

CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM AUFA'S
OUTGOING PRESIDENT

CLUSTER HIRES UPDATE

SCENT-FREE POLICY

WELCOME TO AUFA'S
INCOMING EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH
UPDATE

FACULTY COMPUTERS

FACULTY JOB ACTIONS
ACROSS CANADA

PENSION CORNER

CONTACT US

EDITORIAL POLICY

MESSAGE FROM AUFA'S OUTGOING PRESIDENT

As my term as AUFA President draws to a close, I am struck by the activity and ongoing changes that are taking place at Acadia University. We will be welcoming an unprecedented (at least in recent history) number of new faculty in July, including those who are part of the Mikmaw/Indigenous and African Nova Scotian/African Canadian cluster hires. Significant changes are also happening at the senior administration level, with a new President and Vice-President Finance and Administration set to come onboard in the coming months. We have a unique opportunity to welcome and support our new faculty members and continue AUFA's leadership role on campus.

There have also been ongoing challenges in terms of labour relations, and many appear part of larger national trends in post-secondary education. There were seven faculty unions strikes this year, the most in Canada's history. This outpaces last year's strike actions when six faculty unions, including AUFA, went on strike. Part of this increase in faculty strikes is undoubtedly a result of COVID-19. Many faculty unions opted to extend their existing collective agreements by short one- and two-year terms during the heart of the pandemic, which meant many CAs were expiring at the same time. It is also the case, however, that what we saw at Acadia, with increased administrative control and a breakdown in collegial governance, is an issue nationwide. As our negotiating team begins preparing for the salary reopener that is part of the arbitrator's award for the 16th CA, the importance of fair collective bargaining has never been more apparent.

A significant portion of the AUFA Executive and Grievance Committee's attention this year has been on errors in pensions and payroll. We have been reporting on these issues for some months now and are beginning to see acknowledgment from the administration. For example, Human Resources has now communicated to faculty that all AUFA members subscribed to the PSSP have incorrect 2021 and 2022 Pension Statements and some of you have recently been notified about errors in your T4s. The employer will be engaging a third party to audit its pension and payroll processes, which is part of the remedy AUFA is seeking in our pension and payroll grievance. We will push to make this audit as comprehensive as possible and will

work to make sure that all members' accounts are made right so that these types of errors do not happen again in the future. As noted in previous updates, we encourage you to review your PSSP and CPP pension statements and contact AUFA if you have any questions or concerns.

Being the President of AUFA is a big job and one that I've learned greatly from. But it is a lot. It's a lot for all of us. Our jobs at Acadia are demanding and I think we all experience moments when it feels like too much. Service, in particular, can be constant and it's important that we set personal boundaries, while also collectively making sure that junior faculty are not asked to take on too much. This is why I am especially grateful to all members who choose to share their time and energy to make AUFA a strong and effective faculty association. I think it is important and I think it is worth it. I am endlessly impressed by the talent, creativity, and commitment AUFA members bring to their service roles and their jobs. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Erin Crandall, AUFA Outgoing President

CLUSTER HIRES UPDATE

Interviews with cluster hire candidates have been completed and initial job offers have been sent out. Thanks to all AUFA members who contributed to this important hiring process!



Did You Know Acadia is a Scent-Free Campus?

In response to health concerns, Acadia has developed a Scent-Free Policy. Scented products such as hair spray, perfume, and deodorant can trigger reactions such as respiratory distress and headaches. Staff and visitors are asked to not use these products on campus.

Want to learn more about creating a scent-free workplace environment? Go to:

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent_free.html#section-1-hdr.

WELCOME TO AUFA'S INCOMING EXECUTIVE

AUFA wants to welcome the incoming members of AUFA's Executive Board:

- Claire Mallin, President
- Stephanie Jones, President Elect (pro tem)
- Erin Crandall, Past President
- Joe Hayes, Secretary
- Franklin Mendivil, Treasurer
- Paul Abela, Member-at-Large
- Ryan MacNeil, Member-at-Large
- Jessica Slights, Member-at-Large
- TBD, Part-Time Member-at-Large

Thanks to all who served on AUFA's Executive Board during the past year:

- Erin Crandall, President
- Claire Mallin, President Elect
- Darlene Brodeur, Past President
- Franklin Mendivil, Treasurer
- Kathryn Bell, Secretary
- Edith Callaghan, Member-at-Large
- Josh d'Entremont, Member-at-Large
- Wendy Robicheau, Member-at-Large
- Jon Saklofske, Member-at-Large

And a huge thanks to Jane Longley in her invaluable role as AUFA's Union Officer!

