



ULFA

Welcome to the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association

Contents

About Us	I
Association Objectives	I
The Collective Agreement	2
Membership	3
The Role of the Association	4
Governance	5
Ombuds Officer	8
Staff	8
Duty of Fair Representation	9
Member Accompaniment	9
Member Advising	10
Grievances	11
Confidentiality	12
Your Benefits	13
Notes	15
Contact Us	17





ABOUT US

The University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA) is a democratic, membership-based organization of academic staff whose overarching goals are to promote the collective interests of its members, to protect and enhance the freedom and quality of teaching, scholarship, debate, thought and research, as well as worksite health and safety within the University community, and to improve the overall quality of academic life at the University of Lethbridge.

ULFA is deemed a trade union by §58.3 of the *Alberta Labour Relations Code* and is recognized as the exclusive bargaining agent for all 600 academic staff at the University of Lethbridge in matters including salaries, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment pursuant to §84 of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*.



ASSOCIATION OBJECTIVES

The principal purposes of the Association are to represent and support the collective interests of the academic staff, to promote and defend independence of thought and freedom of expression in teaching, research, and community service, to ensure due process in matters of dispute between a Member and the Board of Governors with respect to the collective agreements, and to collaborate with provincial and national associations of university teachers in matters of mutual interest.

THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Our collective agreement is a legally binding and enforceable contract between the Association, which represents the academic staff, and the Board of Governors of the University of Lethbridge. The agreement is mutually negotiated as required by the *Code* and sets out all the terms and conditions of employment, including salaries and benefits, processes for tenure, discipline, appeals, and grievances, as well as provisions for leaves (such as sick leave, maternity and parental leaves as well as other leaves as approved). The collective agreement represents all academic staff, including faculty members, Professional Librarians, Instructors, Academic Assistants, and Sessional Lecturers.

Collective bargaining is the foundation of ULFA's work. It involves periodic negotiation of salaries, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment that are legally binding until such time as the agreement expires and the University and the Association form a new agreement. On ULFA's side, the bargaining process typically involves: consultation with members at special meetings, through surveys, and via advisory committees; the development of proposals and research to support those proposals; and a series of meetings with a team representing the Board of Governors to consider proposals from both sides and attempt to reach agreement. Should the parties be unable to reach agreement, the *Code's* default options are lockout/strike, though we maintain language designed to encourage mediation and/or arbitration where possible.

Once a tentative agreement has been signed by the negotiating teams and recommended to the membership via the Executive, it must be ratified by the membership and the Board of Governors in order for it to become the new collective agreement.



MEMBERSHIP

Ultimately, the Association is organized and run by its 600 members from all disciplines and units across two campuses (Lethbridge and Calgary). As the University is an institution that focuses on teaching, learning, and research, our members play a pivotal role in the life and success of the institution. Members include all levels of the professoriate (full, Associate and Assistant Professors), Professional Librarians Grades II/III/IV, Instructors I/II/III, Academic Assistants I/II/III, and Sessional Lecturers and, both collectively and individually, our members contribute to the functioning and betterment of academia.

Job categories that are not part of the Association include visiting and adjunct faculty, clinical faculty, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, graduate students, emeritus faculty, administrative professional officers (APOs), and senior academic administrators.



All full- and part-time academic staff are automatically members of ULFA, the provincial Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA), the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), and the CAUT Defence Fund. Payment of dues is compulsory and although membership in the Association is not a condition of employment, membership is assumed unless specified otherwise. Currently, ULFA dues are paid on a mill rate basis ($\$10.0 \times$ actual salary earned) and are deducted from each member's monthly salary.

THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Association:

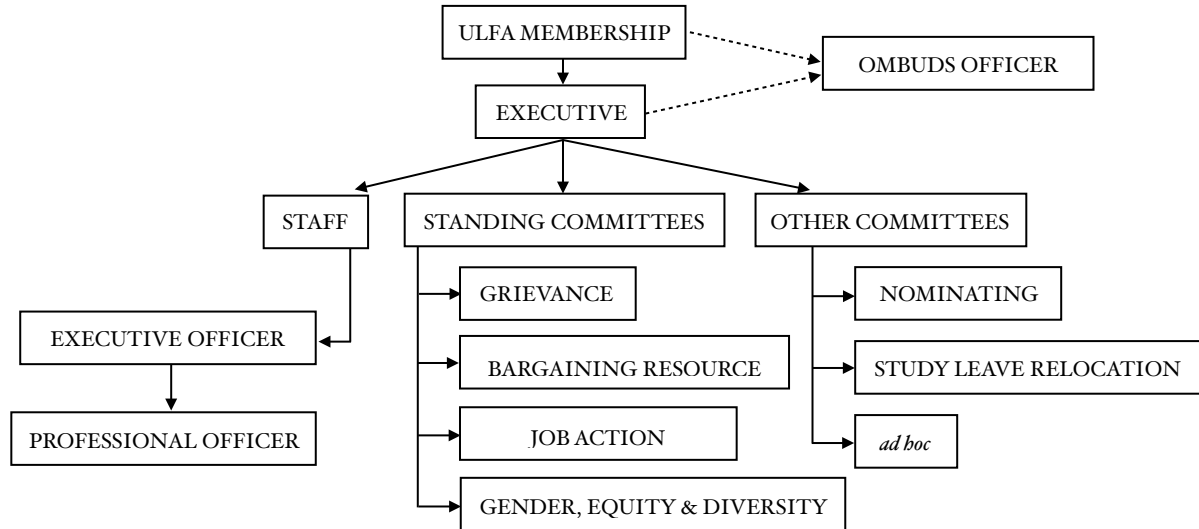
- Represents all academic staff at the University of Lethbridge;
- Negotiates the collective agreements with the Board of Governors;
- Provides information and resources to members;
- Protects the rights and interests of the academic staff through grievances;
- Promotes the interests of the academic staff through collective bargaining; and
- Represents the academic staff in the Councils of the University.

