individual bargaining—a management tactic designed to fracture solidarity and dilute your resolve, especially when it comes time to sit at the negotiation table. By focusing on personal gain, you may inadvertently make it harder for us to secure collective improvements to compensation, workloads, and quality of life for all Members. As the sole bargaining agent, it is WLUFA’s responsibility to represent each of you fairly and ensure that you know your rights and how to navigate workplace challenges within the framework of your Collective Agreement.

WLUFA plays an essential role in ensuring transparency and guiding you through employment-related complexities. Whether you’re unsure

if an issue should be brought to your Chair or Dean, or if it requires WLUFA’s involvement, we are here to help you navigate these challenges while ensuring decisions align with your Collective Agreement. By working together and seeking consistent, collective solutions, you strengthen the unity needed to protect your rights and maintain fairness across the entire Membership.

### Labour In Action

Workers across Canada are standing up for their rights, and WLUFA is there beside them every step of the way.

Whether it is a member of our flying pickets with the CAUT Defence Fund or awareness-raising events such as the Contract Faculty Fair Employment Week, WLUFA Members are organizing, taking action, and making their voices heard online, on campus, and out in the community.

Thanks to all of our action-oriented academics, real change is taking place. There is always something to take part in, so don’t hesitate to reach out to WLUFA to see what you can do to make a difference with collective action.

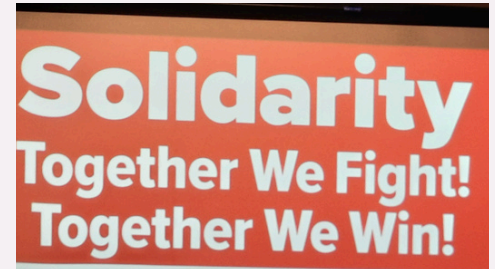


Photo by Ryan Ladner at the Canadian Association of University - Contract Academic Staff Conference

### KEEP IN TOUCH



### EDITORIAL POLICY

The views expressed in WLUFA Matters are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of WLUFA, or the editor, except where such views are clearly indicated. The editor reserves the right to edit and reformat submissions to the newsletter. All contributions to the newsletter have been edited for content and length by the editor with approval from each contributor. It is the policy of WLUFA Matters to encourage discussion and debate that is respectful. We do not publish or print ad hominem attacks on fellow Members, nor any submission that might be deemed libelous or discriminatory. Submissions to the newsletter must include name and contact information. Name(s) may be withheld upon request.

[www.wlufa.ca](http://www.wlufa.ca)



Photos by Cameron McKenzie, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work, in Montreal on the picket line with The Association of McGill Professors of Law (AMPL).



# Grievances 101: Understanding the Grievance Process

By Bruce Gillespie

Given the confidential nature of the grievance process, many Members do not understand what's involved and are sometimes reluctant to request a grievance, even when they should. This article is meant to help demystify the grievance process and encourage Members with concerns to reach out to WLUFA for support.

**What is a grievance?** A grievance is a formal complaint that a bargaining unit Member makes to the Administration with WLUFA's support, whether they are a Contract Faculty Member, Part-time Librarian, Full-time Faculty Member, or Professional Librarian. It happens when a Member feels like their rights as outlined in the Contract or Full-time Faculty Collective Agreements (CAs) (or provincial labour laws, such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act) have been violated or when they disagree with an interpretation of the CA by their manager.

**Who may you grieve?** Members grieve their managers as representatives of the Administration. For faculty, your direct manager is your Dean or Vice-Dean. Because department chairs, program coordinators, and associate deans perform those roles while still Members of the bargaining unit, they are not managers. For Professional and Part-time Librarians, your managers are the Associate University Librarian and the University Librarian. The Vice-President: Academic is the final administrative authority over managers as well as all Members.

Members *may not* grieve other Members. However, if another Member's actions are the source of your concerns and you have reported them to your Dean or the University Librarian with no resolution, you may still request a grievance on the grounds that the Administration has failed to meet its obligations to you as an employee as outlined in the CAs and provincial labour laws.

**Types of Grievances.** There are three types of grievances. An individual grievance relates to a concern raised by a single Member. A group grievance is for concerns raised by and affecting two or more Members. An association grievance concerns a larger issue that WLUFA initiates on its own and may not affect a specific Member.



