

3
2
1
2
2
0
2

u s o f a



MEMBER UPDATE

Chair’s Message	1
Negotiating the Collective Agreement	2
Negotiations 2023	2
Negotiations questionnaires	2
Joint Workload Committee Report	3
Your negotiating team	3
Administering the Collective Agreement	4
Grievances	4
Ongoing challenges in the College of Nursing	4
Indigenous Citizenship and Membership Policy	5
JCMA	5
Your benefits	6
Welcome new USFA Executive members	6
Your 2023/24 Executive Committee	6
Educating Members and Senior Leaders	7
University Council elections	7
Member engagement	7
CWI builds community	7
Building Solidarity Among Members and Canadian Faculty Associations	8
The USFA in solidarity	8
USFA member involvement: engage, learn, share, support	9
Len Findlay Memorial Award	9
Meet the USFA’s new Professional Officer	9

We acknowledge that we live and work on Treaty 6 Territory and the Métis homeland. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

Chair's Message

Being the chair of the USFA Executive is a privilege and an honour, and I was happy to serve in that capacity last year and continue with the role in the current year. As you will see when reading this report, the work of the Association is varied and plentiful. Supporting our members and ensuring that the rights of the collective and the individual are protected is core to the work of our staff and our committees.

Take some time to read the Workload Report; here you will see the perspectives of faculty alongside the perspectives of the Employer. Working in an environment that has seen an increase in students and a reduction in faculty is perceived differently by these two groups. As we begin negotiations, these differing perspectives will be key.

Our negotiations committee has gathered the data necessary to have a clear understanding of what is important to USFA members and have begun the bargaining process with that knowledge. Negotiations are rarely easy, but the current climate of fiscal restraint will add to the complexity. This has been an unprecedented



Geraldine Balzer

year for job action among faculty associations nationwide. Strike action has become common in challenging bargaining times, and USFA has supported our colleagues at other universities. The communication among associations is key to our own preparation for bargaining.

I hope you find the information in this report interesting and helpful in understanding the work of your Faculty Association. We are here to ensure your rights are protected and each member is able to flourish in their role at the University of Saskatchewan.



We heard you!

USFA representatives met with members throughout the year to share information and perspectives. The Member Engagement Committee hosted events for new members, Faculty Association Representatives (FARs) and Department Heads. The USFA Committee on Women's Issues (CWI) hosted gatherings for women in the USFA bargaining unit. The Negotiations Committee held numerous meetings and caucuses, as well as joining Member Engagement sessions to consult with specific groups. As you will read in the following pages, issues that emerged through these conversations included cost of living salary increases; workload; Indigenous recruitment and retention challenges; and salary review processes and compensation.

Negotiating the Collective Agreement

Negotiations 2023

With the term of the Collective Agreement ending June 2023, negotiations have been top of mind for the USFA. Preparations over the year included:

- gathering member feedback about issues of concern
- consulting with Indigenous faculty about potential issues for negotiations
- weekly meetings of the Negotiations Committee, and frequent caucuses
- implementing working groups to explore identified issues
- establishing an Indigenous Recruitment and Retention negotiations team to meet every two weeks

We asked for feedback from the working groups, during meetings with groups of members, and through questionnaires about issues you wanted brought to the negotiations table. What we heard resulted in the following negotiations priorities: recruitment and retention of Indigenous faculty; inclusion, diversity, equity, and access; workload; working conditions of Instructors and Lecturers; and compensation including salary review.

Negotiations began in June and resumed after a summer hiatus. Stay tuned for future updates.

Negotiations Questionnaires

Indigenous Faculty Recruitment and Retention

An important part of our mandate is to develop proposals in support of recruitment and retention of Indigenous faculty. To that end, the first questionnaire distributed to members for this round of negotiations was to Indigenous members.

The highest ranked item was language that would provide the right to have an Indigenous faculty member to advise search committees when Indigenous faculty are interviewed. We followed this up in a second questionnaire to all members,

the majority of whom also strongly supported this principle. Our proposal at the table expanded such that, upon request, anyone conducting Indigenous Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Work (RSAW) may have a person knowledgeable of the incumbent's expertise/contributions assigned to advise the search committee.

