

Newsletter

Volume 46.3
Editor: Alison Sills

McMaster University Faculty Association - January 2020



President's Report

Delivered at the General Meeting on December 6, 2019

Welcome to the end of 2019. May you find time for rest and relaxation over the upcoming holidays, and start 2020 with renewed enthusiasm and energy.

After a year of uncertainty and change, it appears that 2020 will provide more stability, and a strong base on which to build McMaster's continued efforts towards a "Brighter World". Or perhaps we will develop a new catch-phrase, but whatever the words, I know we'll do good things and continue making a university that is such an excellent place to work and study.

To start this move towards stability, we will know who our new President will be after the Senate and Board meetings next week. Getting this person in place will remove the need for quite so many 'acting' positions, including the VPR, and will allow us to formally launch the long-anticipated Brighter World Research Initiative. Fundraising for the university is increasingly important in the current provincial climate.

Also more stability is coming in the sense that our new Chancellor has been installed (with beautiful Convocation robes), the new Chair of the Board has led two meetings and even addressed Senate, and our University Secretary is settling into her role. Of those three, the Secretary is probably the most important to MUFA, since we are co-owners of many policies, and very interested parties in others. I am happy to report that Andrea Thyret-Kidd has been very responsive to our comments & concerns, and I look forward to working with her over the rest of my term as MUFA president.

Speaking of policies, let me go down the list of what MUFA is paying attention to this term. Apologies in advance – it's long.

SPS A9, the policy governing the number (now proportion) of teaching-intensive faculty, has been finished and should go through Senate & Board next week. Many thanks to

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SAVE THE DATES!

SMA3 Town Hall

February 10, 2020

9:00 a.m.

MUSC 319

MUFA Annual General Meeting

May 5, 2020

3:00 p.m.

Great Hall,
University Club

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Laura Parker for shepherding this along.

SPS A1, the policy that describes how faculty are hired, has been undergoing major restructuring for about 3 years. The main goal is to improve practices that will support equity, diversity & inclusion. The latest draft is quite good, but requires substantial changes from past practice in some areas. MUFA believes that these are all being made for the right reasons, but also understands that the chairs and deans need to be on board in order for those changes to be effective. We understand that the policy should be finalized and brought through the governance process in the spring.

SPS B1, the policy that describes how teaching is evaluated, is being changed in response to the Ryerson ruling that student questionnaires about teaching effectiveness should not be used for tenure/permanence, promotion, or salary determinations. Our Past President, Michel Grignon, convened an ad-hoc committee last year to come up with ideas on useful and appropriate replacements for these questionnaires, and that report will be made public in the new year. In the mean time, MUFA and the administration, through Joint Committee, are investigating whether minor changes can be made to the policy before we implement some of the major changes suggested by the committee.

The Faculty General Grievance Procedure was identified as out of date after the DSB “troubles”, and drafting committee was struck, led by Rafi Kleiman. After a lot of consultation and investigation of best practices, they wrote a revised procedure in spring 2018. After some delay in the Secretariat, some feedback to those revisions was sent to the drafting committee this past November. The committee will be reconstituted, the feedback considered, and we are ambitiously hoping to have an improved set of procedures this academic year.

And it’s not really a policy, but I am happy to report that the language surrounding the external tuition bursary that we negotiated last spring will go to the Board for approval next week. For those of you with dependents attending university or college outside McMaster, save your receipts and watch for instructions .

So that was a lot, but the take-home message still follows from the theme of stability – most of these policies have been in the works for a while, and it feels like we are finally finishing up with most of them.

Looking outwards from the university, it also feels like the provincial government is moving toward some stability as well. Or at least in comparison with the first year or so of the Ford mandate!

First, a topic that only peripherally touches faculty, which is the Student Choice Initiative. Last month, a court ruled that the government did not have the right to dictate which student fees were non-essential. This is good news for the MSU and other student unions. The ruling also included strong language about the autonomy of universities from the government.

At the other end of the age spectrum, we now know that the Ministry of Colleges & Universities is not intending to take salary away from faculty members who are working full time and also collecting their pension. The folly of enacting provincial legislation to punish people who are following federal legislation (to take their pension at age 71) finally got through to the right people!