ACADIA'S PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

The search for Acadia's next President is underway. The Presidential Search Committee consulted with several University community members, along with members of the African Nova Scotian community, Indigenous community, and Wolfville's Town Council. Updates on Acadia's Presidential Search can be found by going to <https://presidentialexec.acadiau.ca/process.html>

FACULTY COMPUTERS



Article 17.15 of the CA guarantees that every Employee will be provided a computer. As these computers age, they are routinely replaced. AUFA members who currently have a **Dell Windows laptop can anticipate a replacement in the summer of 2023**. These members should have received, or should soon receive, an email from Technology Services on steps to take to receive a replacement. AUFA members with **MacBooks can anticipate a replacement in summer 2024**. Computers will be approximately six years old when they are replaced.

If you are experiencing technical difficulties with your current laptop, Technology Services can help and will make sure that it is functioning adequately

FACULTY JOB ACTIONS ACROSS CANADA

The past two years have been busy for faculty unions across the country. Acadia University was one of six faculty unions who took strike action during the 2021-2022 academic year. Other university faculty unions that went on strike that year include:

- Association des Professeurs, Professeures, Bibliothécaires de l'Université Sainte Anne
- Concordia University of Edmonton Faculty Association
- University of Lethbridge Faculty Association
- University of Manitoba Faculty Association
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology Faculty Association

The 2022-2023 academic year was another busy year for university faculty associations, especially within the Atlantic Canadian region. Seven faculty unions took strike action during the past year, including:

- Cape Breton University Faculty Association
- CUPE 3906 – Tas, contract faculty, and post-docs at McMaster University
- CUPE 3912 – contract faculty at Dalhousie University
- CUPE 4600 – Tas and contract faculty at Carleton University
- University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Association
- Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador Faculty Association
- Syndicat des Professeurs et Professeures de l'Université Laval

PENSION CORNER

Part 1 – Where do I begin?

Pension planning is a very individual endeavor. There are many options available to you, and each person's life and family circumstances will guide them towards the option that they should choose. You should reach out to experts to assist you with your decision (Financial Planners and Human Resources are two examples). These decisions may impact the rest of your life!

The following tips have been gathered from Acadia faculty who have completed/are going through the retirement planning process.

Tip #1 – Do not submit your letter of retirement until you read/complete the rest of these tips!

Or you might end up like one of our members who found out late in December that no one had acted on their letter of retirement, and they would not be receiving either a pension or a paycheque at the end of January!

Tip # 2 – Check your CPP Earnings and Contributions Statement

You can access your CPP Earnings and Contributions Statement either through Service Canada or through Revenue Canada. Check to make sure that the pensionable earnings base portion has been reported to Service Canada correctly by the employer. Most Acadia faculty should have an "M" (meaning maximum) beside their pensionable earnings base portion for each year of employment. The "M" may be missing in your first year of employment (depending on start date), or if you took any leaves of absence or if your employment was reduced during the year. Note that you may have to involve the employer to get this corrected if you didn't keep your T4 slips from the years that are missing the "M"s. It can take 3 – 6 months for Service Canada to correct your information so start checking early!

Tip #3 – Decide on the retirement options.

There are four time periods to consider when taking retirement through the PSSP and two additional retirement options available through the Collective Agreement. Check the options in the CA first to see if you are eligible and then look at the timings available in the PSSP. Future Pension Corner articles will discuss the different options.

Tip #4 – Check your Pension Profile on the PSSP My Retirement Plan website

Contact the PSSP if you don't have (or have misplaced or forgotten) your access codes for the My Retirement Plan website. Once logged in, click on View My Pension Profile, and scroll down to the Contributions & Salaries – Annual Summary. Check that the Earned Salary & Annualized Salary columns have values in them for the years that you were employed. Note that the current year may be 3 – 6 months behind in reporting your data.

This website is a projection tool that was adopted by the PSSP in 2015. During the conversion, the 2014 data did not come through for any Acadia members.

Although the calculations to derive these numbers are not complex, they do depend on the values reported on your T4's, your employment status, the grids from the CA's and other factors. If you are concerned about the values that you see, contact the employer and have them explain how they derived these numbers to send to the PSSP for your particular circumstances.

Tip # 5 – PSSP Pension Estimate

The PSSP My Retirement website has a tool called the Pension Projection which allows you to look at various scenarios for your retirement. Although this tool is helpful, it may or may not give an accurate estimate of your pension. The tool specifically indicates that anyone with part-time service or who has had a marriage breakdown may not receive an accurate estimate.

If you are eligible to retire, you should contact the PSSP for a Pension Estimate. The pension estimate will contain the data that was used to calculate your highest 130.5 weeks of earnings and your years of service. Review this statement carefully to ensure that the data is correct and ask questions of the employer and the PSSP if you do not understand any of the information in this statement!