We also asked Indigenous faculty if they would prioritize having an Indigenous faculty member on collegial committees upon request. Here again, the questionnaire sent to Indigenous members showed strong support in favour of such a proposal, and the majority of the membership overall was also supportive. Our proposal at the table similarly expanded such that, upon request, anyone conducting Indigenous RSAW may have a person knowledgeable of the member's expertise / contributions assigned to advise collegial committees.

There was strong support for new language to acknowledge and value equivalent Indigenous knowledge in collegial processes. As a result, our proposals at the table include a definition of Indigenous RSAW, teaching, and professional practice derived from and expanding on the definition of Indigenous research used now by CIHR and SSHRC.

Compensation and benefits

Members most strongly supported a salary increase linked to the rise in the consumer price index. In ranking benefits priorities, members identified dental coverage as the highest priority, followed by prescription drug coverage. A strong majority of members also indicated that an increase in the yearly Accountable Professional Expense Fund allotment was a very high priority.

In terms of special increases, members strongly supported the statement that the bases for award of special increase are appropriate.

They indicated a strong preference against a ceiling for special increases over the course of an employee's career and also against a ceiling for the number of special increases an employee can receive over a three- to five-year period. By far the strongest support of USFA members in terms of salary review was the principle that the case of an employee who has marginally missed being awarded a special increase over several years should be prioritized.

Joint Workload Committee Report

As part of the 2020 agreement to extend by a year the 2017-2022 Collective Agreement, the USFA and the Employer participated in the Joint Workload Committee to gather Employer and USFA member perspectives about workloads and to recommend procedures, criteria, and mechanisms to address workload concerns, all of which can be found in the Joint Workload Committee Report on the [USFA website](#).

USFA members included: Pamela Downe, USFA Co-Chair (Anthropology); Elizabeth Quinlan (Sociology); and Dennilyn Parker (Small Animal Clinical Sciences). Employer members included: Suzanne Kresta, Employer Co-Chair (Dean of Engineering); Solina Richter (Dean of Nursing); and Jill Blakley (Vice-Dean of Faculty Relations Arts & Science).

Feedback from a questionnaire emailed by the USFA to members highlighted concerns about workload, specifically, working up to 53 hours per week, including during evenings and weekends; insufficient support and unreasonable expectations for faculty involvement in Concur and Connection Point; and IT services that add to workload stress.

Your negotiating team

Negotiations Committee

Allison Muri, Chief Negotiator (English)
Courtney Charles (Pharmacy and Nutrition)
Doug Chivers (Biology)
Anas El-Aneed (Pharmacy and Nutrition)
Darrell Mousseau (Psychiatry)
Heather Foulds (Kinesiology)
Johanne Brassard (USFA)
Abbie Kappel (USFA)

Indigenous Negotiations Caucus

Winona Wheeler (Indigenous Studies)
Holly Graham (Psychiatry)
Heather Foulds (Kinesiology)
Doug Chivers (Biology)
Courtney Charles (Pharmacy and Nutrition)
Allison Muri (English)
Johanne Brassard (USFA)
Abbie Kappel (USFA)

Other issues identified by members include:

- increase in administrative/clerical tasks
- reduced staffing support for faculty
- student numbers and teaching loads increasing
- assignment of duties and inequity in workload
- clinical workloads
- department head workloads
- rank-specific workload, especially Instructors and Lecturers
- COVID-related workload
- lack of coordination among auxiliary units (such as Access and Equity Services and the Gwenna Moss Centre) that require increasing workloads for faculty

Approximately 40% of full professors, 48% of associate professors, 40% of assistant professors, and 70% of lecturers at the U of S have considered leaving their job because of workload issues (p. 25)

In addition to gathering member feedback, USFA representatives contributed to the report by:

- conducting a literature review and consulting with researchers about workload conditions in other universities
- facilitating two focus groups that identified criteria, procedures, and concerns about faculty workloads
- analyzing 48 assignment of duties documents
- circulating and analyzing a faculty questionnaire

