

2010-2011 LORIMER AWARD
CITATION FOR WINNER PROFESSOR BRIAN E. BROWN

OCUFA

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Brian's contribution to collective bargaining have operated at three levels – locally with the University of Windsor Faculty Association, provincially with his work at OCUFA, and last but not least, his work with the CAUT Defense Fund.

His contributions are long and impressive. Brian began working at the University of Windsor School of Visual Arts way back in 1977 and it was not long before he became active in the University of Windsor Faculty Association (WUFA). He was one of the founders of WUFA's Sessional Committee and its first chair in 1984. He held this position for sixteen years, relinquishing it only when he became WUFA President. He served on the contract committee for every single negotiation over the next sixteen years, and was on the negotiating team four times, playing an instrumental role in framing and bargaining early contract language vital to the protection of WUFA's most vulnerable part time members. Brian also served as one of the elected sessional representatives on WUFA Council, playing a leadership role in ensuring that sessional concerns were addressed.

Collective bargaining is not just about getting the collective agreement – it is also about working to ensure that the agreement is properly applied and enforced. And here too, Brian has played a critical role at Windsor. Over the years, Brian has performed the critical role of grievance officer, representing members at Step 1 of the process. As in many university unions, this is a challenging task given that departmental heads are also our members. It takes extraordinary skill and patience to represent grievors in this context, but Brian was more than up to the challenge, performing effectively and professionally. Since becoming president in 2001, he continued to play a vital role in the grievance process, serving on the grievance committee, while routinely resolving



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

individual issues or disputes informally without having to invoke the formal grievance process. The wealth of experience gained by Brian in taking this active role in grievance and conflict resolution has been invaluable, not only to the continued effective policing of the collective agreement, but also to the institutional development of a vital foundation of knowledge and experience for subsequent negotiations.

As President, Brian has put this experience to great use. He has organized, guided and supported the work of four contract and negotiating committees, steering them to successful conclusions. As his support letters attest, he offers not only an intricate knowledge of the collective agreement and how it works (or doesn't), but also an ability to provide vital advice on negotiating tactics and decisions. Given his almost daily interaction with senior administrators, Brian's knowledge of the administrators on the other side of the table has been a key resource in helping the negotiating team to make the right tactical judgments and strategic decisions. An important aspect of his success is the integrity and standing he brings to the table. The members of WUFA's team and those on the other side of the table recognize and respect his knowledge, his capacity to seek compromise and his honesty.

Of course, things have not always gone entirely as planned. However, he has responded to these challenges as well. When we went on strike two years ago, Brian was instrumental in providing the leadership needed to weather the many challenges and pressures, putting in exceptionally long hours leading up to the strike and during the strike. Along with fulfilling his role as the public face of the Union, he was crucial in mobilizing local and national union support. His ability to quickly gain this support was grounded in years of outreach largely unprecedented in WUFA and I suspect in the university union community as a whole. Brian was largely responsible for forming a coalition of University of Windsor unions that continues to collaborate in various ways to



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Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

this day. He was also a major force behind the push for WUFA and CAUT membership in CLC and for WUFA's active affiliation to the Windsor Essex District Labour Council. In advocating these goals, Brian understood that effective and sustained collective bargaining requires union and community allies and collaborators. In many ways, this simple but critical insight, and his tireless efforts to establish inter union and community linkages, are arguably his greatest contributions to the maturity of the university faculty union sector.

And tireless they have been. It is unlikely that any current faculty association member has played a more active role in supporting striking faculty and other unions across this country. As a trustee of the CAUT defense fund for over ten years, he has gone to virtually every faculty strike in Canada during this period, visiting some twenty different picket lines, sometimes more than once. As stated in one of his support letters, Brian does not just visit and drop off a cheque. He engages with the strikers, offering encouragement and demonstrating his sincere concern and commitment to their cause. When he addresses the strikers, he speaks with the passion and compassion of someone who understands what it means to be on strike and who truly cares about the outcome. Brian has also been a great supporter of local strikes and can often be seen at Windsor area picket lines and Labour rallies.

As President of WUFA, Brian has also done his utmost to support the interests of diverse groups within the Union. He continues to be an active participant in virtually every WUFA committee, from the Sessional and Women's Committees to the Grievance and Pension committees. As in all his activities, he makes these contributions without stifling debate or limiting their independence as standing committees of the association. He attends not because he wants to control everything but because he is committed to helping these committees do the best work they can do



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
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for their members. And although he has a wealth of knowledge and helpful advice to offer, in the end he understands the need to let these committees decide for themselves what they want to do. This commitment to union democracy is another testimony to his integrity as a leader.

Brian has also supported the broader development of collective bargaining in Ontario through his long-standing involvement in OCUFA. He has held several Board, committee and executive positions including President, Vice President, Treasurer and Member at Large. In all these roles, he has demonstrated his commitment to a strong central confederation of Faculty Associations, again recognizing the importance of unity and coordination. Brian has been a tireless advocate of the rights and interests of university faculty and librarians across Ontario. Along with his constant and ongoing involvement in lobbying for better government funding, he has promoted expanded opportunities for training and the exchange of information between negotiators and grievance representatives from the various member associations. This commitment to education and training is demonstrated by his frequent involvement in CAUT and OCUFA conferences as a moderator or facilitator. Brian's dedication to OCUFA has also been demonstrated by his frequent selection to the OCUFA negotiating team charged with bargaining with OCUFA staff and executive directors.

In the final analysis, to fully appreciate the extent of Brian's knowledge and contribution to collective bargaining at the University of Windsor and beyond, it must be said that without doubt no one in WUFA's history has spent anywhere close to the amount of time and effort that he has working on behalf of the members. When he is not in Toronto or Ottawa working on OCUFA or CAUT business, he is at the WUFA office, or somewhere in the University or the community, doing what he does extremely well – helping people, resolving conflict, and challenging unfairness and injustice. The job of



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Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

President and union representative is more than a full-time responsibility for him, but as everything about his dedication shows, it is much more than just a job. It is his caring passion for others which underlies his extraordinary commitment to making things better for us all.