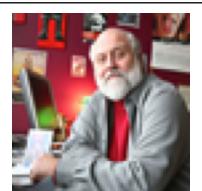


# BUFA FORUM



## President's Message

### Neo-Liberal Brock: Redux

In 2009 I wrote a column for this newsletter about my fears that the Lightstone Administration was intent on restructuring Brock according to a neoliberal template similar to that used in the United States with disastrous effects. As I wind down my BUFA presidency, I want to revisit that original column in which I listed some key indicators (at that time not yet obvious) that might let us know if we were taking on the characteristics of a neo-liberal institution. Before I turn to those, however, I would like to briefly revisit just what neo-liberalism proposes.

Paul Treanor states that ‘Neo-liberalism is a philosophy in which the existence and operation of a market are valued in themselves, separately from any previous relationship with the production of goods and services . . . and where the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs.’

In concrete terms here at Brock, this is the discourse that would argue that the most important thing we must all pay attention to is our market niche and our competitive edge. Everything must be measured in terms of how well we fit into the capitalist marketplace. This measurement is to be done exclusive of “any previous relationship with production of goods and services.” What this means for Brock is that our market position should always take precedent over any previous or existing practices that have defined the institution up until now. Small class sizes, seminars, top rated lecturers, award winning pedagogues, ease of access to tenured professors and other characteristics that have defined Brock in concrete terms of production must give way to new market buzz words like Two Sides of the Brain, Trans-disciplinary Spaces, Innovative Pedagogy, BRAM and so on.

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Stanley Fisch notes that “in the neo-liberal universe, ethics reduces to calculations of wealth and productivity. The solution is the privatization of everything . . . The assumption is that if free enterprise is allowed to make its way into every corner of human existence, the results will be better overall for everyone.” At Brock we have ample evidence of this with an overt new focus in our Office of Research Services on corporate funding for research, with the contracts with the Confucius Institute, with the three year degree in one faculty in which not a single course is taught by a tenured faculty member - so that profit is not impinged upon by faculty salaries, by the drive to quantify everything in terms of its level of productivity from research to teaching.

Fisch also tells us, that in a neo-liberal institution there is a “passage from a state in which actions are guided by an overarching notion of the public good to a state in which individual entrepreneurs “freely” pursue their private goods, values like morality, justice, fairness, empathy, nobility and love are either abandoned or redefined in market terms.” At Brock we can clearly see the incentives offered for entrepreneurship and in the undertone that valorizes competition between faculties, departments and professors.

David Harvey claims that neo-liberalism delivers a “world of pseudo-satisfactions that is superficially exciting but hollow at its core.” Fisch makes the argument that neo-liberal institutions promote “short-term transactions-for-profit replace long-term planning . . . Everyone is always running around doing and acquiring things, but the things done and acquired provide only momentary and empty pleasures which in the end amount to nothing. I will only comment by asking each of us to reflect on the Lightstone years thus far and ask ourselves whether any of the initiatives such as the marketing campaign, the rescissions, trans-disciplinary spaces, on-line learning, or strategic planning have left you with an enduring sense of satisfaction or even hope.

Fisch notes we can spot a neo-liberal university at the institutional level by the fact it “(1) raises tuition, in effect passing the burden of costs to the

students who now become consumers and debt-holders rather than beneficiaries of enlightenment (2) enters into research partnerships with industry and thus courts the danger of turning the pursuit of truth into the pursuit of profits and (3) hires a larger and larger number of short-term, part-time adjuncts who, as members of a transient and disposable workforce, are in no position to challenge the university’s practices or agitate for an academy more committed to the realization of democratic rather than monetary goals”. I think a brief look around confirms Brock’s positioning in this regard.