Key findings of the USFA include:

- eight principles that should guide the allocation of U of S faculty workload: equity, transparency, reasonableness, balance, safety, clarity of responsibilities, acceptability, and the shared commitment by faculty and institutional leaders.
- faculty have expressed difficulties due to expectations for increases in research, teaching activities, and service but these perspectives and those of the university's senior administration are not necessarily the same
- workload reform is needed and requires a long-term commitment of dedicated time and resources across all units and levels
- revisions to assignment of duties guidelines are needed that better reflect the full range of faculty work activities and align with career advancement standards

Administering the Collective Agreement

Grievances

The USFA is ready to help when members face challenging workplace issues that include a violation of the Collective Agreement, or when there is a dispute between the Employer and the Association about its application (Article 27). The Association Grievance Committee (AGC) assists faculty members in investigation and disciplinary processes, complaint proceedings, hearings, and appeals. USFA members are encouraged to contact the Association for confidential advice and assistance when issues arise. We work to ensure that proper procedures are followed by the Employer in the investigation of issues of concern.

The AGC meets weekly and in 2023/24 is made up of seven USFA members: Colleen Bell (Political Studies), Senior Grievance Officer; Julia Montgomery (Large Animal Clinical Sciences), Associate Grievance Officer; Cheryl Besse (Nursing); Janeen Loehr (Psychology and Health Studies); Dionne Pohler (Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour); David Smith (Library); and Liz Quinlan (Sociology).

Grievance and arbitration issues

The work of the AGC resulted in the following outcomes for faculty members in 2022/23: adjustments to an inappropriate disciplinary letter, successful defence of academic freedom, vacation entitlements for terminated faculty members, a severance resignation settlement, fair access to an investigation report, and use of APEF funds to support work from home during the pandemic.

There were also grievances against the Employer for issues related to the assignment of duties, failure to comply with collegial processes, restrictions on clinical teaching, limits to the number of without-term Instructors and Lecturers, scope of new positions, reimbursement for travel, and faculty feedback for senior administration appointments and procedures.

At each membership meeting, the AGC reports to the USFA membership on the status of grievances and arbitrations.

Administrative process issues

The Joint Grievance Committee (JGC) (Article 27.3) meets monthly and is made up of AGC members Colleen Bell (Political Studies), Senior Grievance Officer; Julia Montgomery (Large Animal Clinical Sciences), Associate Grievance Officer; and others as needed, as well as Employer representatives who, for 2023/24, include: Dean Martin Phillipson, Employer Chair (Dean of Law); Keith Willoughby (Dean of Edwards School of Business); Gillian Muir (Dean of WCVM). Ana Crespo Martin, Faculty Relations Officer in the Provost's Office and Colin Weimer, Director, Employee and Labour Relations also attend JGC meetings. USFA office staff at the meetings include Professional Officers, Reuben Kellen and Maureen Fryett as well as Member Services Officer, Abbie Kappel.

A significant issue brought forward by the USFA was decisions taken by non-academic senior administrators that resulted in serious barriers to faculty performing their duties. There have been modest improvements for faculty because of AGC advocacy including: the easing of some software installation privileges, more timely and appropriate support for elders and cultural service providers, and the relaxing of an administrative edict on booking travel through Concur/Direct Travel.

However, there continue to be serious challenges to administrative support services. Two issues the USFA continues to work on, both at JGC and JCMA, are:

- the increased burden of self-service administrative support onto faculty that takes away from core responsibilities of teaching, research, and collegial service
- administrative service policy and procedural changes that are made without the input of faculty who use the services

Ongoing challenges in the College of Nursing

Nursing faculty continue to experience challenges since the vote of non-confidence in college leadership in March 2022. However, their increased understanding of roles and responsibilities related to council and university governance processes and

JCMA

Issues arising from USFA members and the management of the Collective Agreement are referred to the Joint Committee for the Management of the Agreement (JCMA) (Article 33). JCMA is made up of USFA and Employer representatives and provides a forum for discussion and exchange of information in the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. Here are highlights from the past year:

- The USFA and the Employer have differing interpretations around the limit of 30 combined appointments for without term Instructors and Lecturers and what is meant by a “new appointment.” The USFA’s perspective is that the limit has been reached while the Employer disagrees. The issue has been referred to the Joint Grievance Committee and an arbitration is pending.
- Concerns regarding the 2022 salary review process in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine were raised, including whether strategic categories for awarding special increases created by the College Review Committee (CRC) aligned with categories in Article 17.2 of the collective agreement and the choice of the CRC to prescribe

what information it will consider for the award of special increases. In addition, the CRC decided that Department Heads would not appear before it to present department salary committee decisions, which the Employer agreed is offside the Collective Agreement (Article 17.5.4) and will be corrected for the 2023 process.

- JCMA must approve payments over \$8,000 for extraordinary duties (Article 18.5.5) but this step was being overlooked. Now, necessary JCMA approval is being sought before members are advised they will receive the payment. JCMA must approve payments for extraordinary duties in excess of \$8,000 to one employee in an academic year. Be sure payment has been approved, if it’s needed, before you agree to take on extra duties.
- Concerns about collegial processes in the College of Nursing have been addressed. However, a promised report from the Provost to faculty in the College of Nursing regarding TABBS “will not be happening.” The Employer states this is because TABBS no longer exists, and the Provost meets annually with every college at faculty councils and would be pleased to be invited for another meeting where questions could be asked.

their involvement in those processes means more of their voices are heard and considered in the college’s decision making.

Positive steps forward are diminished by ongoing and current issues that place a strain on faculty whose concerns include accreditation, increased class sizes, students attending classes in makeshift locations, faculty and instructor positions outpacing tenure appointments, and the lack of transparency and faculty involvement in program decision making. The USFA recommendations to the Dean included her participation in the Joint Grievance Committee and the hiring of an external consultant to assess the issues at the college and provide recommendations. To date neither of these recommendations have been implemented.

Indigenous Citizenship and Membership Policy

USFA Executive Committee representatives and the Provost’s office met last November to discuss the implementation of the new policy requiring all Indigenous faculty who want access to resources and opportunities targeted specifically for Indigenous faculty members to demonstrate proof of Indigenous citizenship or membership. The main challenges identified remained gaining a clear understanding of the process, criteria, and resources available as this verification process unfolds and additional documents and resources become available. One additional concern raised by the USFA is that certain Indigenous peoples do not fit under the implementation of the policy and verification process.

Your Benefits (Article 22)

Make sure to use the \$500 of your Flexible Spending Plan!

\$105,400 of the \$530,800 credits available for faculty in 2022 wasn't used. That's 20% of the plan's funds returned to the Employer instead of benefiting you and your families. The fund can be used for additional health benefits or personal wellness: glasses, prescriptions, fitness classes, vitamins, childcare, fitness equipment, etc. Your statement of balances will show the amount you forfeit if not spent by December 31.

Benefits highlights:

- total benefits paid to members in 2022: \$2,089,923
- basic life insurance: 1 claim of \$500,000; optional life insurance: 2 claims for a total of \$800,000; and AD&D Insurance: 0 claims
- long-term disability: 8 new claims; \$1,717,590 million paid for 23 faculty members
- drugs: \$1,140,231; \$497,827 paid for dependents
- dental: \$1,237,513; \$597,137 paid for dependents
- paramedical practitioners: \$726,266
- vision: \$323,049
- supplies and services: \$84,256

USFA Scholarship (Article 22.18)

There were 118 recipients who received partial tuition reimbursements of \$81.50 per credit unit for 2022-23.

An issue that arises every year is faculty members' dependents submitting applications to the incorrect employee scholarship fund (i.e., ASPA not USFA). All faculty members should remind their dependents when submitting an application that they need to apply to the USFA Employee Scholarship competition.