**When should I file a grievance?** If you think you have a concern that could be a grievance, you should get in touch with WLUFA to talk it over. Executive Director Terry Poirier or Senior Administrative Assistant Linda Watson can advise you on whether your concern sounds like a viable grievance and how to proceed. It's important to do this as quickly as possible because a grievance must be filed within 20 working days of the grievor's knowing, or when they ought to have known, about the issue.

**Requesting a grievance.** Once you've spoken with someone at WLUFA, you may file a request for grievance. You need to make a request because WLUFA has what's known as carriage of all grievances. This means the association takes all responsibility and incurs all costs for pursuing the grievance on your behalf. The request itself is [a form available on the WLUFA website](#), on which you need to provide only a brief summary of your concerns and the resolution, or remedy, you hope to receive.

Requests are made to the [WLUFA Grievance Committee](#), which is made up of Contract and Full-time Faculty who agree to serve as Grievance Officers, as well as the Executive Director (who is the Grievance Coordinator), and the WLUFA President. The committee must approve or deny requests within the aforementioned 20-working-day window. Sometimes the committee turns down requests, usually because they were made outside of the timelines in the CAs or because the issue in question was not a clear violation of the CA or labour laws.

**Filing a grievance.** Once your request has been approved, you will be assigned a grievance officer. They will meet with you to learn about your concerns and investigate your case, which could include reviewing relevant documents and interviewing witnesses. They will then file the grievance formally with the Administration on your behalf—briefly outlining the concern, the articles of the CA and/or laws that have been violated, and an appropriate remedy.

Most grievances are filed at the Step 1 stage, which means they are heard by a Dean or the University Librarian or their designate. Within 10 working days of a grievance being filed, the grievance officer will be scheduled to present the case. While grievors are allowed to attend this meeting, they often choose not to as it can be stressful and uncomfortable, and it is often more effective for the grievance officer to present the facts of the case by themselves. After the Dean or University Librarian hears the case, they do their own investigation, which might include reviewing relevant documents and interviewing witnesses (but not the grievor) to determine if a violation was made.

**Next steps.** If the Dean or University Librarian agrees to settle the grievance at Stage 1, a letter of settlement is written and filed with WLUFA, the remedy is made, and the case is closed.

If the Dean or University Librarian denies the grievance, they write a letter to the grievance officer to explain their rationale. The grievor may then request that the Grievance Committee take their case to Step 2, at which point it is heard by the Vice-President: Academic or their designate, such as the Associate Vice-President: Academic. (In cases where a grievance concerns the actions of a Dean or the University Librarian, it starts directly at Step 2.) Just as in Step 1, both sides do some investigating, and then the grievance officer presents the case to the Vice-President: Academic. At this point, the Administration may settle or deny the grievance. *Continued on page 5...*

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**Arbitration.** If a grievance is denied at Step 2, the grievor may ask the Grievance Committee to take the case to arbitration, which also needs to be approved by the WLUFAs Executive because of the costs involved in retaining a lawyer to take over the case and cover half the costs of arbitration. You have 40 working days after a Step 2 denial to request an arbitration. If adopted by the Executive, it will be sent to the university for scheduling. It can take six months to a year to schedule an arbitration, which involves more investigation, document exchange, and interviews. The hearing can last many days depending on the depth and complexity of the case. This can involve witness testimony and cross-examination by both sides. After hearing the evidence, the arbitrator makes a final and binding publicly available decision, concluding the grievance process.

**Informal Resolution.** At any point in the grievance process, from the very beginning and up until the arbitrator issues a decision, the grievance officer and Administration may engage in informal discussions to reach a settlement that is agreeable to all parties, so while some cases end up taking a long time to resolve, others are concluded in fairly short order.

**For more information about grievances, check out Article 23 of Contract Faculty Collective Agreement or Article 27 of the Full-time Faculty Collective Agreement. If you're thinking about requesting a grievance, please get in touch with WLUFAs Executive Director Terry Poirier or Senior Administrative Assistant Linda Watson.**



*Bruce Gillespie is a grievance officer and WLUFAs Vice-President: Internal this year. He is an associate professor in the User Experience Design Program, at the Brantford campus, and a Laurier Teaching Fellow.*

## **Representative Workers Group: A Proposal for Enhanced WLUFAs Governance**

By Ryan Ladner

In response to a call for a more inclusive and responsive governance structure, the Representative Workers Group (RWG) was established at WLUFAs 2023 Annual General Meeting to explore ways to broaden representation and encourage Member participation.