Finally, however, I want to turn to a more on the ground measure of the impact of neo-liberal policies at Brock. In my initial column in 2009 I noted the following things to watch out for as signifiers of the incursions of neo-liberalism into our daily working conditions. I won’t comment on them but I would ask you to take a look and ask yourself if they fit:

1. Increase the focus on graduate education and research
2. Decrease focus on undergrad education in every way but rhetorically—undergraduate education is the new high school diploma
3. Increase the number of part-time faculty teaching at the undergraduate level
4. Weaken or bust faculty and graduate student unions
5. Increase the number of graduate students teaching undergraduate courses (not TAing – teaching)
6. Increase tuition
7. Implement department-based budgeting so that each department is responsible for funding itself
8. As a result of #6 and #7 insist on more applied research in departments so that they can draw down corporate dollars
9. Increase the focus on the hard sciences and business and other applied fields so that corporate dollars can be accessed
10. Decrease the number of tenured faculty overall and reduce their undergraduate teaching load to a minimum
11. Increase class sizes at the undergraduate level

12. Increase the amount of rhetoric about community involvement but focus that involvement on the corporate sector i.e. our commitment to the community is really to the economy
13. Decrease emphasis on pure research and high theory (they don't make money)
14. Engage the university in PR campaigns that mimic those of corporate culture such as branding, slogans, mergers, acquisitions and a focus on customer satisfaction. In this regard it is primarily to attract customers (students in seats).
15. Utilize a governance structure that mimics corporate culture with a thick layer of management and a CEO orientation for the leadership
16. Turn professors into entrepreneurs and make it clear that it is critical to their survival that they make sure their research makes money
17. Pit faculty against one another by making it very clear who is making money and who is being subsidized
18. Emphasize self-interest of individual departments in competition with one another

During my presidency we have worked very hard, on the Executive and throughout BUFA Committees and BUFA Senate Observers to spot these trends and to protect faculty and librarians against the worst of neo-liberal excesses. Our bargaining team did an excellent job negotiating a contract that highlighted faculty governance and academic freedom. However, as you can see we still have a lot of work to do. I am extremely pleased about the results of the recent BUFA elections and confident that the new executive will continue to work hard to protect faculty and librarians and to advance Brock as a place of actual excellence beyond slogans and academic fads. I trust that you will support them and take the opportunity to serve on committees and as observers of Senate. It is good work and it can make a difference.

***Hans Skott-Myhre***

***President, Brock University Faculty Association***

***Extension: 4323***

***Email: [hans.skott-myhre@brocku.ca](mailto:hans.skott-myhre@brocku.ca)***

# Health & Safety Officer's Report

## GENERAL



## MEMBERSHIP MEETING REPORT, MAY 22, 2012

Dear BUFA Members:

I am very grateful to have been your servant, colleague, and co-worker on behalf of the Faculty Association for the past six years. Over the past half dozen years as your Officer of Hygiene, Health, Environment, and Workplace Safety, I have overseen the following accomplishments, among others:

### The creation of a bona fide Joint Health and Safety Committee

When I arrived in this office in 2006, the Joint Health and Safety Committee was not an effective body of any kind. It was a token sort of monthly meeting where uninformed union representatives basically were lectured to by administration. We now have an official Terms of Reference, we have expanded membership to triple the number in 2006, and we are the only Joint Health and Safety Committee at any Ontario University where all members are certified by WSIB standards.

### The establishment of monthly inspections of the entire campus

When I arrived in this office in 2006, no monthly inspections were taking place of the campus in any way or of any kind. The entire campus is now rigorously inspected on a monthly basis by certified worker-inspectors. This ensures a much more healthy and safe working environment for all workers, including BUFA members. Inspection reports are distributed to Chief Administrators and to Facilities and Custodial Management for intervention and response. This was partly made possible because your BUFA Health and Safety Officer was also the Worker Chair of the Joint Health and Safety Committee for the past six years, and so some administrative and structural development could be introduced, implemented,

and codified at the university.