Third, the bill that limits total compensation to 1% per year for three years has now passed, 5 months after it was tabled in June. However, it appears that MUFA may have been extremely lucky to have signed a 3-year agreement that expires in 2022. The legislation seems to say that only agreements that are signed between June 2019 and December 2021 are limited.

Finally, SMA3. This third Strategic Mandate Agreement between the province and each university is very different from the previous two. Under this government, up to 60% of our funding will eventually be tied to our performance on 10 metrics. Now, let me be very clear. Performance metrics can be a good idea, if they measure something that is important to the institution, if the data used for the measurement is valid, and if there is funding assigned to improve the situation. It may not come as a surprise that the SMA3 system seems to have been designed

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in order to explicitly remove any warm feelings we might have held for performance metrics. The 10 categories aren't too bad, although they're limited to the two topics of interest to this government: Skills & Job Outcomes, and Economic and Community Impact. The choice of data ranges from credible to downright ridiculous. And the system has exactly no financial upside – universities can lose money, but they can only gain more if other universities lose. If a university does not perform well on a metric, a good system would provide more money to be spent to improve that area; here we just lose a piece of our government funding. And we will lose it in the current fiscal year, meaning there is no ability to plan ahead or adjust to changing realities. Be ready for even more conservative budgeting than we have seen at the university.

David Farrar, in his President's report to the Board of Governors, says "It is important to recognize that although the SMA discussions and agreement play a crucial role in terms of our funding model and relationship with government, the SMA document does not establish or vary the University's mission and vision, nor does it constitute our strategic plan."

Nor indeed will these changes result in big changes to our operating grant. It came as a surprise to me that the provincial grant only covers about 1/3 of the income of the university. About 1/3 is tuition, and 1/3 is other things like research grants, endowment income, etc. And the punishment for missing a target is a small fraction of the total grant, so in reality we are spending a huge amount of work and time for something which in the end, is likely to be at worst a few percent cut to our budget.

So, stability. Irritation, perhaps, but more is known than not known at this point. And even with a year of uncertainty, McMaster continues to thrive. Faculty are actually being hired. Research happens, and it has obvious impact in our communities. Students continue to impress us with the amazing things they come up with (ok, maybe in both good ways and not-so-good ways). I have a lot of confidence in the creativity and ingenuity of you, McMaster's faculty members, and faith that your passion for the university will continue to make McMaster the fabulous place that it is.

If anything I've talked about today interests you, I will just end with a gentle reminder that MUFA is a volunteer organization. The executive, who have led many of the initiatives that I've talked about today, has representation from every Faculty. We meet every two weeks to gather broad input from across the campus, which is brought to the administration through Joint Committee, and my individual meetings with the President & Provost. If you have any concerns or questions, or if you are interested in helping out next year, please don't hesitate to contact us at mufa@mcmaster.ca or mufapres@mcmaster.ca.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy, and stable 2020.

Alison Sills
MUFA President

UPDATE: Since this report was delivered, we now know that David Farrar will be our new President, SPS A9 was indeed passed at Senate & Board, and MUFA will be hosting a Town Hall about SMA3 for interested faculty members on Monday February 10th at 9:00am in MUSC 319.

Elections to the Senate and Board of Governors

The election process is underway and MUFA would like to encourage faculty members to get involved in either Senate or Board of Governors. This type of service is key to maintaining robust collegial governance at McMaster. Your voice matters!

Senate: Two Stage Process:

A call for nominations from the Faculty's nominating body is followed by a general call for additional nominations. If you are interested in participating on Senate, please be sure to let your Chair or Director know.

Board of Governors: One Step Process:

A general call is issued to all faculty.

Pension Portal for Members of the Salaried Pension Plan 2000

“When can I retire?” and “What will my pension be when I retire?” These are two questions that are frequently asked by members of the Pension Plan.

The new Pension Portal can provide you with the answers and is now available to active members of the Salaried Pension Plan 2000.

