

BUFA VOICE

Message from the President



Michelle Webber

On April 11, 2018, Senate voted to establish a subcommittee to examine the development of a policy on teaching evaluations for Brock University, following a generative discussion on this topic. Any potential action on teaching evaluations taken by Senate might ultimately lead to changes to your terms and conditions of work.

The BUFA Executive recognizes that student feedback on teaching is important and there needs to be a mechanism for providing such feedback. However, as research consistently demonstrates (e.g., Arbuckle & Williams, 2003; Basow, Codos & Martin, 2013; Boring, Ottoboni & Stark, 2016; Campbell, Gerdes & Steiner, 2005; MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015; Stark & Freishtat, 2014; Uttl, White & Gonzalez, 2016; Wolbring & Riordan, 2016), student ratings of teaching are neither fair nor valid evaluations of teaching. As OCUFA notes, “systemic discrimination based on gender, skin colour, and accent is a very real issue on Ontario’s campuses, and one of the places it manifests itself is in student questionnaire results”. This evidence-based conclusion about the bias in student ratings of teaching is one of the major reasons for CAUT’s position on such evaluations, as reflected in its Model Clause on the Evaluation of Teaching Performance (2017). Model clauses are researched by CAUT, approved by CAUT Council, and recommended for inclusion in Faculty Association Collective Agreements. Section 2.2 of this Model Clause indicates that “Anonymous commentary, regardless of how it is collected, shall not be seen or used by individuals other than the member” and in Section 2.6, “Student opinion surveys shall not be used for teaching performance evaluation”. Further, in Section 2.4, elements such as subject matter, class size, and instructor experience should be taken into consideration, as research demonstrates that student evaluations are affected by these factors. CAUT’s position on the use of student evaluations states “Because surveys of student opinion about teaching do not measure teaching effectiveness, and because research shows that they involve prejudices to the disadvantage of equity-seeking groups, student opinion surveys should not be used in any career procedures and decisions making involving staff.”

Our Collective Agreement Article 24.06(a) explicitly recognizes the importance of multiple ways of evaluating teaching. This diversity is reflected in the non-exhaustive list of evidence for the quality and effectiveness of teaching that should be recognized in support of tenure and promotion applications.

Any Brock policy on teaching evaluations must be consistent with this principle and recommendations for the use of student ratings must reflect their discriminatory, validity, and other limitations.

Student feedback on our teaching is useful for self-evaluation purposes. However, such flawed evaluation tools ought not to continue to be tied to career progression. There will be a call-out from Senate for participation on the committee, please consider volunteering. *Continued on next page...*

News and Views

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2018-2019 BUFA Committees

Each year members of the BUFA community fill critical positions on BUFA and University committees.



Positions are available within 4 categories of committees:

- Members on BUFA Committees
- BUFA Observers on Senate or University Committees
- Members on University Committees - joint appointment by BUFA & University
- Members on University Committees - BUFA Appointments

A list of each of the BUFA and University Committees and a description of their mandates (descriptions of Senate Committees can be found on the [University Senate website](#)) can be found on our website. Appointments may be for a two, three or four year term, depending on the position. The Collective Agreement (CA) specifically acknowledges service to the Union as equal to service to the University (Article 21.06) and that such service may be included in your Annual Report.

If you are interested, please contact: Dawn Good (BUFA Vice President) at dgood@brocku.ca or bufa@brocku.ca at your earliest convenience, but ideally before May 31, 2018, indicating your committee/position of choice. Questions may also be directed to bufa@brocku.ca.





2018 Provincial Election: *Making Sense of the Local Races*

Larry Savage

The 2018 Ontario provincial election will take place on **June 7, 2018** with plenty of opportunities for advance voting. Check with Elections Ontario for information on voting locations and times:

www.elections.on.ca/en.html

You can access the websites of the three major parties here:



Ontario Liberal Party

www.ontarioliberal.ca



Ontario Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario

www.ontariopc.ca



Ontario New Democratic Party

www.ontariondp.ca

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) will be compiling information on post-secondary issues in party platforms once every party has released details. You will be able to access that information at www.ocufa.on.ca.

In 2014, the Liberals won a majority government with 39% of the vote. The PCs finished second with 31% and the NDP took 24%. In Niagara, however, the NDP was the most popular party, winning 2 of 4 seats and capturing 35% of the vote, compared to 34% for the PCs and just 26% for the Liberals. Province-wide pre-election polls have the NDP and PCs up, and the Liberals down, from their 2014 results.