Currently, WLUFAs governance is carried out by two main bodies: the Executive Committee, composed of 11 Full-time and Contract Faculty Members, and the General Membership. Some Members feel this structure lacks sufficiently broad representation compared to what exists at other universities. Attendance at General Membership Meetings is low, and some RWG members see this as symptomatic of a structure that inadvertently excludes voices, limiting Member engagement and decision-making.

To address these concerns, the RWG proposes adding a third body—an elected **Council**—as an intermediary between the General Membership and the Executive. This tiered governance framework would see decision-making flow in a hierarchical manner: **General Meeting** (all association Members) → **Council** (elected representatives from the various constituencies of the university) → **Executive** (elected Members).

Under the proposal, the Council would interpret the constitution, manage appointments to committees, form committees, and make policy recommendations. It would also create a Bargaining Resource Committee with subcommittees for Contract Faculty, Part-time Librarians, Full-time Faculty, and Professional Librarians, better ensuring each group's representation at the bargaining table.

Jessica Cameron, a Communications Studies and Women & Gender Studies instructor, has been an advocate for increased engagement for many years and was instrumental in establishing the RWG. Reflecting on her experience at York University, where active member debates and monthly meetings energized the union, she saw the need for similar engagement at WLUFAs.



Recalling the energy of General Membership Meetings at York, Cameron described an atmosphere where “there are so many people who want to talk—we would often have 100 to 200 people in a room. There are so many people who wanted to talk that you have to have everybody on a speaker's list, and then sometimes you'll have to have caps.” *Continued on page 6...*



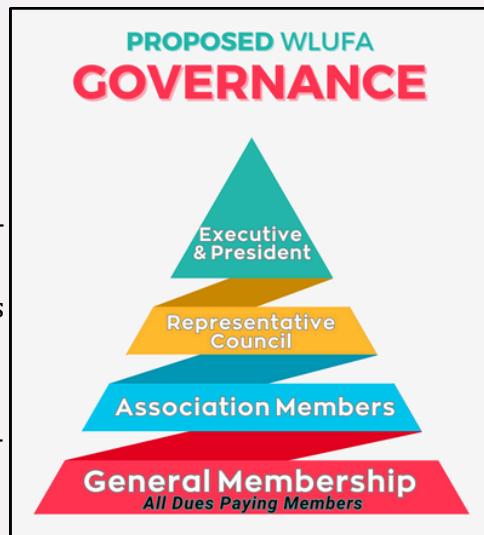
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Deciding on the parameters of a new governance model is not without its challenges. “The biggest challenges have been coming to an agreement and trying to balance different views of governance,” said Cameron. “Some members of the Representative Workers Group are interested in a smaller, governing body, and there’s some of us, myself included, who would love to have regular General Membership Meetings where the General Membership makes the majority of decisions in the union. It’s been difficult to balance those views but also to think about the specificity of our union and what our union is able to facilitate.”

Despite these challenges, the RWG reached a consensus on the Council’s role, which would aim to introduce a more inclusive governance model while still reflecting the structure and needs of WLUFA. The Council would feature representatives from every faculty, the library, and other program areas such as the Wilfrid Laurier International College, alongside equity-deserving groups that could include Indigenous Persons, Racialized Persons, or Persons with Disabilities as determined by the Membership.

With 50 elected Members, representation would be split equally between the Contract Faculty and Part-time Librarians Bargaining Unit and the Full-time Faculty and Professional Librarians Bargaining Unit.

**“I was motivated to join the Representative Workers Group because I saw some shortcomings with the current constitution, primarily that it didn’t facilitate the level of Member participation that I think would be useful.”**



Council meetings would generally be open to all Members as a way to foster transparency and trust within the Association. Confidential matters, however, could be discussed privately upon a two-thirds majority vote by the Council, balancing openness with necessary discretion.

The motion to approve these ideas in principle passed at WLUFA’s last Annual General Meeting, in April 2024, giving the RWG the mandate to develop the Council model further and draft formal constitutional language. The RWG aims to inform and engage Members about their proposals this year, encouraging everyone to consider how this new Council might affect WLUFA’s future.

