

# OCUFA

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

## **2022-2023 OCUFA Service Award**

**Citation for Mike Eklund**

**Read by:  
Rahul Sapra, OCUFA Past President**

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations is honoured to present the 2022-2023 Service Award to Mike Eklund. Mike is President of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology Faculty Association. He is also a current member at-large and former Treasurer of OCUFA, and has served in many roles at the organization. Mike is a Professor in the Department of Electrical, Computer and Software Engineering at Ontario Tech University, which is located on land covered by the Williams Treaties and are the traditional territory of the Mississaugas, a branch of the greater Anishinaabeg Nation, including Algonquin, Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi.

Mike's contributions to OCUFA and his faculty association are described by his recommenders as "inspiring." He joined his faculty association executive in 2014 and took on the role of Chief Negotiator in 2015, bringing the membership to a strike deadline for the first time. Mike has also supported other faculty on campus during bargaining, before and after the consolidation of all faculty into the faculty association in 2019. One recommender wrote: "Mike's ability to bring everybody together as one unit is a remarkable accomplishment that helps UOITFA's bargaining forevermore."

In 2021, Mike's role of Chief Negotiator took on new significance as Ontario Tech faculty went on strike for two difficult weeks. In the face of a difficult bargaining process, Mike and the bargaining team won improvement for members in areas of workload, pay equity, and benefits. During this strike, and in all negotiations, Mike's primary goal is to ensure his members get what they need. One recommender wrote: "Not once have I ever seen Mike put his self-interest alongside, let alone above, the interests of the group. He is a powerful champion of the most marginalized and disadvantaged. He also works tirelessly to ensure the fairest deal that will include something for everyone." Mike's recommenders noted his formidable negotiation skills and his ability to balance the needs of many members at the bargaining table. They also remarked on his communication skills in keeping members up to date on the bargaining process at every step.

Mike's work to defend labour rights and improve conditions for faculty workers extends beyond his campus. Some of this work includes an active role on the CAUT Defence Fund, the Durham Region Labour Council, and at OCUFA. Mike held the role of OCUFA Treasurer for three years, and is now a member-at-large on the executive committee. In addition, he has been an active member of the Collective Bargaining Committee and the University Finance Committee, to which he has brought incredible energy, intelligence, humility, and friendliness. In all of this work, Mike offers a wealth of knowledge and support to colleagues, who are more than willing to accept his wisdom. One recommender wrote: "Mike is a leader in serving his members. He is also a leader in sharing his knowledge and approaches with others." This community-focused approach has been an essential component of Mike's work in negotiations, communicating with members, and creating connections with faculty members from different institutions.

For his unwavering support of his members at the faculty association, his work ethic and strength at the bargaining table, and his commitment to service to faculty and workers at the provincial and national level, OCUFA is pleased to present Mike with this award.

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**The OCUFA Service Award was established to honour individuals who have done, or continue to do, exceptional work on behalf of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations and its Members.**