### The establishment of procedures and standards for renovation and construction

My first challenge, in 2006, involved the botched renovation of MacChown "A" because little attention had been paid to occupant safety and interaction of the renovation and construction. No single individual was to blame for these mistakes. There had just been no attention paid to the interface of renovation/construction and occupants, especially BUFA members continuing to do their work in the midst of these interventions. Everyone had to learn how to successfully manage this process. The turning point arrived when the Library Commons was demolished, renovated, and constructed. All members involved conducted ongoing planning meetings and BUFA members' concerns were given a high priority in how the work progressed and was completed. This was an astounding success story and could not have taken place without oversight and supervision from BUFA along with the cooperation of the administration, especially Facilities Management. This sensitivity is now the norm for all current and future construction on campus.

### The improvement of indoor air quality in occupied buildings

Indoor breathing air was an especial priority during my six years as BUFA Health and Safety Officer. Several projects and individual accommodations have emphasized the importance of this aspect of worker health on campus for BUFA members, and many successes have demonstrated the increased priority that the administration has attached to this particular aspect of workplace health and safety. It was especially attended to during the Commons project in conjunction with an attempt to standardize and monitor the levels of breathing air efficiency and cleanliness during and after the project. Facilities Management has also added this priority to their attention when addressing concerns of worker health and productivity.

### The priority of BUFA Health and Safety Education and Training

Few accomplishments would have been successful without the application and implementation of what was learned over the years from attending professional health and safety conferences provincially and internationally. These included conferences sponsored by the Occupational Safety and Health Association of Ontario, the Workers Center of Hamilton, the Public Services Health and Safety Association, and the American Industrial Hygiene Association. BUFA Health and Safety Officer education and training is an essential aspect of doing the job successfully. It is important that sponsorship of future officers continue so that the academic and practical aspects of hazard assessment, measurement, construction and renovation exposure levels, indoor air quality standards, reintroduction to the workplace procedures, and general protocols related to occupational hygiene be understood and applied at Brock University. Without this training, it is nearly impossible for the Officer to dialogue and negotiate successful courses of action and appropriate accommodations with the administration.

### Stream-lined accommodation procedures for BUFA members

Along with proper training came sensitivity to how members could be accommodated whenever they were encountering toxic or debilitating workplace conditions that impede their productivity at work. This has come about due to a greater understanding and cooperative working relationships with Human Resources. Members are now quickly assessed and standard operating procedures exist for them to be relieved of symptoms and relocated to a safe area on campus to do their work. This is particularly attended to during renovation procedures, but is addressed in general more effectively than in 2006.

Other much smaller accomplishments abound; however, these are all just a part of having done the job conscientiously and diligently. Many days, when I'd spent half the day communicating by e-mail or over the telephone with administrators or members, I was reminded how this is a solitary but

essential aspect of working for our members in an areas where little attention is given. However, occupational health is the basis for all other aspects and forms of being productive at work. If the workplace is not healthy, nothing can be completed. A hygienic, safe, and healthy workplace is the core of a meaningful and productive workplace.

Over the past six years, I have worked for four BUFA Presidents. And I am grateful to each of them and to the Executives that worked with me under those Presidents. They include Barry Grant, Carol Merriam, Don Dworet, and Hans Skott-Myhre. Outside occupational health and safety, I include the Retirement Benefits Savings Plan as another of the greatest achievements over the past six years. And while that was not my own direct achievement, and while it almost demanded strike action to achieve, I also include that plan as another aspect of worker health; albeit for retirees.

Finally, I have to mention that these and other achievements related to occupational health and safety were all accomplished with cooperation and negotiation between labor and management. I am a firm believer in worker-management collaboration. My goals, over the past six years, were not always met in this way. Sometimes, a "heavy hand" has to be applied, especially during urgent periods when quick intervention is required. However, in general, I would say that administration understands the value of hygienic, safe, and healthy working conditions on campus. This is because it is "common sense" and benefits everyone. The challenge arises when we have to decide, collegially, what the levels, priorities, and standards of hygienic, safe, and healthy working conditions on campus should be in practice. That is where mutual understanding and negotiation is required. I thank many colleagues and co-workers for this. I mention here, especially, Valerie Wolfe, Dan Pozzobon, John Roberts, Tom Saint-Ivany, Scott Roper, Domenic Maniccia, and Darren Harper.

