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Report of the Chair of the Equity Committee, 2019–2020

July 2, 2020

The Equity Committee continues to work with the Grievance, Membership, and University and External Affairs Committees on equity projects such as the Association grievance on salary discrimination and negotiations on the University's sexual violence policy. It also focuses on other equity issues.

In the fall, I was involved in the following equity-related activities:

- **Meeting of OCUFA's Status of Women and Equity Committee (SWEC), October 4, 2019**. SWEC has three meetings annually. This meeting concentrated on the SWEC employment equity project, the SWEC performance funding statement, and a workshop on faculty mental health.
- **SWEC Equity Training Workshop, October 5, 2019**. The workshop provided practical tools and strategies to help participants acknowledge and value difference within their association, and understand the interconnected nature of equity struggles.
- **Equity Committee meeting, November 1, 2019**. The committee had a productive discussion on the following issues:
    - Faculty mental health: The need for a survey on this issue and the importance of the survey results for bargaining
    - Sexual violence: How faculty deal with this issue and the significance of preliminary training
    - Disability: How to deal with the diversity of student disability without enough information or knowledge
    - Equity and new-parent faculty: Lack of consideration for new-parent or single-parent faculty who are pre-tenure or pre-promotion

On **January 28, 2020, a workshop on unconscious bias** was held for UTFA Council and staff. With Council approval, I worked with Emma Philips of Goldblatt Partners, who specializes in this topic and has led several workshops on it, to develop this workshop. The event was a success.

During the pandemic, SWEC has been holding weekly Zoom meetings. In these meetings, each faculty association highlights equity implications of the pandemic crisis and its impact on the most vulnerable groups, such as precarious and Indigenous faculty and women. Issues discussed in these meetings

include

- teaching delivery modes for fall 2020 and unilateral decisions by most Ontario university administrations without consultation with faculty associations;
- faculty workload and online teaching;
- privacy and intellectual property concerns in relation to online teaching;
- imitations of online learning and exam proctoring for those without access to strong or stable internet connections, particularly Indigenous students and faculty;
- remote teaching and barriers for faculty and students who are parents or sharing close quarters with family members; and
- SETs and faculty annual activity reports

In the spirit of demonstrations on behalf of the Black community in the United States and Canada, the majority of Ontario post-secondary institutions and their faculty associations released solidarity statements. During the last SWEC virtual meeting, participants discussed the impact of these statements on the fight against endemic racism and inequality. They suggested that all academic institutions should take immediate action against racism and end discrimination against people of colour and Indigenous people in hiring and promotion.

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