Tip # 6 – Health & Dental Benefits

Article 38.52 outlines the very minimal health benefits that are available to Acadia retirees. There are many options available in the marketplace which provide more benefits/lower costs than what is provided by Acadia. Check out the Manulife Follow-me plan, the Group Health/Dental benefits at Costco, and the Health, Dental and Travel benefits from the Retired Teachers of Ontario to name a few. Note that to qualify for some of these other plans, you must apply before you terminate your Acadia benefits. Some of these plans will accept you after you retire if you did choose the Acadia retiree benefits.

Tip # 7 – Submit your Retirement Letter to Acadia

Congratulations! You are ready to retire! You know what your pension benefits are, and you've made sure that they have been calculated correctly. When should you send in your retirement letter to Acadia?

Depending on the options that you have chosen, there are different requirements:

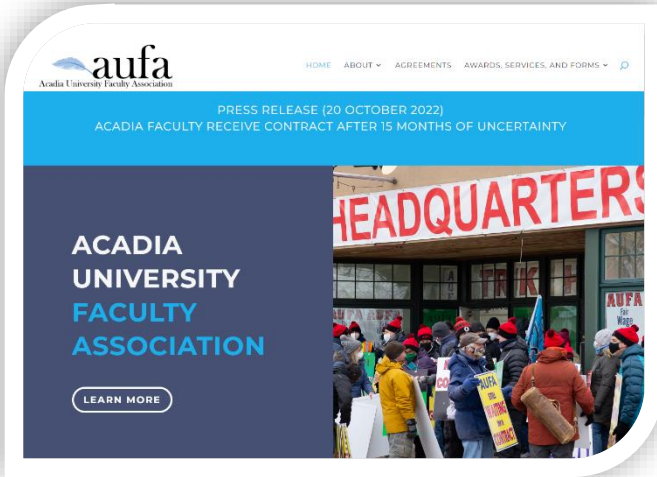
- Early Retirement Incentive (Article 38.10) – 6 months prior to retirement
- Phased-In Retirement (Article 38.40) – 12 months prior to beginning Phased-In retirement; your retirement date will be between 3 – 5 years after you begin as documented in your Phased-In retirement plan
- Regular retirement (Article 13.01) – 2 months prior to retirement, whenever possible
- NS Labour Law – 2 weeks' notice

Tip # 8 – Submit the acceptance of your Retirement Letter from Acadia to the PSSP

The process to sign up for the PSSP can take as little as 2 months (if your data is correct) or as long as it takes to get your data correct. If you have had a complex employment arrangement with Acadia (part-time, Article 11.14 conversion (part-time to continuing), Article 10.09.1 conversion (CLT to continuing), or a combination of full-time and part-time, it is in your best interest to start the retirement planning process as soon as possible. The PSSP will only start to set up your pension once they receive confirmation from the employer that you have actually told the employer that you are retiring. **YOU MUST SEND THE EMAIL/LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR RETIREMENT FROM THE EMPLOYER TO THE PSSP.** The Employer does not do this for you!

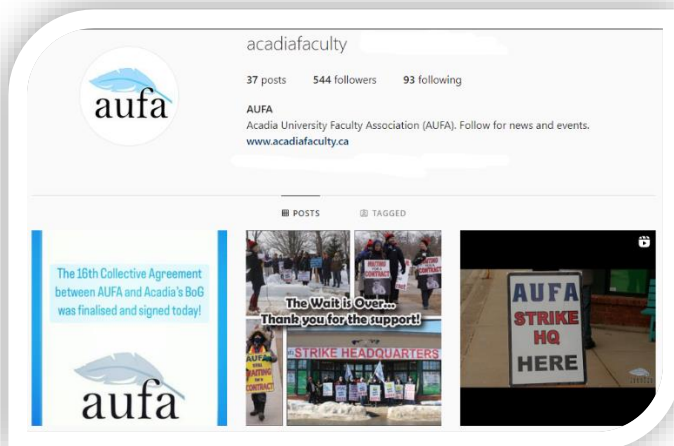
Good luck! And remember that AUFA is here to help you when you are dealing with the employer and/or the PSSP.

CONTACT US



Check out the AUFA website!

Visit our Twitter account!



Follow our Instagram page!

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 Communications 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 Kathryn Bell, Anne-Sophie Champod, Chelsea Gardner, and Jon Saklofske. Special thanks to all our contributors and to Jane Longley.

Interested in getting more actively involved with AUFA? The AUFA Communications Team needs you! For more information, please reach out to Kathryn Bell at kathryn.bell@acadiau.ca



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