

# Communicator

Acadia University Faculty Association Newsletter

Fall 2019

AUFA



In Memoriam - Eric Alcorn  
Awards  
New Faculty

Volume 24  
Issue 01

# AUFA Communicator

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### The AUFA President Communicates

Creating a welcoming scholarly community is frequently top of mind as I connect with a diversity of newly hired academics who are taking up their positions across campus. As an executive, we are making specific plans to meet with new faculty and to ensure they are aware of everything our community has to offer. Our goal is to foster personal connections that will contribute to a sense of community on campus and beyond.

Similarly, we are looking forward to reconnecting with current faculty and to enabling faculty engagement across campus that will build on already established collegial relationships. We have a unique opportunity this year to focus on our membership, on listening to and understanding your ideas for Acadia's future, and on getting to know your priorities for the coming year. As members of the AUFA executive, we are very much looking forward to meeting with you, in both regular meetings and in informal conversation, and we encourage all members to connect with any member of the executive if you have questions or concerns you wish to discuss.

While it is genuinely exciting to welcome new full-time academics to Acadia, we are acutely aware that contract faculty continue to experience uncertainty related to Acadia's significant reliance on contingent academic labour. The AUFA part-time engagement committee is therefore planning a number of outreach and awareness activities that we hope will help contract faculty feel valued. We

are aiming to engage our per-course instructors in discussions that will help us all understand how we can better support contingent members of faculty who want to participate more fully in campus and departmental events and activities. Fair employment week takes place between October 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> this year, and we invite everyone to reach out during that time—and at all times—to part-time instructors. We also ask that you stay tuned for announcements about specific activities AUFA will be holding to raise awareness during that time.

In addition to the previously mentioned outreach plans, the AUFA executive is working with student, staff, and community partners on several equity-related initiatives that we believe will contribute to making Acadia's campus more welcoming for all. Employment equity, in particular, has been a strong focus area for AUFA over the past ten to fifteen years, and our collective bargaining teams have made significant gains related to equitable hiring and evaluation of dossiers for tenure and promotion. We have important and effective equity language in the 15<sup>th</sup> *Collective Agreement* that balances self-

Information about AUFA is available online at <http://www.acadiafaculty.ca/> or in person from the Union office in the Huggins Science Hall, Room 211. Union Officer, Jane Longley may be reached by phone at 902-585-1422 or by email at [jane.longley@acadiu.ca](mailto:jane.longley@acadiu.ca).

You can also follow us on Twitter @AcadiaFaculty

identification of equity-seeking job candidates and potential personal privacy concerns. However, as we work to make space for faculty from diverse academic backgrounds, knowledge traditions, and identity categories, it becomes clear that living out our institutional commitment to equity in all hiring, tenure, and promotion processes is difficult. Therefore, we have begun discussions with Dale Keefe, Provost and Vice-President, Academic, about co-hosting a roundtable or panel discussion that will focus on moving toward equity in all stages of the processes mentioned above. It will provide an important forum for members of the Acadia community to ask and respond to questions related to how we realize our mission of creating a diverse scholarly community. It will allow us to probe the difficult questions that can arise when we make equity a priority from the beginning of every process, and it will provide an opportunity to hear from members of our community who have prioritized equity and moved in significant ways toward a diverse scholarly community in their own units or departments.

As we begin this academic semester, I am pleased to welcome everyone back, and I look forward to meeting with you in the coming months.

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*“Our goal is to foster personal connections that will contribute to a sense of community on campus and beyond.”*

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-- Cynthia Bruce, AUFA President

## In Memoriam - Eric Alcorn

On July 4<sup>th</sup> of this year the Acadia Community lost a friend, colleague, teacher, and mentor when Eric Alcorn succumbed to pancreatic cancer. Eric first arrived at Acadia as a graduate student in the Biology Department in the early 1990s. He had completed a BA(Hon) in Philosophy at King’s College and, after taking time for travel and reflection, he decided to follow a passion for nature and its conservation that he carried to the end. Along the way, he also developed a passion for teaching and a talent for mentoring. Eric returned to Acadia as a faculty member in 2001 as the Lab Instructor for first-year Biology. He was an engaged and an engaging teacher who focused on developing the lab to meet the needs of the program while maximizing student success. Eric also developed and delivered the Intro Biology course and labs for both online and intersession versions of that course and went on to teach the labs and lectures for Human Biology. Always interested in exploring new and engaging ways to increase student engagement, Eric also co-developed and co-delivered a transdisciplinary course in the Connections Program on the Causes and Consequences of War.

