# the FAbric

# UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND FACULTY ASSOCIATION

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# State of the Union President's Report

More than a year ago, Mike Arfken crafted the end-of-year President's Report in which he remarked upon a sudden turn of events. FA President Nola Etkin had recently accepted an Interim Dean position and Mike, as VP, stepped in to serve as President for the last few months of her term. Writing just three weeks into his new role, he wondered what he could convey in order to accurately capture the state of the Association at that time. But he persevered, and ably so, by reminding us of the centrality of our labour to the academic mission of our University and the importance of community and solidarity to our collective welfare.

One year and a month into the role of President, my task of describing the condition of the Association seems equally as challenging as was Mike's, if for somewhat different reasons. It has been a "large" year for the FA, as they say on the Island, and to attempt to describe the magnitude, completeness, and nuance of that statement is impossible in such limited space. Nevertheless, there are themes of activity that can be delineated: Association infrastructure, Membership outreach and engagement, defense and advocacy in support of Members, and the consequences of COVID.

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Association Infrastructure

We began the Association's 2019-20 year with one full-time staff person and an additional part-time person. By late summer, owing to a temporary leave by Heather Penny, our Professional Officer and Office Manager, and a resignation by Kate Burka in order to accept a last-minute teaching appointment out-of-province, the Association had no staff. We struggled through



UPEIFA President, Sharon Myers

for a couple of months until Beth Robichaud joined us part-time to keep the basic office infrastructure running, a feat made all the more challenging by a persistent problem with our email system at that time, a problem that sometimes undermined our ability to communicate with the Membership.

We owe tremendous thanks to Kate for the excellent work she performed on numerous projects, including updating Membership lists and compiling some data that laid bare an important equity issue in our Membership. And there are barely words to describe how grateful we are to Beth who walked into an office cold, with no training in the job, and a brand-new President in place who had little sense of how the office ran or even what needed to be done and when. Beth's perseverance and "let me see if I can figure it out" approach got us through the following months in one piece.

Thankfully, Heather was able to return to us this winter and has reintroduced her valuable understanding of what needs to be done and when. She knows the scope of the job, keeps the day-to-day running of the office flowing smoothly, and I am very grateful for the skill and experience she brings to us each day. Welcome back,

Heather, and thank you for all you do.

Last year also saw the retirement of the Association's long-serving Treasurer. Larry Hale has now taken on the role and has modernized our approach to financial record keeping and systems. Concurrently, the UPEI Administration severed its financial arrangement with the FA, which had previously allowed us to use the University's payroll system, group benefits program, etc., for our staff. Larry took up his role as Treasurer just as migrations to new payroll platforms and benefits providers were happening, and navigated a way through these challenges with skill, good humour, and dedication.

The final item I will mention concerning Association infrastructure concerns the long-telegraphed Faculty Lounge project. Some of you might remember that, a few years ago, discussions were under way between the FA and Administration to shift control of the Faculty Lounge to the FA. A draft memorandum operationalizing that shift has existed for a number of months and both parties are agreeable to signing it. The challenge – and it proved to be a significant challenge – was trying to secure FA-held insurance for the Lounge and its operations. Happily, this has at long last been secured, a draft insurance policy exists, but we are waiting to sign until the Administration is certain it does not require the space for teaching this fall. Once the hold is released, the space is ours to renovate and do with it what we will.

Being academics, however, we wanted to gather some *evidence* to guide the direction of the Lounge project. To that end, the FA applied for and received a Summer Jobs grant from the Government of Canada. This will permit us to hire a youth for eight weeks who will survey Members about preferential uses for the Lounge, model a few possibilities for use, and draft a business plan. You can expect to see this survey shortly, and please participate in it when you do.

#### Membership Outreach and Engagement

Last summer, Members of the FA Executive, the Social Committee, and the Communications Committee participated in CAUT's Membership Engagement Workshop, which was held on campus. Among the consequences of that were a number of "all committees" meetings where we drew together those serving on FA committees and presented some ideas about Membership outreach, communications, and community building. Those

of you who have received a visit (in person or virtual) from a "door knocker" reminding you of an event, or the need to participate in a survey such as the bargaining survey, or asking you to vote for a contract extension will have seen one of several outcomes of those processes.