University faculty and librarians are in a rare position: few workplaces offer employees the means to challenge their employer’s decisions collectively. A union with active, engaged Members can exercise collective strength, improving both working conditions and outcomes in collective agreement negotiations. “Good contracts are contingent upon an organized Membership and your participation,” said Cameron. “This model is going to help us. It’s going to bring us further in that direction. It’s going to facilitate that kind of active, informed Membership that we need.”

For more information, contact Ryan Ladner, [rladner@wlu.ca](mailto:rladner@wlu.ca).

## **Each One, Teach Two: Reflecting on The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation**

By Sobia Iqbal and Ryan Ladner

Just over a month ago, people across Canada marked the fourth National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. Many took part in ceremonies commemorating the Day, while others took the opportunity to learn how they can collaborate with Indigenous communities to foster greater inclusion and minimize the harmful impacts of settler culture.

“The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation mostly impacts Indigenous communities, especially survivors of residential schools and their descendants, who continue to experience the intergenerational traumas caused by colonization,” said Ann Marie Beals (nek’m/they/them), a Two-Spirit Indigenous-Black L’nuwey and Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology.

“It represents a space for reflection and education. It’s about confronting broader systems of colonialism that continue to harm Indigenous Peoples today, such as ongoing child welfare issues, systemic inequalities, police brutality, and mass incarceration.”

For many, it was a day of reflection; for others, it was merely another day on the calendar—in many cases, a paid holiday observed without due regard for its profound significance. Established in 2021 as a response to Call to Action number 80 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the National Day has, by some accounts, overshadowed Orange Shirt Day, which was created in 2013 by Phyllis Jack Webstad to honour residential school survivors. *Continued on page 7...*



*Ann Marie Beals (nek’m/they/them) is a Two-Spirit Afro-Indigenous L’nuwey from Mi’kma’ki territory and a Full-time Faculty Member in Community Psychology.*

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"Coloniality has co-opted what was a very grassroots movement," said Beals. "The Day has, in a way, usurped Orange Shirt Day; this is important to know. Now, public sector employees in certain provinces just have the day off."

Reflecting on their decision to work on September 30th, Beals emphasized the need for educational engagement. "I felt it was important for me to work on September 30th because it was all about what is Truth and Reconciliation and teaching this to students," they explained. "It should be known as a way to confront the reality of the colonial past that affects Indigenous Peoples to this day. But it has morphed into more of a colonial mentality. It's problematic when it becomes an empty gesture, and I think that's what we're seeing now. Instead of being a day of reckoning and action, it's a day off."

"Looking ahead, I believe in the importance of observing the Day in a way that truly honours the history and truths of these lands. It should be a day where settlers engage in learning about the legacies of colonization and the realities that persist today. This must be a day of truth--not just one isolated moment, but a truth spoken 365 days of the year. Truth is the foundation for dismantling the systems that perpetuate harm, and replacing them with structures that support justice, equity, our Earth Mother and all her relations. This is where meaningful change begins--this is the action of (re)conciliation."

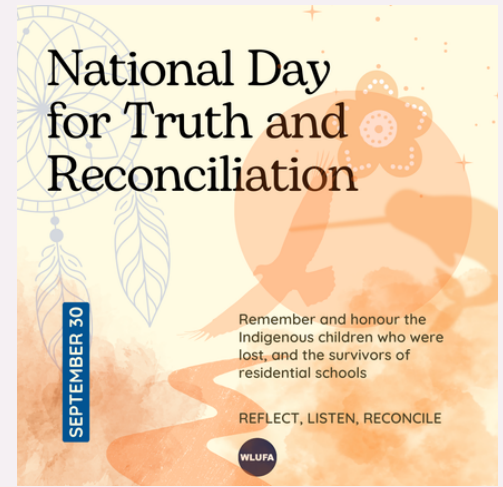
"As we reflect on The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, it is essential to acknowledge its intended purpose: to foster understanding and healing."

Beals' insights serve as a call for everyone to engage with the truth of our collective history and to participate actively in the journey toward genuine understanding.

"Each of us has a role to play in this process. By educating ourselves and sharing knowledge and actioning the TRC Calls to Action, we can contribute to a more inclusive future, ensuring the lessons of the past are not forgotten but instead become catalysts for meaningful change."

