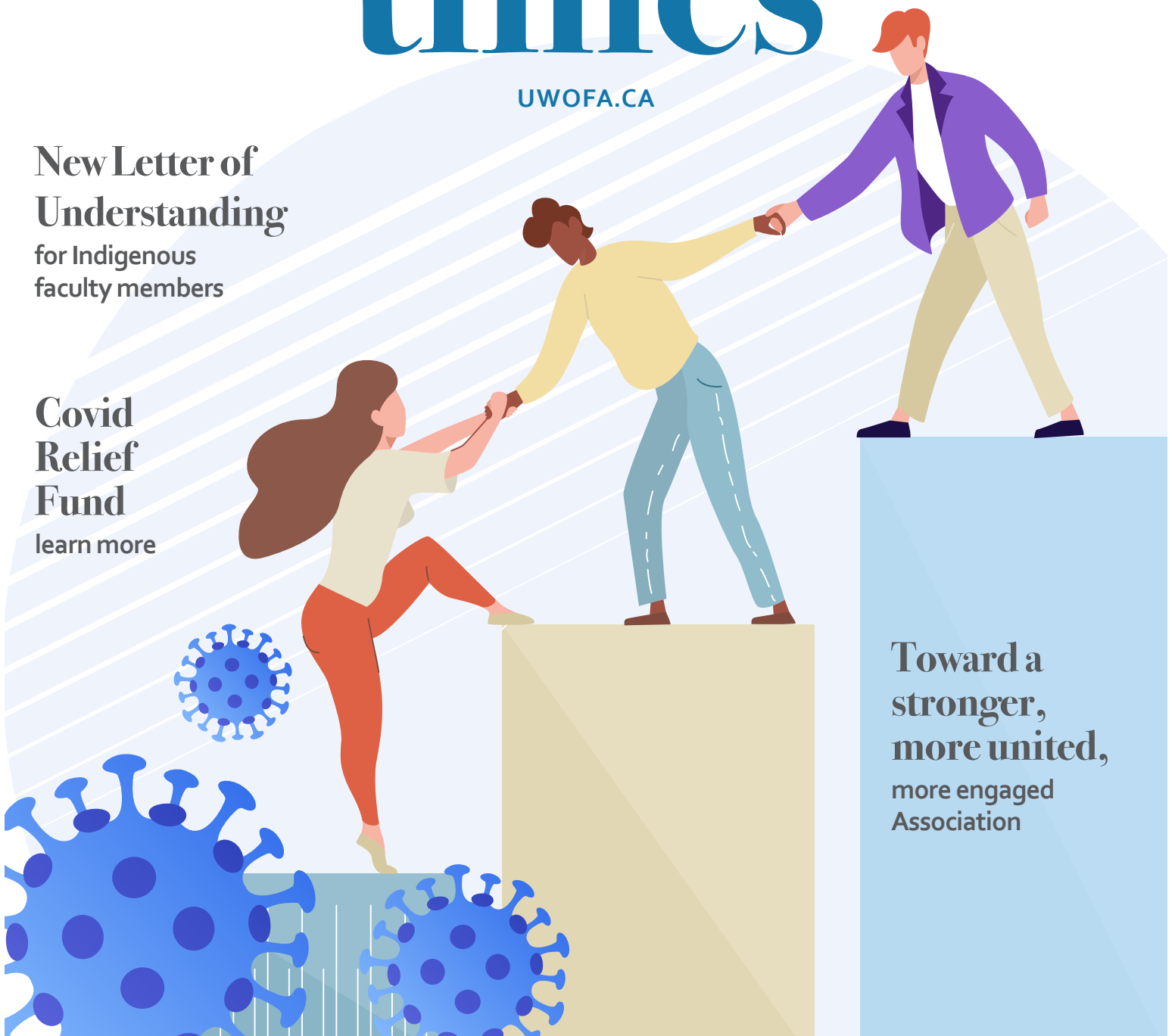


faculty times

UWOFA.CA

**New Letter of
Understanding**
for Indigenous
faculty members

**Covid
Relief
Fund**
learn more



**Toward a
stronger,
more united,
more engaged
Association**

Faculty Times is an official publication of the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association
Phone: 519-661-3016 • uwofa@uwo.ca • www.uwofa.ca

 @uwofa  /uwofa



Contents

President's column

Toward a stronger, more united,
more engaged Association **3**

Interview

New Letter of Understanding
recognizes distinct demands
placed on Indigenous
faculty members **5**

News

New UWOFA relief fund supports
contract academic staff **9**

News

Equity Champion:
Treena Orchard **11**

Announcement

Meeting of Members **12**

News

Pandemic-related Letters
of Understanding **13**

News

Faculty opposition to Navitas **13**

Faculty Times is an official publication of the
University of Western Ontario Faculty Association.
Articles do not necessarily reflect the views
of UWOFA.