The FA also hosted a number of important visitors to campus. You might also remember that, in advance of collective bargaining, Laura Lozanski, CAUT's Health and Safety Officer, visited campus to talk about a workload survey we were going to conduct along with our friends in CUPE 1870 and CUPE 501. That survey has been paused owing to the direction collective bargaining took this year, but we will reactivate that project in the lead-up to the next round of bargaining. Laura's visit followed that of David Robinson, Executive Director of CAUT, who spoke to the Membership about academic freedom at our fall General Meeting. Additionally, the FA co-sponsored with DSJS and Administration a presentation by Dr. Malinda Smith on equity, diversity, and inclusion in Canadian universities. In February, and again this week in the context of international and local actions protesting anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, the FA's Equity Committee and Executive Committee delivered a letter to Administration calling for an EDI-focussed environmental scan of Faculty, staff and students. This was one of Dr. Smith's central arguments: we must first know who we are, and from there work toward a more just workplace and society. Additionally, this week, we have argued that the vital work of EDI, paused at the onset of the COVID crisis, is too important to stay paused and must resume immediately.

A new website has also been created and you can find that (I hope by the time this is published) at upeifa.ca; note we have transitioned away from upeifa.org. The design is much improved, the underlying structure easier to manage for our Communications Committee and office staff, and, importantly, there are new resources posted there for new Faculty and Librarians, and for Sessional Instructors, with more to come. We welcome your feedback, both in terms of site design but also in terms of additional resources we can craft, and content more generally. You may also have noticed an increased number of postings to our Twitter and Facebook feeds, which seem to have driven an increase in the number of subscribers to those platforms.

Each of these ventures has been important, but community engagement happens in less formal ways, too, and is often Membership-driven. We have noted, for example, increased turnout for Faculty Times and Coffee Times this past year, your wonderful participation in the FA video tribute to our graduating students, and your generous support of struggling students through the FA4FB food bank campaign last week, which we estimate brought in more than 1,000 pounds of food. In significant measure, I think, this participation and engagement is only partly about the FA Executive reaching out to Members, and more about Members reaching in to our shared sense of community and your desire to help to build and sustain that, to support one another, and our students, too.

#### Defense and Advocacy in Support of Members

Over the past year, FA grievance officers, Chief Grievance Officer Mike Arfken, and I have supported and advocated on behalf of Members across a diverse range of issues. These have included, but by no means been limited to: a workplace investigation and the consequences of that for a Faculty, a scholarly integrity investigation which found firmly in favour of our Member, workload calculation issues that have resulted in retroactive overload pay for a number of term faculty, forcing adherence to faculty:student practicum ratios, the provision of 6% in lieu of benefits for Sessional Instructors wrongly denied that, and accommodating processes in light of conflicts of interest. For the most part, these and other problems or violations of the Collective Agreement have been corrected through constructive conversations outside of the formal grievance process. There were, of course, exceptions, particularly in relation to a collection of grievances at the AVC that are now positioned to proceed to arbitration. In recent years, our arbitration cases have centred almost exclusively on AVC, a concerning pattern that in part occasioned a workplace scan, a subsequent report, and a meeting between the Executive Director of CAUT, the University President, and the FA President this past fall.

Grievance Officers have been kept busy this year supporting Members through the Fair Treatment process, both as complainants and respondents. In some instances, complaints emerge from students, but more often they reflect interpersonal and departmental-level conflicts.

Remember that FA representatives are available to offer advice and respond to violations of the Collective Agreement. But we are also available to discuss concerns regarding your work and workplace more generally. Please reach out if you need assistance or guidance.

#### The consequences of COVID-19

I've produced various letters and communication pieces responding to the consequences of COVID-19, and these have been distributed to Members. I encourage you to read those. The most recent communication was an edition of the FAbric: Microfibre Edition, distributed by email the week before last. Therein you will find "news you can use," or a collection of updates on a fraction of the issues we are addressing on behalf of Members. While we have been able to get some traction on some issues in the days since the emergency pivot in March, the responses from Administration are incomplete and, in some cases, unsatisfactory. We will persist in terms of advocating on your behalf, and I will say more on this theme at our AGM on June 23. Additionally, you will soon receive a survey designed to make sure we are capturing your concerns more systematically, but also to help us to understand the scale of concern around various items so that we can shape our efforts accordingly.