The Pension Portal is a component of PenProPlus which is the pension administration system used at McMaster. McMaster adopted PenProPlus to better serve the pension and retirement needs of our employee population. The Pension Portal is a secure online tool that has been created to facilitate self-service offerings for active members of the McMaster Salaried Pension Plan, including access to their pension information.

As an active member of the Salaried Pension Plan, you can:

- Access the Pension Portal through Mosaic to try out the Retirement Modelling feature and run your own pension estimates based on variable information including:
 - a retirement eligible date or age of your choosing
 - projected increases to your annual earnings
 - changes to your work percentage (e.g., change full time hours of 100% to part time of 50%)
 - changes to your marital status
- See your past annual pension statements for 2015 to 2018 (2019 statements will be added in January); and
- Review FAQs related to McMaster’s Salaried Pension Plan.

A number of Salaried Pension Plan members from various employee groups were invited to participate in the final testing and pilot launch of the Pension Portal in October 2019. Feedback about the Pension Portal was very positive:

You can access the Pension Portal from within the Employee Self Service page in Mosaic. When you click on

the Pension Portal tile, you will be prompted to input your McMaster user ID and password for access to the site. The [Pension Portal User Guide](#) provides the information and instructions you will need to access and use the Pension Portal. Note that you will need your McMaster user ID and password to access the instructions.

It is important to understand that the Retirement Modelling Tool in the Pension Portal provides you with **estimates of your future pension**. It uses a number of assumptions in the calculations, some of which you determine such as future salary increases and FTE. Based on the assumptions you input, your actual benefits payable may be higher or lower.

Your actual benefits payable from the Plan are always calculated in accordance with the terms of the Plan text, and all applicable laws in effect at the time you retire, leave the University or otherwise when a determination of your pension entitlement is required or upon marriage breakdown. The actual benefits payable from the Plan will be calculated based on information, inclusive of Pensionable Service accruals, held in University records.

The Pension Portal is a big step forward in fulfilling the commitment to improve self-service offerings and provide better access of information to members of the Salaried Pension Plan.

Employees who participate in the University’s Group RRSP can review their investments and account balances at any time by accessing the [Desjardins site](#).

If you are thinking about retirement there are many resources available to help in your [planning for retirement](#).

Should you wish to speak with someone regarding your personal retirement options or you need someone to help you with your unique situation, Human Resources Services is here to support your needs. You can contact the HR Service Desk by calling ext. 222-HR (47) or email hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca

2020-2021 MUFA Executive

If you are interested in serving on the Faculty Association Executive or know of someone who would make an excellent candidate, please complete the form below and mail to the Nominating Committee, Faculty Association, Hamilton Hall 103A. If you prefer, give us a call (ext. 24682/20297) or drop us an e-mail note (mufa@mcmaster.ca).

Deadline: February 12, 2020

CANDIDATE _____

FACULTY _____

RANK _____

PORTFOLIO PREFERENCE _____

(E.G., academic affairs, budget advisory committee, human rights & equity, membership, OCUFA, pension, public relations, remuneration, special enquiries & grievances, tenure/permanence)

DEPARTMENT _____ CAMPUS ADDRESS _____

EXTENSION _____ E-MAIL _____



A voluntary organization such as MUFA can succeed in serving the interests of its membership only to the extent that the members participate in formulating and executing policy. At any given time, approximately two dozen individuals carry the burden for all of the members and after a few years most of them are exhausted by the tasks which they have voluntarily borne. Their valuable experience and wisdom is then lost to us. The best way to lessen this attrition of talent is for more of the membership to give some time and effort to the Association. If you are not interested in putting your name forward for the Executive Committee, please use the form below to let us know if you would like to participate in MUFA's efforts by serving on one of the following committees.