Niagara is divided into four provincial ridings. Here's a quick rundown on what the local races look like in each one:

•*St. Catharines*

This riding has been Liberal since 1977 and is home to the province's longest serving MPP, Jim Bradley. Bradley has served in several cabinet positions in several governments and is currently the Chair of Cabinet and Deputy Government House Leader. In 2014, he comfortably held onto his seat with the PC candidate finishing in second place. This time around, the PCs are running City Councillor Sandie Bellows who came within 1,700 votes of besting Bradley in 2011. The NDP is running St. Catharines City Councillor Jennie Stevens. She finished third in the same riding in 2014, capturing nearly 25% of the vote. This riding includes the entire city of St. Catharines with the exception of the neighbourhood of Western Hill and portions of the city south of Glendale Avenue.

•*Niagara Centre*

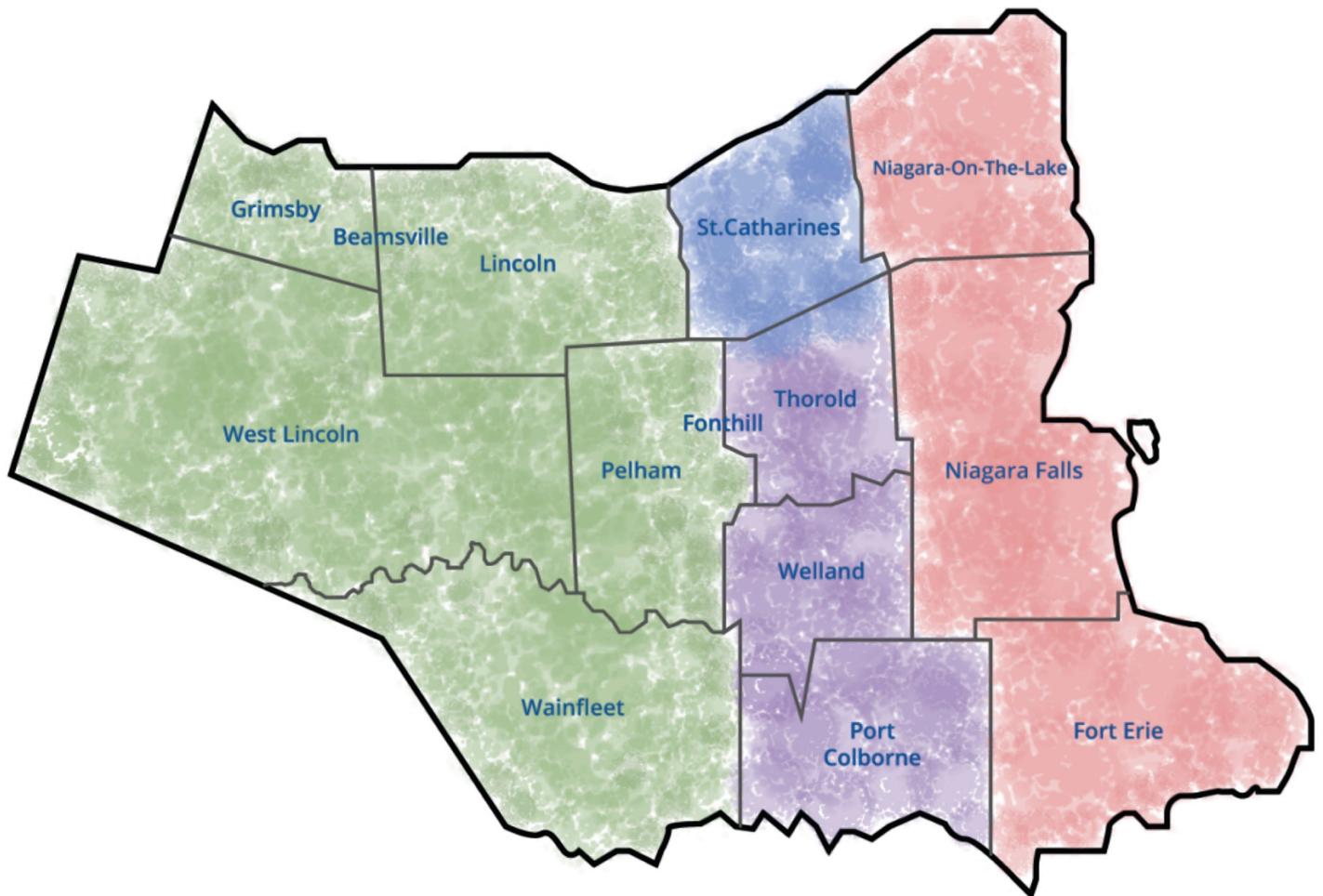
This riding is home to Brock University's main campus and has been represented provincially by the NDP since 1975. Earlier this year, two-term NDP MPP Cindy Forster announced her retirement from politics and former St. Catharines City Councillor and Niagara Folk Arts Executive Director Jeff Burch was chosen as the NDP candidate. Burch, a Brock graduate, is looking to hold the seat for the NDP. The PCs are likely to mount the strongest challenge. They are running Wainfleet Mayor and Regional Councillor April Jeffs. The Liberals are running Benoit Mercier, a teacher and the Executive Director of the French Catholic School Boards Association. Mercier was also a candidate in this riding in both 2011 and 2014, finishing a distant third in each election. This riding includes the municipalities of Welland, Thorold, Port Colborne, the Western Hill neighbourhood of St. Catharines, and other portions of St. Catharines south of Glendale Avenue.