Looking to the future, I am grateful for Dr. Joe Norris for agreeing to continue in the capacity of BUFA Health and Safety Officer. He already has achievements to be proud of, such as the Joint EMF Policy and a forthcoming Faculty and Risk Policy.

These come about because Joe already understands how to manage health and safety in such a way that all benefit from one union member's efforts for the sake of all on the campus. It is very important that BUFA develop some sort of "apprenticeship" arrangement with existing Executive members so that preparatory work can be done to train future Health and Safety Officers. A "learning curve," as we call it, will always be included in taking on this position.

I am very grateful for having served BUFA over the past six years and I wish the Association well in the future. I have gained much from my service. It is

the most valuable contribution that I have made to the university and its faculty and staff. I am especially thankful to the BUFA members who worked with me over the past six years and who supported me in this capacity as your Health and Safety Officer.

END OF REPORT

**Jonathan Neufeld**  
**BUFA Health and Safety Officer**

**(2006 – 2012)**

**Worker Chair: Joint Health and Safety Committee**  
**Extension: 3771**

**Email:** [jonathan.neufeld@brocku.ca](mailto:jonathan.neufeld@brocku.ca)



## CONTEST!

BUFA is holding a "Rename the Newsletter Contest" with BUFA providing the winner with two tickets to the 2012/13 season of the Department of Dramatic Arts' main stage productions.

Please send your entries to [jnorris@brocku.ca](mailto:jnorris@brocku.ca) and I will compile and send a list of suggestions to the BUFA Public Relations Committee who will make the final selection. **Contest closes June 15th.**

# Grievance Officer's Report

## Inside the Head of A Grievance Officer

Suppose a BUFA member approaches a Grievance Officer with a problem that involves a potential Collective Agreement violation. Let's look inside the Grievance Officer's head and see what happens!



The first question the Grievance Officer likely asks herself is whether indeed there has been a violation of our Collective Agreement (CA). The CA covers our working conditions, broadly defined, but there are many aspects of our life at Brock that are not covered by the Agreement. If there is no CA violation, then the issue is outside of the mandate of the Grievance Officer, whose primary function is to protect the CA. In such cases, the Grievance Officer may suggest other sources of help for the member (e.g., Senate for academic issues, Office of Human Rights and Equity for respectful workplace issues, Joint Anomalies Committee for salary inequities).

If the issue does involve an apparent CA violation, the Grievance Officer's mind will turn toward gathering information about the situation. If this information-seeking process shows that a violation has occurred, the Grievance Officer will file a complaint against the University. The Grievance Officer makes a decision about whether to file a complaint based on her interpretation of our CA language, past practice, arbitration and legislative perspectives, knowledge of the intentions of the parties at the bargaining table, and the advice of others with whom she consults. Throughout this process, the Grievance Officer attempts to keep the relevant members and the Union President as fully informed as possible.

Note that, according to our CA, only the Parties to the Agreement (i.e., the Union and the University) can file or be the recipient of complaints and grievances. Individuals cannot file a complaint or grievance and cannot be named as respondents. Therefore, any complaint by the Union is filed against the University. Even if it is the action of BUFA member (heavens!)

that violates the CA, it is the University that has the responsibility for ensuring that the CA is followed.

You also should know that, if a Grievance Officer learns of a violation of the CA, she must act to correct that violation. This will happen even if the member who initially raised the issue decides he or she no longer wants to pursue it. The Grievance Officer must do so in order to protect the Collective Agreement, which is her primary responsibility.

A complaint against the University sets in motion a staged and time-limited resolution process. The resolution process is designed to be a civil one, in which neither side takes the issue personally. Indeed, often a solution can be worked out in a collegial way. The first step typically is an informal discussion between the Grievance Officer and the Director of Faculty and Employee Relations. If a complaint is not resolved or withdrawn within the specified time period, it then becomes a grievance. Similar to complaints, grievances also have a defined sequence of stages and timelines. The processes and time lines for resolution of complaints and grievances are detailed in Article 10 of our CA. This Article also specifies compulsory arbitration for the settlement of unresolved grievances. The decision about whether to proceed to arbitration is made by the BUFA Executive.

