

Thompson Rivers University Open Learning Faculty Association

Mission: To regulate relations between employees and employers, including, but not limited to, the right to bargain collectively on behalf of the employees within the jurisdiction of the Association; and to bring about improvements in the wages and working conditions of the membership without discrimination on the basis of appointment, assignment or job security.

Vision: To promote the provision of the highest possible standard of open and flexible distance learning

President's Report TRUOLFA AGM May 26, 2018

Dear Members,

Over the course of the twelve months since our last AGM, your Association has worked to improve working conditions and to enhance employment opportunities for Open Learning Faculty Members, OLFMs. A principal concern that we have addressed over the course of the last year is maximizing the opportunities for course development work for current OLFMs. While it is understood that for Open Learning (OL) to grow new blood from outside of the institution is to be expected for new courses in emerging subject areas where there are no OLFMs, but recruitment from outside of the existing OLFM pool without regard to the expertise and seniority of current OLFMs continues to be a major issue for TRUOLFA. Particularly troubling and challenging is the increasing tendency to inflate the requirements and criteria for delivery and course development without regard to the fact that the majority of the courses offered by OL are Bachelor level courses where tertiary degrees and research are not typically necessary. Over the last two years we have seen increasingly the introduction of the requirement for a Ph.D. and a research record to teach OL courses while no such requirement is in place to teach undergraduate on-campus courses. In the Labour Management Committee(LMC) TRUOLFA has emphasized that TRU employment practices are biased against current OLFMs, in particular older members of our community who lack tertiary degrees and/or have no current research publications in their field. Management's response has consistently been that requirements are set by the departments; the issue here is that OLFMs are not party to TRU department meetings and consultations and consequently their voice is not heard and we therefore have no other course but to challenge the requirements after the fact.

TRUOLFA has also questioned the selection process and over the course of the last year we discovered that while OL is satisfying the letter of the Collective Agreement with respect to the composition of selection committees and appointment of voting members, OL has on several occasions appointed to the selection committees parties who have lacked subject matter expertise. In TRUOLFA's view, this has skewed and corrupted the selection process and consequently been damaging to OLFMs who had the misfortune of being interviewed by such poorly constituted committees and moreover, where the decision to appoint was decided entirely by a majority of the selection committee having no background in the discipline or subject area. TRUOLFA has pressed OL on this issue but our concerns have