Eric’s contributions to Acadia went beyond the Biology Department. A strong believer in the value of unions, he had worked towards the inclusion of Lab Instructors in the union while at St. FX and he continued his union involvement at Acadia, serving AUFA in several capacities, including as a negotiating team member, as Vice-President, and ultimately as President. One of the things Eric was proudest of was the role he played in transitioning the pension to the PSSP, a move that he believed would increase the sustainability of the pension over the long term while being cognisant of the effect this move would have on all of the employee groups at Acadia.

Eric’s commitment to service touched many: the participants in the Diabetic Association’s Camp Atlantic where he served as a volunteer counsellor in years past; the people, many of them current and future

Acadia students, with whom he worked in the Blanding's turtle recovery program from the time that he was a student at Acadia until the end of his life; a generation of students; and, not least of all, the membership of AUFA.

Eric could seem a bit of an enigma, combining as he did an almost childlike enthusiasm and wonder with an ability to see the bigger picture and a path through difficult issues. While he could spend much time



in quiet contemplation and in the discussion of complex and sometimes esoteric issues, he also had a loud infectious laugh and a personality that could easily fill a room. A lifelong musician, Eric will be remembered by many as a performer always happy to pick up a guitar and belt out a song. He played with several bands over the years, most notably in recent years Gin and Sonic whom many of you will have heard at the University Club.

We will all remember and miss Eric in our own ways. Those who will miss him most are his wife of 22 years Stephanie, his son Calum, and his daughter Morleah.

-- Steve Mockford

## Acadia University Club (U-Club)

In 1968, Acadia professors Jack Sheriff (English) and Terry Pearson (Mathematics) lobbied the Acadia administration of the day for a space on campus for faculty to meet and mingle. The property at 17 Westwood Avenue (formerly the university health clinic) was provided and the Acadia Faculty Club was born. Now 51-years-old, we've morphed into a more inclusive organization that welcomes faculty, staff, alumni, administration, interested community members, and graduate and Education students into membership. This inclusiveness is reflected in our current name: the University Club (U-Club). Acadia is one of a few academic institutions in Canada that retains a university social club.

The Acadia U-Club provides a unique space for meetings, informal gatherings, and other events for our 100 members, their guests, and the larger university community. We have a 9-member Board that guides the overall direction of the U-Club, along with a live-in House Manager during the school year. We are (still) located at 17 Westwood Avenue (affectionately known as "the little blue house behind Huggins"). Our facilities include a living room and bar area, a small meeting room, a kitchen and barbeque, a games room (billiards,



shuffleboard, darts), a modest guest room, and an honour bar (we boast one of the best selections of local beers in Wolfville!). The facilities are available for rent to groups and organizations under the sponsorship of a U-Club member. We regularly play host to departmental or club/group barbeques, potlucks, receptions, and start-of-term/end-of-term parties. Our signature U-Club event is our Friday TGIF (4 – 7 pm), a well-established tradition on the Acadia campus throughout the school year.

We encourage all faculty to consider becoming members. Just \$10/month gives you access to a variety of services and benefits. Visit our [website](#) for membership details and follow us on [Facebook](#). You can reach us at [uclub@acadia.ca](mailto:uclub@acadia.ca) or 902-385-4112.

-- Peggy Crawford

## CAUT Dedicated Service Award

Each year, AUFA nominates a member (or two) for the CAUT Dedicated Service Award. This award recognizes “those who have been particularly dedicated members of the association and have served it with distinction.” Dr. Zelda Abramson (Sociology) was AUFA’s recipient of the 2018 Dedicated Service Award. Zelda has been a truly committed and hardworking member of AUFA since she began her tenure



track position in 2006. Her work was often “behind the scenes,” and she served on a number of important committees, including as a member of the Nominating and Numeracy Committees, a Junior Grievance Officer, and Co-Chair of the Food Sub-committee as we prepared for the possibility of a strike in 2018. Zelda was instrumental in redesigning the pre-negotiation membership survey as we prepared to negotiate the 15<sup>th</sup> *Collective Agreement*. She also played a critical role in advancing gender equity on campus. As Co-Chair of the AUFA Women's Committee, she initiated an annual review of the gender wage gap among faculty, and, as a member of the Joint Committee on Pay Equity, she helped develop the initial proposal for grid step placement to eliminate that wage gap. Zelda did committee work for AUFA even when she wasn't on committees! A little-known fact is that when the Nominating Committee was coming up empty, it was Zelda who convinced Gillian Poulter (History) to serve as AUFA President in 2012-13. Zelda retired in July and has returned to Montreal, her childhood home and subject of her recent book, with John Lynch, *The*

*Montreal Shtetl: Making Home after the Holocaust*. To know Zelda is to know that there's no replacing Zelda. We'll all have to be a little more dedicated to AUFA now that she's retired.