*Sobia Iqbal is a Contract Faculty Member in the Departments of Biology, Health Sciences, Community Health, Kinesiology, and Physical Education at Laurier, located on the traditional lands of the Neutral, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples and subject to the Dish With One Spoon treaty. She is also WLUFA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Colleague for the Waterloo Campus*

*Ann Marie Beals (nek'm/they/them) is a Two-Spirit Afro-Indigenous L'nuwey from Mi'kma'ki territory and a Full-time Faculty Member in Community Psychology. Their research project, Proclaiming Our Stories: Indigenous-Black Community Mental Health, focuses on transformative change through community-based research, integrating Critical Race Theory, Decolonization Theory, and Intersectionality. Ann Marie's work emphasizes amplifying the voices of community members within a conscientization model to create meaningful social change from the ground up.*



**While the Full-time EDII Fund may be depleted for this year for Full-time Members, the separate Contract Faculty Fund still has resources available.**

**Seeking Contributors**

The editorial staff of WLUFA Matters are looking for content. We are looking to highlight matters pertaining to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigeneity, committee contributions, research accomplishments and much more. If you would like to share your academic experiences with all your peers, please contact Ryan Ladner at [rladner@wlu.ca](mailto:rladner@wlu.ca) to submit your content or provide feedback about this publication.

## **Supporting Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization (EDII) at the University: A Conversation with Mona Elayyan**

By Sobia Iqbal and Ryan Ladner

In her role as Chair of the EDI Sub-Committee in the Laurier Library, Mona Elayyan is an advocate for a more inclusive and equitable environment. Recently, she sat down to discuss her motivations, the challenges she faces, and her vision for the future of EDI work within the Library.

Elayyan's journey into EDII work was shaped by her own diverse experiences. "I've experienced discrimination firsthand, especially in fields like engineering. This role allows me to advocate for more inclusive practices and support others facing similar challenges."

She wants to make the Library an inclusive space where all voices are valued. She feels strongly about creating genuine initiatives rather than symbolic gestures, such as establishing EDI sub-committees across the university. "Are we doing it really for the sake of improving EDI or just to say, 'This department has an EDI committee'?" Elayyan said she is cautious of efforts that "reinvent the wheel," favouring instead a blend of centralized resources that support individual departments while avoiding redundancy and performative actions. *Continued on page 8...*



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A practical and community-focused leader, Elayyan is working on a number of impactful events and projects through the library's EDI committee.

"I hope I'm making an impact by supporting ideas for events and collaborations," she explained.

"For example, we host brown bag lunches where Librarians and staff can share research or personal stories related to EDI."

These lunches serve as a space for open conversations, fostering a sense of community among attendees.

She also spoke about her collaboration with artist Vicky Talwar, who led a Mandala workshop that connected Library staff with the community. "The workshop offered a creative and reflective space for Members to connect," she said, "grounding us within the broader community."

Elayyan's work is not without its challenges, such as the limitations and frustrations she's encountered in accessing resources. "When I became chair, I wasn't informed of any available resources. It was only through conversation...that I learned about the EDII Fund, which was already depleted for the year. There's a lack of support and transparency around funding," she said.

This lack of resources is particularly limiting when it comes to bringing in external voices who could inspire valuable discussions within the University.

Elayyan mentioned her interest in inviting Dr. Rajdeep Gill, an educator and curator focused on decolonial methodologies, to help advance the Library's EDI goals. Despite her best efforts, the lack of sufficient funding made it difficult to host him. "It's frustrating to see these opportunities slip away because these are precisely the conversations we need to grow as a university community."

Elayyan is dedicated to creating communication channels within the Library that promote continued engagement with EDI goals. She envisions a dedicated EDI newsletter, a space to feature diverse voices, share resources, and keep EDI efforts visible as a priority within the Library. Through this newsletter, Elayyan hopes to encourage her colleagues to engage deeply with EDII principles, helping everyone feel part of a larger mission.



*Mona Elayyan during Contract Faculty - Fair Employment Week*

As she reflects on her EDII journey, Elayyan remains optimistic and resolute. Her vision is clear: she wants the University to recognize and support EDII work as an integral part of its mission, not merely as an afterthought. For Elayyan, this work is about creating a community where everyone feels they belong, where their stories are heard, and where diverse perspectives are embraced. She continues to champion these ideals one step, one conversation, and one initiative at a time, urging her colleagues and the University leadership to do the same.

