



2019-2020 APUO Annual Report

Campus initiatives

Workload

Since 2017, the APUO members have ramped up their mobilization efforts around the issue of workload. During the Winter and Fall terms of 2019, the APUO Executive Committee undertook a Listening Tour of academic units on the issue of workload. We collected member testimonies in 27 academic units, across all faculties and in the Library. A detailed report summarizing the key issues relating to the growing workload of APUO members and the context in which these issues arise will be released by the APUO in the Fall semester.

In response to mounting pressure to address some of the issues relating to the growing workload of APUO and Support Staff (SSUO) members, the Central Administration has devoted part of its review of administrative systems to finding solutions to alleviate some of the burden caused by Concur. Their work is still ongoing, and the APUO will discuss its progress in the coming months.

Recommendations to improve APUO members' workload will be proposed in the Report of the Listening Tour on Workload published in the Fall.

Strategic Thinking and Action Forum on Mental Health

On November 6, 2019 the APUO held a Strategic Thinking and Action Forum (STAF) on the issue of mental health. For the occasion, and to launch discussions, representatives of the Syndicat des professeur.e.s de l'UQAM (SPUQ) presented their work on a major survey conducted with their members regarding mental health in the workplace. The same survey might be conducted with APUO members in 2020-2021.

Mental health on campus

For several years, students and university personnel have identified a need for more resources to better respond to issues relating to our community's mental health and overall wellbeing. During the Listening Tour on the issue of workload, members shared that their ever-growing workload had a negative impact on their mental and physical health and wellbeing. Along with the challenges associated with their growing workload, members expressed grave concern for students' welfare, noting a spike in accommodation requests and the number of students who appeared distressed in class.

In the last year, the University of Ottawa lost six students to the mental health crisis. Student and labour unions have been unsatisfied with the Central Administration's response. They have been working together, through the inter-union, to develop a series of initiatives and demands to improve the health and wellbeing of our community members.

Anti-black racism

In June and September 2019, there were incidents of anti-black racism through a carding practice enforced by Campus Protection Services. Following the carding incident that took place on June 11, the Central Administration commissioned an external investigation, which found that student Jamal Koulmiye-Boyce had been carded as a result of racial profiling and that protection services' response was "*neither proportional nor reasonable in the circumstance.*"¹ The report also underscores the need for Protection Service Officers to receive "*nuanced and up-to-date training on issues pertaining to race, including racial discrimination.*"²

The APUO supported the advocacy of its Black Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) Caucus in response to the two carding incidents:

1. **APOLOGY:** Apologize publicly to the student for this incident.
2. **COUNSELLING:** Make available immediate counselling for students and University employees impacted by this incident.
3. **INCIDENT:** Do a thorough investigation – both internal and external, notably inviting an independent, expert entity or persons and, preferably, including representatives of directly affected groups – into the actions of campus security in relation to this incident. Remove the security officers involved in the detention of the student from their positions. Address student concerns regarding the conduct of Ottawa Police Services, who were called by the University.
4. **NEEDS:** Consult with Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC), LGBTQI2S+, regarding their concerns and needs to feel welcome and safe on campus.
5. **TRAINING:** Make anti-oppression training and anti-racism training mandatory for campus security and all University personnel.
6. **REVIEW:** Review all the training provided to campus security. Review the composition, recruitment, and management of the campus security and related services. Review all the policies and practices that are followed by campus security. Review all past complaints made against campus security. Review the process in which complaints against campus security are handled. Review how campus security responds to incidents of hate crimes on campus. As above, these reviews would be both internal and external, notably inviting

¹ CODJOE, Esi, Investigation Report, University of Ottawa, June 12, 2019, Protection Services Incident, Turnpenney Milne LLP, p.33

² *Ibid.*, p.36

an independent, expert entity or persons and, preferably, including representatives of directly affected groups.