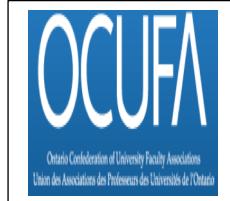
I hope that this brief journey through a small segment of a Grievance Officer's mind has helped demystify some of the complaint/grievance process and has not disturbed any sensitive viewers. If you're intrigued by this process and would like to participate, please volunteer to serve on the Grievance Panel for next year. Panel members provide valuable advice and service to the Grievance Officer and occupy a special place in her prefrontal cortex.

**Linda Rose-Krasnor**  
**Grievance Officer**  
**Extension: 3870**  
**Email:** [linda.rose-krasnor@brocku.ca](mailto:linda.rose-krasnor@brocku.ca)

## OCUFA Director's Report

### OCUFA Director's Report

The OCUFA Status of Women Committee hosted a one-day workshop in early May which explored challenges that women and members of other equity seeking groups experience in their academic careers. The workshop was organized after the Committee met with groups of women faculty on several Ontario university campuses. The Committee is now drafting a report documenting gender and other equity challenges faced by academics in OCUFA member associations.



May 21, 2012 is the deadline for nominations for the OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards. Nomination guidelines and forms can be found at: <http://ocufa.on.ca/ocufa-awards/teaching-and-academic-librarianship-award/>.

These awards are designed to honour those who have made an outstanding contribution to the quality of university education, either through teaching excellence or library service.

The next OCUFA Board meeting will be held June 2, 2012.

*Michelle Webber  
OCUFA Director  
Extension: 4411  
Email: [mwebber@brocku.ca](mailto:mwebber@brocku.ca)*

# The Links

Go to [www.bufa.ca](http://www.bufa.ca) for updates

## Recent PSE News

[CFI Announcement \(May 22, 2012\)](#)

[PSE overrun by administrators \(May 15, 2012\)](#)

[Fostering Good Mental Health in Ontario's PSE \(May 17, 2012\) \(.PDF\)](#)

[AIMS takes aim at PSE in Nova Scotia \(May 17, 2012\)](#)

[Academic Innovation at York \(May 16, 2012\)](#)

[COU launches connect universities with public campaign \(May 14, 2012\)](#)

[Canada places 3rd of 48 in PSE ratings \(May 11, 2012\)](#)

[Freedom of Speech and Non-academic Misconduct \(May 10, 2012\) \(.PDF\)](#)

[Wringing the Bell Curve \(May 9, 2012\)](#)

[Students Condemn StasCan Cuts \(May 9, 2012\)](#)

[Keyano College arts layoffs \(May 9, 2012\)](#)

[Academic Social Networks \(May 7, 2012\)](#)

[Student strike questions 'philosophy of education' \(May 5, 2012\)](#)

**Online Article:** Zabrodska, K., Linnell, S., Laws, C., & Davies, B. (2011). Bullying as intra-active process in neoliberal universities. Qualitative Inquiry, 17(8), 709-719 ([Go to Brock Library Online Catalogue](#))

[UVic Researchers Make Videos Reports for General Audiences \(May, 2012\)](#)

[StatsCan - Full-time Teaching Staff Salaries at Canadian Universities \(May, 2012\) \(.PDF\)](#)

[Innovation or Disruption? \(May 1, 2012\)](#)

[Harvard can't afford journals; encourages open-access publications \(April 24, 2012\)](#)

[Recruitment Ethics \(April 30, 2012\)](#)

[Innovative Teaching at Ontario Universities \(April 16, 2012\)](#)

[Testing Professors? \(April 23, 2012\)](#)

[Students may \(in some cases\) sue universities \(April 19, 2012\)](#)

[Relieving Student Stress \(April 18, 2012\)](#)

[Quebec government will talk with students \(April 16, 2012\)](#)