To date, the most significant consequence in terms of the FA response to COVID-19 concerned collective bargaining. As you know, 97% of the Membership elected to extend the current collective agreement, including an extension of annual financial increases. To this was added a significant increase in Sessional stipends over the course of the two years. This means that all other issues are paused, at least in terms of formal negotiations, until 2022. Nevertheless, we will call meetings of the Joint Committee to address a number of issues that cannot be delayed until then and, if left unresolved, may result in significant grievances or unfair labour practice complaints.

On the whole, and looking at the bargaining landscape across Canada and at UPEI, this approach seems to have been wise. Some other FAs are now seeking extensions to their agreements, too, others are pausing bargaining, and others appear to be wrapping up before the consequences of an anxiety-ladened fall enrollment might be registered. I'm happy to convey that the extension that we negotiated with Administration has also been offered to the two CUPE units on campus as well as IBEW, with a modification; they have been offered one-year extensions.

The impacts of COVID-19 are felt by each of us in ways that are similar to those of our colleagues but also unique to our personal experiences and situations. I know that the "pivot" to remote teaching in March demanded a tremendous amount of labour and adjustment from each

of us. In that "emergency" context we managed, if for some it felt like we were hanging on by our fingernails ... on a good day. I think often of colleagues who suddenly found themselves moving three courses online, working from home with inadequate technology, all while caring for and sometimes trying to homeschool children. I think about colleagues who live alone and whose daily social connections and human company is attached to their lives on campus, but who found themselves isolated at home. I think about colleagues who are designated essential, who continued to work on campus while trying to juggle the absence of childcare and mitigate risks to their health and that of their families. I think about all who are and have been worried or so darn tired, and about those who are frustrated and perhaps increasingly angry. I hear that growing frustration in conversations with some of you lately, in the email prose of others of you. And at the end of the day, I think this is at the root of what I'm hearing: we want to do our jobs well, we understand the challenging circumstances we are in, but we need and deserve appropriate supports, we need and deserve open and effective communication, and we need to be treated fairly. For some, this means a Sessional contract in hand now so that you know your investment of time in preparing an online course is not for naught. For others, this is increased professional and technical support for online teaching. For some, it is clarity around what teaching is permissible f2f and why X is permitted but not Y. For others, it concerns use of PDTR vs. a commitment of University resources to provide the tools we need to teach. The questions and pleas for fairness are both individual and collective. And the work of the FA is squarely focused on communicating your messages to Administration and advocating in your, and our, collective favour.

In Solidarity,

Sharon Myers, President, UPEIFA



# **Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday June 23, 2020

Time: 2-4pm, Virtually (details will be sent to all members email)

# The Reports

Under the Association's Bylaws, the Chair or Co-chairs of each of the Association's committees is obliged to report to the Membership on its activities at least once a year. What follows are the reports of those committees as well as reports from our representatives and delegates on various other committees.

So grab a beverage and a bowl of your favourite snack and get ready for some of the best reportin' you're ever going to read.

# **Communications Committee Report**

by Richard Raiswell (Co-Chair)

The Communications Committee is responsible for the Association's website and social media acconts and disseminating the annual reports of the FA's various commmittees by producing an annual issue of *the FAbric*.

As Sharon announced in her "State of the Union" report, a subgroup of the Communications Committee spent much of the term completely overhauling the FA's website. This has been a major undertaking. I would like to thank Nia Phillips, Kim Mears and Chris Vessey for all their toil on this front. The reworked website will prove much easier to maintain and update and so will serve Members much more effectively.

Elected members of the 2019/20 Communications Committee were Sharon Myers (co-chair), Laurie Brinklow (FAbric editor), Nia Phillips, Chris Vessey, Kim Mears and Ariana Patey. I sincerely thank the members of this year's Committee for their dedication, tireless toil and good cheer.