-- Rachel Brickner (Recipient of the 2017 CAUT Dedicated Service Award)

## Lois Vallely-Fischer Award for Democratic Student Citizenship

Each year AUFA presents the Lois Vallely-Fischer Award for Democratic Student Citizenship to a final-year Acadia undergraduate who has contributed to the quality of democratic discourse, critical thought,

and legitimate contestation in campus or community life, and who has demonstrated leadership in defending student political rights and the interests of disadvantaged groups.

At this spring's annual general meeting, AUFA members were delighted to celebrate the 2019 winner of Lois Valley-Fischer Award, Laura Fisher, a senior student in the Department of Community Development. During her time at Acadia, Laura dedicated herself to defending student political rights and the interests of disadvantaged groups. In particular, she was an advocate for student-parents, victims of sexual assault, and students with disabilities. Laura lent her voice, stories, poetry, and art to many important social justice events on campus. She wrote detailed reports on the invisibility of student-parents and she penned an evaluative report on sexual assault policies at Nova Scotia universities. She also used her mobilizing skills to advocate for accommodations on campus for students with disabilities. Laura's advocacy work extended beyond campus too. She worked with Sharing Our Unappreciated Produce (S.O.U.P), PeacemakeHers Young Women's Leadership Conference, and, through her Honours research, with community partners in Kentville to welcome babies and their families.

Laura Fisher is a steadfast activist. This work is exhausting, but the grit that she demonstrated time and time again had ripple effects on our community. We are a better, more inclusive, more aware campus because of Laura.

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*"We are a better, more inclusive, more aware campus because of Laura."*

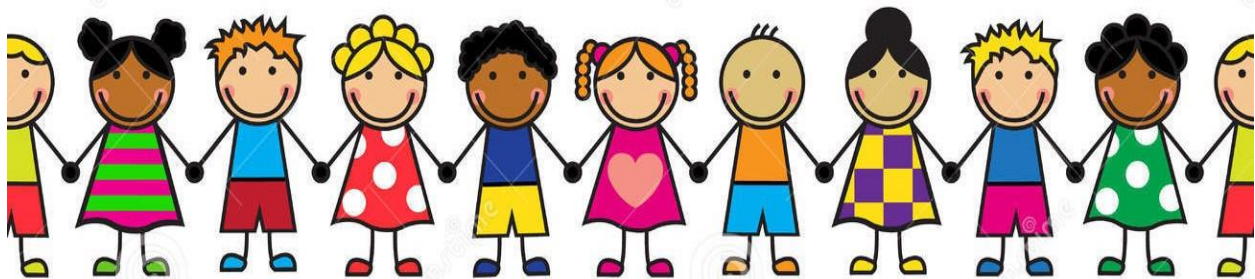
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Nominations for the 2020 Lois Valley-Fischer Award for Democratic Student Citizenship may be made by students and/or AUFA members. Award recipients will be selected by a committee of AUFA members and will be presented with the \$2000 award at the annual general meeting in April. In addition to the monetary award, recipients receive a memento and their names are embossed on a plaque in a permanent location in the Student Union Building.

-- Mary Sweatman

## Childcare Update

Throughout the spring and summer, AUFA representatives continued to be involved with the quiet but broad campaign to bring childcare to Acadia. As many of you are aware, Acadia is one of the only universities in Canada that lacks childcare for faculty, staff, and students. On March 27, four AUFA members – including two from the Executive – met with representatives from a number of stakeholder groups. Along with our members, Kings County councilors, staff members, a student activist, and the Indigenous Student Advisor joined in a rich discussion about strategy in the wake of a feasibility study written by Deloitte. This study concluded that there is a significant need for childcare among faculty,



staff and students but recommended against the university establishing a facility. While we were all frustrated with the Deloitte report, we agreed that educating and collaborating with the University Administration was the best approach for now.

Subsequent meetings have been held with childcare providers in the area, the Acadia Student Union Executive, and representatives from Deloitte. A plan is in place for meetings with the Vice Presidents Academic and Finance and Administration which are scheduled to occur this fall. AUFA's goal is to convince the Administration to seek donor support and to tap into the available government programs for a childcare facility. Stay tuned for upcoming discussions and actions on this critical issue.

-- Stephen Henderson

## Get to know our New Faculty!

Full-time continuing academic employment is at the heart of our ability to properly perform our jobs in academia. One of the gains we achieved in the 15<sup>th</sup> *Collective Agreement* was bringing the number of tenure-stream positions on campus to a minimum of 162 and the number of continuing librarian positions on campus to 9 by 2020.

