



2024-2025 OCUFA Grivance/Arbitration Award

Citation for Christine McLaughlin

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OCUFA

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations is honoured to present the 2024-2025 Grievance/Arbitration Award to Christine McLaughlin, the Executive Director of the UOIT Faculty Association (OUITFA).

For over 11 years as Executive Director Christine has represented UOITFA members through the grievance and arbitration process. Colleagues note that she serves as a model of how to do member-centric grievance work that prioritizes wellbeing, making members feel heard and validated throughout what is often a mentally and emotionally taxing process.

Christine's contributions to capacity-building are particularly noteworthy. At UOITFA, Christine has worked to recruit numerous members into grievance officer roles, helping to limit the burnout that the role often produces. Facing what colleagues have termed a "difficult employer," Christine has taken extensive time to provide grievance officers with everything they need to succeed, including through connecting them to the wider networks of support available through OCUFA and CAUT. Colleagues within UOITFA are especially appreciative of Christine's commitment to ensuring their own success, remarking on Christine's commitment to providing support and resources to enable them to better serve UOITFA members. Christine has also worked effectively with other unions on the Ontario Tech campus to support their grievance processes, sharing resources whenever possible and fostering stronger bonds of solidarity among campus workers.

Christine's commitment to capacity building extends to OCUFA and OCUFA member organizations. Christine is a thoughtful and enthusiastic participant at all OCUFA Grievance Committee events and activities, where she helps foster an environment of continuous learning and capacity building among her peers. Christine regularly shares effective tips, strategies, and relevant case law with other member organizations at formal OCUFA Grievance Committee meetings and in the monthly Grievance Officer Is In virtual meetings. Her impressive legal acumen shines through in her capacity building activities. Currently pursuing an LLM in

Employment and Labour Law, Christine's peers in the program have commented on her exceptional legal insight and her ability to apply practical scenarios to legal frameworks in labour relations and grievance work.

Christine's commitment to building capacity is especially apparent when training new grievance officers. For the past two years, Christine has taken on a remarkably active role at the annual OCUFA Grievance Officer Orientation Workshop, via a lengthy afternoon role playing session where she takes participants through an entire grievance case, from the initial complaint to a formal resolution.

Christine has made a tremendous impact within UOITFA, securing numerous wins in settlements that are confidential. This required confidentiality limits our ability to trumpet her successes. However, colleagues have remarked on Christine's ability to achieve gains even when faced with a suboptimal grievance outcome. Years ago, UOITFA went to arbitration over a denial of tenure, which it lost. Christine identified the issues that led to that loss and supported negotiations to improve UOITFA's collective agreement going forward, with the result that Ontario Tech has seen a dramatic drop in even possible denials of tenure. In a subsequent round of bargaining, Christine continued to grapple with this issue and moved the relevant language into a more suitable area of the collective agreement, further limiting the potential for tenure denials.

Christine's commitment to supporting UOITFA members as well as the members of OCUFA member organizations is readily apparent to anyone who has attended a single event of the OCUFA Grievance Committee. We are absolutely delighted to present her with this well-deserved recognition.