# **Equity Committee Report**

by Margot Rejskind (Chair)

This year, the Equity Committee completed two key tasks: the drafting of a Dependant Care Travel Policy for the FA, which lays out reimbursement guidelines for dependant care costs incurred by members who travel on behalf of the FA; and the writing of a letter to the UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Committee, commenting on the process for developing a strategic plan for EDI across campus. While the Committee members very much support the development of such a plan, we raised a number of concerns, most particularly about the develop-

ment process itself, which it was felt did not include enough time for a robust investigation of EDI issues experienced by members of the campus community; we therefore recommended that they slow the process in order to allow a more in-depth, consultative process.

This committee had been relatively inactive in the last few years since several of its members were also on the Joint Equity Committee. However, we are looking forward to providing more support and commentary in the coming year to the various campus committees, particularly as the UPEI EDI Strategic Plan is developed.

### **CAUT Equity Conference Report**

by Margot Rejskind

As Chair of the FA Equity Committee, in February 2020 I attended the CAUT Equity Conference "Organizing for Equity: Skills for Activists" in Ottawa. The three-day workshop-based conference was attended by more than 100 union and administration representatives from across Canada.

While there were plenary sessions reviewing the current state of the battle for equity from the legal and historical standpoints, the core of the conference was a series of workshops intended to develop the skills with which to advance the cause of equity in all of our activities as an FA. In particular, I attended sessions on Collective Bargaining for Equity; Grievance Arbitration for Equity; Communicating Equity Effectively; and Campaigns – Engaging and Mobilizing Academic Staff for Equity. This final topic was the focus of the majority of the conference, fully one-and-a half days.

The key takeaways for me were:

- The advancement of equity should never be done through the collective bargaining process one cannot "negotiate" human rights, and the give-and-take of the bargaining table is ill-suited to the task of identifying rights. Enshrining and protecting rights in the collective agreement is the final step in the process of achieving equity.
- Grievance and arbitration are good tools for achieving greater equity over the course of a Collective Agreement, as well as for signalling an appetite on the part of the union for taking on Equity-related issues; but it can be an expensive, long-winded, and uncertain path.
- Equity is built and rights are enshrined through effective communication not only with the employer,

but more crucially with Association members, as well as with members of other unions on campus. Building a united front across the community is key to putting pressure on the employer to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion for everyone on campus.

- Effective communication and mobilization take time, effort, and should be continuous over years – not just something done in the run-up to bargaining.

The final day was devoted to putting all of these principles into practice with a session in which we considered a fictionalized scenario through all of the above lenses. I have since begun to adapt the communications and mobilization strategies to be used at UPEI by the FA, and I am hopeful that the FA will be able to bring that campaign to fruition in the coming months.

# Awards and Scholarships Committee Report

by Charlene VanLeeuwen (Chair)

The Awards and Scholarships Committee oversees awards and scholarships that are sponsored and co-sponsored by the Faculty Association, as well as the events celebrating FA award recipients. As Chair, I was capably assisted this year by committee members Cora Gilroy, Nino Antadze, Barry Linkletter, Shafiqul Islam, Nasser Saad, and Nadja Bressen. In addition to the usual activities related to the awards and scholarships for students and members of the FA, this year the Committee recommended the inclusion of Librarians for the Scholarly Achievement Award.

The 2019 entrance scholarship recipients and medalists were recognized at an FA Time which took place in the AVC Learning Commons on March 13. Our Entrance Scholarship recipients were Emma Seviour and Alisa Wiedemer. The recipients of the Undergraduate Medals were Bronze Medal - Zackery Montreuil; Silver Medal - William Taylor-Melanson; and Gold Medal - Liam Payne. The Graduate Medals were awarded to Emily Pope - Masters Medal, and Logan MacIntyre - Doctoral Medal. Many of the student recipients were present and spoke to the group, sharing their appreciation for the support and recognition provided through the FA. The entrance scholarships and medal awards are funded entirely by the Faculty Association, including through individual contributions by members (frequently through payroll deduction). If you are interested in supporting our student awards, payroll deduction forms are available through

Heather Penny in the FA office (<u>upeifa@upeifa.org</u>) or on the new FA website (<u>www.upeifa.ca</u>).

Despite the disruptions we have all experienced, activity to recognize the efforts of our members continued. We draw your attention to the recent announcement of our Faculty Association Award recipients for 2020.