JAMES COMPTON, editor
jcompto3@uwo.ca

VANESSA FRANK, editor
vbrown5@uwo.ca

ISSN# 1206-2529

3



5



The University of Western Ontario Faculty Association
1201 Western Road, Elborn College, Room 2120

Phone: 519 661-3016 Fax: 519 661-3946
email: uwofa@uwo.ca • www.uwofa.ca

 @uwofa  /uwofa

President's Column

Toward a stronger, more united, more engaged Association

By Beth MacDougall-Shackleton, UWOFA President

As I write this column, it's been seven months since the World Health Organization announced the Covid-19 pandemic. In the days and weeks following that announcement, campus life at Western and elsewhere changed beyond recognition. In the spirit of solidarity, UWOFA members rallied to help our students salvage their winter term courses. We transitioned rapidly (if not always smoothly) to the new world of remote instruction. We radically revised our expectations of students, in many cases abandoning the final exams we had prepared and quickly developing alternative assessment tools and grading systems. Over the spring and summer we worked from home, many members balancing the responsibility of family care against the ever-expanding workload associated with remote teaching. Research-active faculty shuttered labs, and counselled graduate students as they struggled to come to terms with their projects being disrupted, and in some cases lost entirely. We mourned the loss

of our own plans for summer research and conference travel.

None of us asked for this pandemic: not the administration, not our students, not other employee groups, and certainly not members of UWOFA. Even for those of us fortunate enough not to have lost loved ones to Covid-19, the pandemic has brought suffering and hardship to us all. But times of crisis are times of opportunity.

For the administration, the pandemic created an opportunity to plead austerity when justifying cuts to the University's core academic functions (despite the budgetary surplus of \$148.2M posted in Western's most recent [combined financial statements](#)). An opportunity to pursue partnerships with privately owned multinational companies such as [Navitas](#) that would circumvent Western's first-year admission standards, further commodify international students, and contribute to increased employment precarity. And an opportunity to erode collegial self-governance, as decisions

around the re-opening of campus are made without meaningful input from faculty and other employee groups.

Finally, the administration saw an opportunity to divide our membership. This became clear during negotiations surrounding recognition and compensation for [increased teaching workloads](#). In a recent [UWOFA questionnaire](#) 90% of faculty respondents reported they were shouldering a heavier load because of disruptions caused by the pandemic. Armed with these data,



President's Column



With solidarity, resolve, and open communication between UWOFA leadership and membership, we can emerge from this pandemic as a stronger, more united, and more engaged Association.

UWOFA tabled proposals to compensate faculty members who could demonstrate increased workloads. Tenured, tenure-track, and limited-term members could request future course release, and contract faculty with Limited Duties appointments could request financial compensation. After initially refusing to consider any such requests, arguing that “a course is a course”, the administration agreed to do so ... but only for tenured, tenure-track, and limited-term members. Save for the minority already receiving Tier 1 and 2 support, the administration’s early proposals did not allow contract academic staff holding Limited Duties appointments to request workload consideration.

UWOFA had seen this “divide and conquer” strategy before from Western’s administration. The attempt to deny

appropriate compensation to most contract academic staff – who consist disproportionately of [equity-seeking groups](#) – was jarring in light of the current administration’s stated commitment to equity, but it was not new. UWOFA maintained that all of our members with demonstrably increased teaching workloads should be fairly compensated. In the end, after six months of negotiations, we reached an agreement allowing all faculty, not just those with secure employment or in resource-rich Faculties, to apply for workload recognition and compensation. UWOFA is committed to supporting our members through the process and ensuring transparent and equitable outcomes.