It is with pleasure that we introduce the following newly appointed AUFA members in continuing tenure-stream and instructor positions:

**Kathryn Bell** is a registered psychologist with clinical expertise in the assessment and treatment of trauma, anxiety, and addictions. She completed her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Western Michigan University and her postdoctoral work at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. Before joining Acadia University, Kathryn was Associate Professor in Psychology at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. Her primary research interests involve the investigation of risk and resiliency factors associated with interpersonal violence, including intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual assault. Kathryn teaches Abnormal Psychology, Psychotherapy II – Intervention Skills, and Special Topics in Applied Psychology: Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology.

**Nicoletta Faraone** is a natural product chemist and biochemist who completed her Ph.D. in Chemical Ecology at the University of Palermo (Italy). She worked as a postdoctoral fellow at Dalhousie University Agricultural Campus and Lund University (Sweden), and as a research associate at Acadia University. Nicoletta's current research interests include natural products, chemical ecology, bioactive molecules, cannabinoids, bio-pesticides, and pest management. Her research projects focus on the discovery of bioactive natural products for pest management and crop protection, and their application in the food and health industry. She teaches Biochemistry, Metabolism, and Natural Product Chemistry.

**Ayman Aljarrah** is a mathematics educator who completed both his Ph.D. in Educational Research/ Curriculum and Learning and his postdoctoral work at the University of Calgary. Before moving to Canada, he worked as a mathematics teacher (K-12) in Jordan and as a lecturer of mathematics and mathematics education in Saudi Arabia. Ayman has consciously maintained two streams of interest—collectivity and creativity—in mathematics learning environments. In his research, he always concentrates on the interactions between all the agencies in the learning environment—the program of

study, the people in the classroom, and the materials and tools—and how such interactions trigger and sustain teachable moments.

**Melanie Coombs** teaches Microbiology and Immunology courses in the Biology Department. Her research looks at the anticancer and immunomodulatory effects of natural products such as phytochemicals and host defense peptides. Melanie completed her Ph.D. at Dalhousie University and she held postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard Medical School and Dalhousie University. She received a Certificate in University Teaching and Learning at Dalhousie University and she has taught microbiology courses at local universities including Dalhousie, Mount Saint Vincent, Saint Mary's and Acadia. She now has a tenure track position at Acadia University and enjoys training research students.

**James Burnham Sedgwick (“Jamie”)** is a transnational historian of global governance, mass violence, and empire with a regional focus on East Asia. His research explores how the inner workings of international organisations affect their outcomes; how social networks, lived experiences, and emotions inform humanitarianism and advocacy; and how institutional solutions to transnational crimes shape international relations. Jamie teaches course on imperial and modern China, feudal and modern Japan, comparative imperialism in the North Pacific, global history, genocide and justice, and the history of medicine. He has taught on contracts at Acadia since 2012.

**Allison Walker** teaches Introductory Biology, Mycology, and Plant Growth & Development for the Biology Department, as well as in the Bon Portage Island Field Course and a 4<sup>th</sup> year DNA barcoding course. As a mycologist, Allison focuses her research on fungal biodiversity, with particular interest in marine and endophyte fungi. Her research has applications in native plant propagation as well as local craft beer and wine industries. Before joining Acadia, Allison held research positions in Canada (AAFC) and in the United States (USDA). Allison serves as Director of the E.C. Smith Herbarium at Acadia.

**Gabrielle Donnelly** is a scholar-practitioner in the field of social innovation, creativity, and systems change. She teaches in the Community Development program courses such as group facilitation, community program design, and community leadership for social change. Before coming to Acadia, Gabrielle worked primarily as a freelance facilitator tackling social and environmental issues with organizations including the International Red Cross, Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, and Ecology Action Centre. Today, she continues to integrate her research agenda with the needs of organizations working on complex problems both locally and globally.

**Matthew Vierimaa** teaches courses in the areas of sport coaching and leadership in the School of Kinesiology. His primary research interests include coach education, coaching effectiveness, and positive youth development through organized sport. Matthew completed his PhD at Queen's University and previously worked as Assistant Professor at Utah State University.

**Ruben Sandapen** obtained his Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the University of Manchester. After being a postdoctoral researcher at Laval University, he held contractual positions at l'Université de Moncton and Mount Allison University. In 2015, he joined Acadia University. Ruben usually teaches theory courses like Quantum Mechanics, Subatomic Physics, and Astronomy. His research focuses on the Standard Model of particle physics which is a framework that explains the interactions among fundamental constituents of matter like electrons and quarks. In particular, he studies a correspondence between Quantum Chromodynamics, the theory of strong interactions, and a gravitational theory in a higher dimensional spacetime. Ruben has an extensive list of publications in prestigious physics journals,



including publications with undergraduate students as co-authors. He has collaborated with researchers from the UK (including a one-time collaboration with celebrated UK physicist Brian Cox), Canada, India, Pakistan, and China and he has extensive experience in supervising undergraduate research students.

