



ACCUEO

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY
OMBUDSPERSONS

April 2020

Website: accuo.ca

ACCUEO members continue to play an important role in their higher education communities during an unprecedented pandemic. Our clients and our universities are dependent on the value we bring to persevere these difficult times.

Resilience in the ACCUEO Community during Covid-19 Laura Reid (SFU Ombudsperson) generously offered to lead this webinar for us to connect and offer ways to support each other while working remotely. Webinars allow members an opportunity to speak together and brainstorm on ways to thrive in our ombuds work. Members explored ways to keep connected for their personal well-being. Laura serves on the Executive and works with Annette Fraser on maintaining the ACCUEO website; she is also a member of the Communications team. As Laura noted in her offering of the webinar: "Discussion with colleagues is essential to the Ombuds community in the best of times and needed now more than ever. We want to ensure that members are still able to interact, share ideas and provide support to one another even if we aren't able to gather in-person." Laura's session on April 22nd focused on how ombuds offices are adjusting to the new circumstances. If you wish to let Laura Reid know how this webinar impacted you and/or how to set up another webinar, please contact her at lra17@sfu.ca We encourage members to come up with additional support meetings and/or webinars, in English and French for your regional communities and/or across Canada.

Alberta Network of Ombuds in Higher Education Kim Zimmerman and Masani St. Rose (Athabasca University) hosted a remote meeting April 23rd, for Alberta ombuds in higher education and the Alberta Ombudsman to connect and discuss the impact of provincial budget cuts to higher education and the pandemic on their work .

ACCUO Seeking an Interim Financial Officer Anita Pouliot is retiring at the end of May, we are hoping a member will step up to this position as soon as possible. Please contact Anita if you want to know what the position entails at apouliot@uwo.ca

Annual General Meeting We hope to announce very soon the date of our AGM in early to mid-June which will be conducted remotely.

ACCUO/ENOHE Joint Conference in Athens The conference has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are no plans to reschedule a conference until we can confirm everyone's safety and well-being. There is potential to organize a webinar at a later date; we will be receiving updates from Martine Conway who serves on the ENOHE Board of Directors and Julie Boncompain who chairs the ACCUO International Committee. They will explore options to keep our ties strong with ENOHE and other international HE ombuds colleagues and friends. Thank you to all ACCUO colleagues who submitted proposals; we are hopeful that these can be presented in some form at a later date.

International Ombudsman Association Conference This conference was scheduled for the first week of April in Portland, Oregon and was cancelled, and will likely not reschedule till 2021.

Cal Caucus Conference The Conference Planning Committee continues to meet remotely. The Committee will make a decision within the next few weeks on whether to alter this to a virtual conference or reschedule for 2021.

FCO/ACCUO Conference We will provide updates on the plans for this conference in St. John's, Newfoundland in 2021 as they unfold.

Ombuds Colleagues - New Arrivals



Paul Staitton (Confederation College) started his position in February 2020. Originally from Southern Ontario, Paul graduated from Lakehead University in Forestry, and Confederation College in Aviation (Flight) Management. He worked in the airline industry in Northwestern Ontario for 11 years. He then studied law at Queen’s University, returning to practice law for 19 years in Thunder Bay. Paul has a strong connection with Confederation College, where he taught in the Aboriginal Law and Advocacy Program and the Human Resources Program. He served on the College’s International Business Program’s Advisory Committee. Paul was a reservist with the Naval Reserve in Thunder Bay. He also speaks French as a second language. As a former student and instructor at Confederation College, Paul can see both the student’s and faculty’s perspective in relation to disputes that can arise in an academic setting. He is looking forward to using his dispute resolution skills as the new ombudsperson. He looks forward to meeting other ACCUO members and learning from their work experiences

Kim Morgan (Lakehead University) who just retired as ombudsperson at Confederation College, has returned to serve as the Interim Ombudsperson at The Lakehead.

Veronica Kube (University of Alberta) is the new Graduate Ombuds Intern. Veronica served as an Undergraduate Ombuds Intern in the first year of the Ombuds Internship program at the University of Alberta. Since her first internship, Veronica has earned an undergraduate degree in Psychology, a Master’s degree in Counselling, and now is pursuing a PhD in Counselling at the University of Alberta. Veronica penned the “Fairness in Communication” - Relational Fairness Guide on our accuo.ca Resources.

Thomas Brown (University of Alberta) will start in May as an Undergraduate Ombuds Intern, Thomas has completed three years of an undergraduate degree in Political Science and has a background in dispute resolution having worked with ADRIA.

Ombuds Departures

Anita Pouliot (Western University) will be retiring late May and looks forward to a day when she can golf again. We will dedicate a special article on Anita in the next newsletter to acknowledge the critical role she has played in the ACCUO community keeping our members close and our finances in order. Anita is our walking encyclopedia of ACCUO history.



Dimitrios Berk (McGill University) has completed his term as Ombudsperson for Students at McGill University (appointed in September 2014) and is retiring. Dimitrios was a faculty member and Chair of Chemical Engineering for over three decades and will be missed by his ACCUO community.

Waged Jafer (Quest University) has left her ombuds position after receiving an offer to be a regional Ombudsperson for the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). She has moved to Geneva and will eventually be based in Dubai.



Fenya Fitzpatrick (University of Alberta) Undergraduate Ombuds Intern, will return to complete her final year in Psychology, and has been keeping her office mates healthy with wellness activities at our remote meetings.

Bhuva Narayanan (University of Alberta) has completed her terms as Graduate Ombuds Intern and will return to writing her PhD thesis.

Kara Blizzard (University of Alberta) is departing her ombuds post on Augustana campus, and work with Augustana students will be covered remotely for the next few months by our main north-campus office.



Cathryn Heslep (MacEwan University) sends a farewell note to ACCUO friends: “As you may know, on January 15th, the Student Ombudsperson position was abolished due to the impact of the provincial budget on MacEwan University. I am grateful that I was asked to stay on until April 30th to support students during this winter term. As I work with students while I self-isolate in my home office, I have daily reminders of the importance of this work, especially during challenging times, including budget challenges and the pandemic. I want to personally thank all of you, especially that amazing Alberta contingent, ANOHE, for their support, encouragement and expertise that I have enjoyed and appreciated since May 2016. At this time, I have no plans for after April 30th, other than to improve my golf game and become a better sailor. But when September comes, I will be looking for something to do.”