Welcome new USFA Executive members

Members voted in April to fill six positions on the USFA Executive. Four representatives were re-elected and two new members were welcomed: Sina Adl (Soil Sciences), and Janet Okoko (Educational Administration). We also welcome Matthew Mitchell (Political Studies), elected in our fall by-election. Many thanks to Lénaïc Couëdel (Physics and Engineering Physics) who served as treasurer and was an Executive committee member since 2019, Amin Mousavi (Educational Psychology and Special Education) who joined the executive in 2021, and Scott Walsworth (Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour) who recently left the executive to take on the role of Vice-Provost, Faculty Relations.

Your 2023-24 Executive Committee

Geraldine Balzer (Education), Executive Chair
Sina Adl (Soil Sciences)
Colleen Bell (Political Studies)
Courtney Charles (Pharmacy & Nutrition)
Doug Chivers (Biology)
Susan Fowler-Kerry (Nursing)
Paula MacDowell (Curriculum Studies)
Matthew Mitchell (Political Studies)
Allison Muri (English)
Janet Okoko (Educational Administration)
Helen Vandenberg (Nursing)
Julita Vassileva (Computer Science)
Li Xing (Mathematics and Statistics)

New to the USFA?

You can look forward to meetings and lunches to learn more about how the USFA supports your employment at the University of Saskatchewan. Topics covered in past meetings included:

- information about the USFA
- advice for new members
- tips for tenure and promotion processes
- information about negotiations

Educating Members and Senior Leaders

University Council elections

Members were galvanized by the over representation of Deans and their appointees on University Council caused by the failure of the University Governance Office to follow the Bylaws and Regulations of Council and the University of Saskatchewan Act for council elections. With the support of the USFA, faculty pushed back against incorrect election procedures. The outcome was that for the first time in 20 years the majority of college representatives on University Council are elected in-scope faculty members.

The USFA Executive asked CAUT for their feedback on the election process. After reviewing the summary, the University of Saskatchewan Act, and University Council's bylaws on elections procedure with CAUT's legal staff, Executive Director David Robinson concluded:

- the University violated the Act and the bylaws
- by manipulating the nominations to the University Council, the Governance Office acted contrary to the University's Act
- the Council's bylaws clearly set out an election procedure that saves the Deans for last: it is clear from the Act and the Bylaws that the second college position is not presumptively reserved for the Dean – if they choose to “let their name stand” – rather, the Deans are the last step in the procedure to fill council seats democratically.
- this kind of electioneering at the U of S poses a threat to collegial governance everywhere

Contact USFA next February if you notice continued irregularities during the University Council nomination process.

Member engagement

Department Heads and Faculty Association Representatives (FARs) met throughout the year with the Member Engagement Committee to discuss workload, the salary review process, and bargaining. USFA members appreciated learning more about benefits, tenure, and promotion during meetings with Doug Chivers (Biology); Susan-Fowler-Kerry (Nursing); Li Xing (Mathematics and Statistics); Amin Mousavi (Educational Psychology and Special Education); Geraldine Balzer (Curriculum Studies); and USFA Member Services Officers Abbie Kappel and Johanne Brassard. The Committee is working on establishing new links with The Black Faculty and Staff Caucus (BFSC-USask).

CWI builds community

This year's focus for the Committee on Women's Issues (CWI) was connecting with female academics from across campus to discuss issues of concern and interest. During monthly committee meetings, luncheon presentations, and fall and spring get-togethers, the most common themes identified by participants were workload, Connection Point, Concur, timelines for ethics approval, and women's health.

Presentations included:

- finances and retirement planning
- Dr. Viktoriia Marko who shared her experiences emigrating from Ukraine six years ago and those of women and children trying to leave the war in Ukraine
- registered social worker Marcie Dupuis who facilitated the discussion “Anger: What is it good for?” to explore healthy ways to deal with exhaustion and burnout

CWI members in 2022-23 were Susan Fowler-Kerry, Chair (Nursing); Courtney Charles (Pharmacy & Nutrition); Mirela David (History); Kirsten Fisher (Political Studies); Heather Foulds (Kinesiology); Gabriela Mangano (Geological Sciences); Sithokozile Maposa (Nursing); Veronika Makarova (Philosophy); Veronique Mathieu (Music); Melanie Morrison (Psychology); Haizhen Mou (Public Policy); and Trisha Dowling (Veterinary Biomedical Sciences).