#### Merit Awards for Outstanding Service

- Vicki Johnston, Department of Psychology and University 1000, Faculty of Arts
- James Randall, Island Studies, Faculty of Arts

#### Merit Award for Scholarly Achievement

- Aitazaz Farooque, Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering
- Trung Dung Ngo, Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering
- John VanLeeuwen, Department of Health Management, Atlantic Veterinary College

#### Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching

- Susan Graham, Faculty of Business
- Richard Raiswell, Department of History and Classics, Faculty of Arts



We would not be able to celebrate the accomplishments of our students and colleagues without the service of quite a few people. The three subcommittees that adjudicate nominations for our FA awards are highly valued for the careful consideration they give to these nominations and we really appreciate their contributions. This year the Merit Award for Scholarly Achievement Subcommittee was chaired by Sanda Badescu in the Fall Semester for the adjudication of the graduate student medals; James Polson took over in the Winter Semester. Gloria McInnis-Perry, Gary Evans, Anne Marie Fitzgerald, Spencer Greenwood, and Esther Wohlgemut (Winter semester) are the other members of this subcommittee. Henrik Stryhn is chairing the Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching Subcommittee, and is joined by Amy MacFarlane, Kate Scarth, Chris Vessey, Charlene VanLeeuwen, Libby Osgoode, and Janet MacIntyre. Our third subcommittee for the Merit Award for Outstanding Service is chaired by Simon Lloyd, joined by Zain Esseghaier, Gail Macartney, Stevan Springer, Ann Braithwaite, Michelle Evason, and Raquel Hoersting. Thank you for the time and care each of you dedicate to these subcommittees and we are looking forward to celebrating this year's recipients.

In the coming year, please consider nominating a deserving colleague for one of our awards. We know there are many at UPEI. Finally, we promise to reschedule the Faculty Recognition Celebration as soon as we can.

# Research and Advocacy Committee Report

by Carlo Lavoie (Co-Chair)

The UPEIFA Research and Advocacy Committee is tasked by the Executive with completing research and making recommendations on issues being discussed by the Executive. In addition, the Committee serves an advocacy function to external groups and organizations, and to governments.

During the past year, the Committee supported the Negotiating Team by gathering information and clarifications on matters encompassed in UPEI's internal documents and from the collective agreements of our comparator universities. Committee members for 2019-2020 were Brian Wagner (co-chair), Shafiqul Islam, Justin Kakeu, James Polson, Rebecca Reed-Jones, Jean Mitchell, and Carlo Lavoie (co-chair).

#### Senior Grievance Officer Forum

by Michael Arfken

Every December, representatives from the various faculty associations across Canada descend on Ottawa for the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Forum for Senior Grievance Officers. The aim is to bring grievance officers together to discuss the most pressing labour issues of the day and to provide a space for exploring the challenges we face enforcing our various collective agreements. This year we focused on the Academic Grievance. According to the CAUT agenda:

The academic workplace is uniquely characterized by academic freedom, collegial governance, and the job processes and protections associated with peer-based determinations of promotion and tenure. Through presentations, plenary discussions, and small group sessions, the 2019 CAUT Forum for Senior Grievance Officers will explore recent and longstanding issues associated with the distinct aspects of academic staff employment.

The presentations at the forum dealt with both concrete grievance situations and the case law surrounding academic freedom and intramural/extramural speech, custody and control over our academic materials, collegial governance, precarity, and academic misconduct. This year, I had the honour of giving a presentation on the unique challenges of academic misconduct grievances drawing on a specific case from the UPEI context.

As always, the forum is an excellent opportunity to learn both from experts in the field and grievance officers who are often dealing with many of the same issues that we face at UPEI. As a grievance officer, it is extremely rejuvenating to spend time with colleagues from other institutions who bring a fresh perspective on many of the issues that we encounter on a day-to-day basis.

# Negotiations Report

by Doug Dahn (Chief Negotiator)

During the fall of 2019 the UPEIFA executive reviewed the collective agreement, a membership survey was held, and executive and bargaining team members met with various constituencies within the Faculty Association. Thanks to all who participated. Based on this input, a bargaining position was prepared and was approved at the UPEIFA general meeting on December 3. The bargaining team then began drafting proposed collective agreement language in preparation for bargaining. A lot of time and

hard work went into this, and I thank team members Melissa Belvadi, Udo Krautwurst, and Rebecca Reed-Jones for their effort and dedication. We also had important help from the Research and Advocacy committee and several other FA members, who helped find the information we needed to craft our proposals.