*Sobia Iqbal is a Contract Faculty Member in the Departments of Biology, Health Sciences, Community Health, Kinesiology, and Physical Education at Laurier. She serves as WLUFA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Colleague for the Waterloo campus. Her dedication to EDII initiatives is evident across her roles, where she actively supports inclusive learning environments and advocates for equity across multiple academic departments.*

*Mona Elayyan is the Digital Projects and Curation Librarian at the University and Chair of the library's EDI Sub-Committee. As a co-chair of WLUFA's Diversity and Equity Committee, she leads digital initiatives that enhance access to diverse resources and supports the library's mission to promote inclusivity and equitable access to information. Elayyan is committed to embedding EDI principles into Library services, fostering a supportive environment that reflects a dedication to diversity and ethical storytelling.*



## **A Testament to the Power of Collective Action: Solidarity Does Indeed Work**

By Evren Altinkas

Like many of you, my Contract Faculty colleagues, I must cobble together teaching contracts from multiple post-secondary institutions to pay the bills. Each workplace experience is unique, and I find myself applying insights from one job to another, including my recent experiences with collective bargaining and union organizing.

As a Sessional Professor at the University of Guelph and a Union Steward with CUPE 3913, I have firsthand experience of the powerful impact of union organization. Last spring, my colleagues and I in CUPE 3913 showcased the transformative potential of collective action through a remarkable success in contract negotiations. Our unified efforts and commitment to Member organization and mobilization resulted in significant gains for Contract Faculty and Sessionals. *Continued on page 9...*



*Evren Altinkas, Political Science*



*Continued from Page 8.* During negotiations, CUPE 3913 members at the University of Guelph secured substantial improvements. The negotiated agreement includes the following noteworthy provisions:

### University of Guelph CUPE 3913 Negotiated Wins at the Bargaining Table

- A 12.45% wage increase for Unit 1 (TAs) and a 13.25% increase for Unit 2 (Sessionals) over the next three years.
- A 60% expansion in health benefits, offering crucial support to Members.
- Enhanced accommodations and extended leave options for Members with disabilities or health conditions.
- Continuing status fees for graduate students beyond the 12th semester of PhD programs.

These gains underscore the dedication and unity of CUPE 3913 Members, highlighting the power of collective action in securing tangible improvements for Contract Faculty.

As we remember this victory, you and I can look forward with optimism and determination. With the pending establishment of the Contract Faculty Negotiating Team, we have a unique opportunity to build on this momentum and drive positive change within our institution. Let us harness the strength of our collective efforts to advocate for fair and just working conditions for all Contract Faculty Members. As we embark on our own bargaining journey, may we draw inspiration from our colleagues' success at Guelph and remain united in our resolve to create a better future for all!

*Evren Altinkas is a Contract Faculty Member in the Department of Political Science. He earned post-graduate degrees from King's College London, in 2000, and from Dokuz Eylul University in 2003. He obtained his doctoral degree from Dokuz Eylul University in 2011 based on his dissertation comparing the development of the concept of intellectuals in Europe and in Ottoman State/Turkey. Since July 2018, Altinkas has been affiliated with the Department of History, University of Guelph. His research areas are the history of the Middle East, Turkish history, intellectual history, and the transformation from Ottoman Empire to Modern Middle East and Turkey. He is a member of the CF Negotiating Team.*

### Congratulations to Jennifer Marshman, Winner of WLUFAs Newsletter Naming Contest!

WLUFA is pleased to announce that Jennifer Marshman from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies in the Faculty of Science has won our newsletter naming contest!

Marshman's winning entry, **WLUFAs Matters**, captures the essence of our community with its clever wordplay and meaningful significance.

WLUFAs Matters was selected from a pool of excellent suggestions, and we look forward to using it as the title of our future editions.

Marshman, your creativity and imagination have truly shone through, and WLUFAs is grateful for your contribution to our newsletter's identity. As promised, you have received a gift card of your choosing, along with the honour of naming our newsletter. We hope you take pride in this recognition, knowing that your creativity will be celebrated with each edition.

WLUFAs also wants to thank our community for your enthusiasm and engagement. Your participation in this

naming contest has been inspiring, and we appreciate each of you for sharing your ideas and making this contest a success.