Although the pandemic provides the administration with new opportunities to advance an agenda of austerity and privatization, it also presents

opportunities for UWOFA. As we navigate emergency remote teaching and other challenges, faculty members, librarians, and archivists have come together to share their expertise and coach their colleagues in adapting to our changed working conditions. Many of our members are contributing to efforts to manage the pandemic, for example through engineering vaccines, developing models to predict disease severity, and donating personal protective equipment to front line health care workers. Others are conducting important equity studies, investigating how the pandemic and lockdown affected research productivity differentially along the lines of gender and family status. One thing is for sure: our members are more keenly aware of their working conditions than ever before. With solidarity, resolve, and open communication between UWOFA leadership and membership, we can emerge from this pandemic as a stronger, more united, and more engaged Association. ■

Stronger together



Beth MacDougall-Shackleton is president of UWOFA

Interview

New Letter of Understanding recognizes distinct demands placed on Indigenous faculty members

Interview by Vanessa Frank

In mid-August, UWOFA and the employer signed a new Letter of Understanding (LOU) that will make review processes more equitable for Indigenous faculty members.

The Indigenous Faculty Members LOU recognizes additional and distinct demands placed on the time and workload of Indigenous faculty members through involvement in a number of activities that support Indigenous education, research and scholarship across the university, including guest lectures, prioritizing Indigenous community-based work and engagement, planning and consulting on development of new courses, academic

advising and support for students, as well as ongoing expectation to consult on Indigenous-related committees and initiatives. The LOU recognizes that, for Indigenous scholars, research, scholarship and creative activity may include research carried out based on traditional/Indigenous knowledge, and the practical applications or dissemination of such research generally, or specifically through engagement with Indigenous communities.

Specifically, the LOU modifies the following articles in the Faculty Collective Agreement: Annual Performance Evaluation; Promotion, Tenure and

Continuing Status; and Workload. All processes, procedures and relevant meetings associated with those review processes shall be conducted from a culturally appropriate perspective.

Brent Debassige is Director of Indigenous Education and an associate professor in the Faculty of Education. Debassige worked with members of UWOFA and the employer's Joint Committee to ensure the LOU is culturally appropriate for Indigenous faculty members. Debassige recently spoke with UWOFA about how the changes contained in the LOU will affect Indigenous faculty members' working conditions.



This interview has been condensed and edited for brevity.

The LOU stipulates that maintaining relationships, responsibilities and commitments to Indigenous communities shall count as part of the service requirement of academic responsibilities. How important is it to explicitly recognize that?

BD: Maintaining relationships, responsibilities and commitments in Indigenous communities are indicators of a need to expand the definition of service, which is typically focused on administrative and scholarly service. If we include other types of labour that have relevance to Indigenous communities, along with scholarly service, that academic responsibility becomes an overflowing bucket of different types of labour. The labour associated with Indigenous communities is essential to doing respectful and ethical Indigenous research, and, by its close association, is embedded in the process of Indigenous research; but, in scholarly circles, this labour is not observed with the same significance as it is within Indigenous contexts.

Now, with the LOU, there's enough flexibility for Indigenous scholars to determine where it's most appropriate for the labour that they do to be situated. And oftentimes, what happens with Indigenous labour in the academy – whether it can be classified as teaching or research or scholarship/service – it doesn't fit the definitions available in the Collective Agreement, and the labour ends up pushed to where it doesn't have value in evaluation processes.

This Letter of Understanding greatly assists Indigenous researchers in that it recognizes Indigenous scholars' distinct types of labour as essential to meeting their academic responsibilities. The LOU permits the Indigenous scholar greater autonomy in locating the labour in the places where it ought to be considered – something that actually has value and weight that's tantamount to what it actually is, as opposed to the pre-defined non-Indigenous constructs that simply marginalize Indigenous labour in those categories as defined under the Collective Agreement.

It sounds as though the definition of scholarly service was incomplete for Indigenous scholars before this LOU took shape. Is that a fair characterization?

BD: We grappled with this notion of limited definitions under the CA when the committee was doing its work because, for example, so much of my research work is about building relationships. I consider relationship-building to be labour that is properly listed under the academic responsibility of research. It is a research activity. The academic literature on Indigenous research corroborates my thinking on this point. Within the context of the university setting, we tend to think about fulfillment of research responsibilities as peer-reviewed publications that are based in a particular process for judging value, merit and contribution, and the Collective Agreement defines these understandings. But within Indigenous communities, those interactions of meaningful relationships are intimately interwoven with how we are expected to do our research.