In addition to being the sole bargaining agent for its members, the Association provides various other services designed to support academic staff in all aspects of their careers, from candidacy for academic positions through to retirement. (See YOUR BENEFITS for more information.)

The Association is funded entirely by member dues and it is to its members that the organization is ultimately accountable. We keep in touch with members through our website, newsletters, email, workshops, events and meetings. There is an annual general meeting in April of every year, a fall general meeting in December, and special general meetings as needed throughout the year.



GOVERNANCE



The Association is governed by constitutional bylaws and by the democratically elected representatives of the Executive. Members of the Executive are responsible and accountable to the general membership through the democratic process and adhere to a Code of Conduct. The Executive as a collective acts on behalf of the Association subject to the direction of the general membership. The Executive comprises the President, Past-President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and four members who are elected as chairs of each of the standing committees. The President is the senior official of the Executive and is chiefly responsible for the overall operation of the organization, supervision of the meetings, and for presiding over the general meetings.

Reporting to the Executive are four standing committees that assist with the overall mandate of the Association. Each standing committee comprises representatives from various faculties and includes a diversity of ranks to represent Faculty, Professional Librarians, and Instructors/Academic Assistants.

- **Grievance Committee** deals with complaints, appeals and grievances as set out in the collective agreements;
- **Bargaining Resource Committee** is an investigative, deliberative and advisory body whose proper sphere of action includes all matters relating to collective bargaining of the terms and conditions of employment of the membership.
- **Job Action Committee** is the regulatory committee tasked with fulfilling the logistical duties associated with conducting job action (such as lockout or strike) in compliance with ULFA's Job Action Policy.
- **Gender, Equity and Diversity Committee** examines and documents issues of diversity that affect the academic staff of the University with the intention of developing a profile of diversity, suggesting strategies to redress inequities, making recommendations to the Handbooks negotiating team, and working with the general membership on diversity issues.

In addition to the four standing committees, there exists a Nominating Committee, a Study Leave Relocation Committee, and various *ad hoc* committees. The Association also has membership on a number of GFC Committees and a representative to the Board of Governors.

The Association relies on the volunteer efforts of its members. As a member, anyone can run for elected office, volunteer on a committee, assist with expert research and advice, participate in debates in public fora and general meetings, or provide support in a variety of other ways. If you are interested in helping with the work of the Association, please contact the office.



OMBUDS OFFICER

In the event of a conflict between a statutory Member and any member of the Executive, the Ombuds Officer is tasked with assessing and investigating complaints. The Ombuds Officer is intentionally kept at arms length from the internal goings-on of the Executive in order to preserve impartiality and adheres to the principle of confidentiality.

STAFF

The Association has two continuing, full-time staff members:

Aaron Chubb, *Executive Officer*: reports to the President and is primarily responsible for overall office, carrying out the operation of the Association subject to Executive guidance, and providing advice to members.

Eva Cool, *Professional Officer*: reports to the Executive Officer & President and is primarily responsible for member communications, website maintenance, financial and office administration, and is the first point of contact for the office.

The staff's job is to serve the members. Please contact the office if you need information or assistance regarding any employment-related matter or issue.



DUTY OF FAIR REPRESENTATION

The role of the Association is governed by the duty of fair representation. The duty of fair representation may be defined as the responsibility to represent all members in the bargaining unit and in doing so the Association must act in a manner that is neither arbitrary, discriminatory, nor in bad faith. Representation shall not be capricious nor superficial, and shall be based on a thorough understanding of the situation with respect to grievable matters.

MEMBER ACCOMPANIMENT

The Association is committed to protecting the rights and privileges of its members and, as such, members may request to be accompanied by any ULFA member in good standing to attend meetings with the employer as a witness or advocate in any matter connected to the Handbook. Members are under no obligation to justify the use of accompaniment and there are no restrictions on who this accompanier may be. If attendance is requested of a member of the Executive or standing committees, all reasonable attempts will be made to provide accompaniment.

ULFA accompaniment is recommended for:

- Meetings between an ULFA member and the employer including, but not limited to, meetings with Human Resources, Deans, Directors of Schools, Vice-Presidents, or University disciplinary committees;
- Meetings regarding members' rights under the Faculty Handbook or Sessional Lecturers Handbook or superior legislation, as well as all University disciplinary procedures;
- Negotiations for special consideration, accommodation, or variation of the collective agreement between the member and the employer.



