

YUFA Election: Communications Officer

Jody Berland: Candidate's Statement

I have been involved with communications at York in various formal and informal capacities for some time, and I would like to bring my experience and expertise to the service of the York faculty as a whole. YUFA performs crucially important functions for York full time and tenure track faculty. As members of a union we are facing pressing bargaining challenges that include university governance, workload, compensation and benefits, progress through the ranks, pensions, and equity issues, including accommodations for persons with disabilities. We have fallen behind other institutions in the province in many of these areas. To maintain the quality of our work and collegial life and the strength of our bargaining position, we need a vigorous communication strategy that will inform and empower all faculty during negotiations for a new contract.

Like all faculty associations associated with CAUT, YUFA is also mandated to support and defend faculty's broad academic and institutional interests. I am proud to be the daughter of a former CAUT executive secretary. CAUT plays an important role across Canada defending collegial governance, academic freedom, fair complements and employment strategies, support for research and research dissemination, and the future of university autonomy and integrity. To advance these mandates, I am committed to enhancing YUFA's visibility, its attention to developments across the university, its cooperation with other unions and faculty associations, its ability to share relevant news and information about higher education in Ontario and beyond, its capacity to hear and represent all members, its contact with multiple media sources, and its ability to explain the issues to York faculty and the community at large.

We need new and young colleagues to be involved and invested in YUFA's bargaining priorities and activities, to know York's particular history and challenges, and to have opportunities to speak about what they need to enhance their academic careers. We need to address the depletion of pensions and retirement benefits that disadvantage York faculty in comparison to other Ontario universities. Developing good collegial communication on these issues involves the dissemination of pertinent research, respectful support for junior and part-time colleagues, students, and staff, and enriched friendship and solidarity, including good use of our new faculty/grad lounge! These strategies can help us situate our concerns about teaching, research, workload, governance, and university citizenship in clear perspective.

I have served on several YUFA communication committees and initiated a petition to re-open our faculty club. As a member of the YUFA Disability Caucus, I engage with equity and accommodation issues as well as governance and other issues. I have made innovative use of social media and engaged with colleagues and journalists across Canada in discussion of academic issues and news. I have edited numerous independent and academic publications, and have taught and written about media and communication. I have extensive experience drafting and editing time-sensitive documents and reports with multiple authors, collaborating peacefully and efficiently, editing journals and books, and linking people, stories and updates across diverse media venues. I am eager to serve our colleagues as Communications Officer.