Face-to-face negotiations with the Employer's team were due to start in April, but before they could begin, the CO-VID-19 pandemic hit. Given the disruption and uncertainty caused by the pandemic some sort of delay in bargaining was inevitable. Discussions between the Association President and the University President led to a proposal that the existing collective agreement be extended, with a continuation of the annual salary scale increases (2% per year) which had been in the previous agreement. The length of the extension was set at two years, a compromise acceptable to both parties. The Association was also able to get an additional increase to the Sessional stipend effective in June. The agreement was ratified by the UPEIFA membership and by the Board of Governors, and a Memorandum of Agreement was signed on April 17.

Although the full collective agreement will not be renegotiated for another two years, I am confident that the preparatory work done by the bargaining team will not be wasted. The University may have changed a great deal by then, but I am sure that with some modifications and updates the proposals we prepared will be a useful starting point for the FA team in the next round. 7



Shelves at the campus foodbank following the FA4FB drive. The drive, held 8-12 June, brought in more than 1,000 lbs of food!

# CAUT Libraries & Archivists' Conference Report

by Kim Mears

With support from the UPEI Faculty Association (FA), I welcomed the opportunity to attend the 2019 CAUT Librarians' & Archivists' Conference on 25-26 October 2019 in Ottawa. The theme of the meeting was "Navigating the Reorganisation." For someone new to a union environment, this conference happened at the perfect time. The UPEI FA was soon to begin negotiations for our new Collective Agreement and I used knowledge gained at this conference to jumpstart conversations with my fellow librarians in advance of meetings with the FA's negotiation team.

The best parts of the conference were the breakout discussions during the first day and role-playing exercises on the second day. The breakout sessions allowed attendees to speak openly about their experiences with reorganisations and the changing (and increasing!) roles of librarians and archivists. Trends in librarian roles within a university have shifted to include functional service areas, as well as liaison and subject areas. This is reflected in librarian roles at the Robertson Library. In my role as a Scholarly Communications and Health Sciences Librarian, the functional areas within my portfolio include managing IslandScholar (faculty profiles and citations), Pressbooks (a publishing platform), and our data repository (data.upei.ca) while also balancing instruction sessions, collections development, and research projects within my liaison areas (Biology, Environmental Studies, Kinesiology, Nursing, Nutritional Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine). This is a challenge that I have heard from my librarian and archivist colleagues across Canada.

I left the conference with two main takeaways: it is important to include librarians and archivists in collegial governance, and librarians need to take an active role in shaping governance structures. I look forward to being an active member of UPEI's FA.

# Social Committee Report

by Michael Arfken (Co-Chair)

In an effort to build relationships and solidarity across campus, the UPEIFA Social Committee organizes regular events for our membership throughout the academic year. Since September 2019, we have held a number of coffee and Faculty Association (FA) times. Once again we held

our holiday party at the Culinary Institute which was well-attended despite the inclement weather. Winners of the FA Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals as well as recipients of the FA Entrance Scholarship were honoured at an FA time this year. Committee members this year were Sobia Ali-Faisal, Raquel Hoersting, Jim Sentance, Pamela Bastante, and Laurie Brinklow. This year we are proud to welcome Michelle Evason (AVC) to the committee. A special thanks goes out to Susan Brown who served as co-chair for a number of years and has decided to step down for the coming year.

Given the uncertainty around COVID-19, we will be working to develop novel and interesting ways to keep our Association together even when it becomes necessary to stay apart. More to come soon!

### **UPEIFA Executive**

#### **President:**

Sharon Myers (History)

#### Vice-President:

Miike Arfken (Psychology)

#### Treasurer:

Larry Hale (Biology)

#### Members-at-Large:

Andrea Bourque (Pathology and Microbiology)

Douglas Dahn (Physics)

Simon Lloyd (Library)

Margot Rejskind (Music)

Charlene VanLeeuwen (Applied Human Sciences)

#### **UPEIFA Office Manager/Professional Officer:**

Heather Penny

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