The relationship-building piece is an immersive activity and involves interacting with and in the lives of other Indigenous peoples. It is also an essential aspect of the ways that the co-production of knowledge occurs over an extended period. So these lines between teaching, research and service become blurred, because they are very much centered on making sure that we are staying true to the cultural milieu and ethical responsibilities of those First Nations communities that we work with, but also ensuring that we're fulfilling those aspects of responsibility, that reciprocity and those other pieces of giving-before-taking and trust-building, which is all part of Indigenous research by Indigenous peoples. The Collective Agreement's academic responsibilities do not distinguish as cleanly for me in the work that I do. They are very much overlapping features and, really, I see Indigenous relationship-building and community-based labours less as service and more as research and/or teaching activity.

The LOU provides for an alternative workload that includes a year free of teaching for a tenure-track Indigenous faculty member. What brought that about? Why is that important?

BD: Ultimately, each teaching, research, and service bucket is going to be overflowing. And the reason is mostly linked to shifts and movements that universities have embraced recently. So when we consider Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) calls to action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we can go back further to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, we can identify a series of documents, declarations, policy statements, accords and agreements from a number of post-secondary institutions and affiliated organizations that have implemented some direction for changes ... and Indigenous peoples' contributions are central here where they have asked questions and committed to the labour that has led toward post-secondary institutional change where we consider: What is the commitment to, and what is the level of understanding, to being, for example, a treaty beneficiary or somebody who currently resides or is employed in a place where Indigenous Peoples have been displaced from? What level of understanding and comprehension do non-Indigenous peoples have of their responsibilities in the Indigenous – non-Indigenous relationship? And really, it's not Indigenous peoples' responsibility to educate non-Indigenous people, but sadly Indigenous peoples have primarily received the burden of such concerns because, again, institutions, systems, and the structures that exist within Canada haven't done a great job of preparing Canadians with a thorough understanding of the particular issues and responsibilities that they have in their relationship with Indigenous peoples.

And so, what this means then is that Indigenous scholars are typically overcome with requests. It comes from those that are genuinely interested in learning more or need assistance on a wide range of issues, concerns and crises... and there are so few Indigenous faculty and staff able to be involved in triaging the number of requests. The suite of priority-setting within those requests requires a great deal of emotional, cognitive and hidden labours, as well. There is often an expectation that Indigenous scholars and Indigenous staff have a responsibility to simply just do this labour. And the investments, the human resourcing investments, are one of the primary needs right now for institutions across the country, in order to meet what feels like a tsunami of requests and needs that are internal and



Brent Debassige, Director of Indigenous Education and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education

external to universities. Decisions to exclude Indigenous peoples has great consequences too. Indigenous scholars and staff provide a distinct range of skills, competencies and knowledges that provide clear direction on culturally responsive approaches that mitigates against future crises. 'Nothing about us without us' is a motto that is significant to Indigenous autonomy, but to the discernable scholar it also makes evident the indispensable contribution Indigenous peoples make by labouring and participating in activities associated with the modern university.

What the Indigenous Faculty Members LOU does is to recognize that Indigenous scholars have a substantial amount of additional and distinctive demands placed on them, and the outcomes of these demands can at times contain high stakes. Given the history in this country, Indigenous community members already rightly carry distrust for activities conducted by members of the modern university. Decisions made at senior levels are going to have impacts on Indigenous students, on Indigenous faculty, Indigenous staff and Indigenous communities. Damaged relationships can be irreparable or involve substantial time, effort and resourcing to repair. In turn, Indigenous programs

of research and sites of Indigenous and non-Indigenous engagement can be profoundly impacted where careers and other collaborations are threatened. Ultimately, then, it becomes a question of the Indigenous scholar determining whether there's going to be harm caused as a result of activities if I or another doesn't intervene. Do I ignore what I can predict will result in a problem or a risk of harm? Or do I take responsibility and accept the burden, again, to do this work on behalf of the university? Noteworthy here is that this sort of labour – or what I might call volunteer work – doesn't necessarily fall in the domains of teaching, research or service, but it's certainly something I'm committed to in terms of making Western University a healthier community for all, especially Indigenous students, staff and faculty. This LOU recognizes that that hidden workload is substantial.

The LOU states that, where the appointment is for an Indigenous scholar, at least one member of the Appointments Committee shall be an Indigenous scholar. That number seems low. Why isn't it higher?

BD: We're conscious of trying to walk that tightrope of trying to continue to ensure that the university is advancing, but also trying to balance the level of expectation and the level of additional labour that this is going to require.