•*Niagara Falls*

This riding is currently represented by NDP MPP Wayne Gates, a former Niagara Falls City Councillor and United Way Campaign Chair. Gates was first elected in a 2014 by-election and re-elected with a much larger vote total in the 2014 general election. Gates' main challenger is Chuck McShane, Past President of the Niagara Home Builders Association. Dean Demizio, an insurance agent and former president of the Greater Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce, is running for the Liberals. This riding features the clearest two-way race in the region with the NDP and PCs as the top challengers. The Liberals captured less than 15% of the vote here in 2014 – one of the worst Liberal results in the province. This riding includes the municipalities of Niagara Falls, Niagara-On-The-Lake, and Fort Erie.

•*Niagara West*

This riding is represented by PC MPP Sam Oosterhoff, first elected in a 2016 by-election to replace former PC leader Tim Hudak. Oosterhoff is also a student at Brock and the youngest MPP in Ontario's history. He is being challenged by another Brock student, Curtis Fric, who is running for the NDP. The Liberals have yet to name a candidate. Niagara West is considered a PC stronghold. While the Liberals finished a distant second to the PCs in the 2014 provincial election, it was the NDP that managed to capture second place in the 2016 by-election that elected Oosterhoff. This riding includes the municipalities of Pelham, Wainfleet, Lincoln, West Lincoln, and Grimsby.



Niagara West	
2014 Election Result:	
	48%
	25%
	20%
OTHERS	7%

Niagara Centre	
2014 Election Result:	
	48%
	27%
	20%
OTHERS	5%

St. Catharines	
2014 Election Result:	
	41%
	29%
	25%
OTHERS	5%

Niagara Falls	
2014 Election Result:	
	47%
	33%
	14%
OTHERS	6%

Call for BUFA Committee Membership

BUFA COMMITTEES

Grievance Panel
Hiring Advice Committee
Pension Committee
Benefits & LTD Committee
Equity Committee
Budget Advisory

OBSERVERS on SENATE or UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

Academic Review Committee
Planning, Priorities and Budget Advisory Committee
Information, Technology and Infrastructure
Student Appeals Board
Governance Committee
Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee
Research and Scholarship Policy Committee
Teaching and Learning Policy Committee
Undergraduate Program Committee
Graduate Studies Committee

REPRESENTATIVES on UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

Parking Appeals

JOINT BUFA/UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEES

Joint Benefits & Long-Term Disability Advisory
Joint Timetabling Committee
Health and Safety (each campus)

JOINTLY APPOINTED BUFA/UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

Academic Leaves
Employment Equity
Tenure & Promotion (a committee for each Faculty)
Tenure and Promotion Appeals

What might the 2018 Ontario Budget mean for university faculty?

A PLAN FOR CARE AND OPPORTUNITY



On March 28, the 2018 Ontario Budget was tabled. Given the upcoming election, it is widely understood that this is as much a campaign platform document as a budget. While the continued implementation of reforms to student assistance in this year's budget are expected to further improve access for students, faculty are concerned that operating funding for universities remains stagnant, threatening the high-quality education students expect and deserve.

The lack of increased funding to support the government's stated goals of providing fairness for contract faculty and encouraging faculty renewal is disappointing. Operating funding over the next three years is now on track to decline slightly (by 0.1%), which, when adjusted for inflation and enrolment, amounts to an even larger reduction in funding. Ontario's universities already receive the lowest per-student funding in Canada and this budget will leave our province further behind.