Yes, I am interested in working more closely with the Faculty Association. My interests are:

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| MUFA Council | <input type="checkbox"/> | Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> | Special Enquires & Grievances | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic Affairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pension | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tenure/Permanence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Budget Advisory Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ad Hoc Committees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Human Rights & Equity | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remunerations | <input type="checkbox"/> | Special Assignment | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Are there other areas where the Faculty Association might be useful to its members? _____

NAME _____ EXTENSION _____

DEPARTMENT _____ E-MAIL _____

Return form to McMaster University Faculty Association, HH 103A



EDUCATOR ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The MacPherson Institute is pleased to present the winter and spring 2020 *Educator Enhancement Program* seminars. The program is structured as a series of 3-part seminars, each of which have common components of (i) sharing resources and content, (ii) allowing for practical application and feedback, and (iii) reflection and synthesis.

For more information, including full seminar descriptions and dates, or to register please visit: <http://mieep.eventbrite.ca>

SEMINARS

Classroom Assessment Strategies

Learn to measure students' learning in real time.

Dates: Jan 20, Feb 3, Mar 2, each day at 1:30 pm

Get HIP with Experiential Learning! Critical Reflection as Assessment in High Impact Practice (HIP)

Join this seminar to gain a deeper understanding of experiential learning and how to assess students' higher-order learning through critical reflection.

Dates: Jan 29, Feb 1, Mar 11, each day at 11:30am

Use Design Thinking to Spark Your Creative Confidence in the Classroom

Educators! Build your creative confidence in reimagining an experiential lesson with design thinking.

Dates: Jan 30, Feb 13, Apr 9, each day 1:30 pm

Teaching and Assessment in Large Classes

Build your toolbox with techniques practical for large group assessment and engagement.

Dates: Feb 7, Feb 14 & Mar 20, each day at 9:30 am

Accessibility in Teaching & Learning

Apply principles of universal design to create accessible learning opportunities.

Dates: Mar 4, 9:30 am (one session only)

Teaching Portfolios at McMaster

Design a McMaster compliant teaching portfolio while exploring the values and beliefs that underpin a teaching philosophy and portfolio.

Dates: Mar 13, Apr 17, May 1, each day at 9:30

Teaching Contentious Topics

Discuss strategies for teaching topics that may elicit varying responses from students.

Dates: Mar 23, Apr 20, Apr 27, each day at 9:30

Video Made Easy

Explore simple tools and techniques to create engaging videos. No experience necessary!

Dates: Apr 29, May 27, Jun 10, each day at 1:30

Increasing Student Participation Online

Engage students through quality online discussions, effective social media use, and digitized content.

Dates: Jun 3, plus two more participant agreed upon dates, each day at 9:30

Introduction to Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL)

Learn about different conceptions, frameworks, and methodologies that inform SoTL in higher education.

Dates: Jun 8, Jun 29 & Jul 20, each day at 10:30

Course Refinement

MacPherson staff collects mid-semester feedback from your students on their experience in your course.

Date: As requested. Complete the [MacPherson Support Request Form](#) by Jan 17 and select the "Feedback on Teaching" option.

Peer Observation of Teaching

Partner with two other faculty members from across campus to gain new insight into

Date: As requested. Please contact Jennifer Faubert (fauberjl@mcmaster.ca)

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ADVANCED PRACTICUM OPPORTUNITIES

Instructional Skills Workshops (ISW)

Internationally recognized 3-day workshop to enhance your teaching skills.

Dates: May 2020 (May 5-7, each day 9:00 - 4:30)
Or Aug 2020 (Aug 18-20, each day 9:00 – 4:30)

Registration available now!

Course (re)Design Workshop (CrDW)

Come design or redesign your course! This workshop includes facilitated sessions on effective course design, plus lots of time for you to work on your course.

Save the Dates! May 11-13, each day 9:00 - 4:30. *Registration will open early 2020.*

Assessment Development Workshop (ADW)

Come develop a new or existing assessment for your course. We'll rubrics, assessing group work, and more! This workshop helps instructors implement meaningful assessments that support student learning.