In each of the committees and meetings that I've attended when these issues arise, I find myself taking responsibility for the cognitive and emotional labour involved in unpacking peoples' assumptions or assertions about Indigenous peoples and Indigenous initiatives. There are distinct pathways needed to be in place to promote culturally responsive, anti-racist, and decolonizing outcomes, but not everyone understands or feels it is their responsibility. Dealing with the assumptions people might have and helping to demystify these complex issues in the moment it occurs, while also trying to maintain a certain calm about it, is heavy emotional and cognitive labour. At times it's quite difficult because, of course, it gets frustrating when you're constantly having to deal with new people who lack the deeper understanding of these issues in a university the size of Western, and having to re-educate, re-educate, re-educate. I probably shouldn't say this, but some are slower learners than others, especially in terms of the application and the concretization of this learning in terms of how it can produce healthier impacts, a healthier climate for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the university. Indigenous peoples are invested in the project of bettering the university. We wouldn't involve ourselves if we felt that being employed here is unimportant. But we are few. The amount of distinctive Indigenous labours and inequities are intensifying, and the stakes are high. Western's administration and faculty members should be proud of this small but important step in supporting Indigenous faculty members as recognized in the Indigenous Faculty Members LOU. Miigwetch (thank-you).

News



New UWOFA relief fund supports contract academic staff

Contract faculty members of UWOFA holding a limited-duties appointment or a standing appointment are encouraged to apply for the Association's new COVID-19 relief fund.

The new fund, which was unanimously approved by the Board of Directors in September, provides one-time funding of \$100,000 for contract faculty members holding a limited-duties appointment or a standing appointment. Eligible members may apply for an amount up to \$500 in total. The funding shall cover teaching costs related to the purchase of hardware, software, home office equipment or furniture, and incremental increases in Internet costs.

Many contract academic staff only have access to a modest amount of Professional Expense Reimbursement. UWOFA's

hope is that the new COVID relief fund will defray some of the additional costs incurred by contract faculty members during the pandemic.

"With the transition to emergency remote teaching, contract faculty members are shouldering not just heavier workloads, but also substantially increased out-of-pocket expenses related to teaching," said Beth MacDougall-Shackleton, UWOFA president.

"The administration may be content to ignore the untenable situation of many contract academic staff, but UWOFA will not. I am delighted with the Board's decision to support our members who need it the most."

Eligibility and Application Process

Purpose:

The purpose of this funding is to provide support for UWOFA Part-time faculty Members for teaching costs related to the purchase of hardware, software, home office equipment and/or furniture, and incremental increases in Internet costs.

Amount:

UWOFA is providing one-time funding of \$100,000 for Part-time faculty Members. Part-time faculty members may apply for an amount up to \$500 in total from the CRF.

Administration and Adjudication:

The UWOFA Committee for Contract Faculty is responsible for ensuring that the funding is advertised and for appointing a CRF adjudication committee. The CRF adjudication committee shall have five members, three of whom shall be members of the Committee for Contract Faculty, at least one who is a Part-time Member. Part-time Members who are members of the CRF adjudication committee may apply to the CRF but must recuse themselves from deliberations related to their application. The funding shall be advertised on the UWOFA website and to all Part-time Members on UWOFA's contract faculty email list.

Eligibility:

Only UWOFA contract faculty Members (those holding a Limited-Duties Appointment or a Standing Appointment) are eligible to apply for the funding. Each Member can submit only one application per cycle. There are two funding cycles of the CRF. Cycle 1 covers the period between March 14, 2020 and October 31, 2020. Cycle 2 covers the period between November 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021. A Member who receives funding through the CRF is not excluded or encumbered by applications to other teaching-supporting funds from UWOFA.

Application:

Applicants must submit a receipt(s) and a short explanation outlining the incurred expense(s) and indicate the amount of funding sought. All applications must be submitted by email to UWOFA (uwofa@uwo.ca) with the subject title: UWOFA Covid Relief Fund.

Application Due Dates:

For Cycle 1 applications must be submitted by 6:00 p.m. October 31, 2020. For Cycle 2 applications must be submitted by 6:00 p.m. April 30, 2021.

Conditions:

Applicants must have taught at least one half-course during the dates of Cycle 1 funding for Cycle 1 funding. Applicants must have taught at least one half-course during the dates of Cycle 2 funding for Cycle 2 funding.

Selection:

The CRF adjudication committee shall determine the recipients of the funding within one month of the submission deadline and shall so advise the President.

Reporting:

The Committee for Contract Faculty shall provide a brief report to the President on the applications which indicates the number of applications received and summarizes key areas for which relief funding was provided.