7. **POLICY:** Prohibit carding on campus by amending policy 33, which authorizes protection services to request proof of identity from persons on campus.
8. **MANDATE:** Do a community consultation about the role and mandate of campus security.
9. **STATISTICS:** Make public, on an ongoing basis, campus security statistics.
10. **IMPLEMENTATION:** Implement all the recommendations that were made by the 2016/2017 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee Report, particularly the recommendation to collect statistics on the employment and student enrolment of racialized minorities.

As a result of the two carding incidents, President Frémont created an Advisory Committee for an anti-racist and inclusive campus. A member of the APUO BIPOC Caucus sits on this Committee.

APUO Land Acknowledgement Policy

On June 23, the APUO Board of Directors approved first APUO Land Acknowledgement Policy. The Policy, which will be regularly reviewed and updated, recognizes the colonial foundation of Canadian universities, and aims to foster a meaningful reflection on the role that the APUO can play in decolonizing academia.

Student Awards Program

In 1972, the APUO established the Student Awards Program, run and funded by members in collaboration with the University's Financial Aid Program. Every year, the APUO distributes approximately 90 awards of \$1,250 each to students who demonstrate a good academic standing and a financial need. This year, APUO members' contributions amount to \$112,500.

Award for Excellence in Teaching

Each year, the APUO, in partnership with the University, recognizes a professor's outstanding contribution to university teaching by remitting an honorarium.

This year, the Excellence in Teaching Awards Committee chose the first joint recipients since the award's inception in 1975-1976, finding the task of selecting just one (1) recipient impossible. This unique decision speaks directly to the exceptional caliber of the submitted files for Professor Alizera Jalali from the Faculty of Medicine, and Professor Nicola Gazzola from the Faculty of Education, and their outstanding contributions to university teaching.

Excellence in Research Award

Each year, the APUO, in partnership with the University, recognizes two members' outstanding contributions to university research by remitting an honorarium.

This year, the recipients of the award are:

Professor Sanni Yaya of the School of International Development and Global Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences; and

Professor Barbara Vanderhyden of the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine.

COVID-19

APUO Virtual Coffee Hours

Amid the uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the APUO hosted five virtual Coffee Hours. During these one-hour informal meetings, the APUO President and the Administrative Director provided updates on our negotiations with the Central Administration regarding our working conditions during the pandemic. This was followed by a discussion with members, during which they raised several questions and concerns. Nearly one hundred members participated in these Virtual Coffee Hours.

Surveys

To inform our priorities for our negotiations of letters of understanding (LOUs) with the Central Administration to establish a collective operational framework for the exceptional circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the APUO released three members surveys.

- A survey for members on academic or professional leave (74% of members on leave participated).
- A survey to identify the resources needed to prepare and deliver emergency remote teaching, or to plan distance and/or online courses for the Fall 2020 semester (55% of members participate).
- A survey to better understand the challenges APUO members must contend with as they work remotely in the context of confinement (59% of members participated).

These survey results provided the APUO with clear priorities and a strong mandate to negotiate LOUs with the Central Administration as we continue to navigate through the uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Letters of Understanding

The negotiations of LOUs to establish a collective operational framework with the Central Administration for the period of exceptional circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have been akin to our past experiences with collective bargaining. The negotiations of LOUs with the Central Administration have been difficult as a result of their strong reluctance to

compromise. In fact, it took several weeks of pressure to get the Central Administration to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the APUO.

Here is a brief summary of the five LOUs signed by the APUO and the Central Administration.

Student Evaluations of Teaching

On April 2, the APUO and the Central Administration signed their first LOU on the Student Evaluations of Teaching for the Winter 2020 and Spring-Summer 2020 terms. The APUO and the Central Administration have agreed that no A-Reports will be produced for this period. However, the University will produce personal reports that will be provided to APUO members containing the results for each question as well as student comments. The data from these evaluations cannot be used for promotion and tenure decisions, except in cases where members decide to include some of the data from their personal report in their promotion and/or tenure file.