Thank you all once again for your participation, and stay tuned for the next issue of WLUFAs Matters!

**WLUFAs MATTERS**



*Jennifer Marshman, Geography and Environmental Studies*

### Good Times at WLUFAs Fall Social



## What's Our Flight Plan? Tackling Air Travel in the University's Climate Action

By Ryan Ladner

On October 9, faculty, staff, and students gathered in Waterloo, Brantford, and online for **What's Our Flight Plan? Tackling Air Travel in the University's Climate Action**, a workshop co-sponsored by the Office of Research Services, the Sustainability Office, and the [WLUFAs Climate Action Committee \(CAC\)](#). This hybrid event brought the community together to discuss the ethical and practical dilemmas of academic air travel in a climate-conscious era.

Ryan Ladner followed up with Derek Hall, a professor of Political Science and CAC Chair, after the event. Reflecting on one of the major parts of his presentation at the event Hall noted that "Flying is important or essential for many core university goals, but it's also a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions" said Hall. "Cutting back on flying can impose real costs (missed opportunities) on individual academics and universities, but continuing our current levels of flying undermines institutional and global climate goals and may reduce our credibility as advocates for climate action." Students and faculty are now confronting these complexities head-on, recognizing that solutions will require new ways of thinking about travel. A detailed report on the event's discussions is available on [WLUFAs website](#).

At the event, Hall drew on his own research to argue that it's difficult to pin down the scope of university greenhouse gas emissions from air travel. "Most Canadian universities don't report their air travel emissions, and those that do have made different decisions about which kinds of flights to report and which emissions calculators to use. No Canadian university reports the flights of students getting between campus and home--adding those flights would have a major impact." He recommended that discussions about air travel shouldn't focus too much on precise numbers and should rather ask what kinds of flying could be scaled back without harming the university's mission.

**"Most Canadian universities don't report their air travel emissions, and those that do have made different decisions about which kinds of flights to report and which emissions calculators to use. No Canadian university reports the flights of students getting between campus and home - adding those flights would have a major impact."**

Hall offered some solutions that could promote more responsible travel decisions at the University. He described an initiative of the Balsillie School of International Affairs (BSIA) under which applicants for travel funding must complete a carbon budget.

This initiative encourages applicants to weigh each trip's environmental impact thoughtfully, setting an example for others seeking to balance academic needs with sustainability. "Faculty should be careful to incorporate climate considerations into making that decision," said Hall. "Don't just think about money and time."

In terms of the broader global context of air travel emissions and their impact on climate change, Hall said air travel contributes about 3-4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, a significant share given that "85% of humans have never been on a plane." While a relatively small portion of the global population contributes to these emissions, the air travel sector is projected to grow rapidly, with few short-term options for decarbonization.

"Compared to things like heating and cooling and electricity generation, the decarbonization options for air travel are much more limited," Hall said.

Reflecting on the October event, Hall said the breakout discussions allowed attendees to think through the issues collectively. "We had wide-ranging discussions about different aspects of how all of this works, both in general and from a Laurier perspective," he said. Attendees were encouraged to speak freely, knowing that input would remain anonymous as organizers prepared a report on the event. This open dialogue underscored the importance of gathering diverse perspectives to shape a travel policy that aligns with the University's climate goals while taking into consideration other aspects of our lives that impact our carbon footprints, financial priorities, and the equitable treatment of all members of the academy.

"At a time of serious financial pressure on Ontario universities, expenditures on airfare, hotels, and meals may increasingly compete with other priorities," Hall said. Rising travel costs add another layer to the discussion, raising dual concerns about equity and the sustainability of academic travel itself.

As the University works to meet its sustainability targets without sacrificing the vital collaboration that air travel enables, such events provide essential opportunities for reflection and innovation, encouraging the community to think more critically about sustainable decision-making.

*Derek Hall is a Professor of Political Science at Wilfrid Laurier University, specializing in international political economy and the environmental dimensions of capitalism. His work spans topics such as land, food systems, and sustainability in the Global South. Dr. Hall chairs the WLUFAs Climate Action Committee and the Balsillie School's Global Climate Action Committee*

**Thanks for reading this issue of WLUFAs Matters. Have a great holiday season and stay tuned for our next issue this Spring 2025!**

