



ACCUEO

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY
OMBUDSPERSONS

September 2020

We continue half a year unified and strong since this world pandemic began. Our work with students, faculty and administrative staff remains focused on keeping our institutions fair and accountable to their community. Our care for each other and our global neighbours is vital. Reach out to your ombuds colleagues, near and far, whenever you can. Keep connected.

Website: accuo.ca

ACCUEO Membership Dues are Overdue The renewal forms have been revised and the payment process will be expedited if you follow instructions by Treasurer Alexia Wright. Check accuo.ca to complete this process or contact Alexia at alexiaaw@nait.ca for assistance.

ACCUEO Executive Changes

We have three ombuds stepping into positions on the ACCUEO Executive for 2020-2021. Martine Conway has stepped down from her role on the ACCUEO Executive but continues as the ACCUEO Chair for a future FCO/ACCUEO conference and serves on the ENOHE Board. Julie Boncompain joined to fill this vacancy as a regional representative after the AGM in June. Anita Pouliot retired as ACCUEO Treasurer, and Alexia Wright moved into the Treasurer position under Anita's careful training and mentorship. ACCUEO thanks Anita and Alexia for their hard work over the summer to transition to a new banking location. Carolyn Brendon stepped down from her regional role on the ACCUEO Executive in late August due to work commitments; however,

Carolyn remains a member of the FCO Board, and works on various ACCUO sub-committees, most recently joining Annette Fraser and Laura Reid to implement website changes as recommended in Nora Farrell’s review earlier in the year. Emma Thacker has joined as a regional representative this September. Biographies on our three new Executive members follow.

Julie Boncompain while in her ombuds role at Concordia University, joined our ACCUO Executive as a Regional Representative following the AGM in June. Julie continues to play a strong role as Chair of our International Relations Committee, working on the ENOHE and ACCUO planning committee for Athens before we had to postpone the event. She has strengthened our higher education links to Africa and Latin America. Most recently, she has taken a strong role in organizing the ad hoc committee on EDI this summer. A more detailed biography on Julie follows later in this issue as she announces a new role in her ombuds career.



Alexia Wright

Alexia Wright, Ombudsperson (NAIT) is ACCUO’s new Treasurer. “In my current role I get to do things I am passionate about which include helping students navigate a complex system and providing conflict coaching. I joined ACCUO’s executive team in July as treasurer and I hope to interact with all of you in the near future. As I am new to the Ombuds role, I look forward to sharing and learning with you over the coming months.....On a personal note, I am currently enjoying spending time with my partner and son envisioning and planning what our new home will look like. It is being built in the community of Blatchford on what used to be Canada’s first licensed airfield. This will be one of the world’s largest sustainable communities once it is built. Our possession timelines have changed many times, but it seems like we will get to spend Christmas in our new home. Keep your fingers crossed for us.”

Emma J. Thacker, Ombuds Officer (UToronto) joined the ACCUO Executive this fall. Emma has worked at the University of Toronto, specializing in governance, policy and ombuds work. She has held several positions to support institutional quality assurance, integrity and quasi-judicial affairs. Emma has an M.A. and is currently a doctoral candidate in the School of Social, Political and Global Studies at Keele University, UK. Her doctoral research focuses specifically on academic literacies and contract teaching. Emma is also an active member of the Academic Integrity Council of Ontario, and her research interests are in HE policy and academic integrity education.



Emma Thacker

ACCUO AGM June 17, 2020

One of the highlights of our AGM was an ACCUO Statement of Solidarity with Black Lives Matter. “ACCUO stands in solidarity with the black community and condemns anti-black racism...” The full statement can be found on accuo.ca. ACCUO has created an EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) committee to provide educational forums for members to address systemic racism. Details of EDI’s summer activities are highlighted in the following reports.

EDI Ad Hoc Committee Update – submissions of Laura Reid and Julie Boncompain

The EDI Committee has been busy over the last few months. After ACCUO released the statement of solidarity in support of Black Lives Matter, the group met to develop a mission statement and mandate. A smaller working group also met to draft a survey for ACCUO members. All of these components are in the process of being finalized and we are looking forward to sharing the results with ACCUO membership shortly. The group hopes to support and educate ACCUO members, both by sharing information about EDI initiatives happening at our institutions, and by looking inward at the ACCUO and our own policies, practices and operations to promote equity, diversity and inclusion.

During the summer, the members of the Equity and Diversity(EDI) ad hoc Committee met twice, to review the statement of solidarity, propose a mission statement and action plan for 2020-2021 to the ACCUO Executive. Following the Executive meeting of September 9, 2020, the EDI ad hoc committee will meet to consolidate the suggestions received and move forward with our action plan. We will keep you informed.

International Relations Committee (IRC) – submitted by Julie Boncompain

Over the summer, the IRC communicated to ACCUO’s members articles that were published from the international community (see accuo.ca) and informed members of upcoming webinars from European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education (ENOHE) and the African Ombudsman Research Center (AORC) that were held this summer. In the Fall, the IRC intends to review its plan of action considering the impact of the pandemic on its activities, i.e. joint partnership with ENOHE that was to take place in Greece will be postponed to 2022.