Academic and Professional Leaves

If a project described in a member's application for academic or professional leave could no longer be pursued or had substantially changed as a result of the exceptional circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, a member had the right, within ten working days of the signature of this LOU, to communicate with their Dean or the University Librarian and request that the leave be either rescheduled, a number of credits be reimbursed, or to request any other measure deemed suitable and feasible by both parties. This part of the LOU applied for members who were on leave during the period of January 01, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

If a member scheduled to be on an academic or professional leave from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 became aware that, due to the exceptional circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, they could no longer pursue the project described in their application for academic or professional leave, they had to notify their Dean or the University Librarian by no later than June 1, 2020. Members who deferred their academic or professional leave will be permitted to accumulate additional credited service commensurate to the length of the postponement period beyond the maximum years of credited service allowable in the Collective Agreement.

Labour Relations Processes

For the duration of the exceptional circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the APUO and the Central Administration have agreed to extend the mandatory time limits to file letters of disagreement to 20 working days, and to 30 working days for notices of grievances, regardless of explicit time limits mentioned in letters from a Dean or the Employer to a member. This LOU includes terms for mediations, arbitrations and human rights complaints.

Promotion, Tenure and Continuing Appointment Processes

A procedure to continue reviewing applications for promotion and tenure and continuing appointments in accordance with the Collective Agreement has been agreed upon by the APUO

and the Central Administration for the duration of the exceptional circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. For this period, Direct Peer Review of Teaching have been suspended. As per the LOU:

- “Regular non-tenured Faculty Members with a contract will be granted a one-time extension of a period of 1 year to such Faculty Member’s contract.” Notwithstanding Article 25.1.7.3 of the Collective Agreement, “such Member must apply for tenure no later than the seventh year of continuous employment at a rank of Assistant Professor or higher at the University of Ottawa.”
- “If requested by a Librarian member on a preliminary appointment, as referred to in Article 17.7.3.3 of the Collective Agreement, the length of their preliminary appointment shall be extended by a period of 6 months from the expiry date of the term of the preliminary appointment.”

Use of Professional Expenses Reimbursements (PER) for Retiring Members

Members retiring on or after March 16, 2020 will be allowed a grace period of up to April 29, 2021 to use their remaining PER funds and internal and general research funds as of the date of retirement for allowable expenditures.

Ongoing Negotiations on Two Letters of Understanding

The APUO is still in negotiations with the Central Administration regarding two very important LOUs. The first focuses on the performance assessment of members, and the second seeks to establish a collective operational framework regarding course development and delivery during both the Spring/Summer and the Fall 2020 semesters.

Student Emergency Fund

The APUO is concerned about student retention, accessibility, and accommodations as we move to distance teaching for the Fall semester. Students have few job prospects amid the pandemic, and as announced by Jacques Frémont, the University will not offer any tuition fee reductions.

This is why the APUO has engaged in discussions with our University to develop a campaign that will increase the amount of emergency funding available to students. The APUO has committed **\$50 000** in additional student grant money to support students in financial need.

Provincial update

Update on the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*

In June 2019, the Ford government introduced Bill 124, now the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*, imposing a one percent wage increase to the province's public sector workers for three years. The Act, which in practice represents a wage cut as it prevents salaries from keeping up with annual increases to the cost of living, is being fought in courts by several labour unions and coalitions. The APUO supports the Ontario Confederation of

University Faculty Associations' (OCUFA) Charter challenge launched in partnership with ten other unions, and representing more than 250,000 Ontario workers.

Update on performance funding

In its 2019 budget, the Ford government announced that starting in 2020-2021, institutional funding would be tied to ten performance metrics. For the first year, 25 percent of institutional funding would be tied to performance metrics, increasing gradually for the following four years to reach 60 percent in 2024-2025. The introduction of performance-based funding was negotiated with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and our Central Administration through a Strategic Mandate Agreement. The APUO, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) have raised concerns and opposition to this new institutional funding formula. The introduction of performance-based funding has been postponed for one year as a result of the financial insecurity brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. In its lobbying efforts, OCUFA has been advocating to see the future implementation of performance-based funding replaced by a more sustainable and stable funding model, a call echoed by CAUT, and supported by the APUO.