The changes to student assistance announced in 2016 continue to be implemented, with parental and spousal contributions reduced as expected in the 2018 budget. This will result in more students qualifying for the grants and loans they need to afford the cost of tuition fees, which continue to increase. Investments in access are welcome, but they must be matched with operating investments in quality that support improved student-faculty ratios, smaller class sizes, full-time faculty hiring, and fairness for contract faculty. Investments in quality were missing from this year's budget.

Postsecondary-related budget announcements that will be of interest to faculty include:

- Funding new labour laws: A one-time "support quality programs and student outcomes" fund is allocated in 2018-19, including \$32 million for universities and \$125 million for colleges. While not specified in the budget, it is our understanding that these funds are intended to fund implementation of new labour laws passed in *Bill 148, Fair*

OCUFA

Workplaces, Better Jobs Act. In the university sector, we understand that it is expected to fund a portion of the cost of new minimum wage, vacation pay, and leave provisions, but no funding has yet to be allocated to support the implementation of new equal pay provisions. It is also concerning that this funding has only been allocated for a single year, since supporting fair working conditions will require ongoing investment in Ontario's universities.

- **Experiential learning and labour market focused programming:** A new Talent Advantage Fund will provide \$132 million over three years to support programming that is responsive to the needs of students and the labour market, including partnerships with employers to provide more experiential learning opportunities, dual curriculum programs that partner with employers, and increasing STEM grads by 25 per cent. An additional \$12 million has been allocated to support the Career Ready Fund, which was established in 2017 to support experiential learning.
- **Capital funding:** A new investment of \$500 million over ten years starting in 2020–21 is targeted at helping to renew and modernize Ontario's university and college campuses. Two-thirds of this funding is expected to be allocated to universities. This is part of a \$3 billion commitment over ten years to capital funding for postsecondary education, which includes facilities renewal and major capacity expansion funding, announced in previous budgets.
- **Mental health:** A portion of the \$2.1 billion investment in mental health services over four years will be dedicated to postsecondary education. The annual \$6 million investments in on-campus student mental health services announced in the 2017 Ontario Budget will continue.
- **International strategy:** An Internationalization Fund has been announced, but no money has been allocated in this budget to support it. Once funded, the strategy will aim to support programming to enhance students' international competencies and knowledge, study-abroad scholarships for domestic students, bolster support services for international students, expand support for students with social service and settlements needs, and promote French-language institutions in Ontario as study destinations.

Other ongoing initiatives were also noted in the budget, including continued support for eCampusOntario's Open Textbooks Library and continued progress towards the proclamation of a French-language university.

This budget also included the expansion of OHIP+ prescription drug coverage to seniors, which will result in cost savings for benefit plans that provide drug coverage for employees over 65 or retirees. Through negotiations, this could lead to benefit improvements or premium reductions for faculty associations.

Overall, this budget leaves important faculty concerns unaddressed. Following the June 7 election, OCUFA will continue working with the new government to advocate for re-investments in universities to support improvements in per-student funding levels; establish a more robust consultative process for Strategic Mandate Agreements; ensure core operating grants are not linked to performance metrics; establish funding to support fairness for contract faculty, including equal pay; and develop a faculty renewal strategy that supports full-time faculty hiring.

Once the full platforms of all three parties are released, OCUFA will provide a more detailed analysis of those documents to you.



If you have any questions about the 2018 Ontario Budget, please contact Brynne at bsinclair-waters@ocufa.on.ca.



2018 RECIPIENTS

*Jonathan Brower,
Social Justice & Equity Studies*

and

*Lisa Whittingham,
Child & Youth Studies*

Calendar of Events at Brock and in the Community (Visit us online for more information)



Up close and in motion (2018)
Rodman Hall Art Centre
An exhibition of selected items from the permanent collection presenting local artists of national significance whose works recall local history, culture, and geography. Curated by Visual Arts Alumna, Emma German. Free community event!

June 7, 2018: www.elections.on.ca



CANAL DAYS FESTIVAL
PORT COLBORNE - EST. 1979
August 3-6, 2018

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CANADA DAY

July 1, 2018
Community Events

Niagara Falls: Fireworks & Live Entertainment in Queen Victoria Park

St. Catharines: Port Dalhousie Lions Club Fireworks, near Lakeside Park

Niagara-on-the-Lake with the Friends of Fort George and Parks Canada

Pelham: Celebration at Harold Black Park



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