MEMBER ADVISING

In seeking assistance, members are encouraged to contact the Association should there be any concerns about an issue of employment. The Executive members, members of standing committees, and staff are knowledgeable individuals who work with the collective agreement on a regular basis and are well-positioned to provide support and advice. All information will be handled with complete confidentiality and matters are disclosed only as necessary for representation in a complaint resolution process or for seeking legal advice. For more information, or to obtain advice, please contact the ULFA office.

The Association can often resolve issues in an informal manner without resorting to the grievance process; however, if an issue does come to a grievance, the Association will work hard on behalf of the individual and all members to ensure a favourable result. All cases will be handled with complete confidentiality and matters are disclosed only as necessary for representation in a complaint resolution process or for seeking legal advice.

Remember: Members have the right (and are strongly encouraged) to have an ULFA accompaniment to meetings with any supervisor or senior administrator regarding employment matters.



GRIEVANCES

The Association claims grievance when the employer violates any of the rights under the collective agreement, be it accidental or intentional. It is a matter of concern for the Association to address and to resolve issues facing academic staff. If there are concerns of a violation or improper application of the Handbook, members are encouraged to contact the Association office for assistance.

Most grievances are individual member grievances in which only one person is affected; however, the Association also deals with group and policy grievances in which groups of people or the entire membership may be affected. More often than not, issues that arise are handled informally through discussions between the Association and the employer. When we are unable to resolve an issue informally, the Association has the ability to file a grievance.

The grievance process in the collective agreement has three stages:

- Stage 1: Informal resolution
- Stage 2: Submission of formal written grievance
- Stage 3: Arbitration

Each stage is governed by specific timelines and so it is important to inform the Association of an issue in a timely manner. For information on any of the stages, please contact the ULFA office and refer to the Faculty Handbook or Sessional Lecturers Handbook. The Association has its own internal procedures for handling a grievance and ultimately retains carriage rights for pursuing formal grievances. The Grievance Chair and Executive Director can assist during the informal stages of the grievance procedures.

Grievance files are kept in the ULFA office. Though materials will be treated as confidential, information regarding the grievance may be made available to the Executive if it is determined that arbitration is necessary or is requested.



CONFIDENTIALITY

The Association officers and staff will keep information in confidence. In some cases, it may be possible to resolve member issues anonymously. Most times, however, the Association may need to share details with the employer in order to come to a resolution. Neither the Association nor employer will distribute this information further than needed to resolve issues.

Under grievance procedures, not even the grievance committee will know the details of a grievor's name or department until the point at which the Executive recommends pursuing a grievance. The Association may report broad information about member issues, including the issue itself and how it was resolved. The Association will never publish the name or department of any individuals without explicit permission. If a grievance progresses to an arbitration hearing, the arbitrator's decision and the names of those involved will become a matter of public record.



YOUR BENEFITS

In addition to being the sole bargaining agent for its members, the Association provides various other services designed to support academic staff in all aspects of their academic careers, from candidacy for academic positions through to retirement. Complementary to the benefits in the collective agreements, the Association offers a number of great opportunities.

ULFA Academic Scholarship: This scholarship is available to any full-time student who is the spouse or dependent child of a dues-paying statutory member, whether they attend the University of Lethbridge or another recognized university. For more information, contact the Scholarships and Student Finance office for the University of Lethbridge.

Study Leave Relocation Fund: This fund is intended to subsidize academic staff who relocate during study leave. The Study Leave Relocation Committee oversees the distribution and approval of applications for members going on study leave. For more information, contact the ULFA office.

Workshops: The Association offers a variety of workshops on topics related to salary, tenure, and promotion (STP). The STP Workshop for prospective applicants is held each year in the spring and the STP Workshop for chairs and committee members of the adjudicating committees is held in the fall. The Association also keeps members informed with jointly offered workshops with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) on topics including negotiation training, grievance handling, and media relations.



Newsletters: The Association produces a bimonthly newsletter for members that includes updates from the President and chairs of the standing committees and contains relevant information about the goings-on of the Association and upcoming events and deadlines. The newsletter is also published on the website at www.ulfa.ca.

Social Events: The Association hosts social events throughout the year for all academic staff, including the fall social that introduces new members to the broader membership and the socials at the annual and fall general meetings. The Association also financially supports the annual appreciation dinners for the academic staff on the northern campuses.

General Communications: The Association communicates with its members primarily through its listservs and the www.ulfa.ca website. As a dues-paying statutory member, you should automatically receive all communications. For any concerns or questions, contact the ULFA office.



Series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

CONTACT US



University of Lethbridge Faculty Association
Room D620, University Hall
4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, AB T1K 3M4

Phone: 403-329-2578

Fax: 403-329-2113

Website: www.ulfa.ca

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm

officer@ulfa.ca

admin@ulfa.ca



All images reproduced with permission.
© Fairweather 2015