



UWOFA **Faculty** **Representative** **Handbook**

uwofa.ca



THE UWOFA FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES COUNCIL

Thank you for taking on the responsibilities of a representative. You represent either a Faculty or a Unit within a Faculty. In either case, because you represent faculty members, we refer to you as a faculty representative.

Faculty representatives play an important role in helping colleagues obtain information about their rights under the Faculty Collective Agreement. You may be the first person a member will approach to get information about a Collective Agreement issue. You are also responsible for disseminating information about the Collective Agreement from the UWOFA office and can serve as an Academic Colleague.

This handbook will help you navigate your responsibilities as a faculty representative. In it you will find tips to be an effective representative and a list of UWOFA contacts if you need assistance.

About UWOFA

UWOFA represents about 1,500 faculty members and 50 librarians and archivists at the University of Western Ontario. UWOFA negotiates collective agreements, advises members on employment matters, handles workplace disputes and grievances, and advances the professional interests of faculty and academic librarians and archivists.

In the broader community, UWOFA representatives meet with provincial and federal politicians to ensure members' voices are heard and reflected in education and labour policy decisions. UWOFA also strives to engage members and citizens through awareness campaigns, membership meetings, community events, contact with journalists, and town-hall discussions.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION

There is no magic formula for effective union representation. Cultures vary across faculties; what works in Law may not be effective in Arts & Humanities. However, please find below some general suggestions.

Note: There will always be someone here to help you. You are not expected to unilaterally solve colleagues' workplace disputes nor recite the Collective Agreement from memory. Rather, you should be a friendly face who can help your colleagues find the information they need and refer them to UWOFA staff when necessary.

1. Become generally familiar with the Faculty Collective Agreement.

It is available on the UWOFA website: uwofa.ca

2. Build UWOFA visibility in your faculty/department.

a) Inform your colleagues that you are the UWOFA representative for the department/faculty and encourage them to come to you with workplace questions or issues. It may also be helpful to remind your colleagues over the course of the year that you are the UWOFA representative.

b) Request that a UWOFA Report from the faculty representative be added as a standing agenda item at your monthly department meeting or Faculty Council meeting. UWOFA can provide you with content for such a report.

3. Listen carefully and probe to obtain more details.

The faculty representative is an outlet for a member to raise issues. The representative needs to be a sensitive and careful listener and needs to gather details the member might not initially provide.

4. Maintain strict confidentiality and explain to members that UWOFA keeps members' personal information confidential in accordance with its confidentiality policy.

5. Reach out to new UWOFA members in your faculty/department.

Introduce yourself to new faculty members in your Unit and, as with tip No. 2, encourage them to come to you with workplace questions or issues.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES

Faculty representatives shall bring the concerns of the members of their Unit to the attention of UWOFA, including to the Professional Officer, the Member Services Officer or the Chair of the Faculty Representatives Council (whichever seems most appropriate).

Faculty representatives shall represent UWOFA to members of their Unit, explaining issues and aspects of the Collective Agreement.

Faculty representatives shall be available, where appropriate, to accompany a member who wishes the support of an Academic Colleague to any meeting dealing with an employment-related matter.

Faculty representatives shall be a conduit for relevant matters to be raised with the Unit (such as the advent of universal timetabling, faculty collective bargaining, surveys by UWOFA on salary or other issues) and conversely for the Unit to raise matters with UWOFA.

Faculty representatives shall establish a higher profile for UWOFA in their Units (encourage attendance at meetings, provide information about negotiations, share UWOFA communications).

Faculty representatives shall participate actively in the work of the Faculty Representatives Council.

WHO TO CONTACT?

Faculty Representatives Council Chair

Nigmendra Narain

nnarain@uwo.ca

Contact the Representatives Council Chair for any general inquiries or to raise issues for consideration by the Faculty Representatives Council.

Member Services Officer

uwofamso@uwo.ca

Contact the Member Services Officer with inquiries about the Collective Agreement and for assistance answering your colleagues' questions.

Professional Officer

uwofapro@uwo.ca

Contact the Professional Officer with respect to active grievances and to raise issues for consideration in upcoming rounds of faculty collective bargaining.

Communications Officer

uwofaco@uwo.ca

Contact the Communications Officer for content for UWOFA reports that can be given at Faculty Council or department meetings.

UWOFA Office

uwofa@uwo.ca

Contact UWOFA's office for email lists for your faculty/department.

UWOFA contact information can be found on our website at www.uwofa.ca