**Inna Viriasova** teaches political theory in the Department of Politics. She completed her Ph.D. in Theory and Criticism at the University of Western Ontario in 2013. Her research interests include contemporary continental political philosophy, non-Western and indigenous thought, critical theory, biopolitics, refugee studies, post-humanism, and new materialism.

**Justin Beaudoin** is an economist who completed his Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of California, Davis in 2015. He spent the previous three years as an Assistant Professor at the University of Washington Tacoma in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. His research specialties are urban and environmental economics, with his recent work primarily focusing on the impacts of public transit investment. In the upcoming year, he will be teaching microeconomics, statistics and cost-benefit analysis in the Department of Economics.

**Russell H. Easy** started as a biologist with Health Canada in Ottawa where he worked with bacterial pathogens in the characterization of antibiotic resistance genes. He moved to Winnipeg where he developed the molecular diagnostics lab at The Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health. Russell then accepted a position with the National Research Council in Halifax where he explored fish pathogens. He finished a master's degree in molecular Parasitology and then completed his Ph.D. exploring molecular signatures of stress in Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) at Dalhousie University. Russell has a passion for science education and has presented public lectures to students of all ages for more than 20 years. As an Associate Professor at Acadia University, Russell has been very successful in acquiring funding for the numerous research projects he has established. He has a dynamic lab which includes collaborations with national and international academic participants. The current focus of research in The Easy Lab is exploring molecular mechanisms of stress in animals.

**Chelsea Gardner** is a Mediterranean Archaeologist working on cultural identity in southern Greece. She received her Ph.D. in Classics from the University of British Columbia and worked at Mount Allison and the University of Hawai'i before arriving at Acadia. Chelsea's research interests include digital humanities pedagogy, women in the ancient world, and ancient religious sanctuaries. She joins the Department of History & Classics and teaches courses on ancient history, material culture, and Latin & Greek languages.

Please join us in congratulating and welcoming our colleagues!

In the next number of the *Communicator* we will feature introductions to our colleagues in contractually limited term appointments.

-- Juan Carlos López

This year's elected 2019-2020 Executive members are:

**President**

Cynthia Bruce

**President Elect**

Richard Karsten

**Past President**

Anthony Pash

**Secretary**

Juan Carlos López

**Treasurers**

Darren Kruisselbrink

Cindy Trudel

**Members-at-Large**

Kate Ashley

Jon Saklofske

Britanie Wentzell

Ian Wilks

Dates to remember

*Upcoming AUFA Meetings*

Tuesday, September 17th, 2019, 4:30pm – 6:00pm

Thursday, October 17th, 2019, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Tuesday, November 19th, 2019, 4:30pm – 6:00pm

Thursday, January 16th, 2020, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Tuesday, February 25th, 2020, 4:30pm – 6:00pm

Thursday, March 12th, 2020, 11:30am – 1:00pm

Tuesday, April 21st, 2020, 12:00pm – 2:00pm

*AUFA New Faculty Welcome at the U-Club*

Friday, September 27th, 2019, 4:30pm – 7:00pm

*Fair Employment Week*

Monday, October 7th through Friday October 11th, 2019

## Editorial Policy

### Connecting the Membership

The AUFA Communicator is a newsletter of the Acadia University Faculty Association (AUFA) and is intended to keep its members and the Acadia community up to date and informed. The AUFA Communicator is published twice during the academic year and serves the following purposes:

- to provide a means for the free exchange of ideas, views, information, and issues relevant to AUFA and the Acadia community;
- to provide feedback and information useful for AUFA to maintain its effective operation in fulfilling the objectives of AUFA and its membership;
- to provide documentary records of matters pertaining to AUFA;
- to serve all the functions of a newsletter

The Communicator Committee, under the direction of the AUFA Executive, takes responsibility for the contents of the AUFA Communicator. Opinions expressed in authored articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Communicator Committee. We encourage your contributions (letters, articles, article summaries, and other pertinent information). Anonymous material will not be considered for publication; however, under special circumstances, the AUFA Communicator may agree to withhold the author's name. The Communicator Committee retains the right to edit and/or reject contributed material.

The Communicator Committee is Michael Corbett, Stephen Henderson, Juan Carlos López, Jessica Slights, and Britanie Wentzell. Special thanks to all our contributors and to Jane Longley.