

**2019 OCUFA
Award for Outstanding
Contribution to
Grievance/Arbitration**

Citation for Sophie Quigley

OCUFA

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des associations des professeurs des universités de l'Ontario



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Read by Rahul Sapra, OCUFA President

The OCUFA Award for Outstanding Contribution to Grievance/Arbitration was established in 2018 to recognize that, alongside Collective Bargaining, Grievance and Arbitration work is one of the twin pillars that shape the working conditions of faculty, academic librarians, and other academic professionals. It is in the nature of counselling and representing members that much of the effort undertaken by faculty association members and staff occurs outside of the public eye. This award pays tribute to the exemplary dedication and resourcefulness that Grievance Officers bring to defending collective agreements, advancing the position of the academic professions, and protecting members' rights and dignity.

In the inaugural year for this award, we honour Sophie Quigley for distinguished service as a long-serving Grievance Officer and three term Chair of the Ryerson Faculty Association Grievance Committee, and for her notable and sectorally significant success in securing a precedent-setting arbitration award on student evaluations of teaching. Sophie is also a Professor in the department of Computer Science at Ryerson University, with thirty years of experience teaching thousands of students the importance of analytic reasoning and rational deliberation. These are skills that also form the backbone of the work done on behalf of faculty association members through the grievance/arbitration process.

During her time as Grievance Officer, Sophie handled over seventy individual and policy grievances, prepared fifteen of them for arbitration, and settled the others. Among them are two notable cases. One, in 2007, was early in her tenure as Chair of the Grievance Committee. It resulted in an arbitration award which clarified the use of comparator files and the standards and procedures for tenure evaluation. The introduction of comparator files provides an added avenue for assessing the consistency of the tenure application process, and whether it meets the standards of procedural fairness. Other faculty associations have since adopted this practice.

The second notable case is an arbitration concerning the Employer's use of student evaluations of teaching that was a decade in the making and settled finally in 2018. After seeking to convince the university administration that the Faculty Course Surveys used to evaluate faculty members' teaching performance were improper and unfair instruments, which were also being misused, Sophie followed up with a rights grievance in 2009 and a policy grievance in 2015. The arbitrator's award determined that such surveys do not measure teaching effectiveness, and, moreover, that they are characterized by inherent and systemic bias and therefore discriminate against faculty members who identify with *Human Rights Code*-protected grounds.

Thanks to Sophie's steadfast shepherding of the faculty association's case, and her commitment to ensure equity, this groundbreaking arbitration award reverberates well



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beyond Ryerson. Sophie continues to oversee implementation of the arbitration award as a Special Grievance Officer, and she is currently playing a role in developing an alternative faculty-focused tool.

Making an impact as a Grievance Officer and Grievance Committee Chair goes beyond success obtaining compliance from the employer or winning arbitrations. Simply representing members to ensure the norms of procedural fairness are respected requires a team of ready and capable representatives. This became more generalised since workplace harassment investigations have been mandated with amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. As Chair of the Grievance Committee, Sophie designed and implemented protocols and procedures for representing members, and was responsible for training and supervision of Alternate Grievance Officers.

Sophie has demonstrated the kind of thought leadership, courage, and fortitude that are critical to protecting the four corners of the collective agreement, and that lead to the kind of groundbreaking work that we see in the arbitration award on student evaluations of teaching. These accomplishments, along with her unwavering commitment to equity and fairness, and her patience and compassion for members, make her both a worthy and a distinguished recipient of the inaugural OCUFA Award for Outstanding Contribution to Grievance/Arbitration.