

**2016 OCUFA STATUS OF WOMEN
AWARD OF DISTINCTION
CITATION FOR HELENE CUMMINS**

OCUFA

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario



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Read by Melissa Jean, President, Brescia Faculty Association

The Status of Women Award of Distinction is presented to those exceptional individuals whose passion and dedication has helped improve the lives and working conditions of women in academia. I can think of no individual more deserving of this honour than this year's recipient, Helene Cummins.

Over the course of her career, Helene has worked to bring attention and action to the inequalities that women face. Through her scholarly work, through years of engagement with the Brescia Faculty Association, and at the provincial level as Chair of the OCUFA Status of Women Committee, Helene has been a beacon of leadership for academic women's professional equality.

Through her research, Helene has become known for her expertise on issues of gender identities, relationships, family, rural sociology, and bullying. Her scholarly expertise and commitment to professional service intersect in her research investigating the barriers affecting the advancement of academic women.

Helene shares this knowledge and expertise through active engagement and outreach in the Western University and London communities. She has demonstrated her commitment to educating and informing colleagues about the historic and current obstacles and discrimination faced by women working on university campuses across Ontario.

Within the Brescia Faculty Association, Helene has been a consistent, strong, and supportive advocate for academic women. In 2015-16, when Brescia's internal governing council considered eliminating the institution's Equity Committee, Helene stepped forward, rallied faculty and staff, and convinced the council to retain the committee – a crucially important victory at a university that has the highest percentage of full-time women academics in the country.

At the provincial level, Helene has demonstrated a commitment to equity, fairness, and consultative processes in her role as Chair of the OCUFA Status of Women Committee.



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Under her leadership, the committee travelled across Ontario to hear from women about their experiences working in the academic profession. Drawing on this experience, Helene worked tirelessly to educate faculty associations and universities about the persistent inequities that women in the academy continue to face and to identify solutions to address these challenges. As the Status of Women Committee transitions to the more broadly constituted Status of Women and Equity Committee, Helene continues in her commitment to addressing the concerns of a broader range of equity-seeking groups in academic life.

For her continuing advocacy work and research supporting the status of women in academic life, for her dedication to improving their lives and working conditions, and for her tireless encouragement, support and inspiration, I am so honoured to present the Status of Women Award of Distinction to Helene Cummins.