Equity Champion:

Treena Orchard



UWOFA's Equity Committee has developed a series of profiles highlighting the perspectives and contributions related to equity among UWOFA members. They are also designed to help facilitate conversations about the 'everyday' nature of equity, and inequity, among our members. The profiles will be featured in Faculty Times and at www.uwofa.ca

What role does equity play in your work and/or everyday life?

Equity plays a key role in every aspect of my life, whether in the classroom, doing fieldwork, or at yoga- we all need to have a place that's safe, cared for, and our own. It structures how I put together my courses, all of which engage with different issues that impact the lives of people who are relegated to society's margins. It is vital for our students, and colleagues who might not delve into these issues very often, to consider how inequity and equity impact the everyday realities of different groups of people. We're all connected, and not

just in a happy social media kind of way, but in a fundamental, messy way that has to do with power, privilege, and the need to speak out and to be heard. Equity streams into all aspects of life, including the yoga studio because it is connected with safe engagement and respecting our respective journeys, mistakes, and desires.

Where did your interest in these issues stem from?

Where everything stems from: childhood! My mom was always very caring and mindful of the needs of certain family members who didn't always get a fair go at life. It was the same with animals- especially cats. Civil rights, the voices of women, and others who had experienced trauma were among the issues she supported and still does. The circles I entered into while spending time with my dad were also very influential and they included women, artists, and Indigenous activists, and feminists from many camps. I also had the opportunity to spend time with kids from diverse socio- racial groups, which was a formative learning experience about how different- and often similar- our lives are.

Is Western a supportive environment for equity work/issues?

I have consistently felt supported in my research and teaching about various equity/inequity issues, however, as a white woman with tenure I speak from a very privileged position. Western hasn't always been as consistently supportive to other faculty, service staff, and administrative members, which isn't a surprise because like any political institution the university is an extension of the stratified society in which it is situated. However, Western has been more responsive to issues of race and diversity thanks in part to the Black Lives Matter movement and the long-overdue acknowledgment that racism exists on our campus. This is reflected in the formation of the President's Anti-Racism Working group and Anti-Racism Taskforces in the Faculty of Health Sciences as well as the Social Sciences.

What are some of the equity-related accomplishments you're most proud of?

I'm proud to help reconfigure the discourse about women in sex work, not only in terms of the health risks and structural violence they experience but also their subjectivities as unique people in the world. Understanding how they see their lives is critical to unraveling stereotypes and harmful stigmas. These insights guide my research, activism, teaching, professional interactions, and discussions with family, friends and all people, really! Tracing the career paths of my former students and seeing them become increasingly political and established in jobs where they use some of the things I taught them is particularly special.

How about disappointments or unforeseen challenges in your equity work?

The reluctance among certain Civic administrators to support my research with women in sex work and acknowledge its relevance to local social and health policies was frustrating. This has since changed, but for many years I was engaged in

emotionally challenging, vital research that was recognized globally and nationally, but not in the city where it matters most. Another thing that's disappointing is when equity work is seen as sexy, trendy or as something perfunctory or mandatory to include in policy or programmatic initiatives. Framing the lives of the marginalized in these ways can reproduce the conditions in which inequities flourish and make the researchers engaged in this work feel like tokens in a game of institutional chess.

Treena Orchard is co-chair of UWOFA's Equity Committee and an associate professor in the School of Health Studies.

Annual Meeting of Members

**Tuesday,
November 24, 2020
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**



By videoconference.
More information to come.

Pandemic-related Letters of Understanding

UWOFA and the employer have signed off on the following Letters of Understanding that address the added burdens placed on members' working conditions and professional lives during the COVID-19 pandemic:

[Implications of Technology](#)

[Annual Performance Evaluation](#)

[Student Questionnaires on Courses and Teaching](#)

Visit the [UWOFA website](#) to read the Letters of Understanding.

Faculty opposition to Navitas

As previously reported, UWOFA opposes a possible partnership the university administration is considering with Navitas Ltd., a for-profit education services provider that will recruit and educate international students. Please read UWOFA's full statement [here](#).

This position has been endorsed by a growing number of faculty councils, which have passed the following motion:

The Faculty of XXX does not support the outsourcing of the crucial work of teaching first-year international undergraduates at Western to a private, for profit international 'pathway' college such as Navitas.

So far, faculties that have endorsed UWOFA's position include:

Arts & Humanities
Education
Social Science
Science
FIMS