Communications Team

This team was quiet over the summer but will be meeting later this fall to continue their outreach work with postsecondary institutions across Canada. They have an extensive document showing all the institutions they have been contacting. We plan to have an update in our November bulletin.

ACCUO Western Regional Meeting August 2020

Tanny Marks, Arbiter of Student Issues, Vancouver Community College, hosted this virtual event. Topics included: Using Distance Servicing Beyond COVID; Incorporating the Black Lives Moment into the Office: Our response, as action as Ombuds-VCC; Decolonizing our Practice: Concrete Measures Taken and To Take - VCC; How to support the Ombuds/College/University Indigenization Process - VCC; the SFU environmental scan into Ombuds programming and supports, with a special emphasis on serving Indigenous Student with special guest: Chantelle Spicer, Research Assistant at SFU; Ombuds Office Reviews and Quality Assurance – VCC; Specialized Report on Graduate Students and Fairness – SFU, UVic; and Academic Integrity Amidst Covid and University responses; Exploring Possible HE Ombuds Responses on Mandatory Minimum Sanctions (for Cheating Cases) – UAlberta. Thanks to Tanny for a well-organized, well-attended and informative event. If you wish to contact Tanny for more details on the guest speaker, Chantelle Spicer, you can reach her at tmarks@vcc.ca

The Osgoode/FCO Certificate “Essentials for Ombuds”

The 5-day intensive training that is usually offered onsite in Toronto each fall has been postponed to March 22 – 26, 2021 and will be offered online. Register early as this class fills up quickly: osgoodepd.ca

FCO/ACCUO Conference

The conference originally scheduled for St. John’s, Newfoundland in 2021 has been cancelled. The conference planning committee is tentatively focusing on a conference in 2022 at a more central location in Canada.

International Ombudsman Association Pecha Kucha Event

After the IOA conference was cancelled, a Pecha Kucha evening was offered online in July. Natalie Sharpe, University of Alberta, Roy Baroff, Ombuds North Carolina University, D.A. Graham, University Ombuds, University of Kansas, and Kristine Paronica, Ombudsperson, North Dakota State University presented to a large online IOA audience. The Pecha Kucha event focuses on the personal events that brought these ombuds colleagues into their profession. Natalie’s: “Kaleidoscope: An Ombuds Journey” challenges gendered schemas through a Kaleidoscope career model.

Cal Caucus Conference

The 47th Asilomar onsite conference has been cancelled and re-imagined as a one-day virtual event. The 2020 Cal Caucus Conference is scheduled for Thursday, November 12th, 2020 from 9:30 am – 2:30 am (PST) and will be limited to 100 participants. In past years, registration has been filled before the deadline. We will provide information on the ACCUO:listserv when the registration opens.

Recent Ombuds Appointments and Departures



Julie Boncompain

On September 15, 2020, the Board of Directors appointed **Me Julie Boncompain** as the Ombudsperson of Polytechnique, Montreal, following Mr. Michel Villard's tenure in the position with rigor and integrity since 2014. Holder of a bachelor's degree in political science (Management / Administration - 1996) from Concordia University and a bachelor's degree in law from the University of Montreal (LL.B. - 1999), Julie was admitted to the Quebec Bar in 2003 and obtained the title of accredited mediator in 2009 and arbitrator in 2016. A lawyer with seventeen years of practice and having particular expertise in alternative, dispute resolution (ADR) in areas related to education, labor and business law. Julie has been the Associate Ombudsperson with Concordia University since 2013. She sits on the ACCUO Executive and is VP of the Association des Ombudsmans des Universités of Québec (AOUQ).

Whitney Barrett is the new Associate Ombudsperson at Western University. Whitney has worked since 2007 at Western in many administrative positions, most recently as the Graduate Program Officer in the Faculty of Engineering. She has a lot of experience with data management systems and is looking at new options for their database. Whitney's education includes a diploma in paralegal studies, a certificate in project management, and she is currently completing an MBA at James Cook University.



Whitney Barrett



Dominique Demers

Dominique Demers the new University Protector UQAM (formerly referred to as Ombudsman) commenced her five-year term on September 1st. Dominique has a Bachelor's degree in Law, a Master's in Health Law and has been a member of the Quebec Bar since 1994. She held positions from 1999 – 2020, focused on respecting the rights of individuals. These began with Deputy Director General at the Council for the Protection of Patients; Coordinator of Professional Affairs at the Interprofessional Council of Quebec; Commissioner for Complaints and Quality of Services in Thérèse-De Blainville and Bordeaux – Cartierville – Saint-Laurent health and social services centers; and most recently, Assistant Commissioner for Complaints and Service Quality at the Integrated Health Center and of social services in the Laurentians.

Muriel Binette has retired after holding the Ombudsman appointment at UQAM since 2009. Muriel began working at UQAM in 1987 in various positions: Lecturer in the Department of Legal Sciences; Student Life Services, developing the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for UQAM Students; Research and Development Officer at Community Service; and Director of the Office of Intervention and Prevention in Harassment. She previously served as the Ombudsman at University of Sherbrooke and was a former president of the Union of UQAM lecturers. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Law and has been a member of the Quebec Bar since 1986.



Muriel Binette

If we have missed an announcement of new or retiring ombuds at your institution, please contact Natalie at nsharp@ualberta.ca and we can provide an update in the next bulletin.