Coalition and Solidarity Work

Support Staff of the University of Ottawa – Collective Bargaining

The Support Staff of the University of Ottawa (SSUO) has been in Collective Bargaining with the Central Administration since March 1, 2019. As a result of tough negotiations, the SSUO held a strike vote on October 18, which was supported by 84% of members who voted.

A key issue stalling the ratification of a collective agreement has been the Central Administration's attempt to roll-back the health and dental coverage from 100% to 80%. The SSUO is the only union on campus to have successfully maintained a 100% coverage for the health and dental benefits of its members. As our University community confronts a mental health crisis, the Central Administration should be discussing how to better support its personnel by improving our health and dental coverage rather than scaling it back.

On Monday, May 25, the Central Administration filled for a final offer vote with the Minister of Labour, Training, and Skills Development breaking down negotiations between the Central Administration and the SSUO. In the last 20 years, only three universities filled for a final offer vote in Ontario.³

Fairness for Precarious Workers Day of Action

On February 12, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) organized a social media day of action for its Fairness for Precarious Workers campaign. The APUO participated in the day of action to help raise awareness on the growing number of

³ Call for Solidarity with Support Staff : <http://www.apuo.ca/call-for-solidarity-with-support-staff/>

precarious workers employed at institutions across the province. More than half of faculty at Ontario Universities are now working on low-wage contracts. According to a study conducted by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), more than 60 percent of contract faculty across the province are women, making this an issue of equity.

Elementary and Secondary School Teachers on strike

This winter, Ontario's four public school teacher unions were on strike. The Association des enseignantes et enseignants franco-ontariens, the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, and the Ontario Elementary Catholic Teachers Federation were striking to see the reversal of cuts to education, larger class sizes, mandatory online courses, and the one percent wage cap increase. The APUO stood in solidarity with these unions and support their efforts to protect our public education system.

Demonstration to demand a political response to the climate crisis

On September 27, the APUO participated in a global movement demanding that politicians and decision-makers respond to the climate crisis. The APUO supported the efforts led by the Ottawa-Gatineau chapter of *La planète s'invite à l'Université* by promoting the day of action and inviting members to do the same in their classrooms, and by sharing the group's three demands for the post-secondary education sector:

1. *“For our governments to establish an environmental education and climate crisis awareness program in partnership with young citizens;*
2. *for our governments to adopt a climate law that, using degrowth, supports the achievement of the targets recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The IPCC calls for a 50% reduction in global CO2 emissions by 2030, a zero net CO2 emission by 2050, and a nearly 50% reduction in methane emissions by 2050;*
3. *for educational institutions to demonstrate greater transparency regarding their investments, the withdrawal of their investments in fossil fuels, and the maintenance of an institutional carbon footprint to target the largest sources of GHG emissions with the aim to reduce them.”*

The rally was successful in that the number of participants exceeded the space capacity of Parliament Hill and flooded the neighbouring streets. Thousands of students and community members joined the University of Ottawa contingent.

June 7, 2019 Day of Action to Oppose Doug Ford's Cuts

To mark the one-year anniversary of Doug Ford's election, a broad coalition of public sector unions joined forces to organize rallies across the province, to denounce this government's cuts to public services. In Ottawa, the APUO played a key role in coordinating meetings that allowed

this cross-sectorial coalition to grow and promote a series of actions that took place across our city throughout the day. Three actions took place in Ottawa:

- a leaflet campaign at various bus stations across the city early in the morning;
- a lunch rally on Preston Street in front of Government of Ontario Office; and
- a large rally at City Hall at the end of the day.

Hundreds of people participated in the various actions throughout the day.

APUO Human resources

Paralegal

Due to a growing number of mediations and arbitrations, a paralegal position was created in 2019 to support the work of our Legal Counsel. Following the departure of our first paralegal at the end of the summer, Christine Moncrieff was hired in the fall to take over the role. We welcome her to our team.