Save the Dates! May 19 & 21, each day 9:00 - 4:30. *Registration will open early 2020.*

REGISTER NOW FOR WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS AT
<http://mieep.eventbrite.ca>

Passages

Stanley Bayley

Biology

December 27, 2019

Maureen Halsall

English and Cultural Studies

November 17, 2019

Kenneth Kershaw

Biology

December 30, 2019

Laurie Wishart

Rehabilitation Science

December 13, 2019



Welcome New Members

Crystal Biruk

Anthropology

Sheila Boamah

Nursing

Szu-Yun Hsu

Political Science

Shun Fu Lee

Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact

Margaret McKinnon

Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences

Ashwini Namasivayam-MacDonald

Rehabilitation Science

Niaqi Xiao

Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour

Hui Ming Yu

Materials Science and Engineering



Call for Nominations

The MUFA Award for Outstanding Service

PURPOSE

The purpose of the MUFA Award for Outstanding Service is to provide annual recognition¹ for faculty and professional librarians who have made an outstanding contribution to the mission of the University through the provision of exceptional service to faculty, librarians, staff and/or students.

THE AWARD

Each year there will be a maximum of three awards in the amount of \$1,500.

ELIGIBILITY

The Awards are open to all Full Members of the McMaster University Faculty Association (MUFA)².

PROCEDURES

1. The MUFA Executive will appoint a selection committee to be drawn from amongst the categories of faculty, librarians, staff and students (undergraduate and graduate).
 - a. The Committee shall be comprised of no less than four, and no more than eight members, including the Chair.
 - b. The MUFA Past President normally serves as Chair and is not counted as the faculty representative.
 - c. The Secretary to the Committee will be the MUFA Executive Director.
 - d. A quorum for a Committee meeting shall be four members in attendance, including the Chair.
2. Nominations
 - a. There will be a call for nominations through the University and MUFA electronic distribution lists, in the MUFA Newsletter, and on the MUFA webpage.
 - b. Nominations must be emailed to MUFA (Hamilton Hall, Room 103A or emailed (mufa@mcmaster.ca) no later than **FEBRUARY 21, 2020**
 - c. The nomination must include a summary of not more than 750 words highlighting the candidate's accomplishments.
 - d. Each nomination must be supported by a minimum of two and not more than four reference letters.

The reference letters must be e-mailed or mailed to MUFA, either through the nominator or directly from the reference. Reference letters should not exceed 500 words.
3. The Committee will review the nominations and will make the final decision regarding the selection of the award recipients. Some of the factors considered by the Committee will include:
 - enhancement of the reputation of McMaster University
 - provision of excellent service
 - demonstrated innovation
 - breadth and depth of impact
 - the enhancement of student success
 - the ability to establish and maintain effective and harmonious working relationships
 - evident acceptance of diversity and inclusivity at McMaster
 - strength and diversity of supporting references
4. The faculty/librarians selected to receive the awards will be invited to attend a special reception normally held in conjunction with the MUFA Annual General Meeting and will be presented with their awards at that time. Pictures of the individual recipients and a brief summary of the rationale for their awards will be published in the MUFA Newsletter and on the MUFA webpage.
5. Each eligible faculty/librarian who was nominated for an award will receive a letter of commendation from the MUFA President.

¹MUFA faculty/librarians are not eligible for the President's Awards for Outstanding Service, awarded by the President of McMaster University

²Those holding academic administrative appointments with the rank of Assistant Dean or higher in the current academic year are not eligible for the Award.

MUFA ad-hoc Committee on Student Evaluation of Teaching Report

In 2019 the McMaster University Faculty Association created a committee to perform a student evaluation of teaching. The committee, comprised of faculty and students (undergraduates and graduates) met in the first months of 2019, circulated a draft report early spring, sought feedback from various groups on campus and published a [final version](#) in December.

This exercise provided important feedback from faculty and students on the evaluations used to assess teaching and learning outcomes at McMaster University and suggested to replace the current quantitative questionnaire by three tools to assess the learning experience of students: a formative tool to be used during the term (preferably mid-term), known as “stop-start-continue”, a summative tool, based on focus groups, collecting qualitative comments through a collective discussion at the end of the course, and reflexive tool, based on a survey questionnaire addressed to graduates to collect information at the program level.

We are now seeking feedback on these recommendations through a series of Town Tall meetings, to take place this month (January 21 and 29). Please see below for details on the Town Hall meetings.