[CAUT to Monitor RMC \(April 15, 2012\)](#)

[University of Ottawa President's Office Reoccupied \(April 13, 2012\)](#)

[Students Question HEQCO's Research Practices \(April 12, 2012\)](#)

[Disposable Professors? \(April 5, 2012\)](#)

Reactions to the Federal Budget (April 3, 2012)

- [ACCC](#)
- [Polytechnics Canada](#)
- [Canadian Federation of Students](#)
- [Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences](#)

[Faculty Members Work Hard \(April 2, 2012\)](#)

## **Recent Other Associations' News**

[CAUT's statement on the law introduced in the Quebec National Assembly to stop the student strike \(May 18, 2012\)](#)

[CAUT's Statement on Homophobia and Transphobia - \(May 17, 2012\)](#)

[CAUT's letter on StatsCan discontinuing Full-time University and College Academic Staff Survey \(May 3, 2012\)](#)

[CAUT continues to question governance structure for the Balsillie School of International Affairs at Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University \(April 27, 2012\)](#)

[A Bad Deal: AUCC/Access Copyright Model License Agreement \(April 17, 2010\) \(.PDF\)](#)

[Deal Reached with York University \(April 13, 2012\)](#)

[Federal Budget 2012 CAUT Analysis \(March 30, 2012\) \(.PDF\)](#)

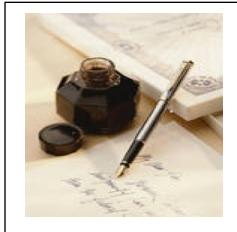
[CAUT Media Release on Federal Budget \(March 29, 2012\) \(.PDF\)](#)

***Joe Norris***

# Communications Commentary

## Communications Officer's Report

This year has been a year of change:



1) The website went through a major overhaul this year. The top bar contains all semi-permanent materials relevant to our membership. The collective agreement, our constitution and bylaws are easily found and we have put a 'face' to most of our executive. There is also a private section with membership logins. To date, 201 of our 574 members have changed their temporary password to a secure personal one. Members will be informed through email when items are posted to the secure site. The main section has a series of news feeds regarding post-secondary education, OCUFA Reports and news, news about other associations as well as our announcements and meeting times. News items are posted a few times a week and the page could be considered a weekly newsletter.

2) The website went through a major test during the CUPE strike and we received thanks from faculty, students and others for the many updates.

3) We tested the survey system and it exceeded expectations. The survey results regarding the CUPE strike follow on page 12.

4) The *BUFA Forum* has taken on a more updated look and is now distributed in electronic format only. Photos are now easy to include with no colour printing costs and hot links to other sites provide easy access.

5) Behind the scenes, the Public Relations Committee, Terrance Carroll, Joe Kushner, Glenys McQueen-Fuentes and Michelle Webber as well as the Executive provided wise council regarding the directions that we have taken this year and the committee greatly assisted in the hiring of *Future Access* to assist in the design and hosting of <http://www.bufa.ca>.

I thank the many who have assisted me this year and I pass the torch to Jonathan Younker the incoming Communications Officer as I replace Jonathan Neufeld, the outgoing Joint Health and Safety Officer as he heads into a sabbatical.

As part of our communication task, we are exploring ways of better informing the general public and elected officials about our positions and what we do.

**Joe Norris**  
**BUFA Communications Officer**  
**Extension: 3596**  
**Email: [jnorris@brocku.ca](mailto:jnorris@brocku.ca)**

## Web Survey Results about Communications of the CUPE 4027 Unit 3 Strike

**1) I found that BUFA provided enough information by to assist me in making an informed decision regarding the cancellation of classes.**

- 4      Strongly Disagree
- 5      Disagree
- 6      No Opinion
- 19**    Agree
- 7      Strongly Agree

**2) I found that BUFA provided information in a timely manner.**

- 3      Strongly Disagree
- 6      Disagree
- 0      No Opinion
- 19**    Agree
- 13**    Strongly Agree