Contact USFA at usfa@usaskfaculty.ca to share your ideas for presentations or workshops

Building Solidarity Among Members and Canadian Faculty Associations

The USFA in solidarity

- **USFA's flying picket.** Gordon Zello (Pharmacy and Nutrition) represented the USFA on the picket lines at several universities where faculty association members chose job action to support efforts at the bargaining table, including Syndicat des professeurs et professeures de l'Université Laval (SPUL), University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Association, and Memorial University Faculty Association.
- **Supporting striking faculty across Canada.** The USFA contributed to the strike funds of Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association, Cape Breton University Faculty Association, CUPE 3912 (representing precarious academic workers

at Dalhousie University), Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Saint Mary's University, and the University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Association. A donation was also made to the Laurentian Fired Faculty Distress Fund Appeal.

- **Support Our Science.** The USFA invited faculty members to join PhD students and postdoctoral researchers in a national protest organized by Support Our Science to protest government-funded salaries that haven't increased since 2003.
- **Workers Day of Mourning April 28.** Liz Quinlan (Sociology) laid a wreath on behalf of the USFA at the Saskatoon and District Labour Council's 2023 ceremony to honour workers killed or suffering injury or illness related to the workplace.



Gordon Zello with striking members of Syndicat des professeurs et professeures de l'Université Laval (SPUL)

USFA member involvement:

engage, learn, share, support

Many thanks to our members who contributed to the work of the USFA and to the success of your colleagues in collegial processes by:

- attending the fall and spring general meetings or workshops and information sessions offered by the USFA
- volunteering for a USFA committee representing a wide range of important issues
- serving as an observer on one of the collegial process committees (President's Review, Promotions Appeal, Tenure Appeals, Sabbatical Leave Appeal, University Review)
- representing your department and serving as a liaison with the Executive Committee as a Faculty Association Representative (FARs) (see a [full list of FARs](#) on the USFA website under "About USFA")
- being an advocate for a colleague who receives a negative appeal decision
- reviewing case files for renewal of probation, tenure, and promotion candidates
- serving on collegial committees in your Department, College, and the University
- volunteering for University Council committees
- being one of 48 members on the Appeal Panel that is used to comprise the Promotion Appeal Committee, the Sabbatical Appeal Committee and the President's Review Committee



Len Findlay

Len Findlay Memorial Award

Len Findlay joined the university faculty in 1974. Known for his significant and award-winning academic and leadership contributions, his academic service in support of human rights, civil rights, and academic freedom included two terms as chair of CAUT Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee. When he passed away in May 2023, an award was endowed in Len's name at CAUT: the Len Findlay Award in Critical Race Theory, Decolonization, and Academic Freedom. The USFA donated \$5,000 to the award and encourages others to contribute to Len's legacy. Donations can be made out to the Harry Crowe Foundation with the Len Findlay Award in the subject line and mailed to the Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2705 Queensview Drive, Ottawa ON, K2H 8K2.



Meet the USFA's new Professional Officer

Join us in welcoming Reuben Kellen! Reuben came to the USFA in July from the University of Victoria Faculty Association where he was a Member Services Officer.

"Between academic freedom, collegial governance, and the highly specialized work that faculty are expected to undertake, labour relations in the post-secondary sector has the sort of features that keep this work constantly fresh and interesting. It's a privilege to be able to play a part in defending your rights and protecting the elements that contribute to the unique and vibrant character of academia." Reuben Kellen



university of saskatchewan
faculty association

Room 20 Education Building
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1

Telephone: 306-966-5609

Fax: 306-966-8807

usfa@usaskfaculty.ca

www.usaskfaculty.ca

Printed December 2023

PrintWest

111 Eighth Avenue

Regina, SK S4R 1E1



75G 01