You can register online at: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/student-evaluation-of-teaching-report-town-hall-tickets-88525280497>

Help shape the future of course evaluation at Mac!

Join us to learn more about the recent findings of the Student Evaluation of Teaching Report and to provide your feedback on the short-term and long-term initiatives.

- Jan. 21 **Town Hall # 1**
Time: 9:30am - 11:00am
Location: MUSC 318
- Jan. 29 **Town Hall # 2**
Time: 10:30am - 12:00pm
Location: MacPherson Institute Classroom (Mills Library, 5th Floor)
- Jan. 29 **Town Hall # 3**
Time: 3:30pm - 5:00pm
Location: MacPherson Institute Classroom (Mills Library, 5th Floor)



Register online at: mi.mcmaster.ca/upcoming-events



OCUFA maintains focus on good jobs, university funding, and capacity building at 159th Board Meeting

On Saturday, October 19 and Sunday, October 20, OCUFA held its first Board of Directors meeting of the 2019-20 academic year. The weekend oriented new board members to OCUFA and allowed members to discuss the implications of the Ford government's attacks on public postsecondary education in Ontario.

During the meeting, there were special presentations on two of Ford's reckless schemes: the proposed shift to performance-based funding and the *Student Choice Initiative*. Taking stock of Ontario's political landscape, members chose to continue focusing on good jobs, university funding, and capacity building as OCUFA's priorities for the year.

On Saturday, during a special lunchtime reception, Board members and colleagues celebrated the winners of the 2019 OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards, which featured a touching speech by special guest, Robert Fisher.

Priorities

Following a year of attacks on Ontario's public services, including postsecondary education, the Ford government's popularity has been dwindling and they have been forced to walk-back several of their ill-considered austerity measures. While it is unlikely Ford will become more reasonable in the year ahead, it has become clear that his government can be pressured to walk back some of their announcements. With that in mind, OCUFA has chosen to maintain its focus on the most high-profile needs at Ontario's universities: good jobs and increased public funding.

Unfortunately, despite a new Minister of Colleges and Universities, the government continues its refusal to meet with any sector stakeholders other than university administrations. This makes OCUFA's third priority for the year all the more important: build capacity across Ontario to put pressure on this government to withdraw its damaging policies and proposals.

Good jobs

Advocating for good jobs has taken on particular urgency under the current government. With the [introduction of Bill 124](#) on June 5, Ford made clear the government's intent to cap broader public sector compensation increases at one per cent per year. This legislation is an attack on the right to free and fair collective bargaining, a threat to pay equity and benefits for contract faculty and other marginalized workers, and an erosion of the foundations of Ontario's important public services. Further, because faculty members are employed by and negotiate their contracts with universities, not the provincial government, this legislation would violate university autonomy.

More broadly, OCUFA continues to advocate for a post-secondary education system where every academic job is a good job with fair compensation, reasonable workloads, access to benefits, and job security. Delivering fairness for contract faculty and committing to faculty renewal will create more good jobs on our campuses and ensure that students have access to the quality learning experience they deserve.

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University funding

OCUFA has held a long-standing goal of increasing public funding for universities to support high-quality post-secondary education in Ontario. Unfortunately, the Ford government's April Budget introduced a drastic move towards tying funding to market-based "performance" outcomes. This would mean that, by 2024-25, 60 per cent (an estimated \$2.2 billion) of university funding would be based on their ability to meet certain performance targets prescribed by the government.

To put it plainly, the Ford government is not qualified to evaluate postsecondary education, and this is demonstrated by the arbitrary performance metrics they have chosen to use when making decisions about university funding. These metrics were chosen with no consultation and, instead of measuring performance, will likely lead to university budget cuts and greater inequities across the system.

[The Ford government's reckless performance funding model prioritizes politics over sound public policy.](#) By design, performance funding rewards institutions that meet arbitrary targets while penalizing those that do not, denying vital funding to those institutions that need it most to improve their educational outcomes.