**3) I found the amount of emails to be:**

- 6      Too Few
- 32**    Just Right
- 3      Too Many

**4) I visited the BUFA website for updates:**

- 18**    Not at all
- 19**    Occasionally
- 5      Often

**5) I recommended the BUFA website to others (includes students) for updates on the CUPE 4027 Unit 3 strike:**

- 24**    No
- 15**    Yes

**6) I use the following forms of mobile communication (check all that are appropriate):**

- 42**    Email
- 30**    Web updates
- 7      Facebook
- 6      Twitter

**7) Overall my satisfaction with BUFA's communication regarding the CUPE 4027 strike is:**

- 4      Strongly Dissatisfied
- 5      Dissatisfied
- 2      No Opinion
- 23**    Satisfied
- 8      Strong

## BUFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and STAFF CONTACT LIST

<b>President</b>	<b>Hans Skott-Myhre</b> Child and Youth Studies	<b>Extension 4323</b> <a href="mailto:hans.skott-myhre@brocku.ca">hans.skott-myhre@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Kathy Belicki</b> Psychology	<b>Extension 3873</b> <a href="mailto:kathy.belicki@brocku.ca">kathy.belicki@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Past President</b>	<b>Dawn Good</b> Psychology	<b>Extension 3869</b> <a href="mailto:dawn.good@brocku.ca">dawn.good@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Nancy Taber</b> Graduate and Undergraduate	<b>Extension 4218</b> <a href="mailto:nancy.taber@brocku.ca">nancy.taber@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Jonah Butovsky</b> Sociology/Labour Studies	<b>Extension 4371</b> <a href="mailto:jbutovsky@brocku.ca">jbutovsky@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Grievance Officer</b>	<b>Linda Rose-Krasnor</b> Psychology	<b>Extension 3870</b> <a href="mailto:linda.rose-krasnor@brocku.ca">linda.rose-krasnor@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Health and Safety Officer</b>	<b>Jonathan Neufeld</b> Graduate and Undergraduate	<b>Extension 3771</b> <a href="mailto:jonathan.neufeld@brocku.ca">jonathan.neufeld@brocku.ca</a>
<b>OCUFA Director</b>	<b>Michelle Webber</b> Sociology	<b>Extension 4411</b> <a href="mailto:mwebber@brocku.ca">mwebber@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Communications Officer</b>	<b>Joe Norris</b> Dramatic Arts	<b>Extension 3596</b> <a href="mailto:jnorris@brocku.ca">jnorris@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Non-tenured Faculty Representative</b>	<b>Debra Harwood</b> Graduate and Undergraduate	<b>Extension 5873</b> <a href="mailto:debra.harwood@brocku.ca">debra.harwood@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Professional Librarian Representative</b>	<b>Laurie Morrison</b> Liaison Services	<b>Extension 5281</b> <a href="mailto:lmorrison@brocku.ca">lmorrison@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Member-at-Large</b>	<b>Dragos Simandan</b> Geography	<b>Extension 5010</b> <a href="mailto:simandan@brocku.ca">simandan@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Member-at-Large</b>	<b>Jeannette Sloniowski</b> Communications, Popular Culture & Film	<b>Extension 4065</b> <a href="mailto:jeannette@brocku.ca">jeannette@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Executive Assistant</b>	<b>Leslie Dick (on leave)</b> BUFA Office, MC D402	<b>Extension 3268</b> <a href="mailto:ldick@brocku.ca">ldick@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Administrative Assistant to the Executive Committee</b>	<b>Shannon Lever</b> BUFA Office, MC D402	<b>Extension 4643</b> <a href="mailto:bufa@brocku.ca">bufa@brocku.ca</a> <a href="mailto:slever@brocku.ca">slever@brocku.ca</a>
<b>Office Assistant</b>	<b>Nadia Dufour</b> BUFA Office MC C409	<b>Extension 5378</b> <a href="mailto:ndufour@brocku.ca">ndufour@brocku.ca</a>
<b>BUFA Office fax number (905) 688-8256</b>		