This rash and drastic funding shift will create a system of winners and losers by exacerbating inequities between institutions, destabilize Ontario's postsecondary education system, work against quality improvement, [pose a serious threat to equity and diversity at Ontario's universities](#), and punish students studying at institutions that have already seen their budgets reduced by the Ford government.

In a presentation on the new funding model, OCUFA Community and Government Relations Policy Analyst Mina Rajabi Paak provided an update on timelines and

details for the frameworks implementation, as well as the work OCUFA is doing to push back against this dangerous approach to university funding.

Capacity building

In recent years, OCUFA has put more emphasis on capacity building and political organizing in the service of the priorities identified by Ontario faculty. Ultimately, the power to effect change comes from the capacity of faculty to mobilize their colleagues and other members of the university and broader community.

Through new trainings focused on collective bargaining strategies for the new political reality in Ontario and ongoing mobilization by OCUFA's Contract Faculty and Faculty Complement Committee, Ontario's faculty are developing new approaches to strengthening their voices, building solidarity, and exploring new ways to put pressure on decision-makers.

Examining the implications of the *Student Choice Initiative*

During a special presentation, Felipe Nagata, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario (CFS-Ontario), and Kayla Weiler, National Executive Representative for CFS-Ontario, provided an update on the [impacts of the Ford government's *Student Choice Initiative \(SCI\)*](#).

Introduced in January, the *SCI* requires institutions to provide an opt-out option for "non-essential services," which include democratically determined student union dues and student newspaper fees. As Nagata and Weiler noted, [this represents a direct attack on student rights](#), student unions, and student press on our campuses.

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Student unions have started their academic year with extreme uncertainty about their operating budgets, unsure of whether or not they will be able to provide many of the important services and activities their members have come to rely upon. In the past month, many of these services have been cut or scaled back, and many student staff positions eliminated.

In response to the *SCI*, CFS-Ontario has partnered with the York Federation of Students to [launch a legal challenge](#) seeking to demonstrate that the government lacks the authority to implement and enforce the directive and that the *SCI* should be withdrawn.

OCUFA continues to support CFS-Ontario's resistance to the government's introduction of the *SCI* as well as the recent and dramatic cuts to OSAP.

Celebrating excellence in teaching

Finally, a special luncheon gala celebrated the recipients of this year's [Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards](#). Since 1973, these awards have recognized the exceptional contributions made by professors and librarians to the quality of higher education in Ontario.

The 2018-2019 Teaching Award recipients are:

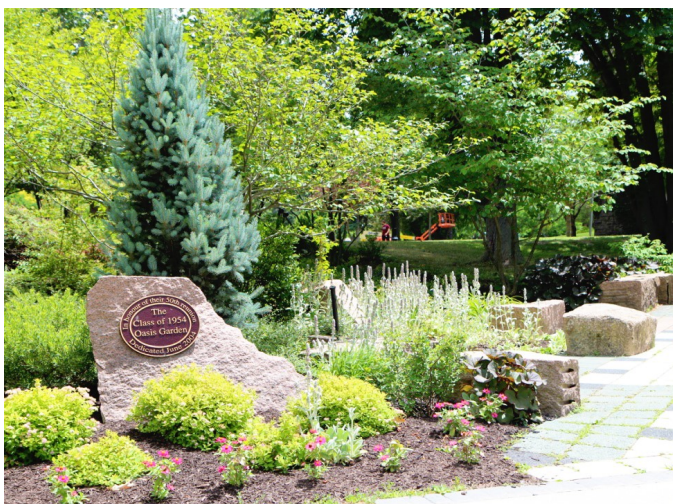
[Sue Baptiste](#), Professor Emerita in the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University

[Daniel Gillis](#), Associate Professor in the School of Computing Science at the University of Guelph

[Jennifer Irwin](#), Professor in the School of Health Studies at Western University

[Andrew Petersen](#), Associate Professor, Teaching Stream in the Department of Mathematical and Computational Sciences at the University of Toronto Mississauga

The 47th annual awards ceremony featured a keynote address from award-winning journalist Robert Fisher, who provided a touching and humorous account of his journey through postsecondary education and the important role faculty played in shaping his life.



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