

Thank you for inviting me to speak on behalf of CUASA at this General Faculty Board, an unprecedented event in the history of Carleton. Our association represents most members of this faculty board, in their capacity as academic workers. This has been true for the last 50 years, and 75, if you include the Carleton College Academic Staff Association (CCASA) period before certification as a union in 1951, a year before the Carleton University Act.

In the following 10 minutes, I will say three things about this policy: 1) it is unnecessary, 2) it is an overreach and 3) it is unsafe. I will conclude by repeating what CUASA wrote to President Tettey on the 24th of October in a public response on the former draft of the institutional impartiality policy, which is still true for the second draft: **the projected policy should be withdrawn.**

1. The policy is unnecessary

There is no crisis in the trust the public has in the university.

- A poll conducted last year for OCUFA showed that academics and universities were amongst the most very trusted people and institutions in the province. This alleged lack of trust has all the appearances of a fabricated problem.

CUASA members have agreed with the University for a long time, after long deliberations, about the clear and understood rights and responsibilities. CUASA has also long been committed to uphold these rights and responsibilities, in collaboration with the university, in good faith, and for the good of the whole institution.

- CUASA members have academic freedom, as do the CIs of our sister union CUPE 4600, who are not in this room
- According to the CUASA Collective Agreement, this academic freedom is a serious matter, which “*carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base research and teaching on an honest search for truth.*”
- According to their CA, CUASA members cannot speak in the name of the University. They can state their university affiliation “... *so long as they do not purport to represent the Employer or to speak on the Employer’s behalf unless specifically authorized to do so.*”

2. The policy represents an overreach of university authority

Most of the document represents a restriction of the academic freedom. It pertains to support.

- The document expands the authority of the university over the scope of academic freedom, when one of the important elements of academic freedom is *freedom from institutional censorship*.
- It subordinates the principle academic freedom to an expanding list of other terms and, in doing so, it jeopardizes meaningful discussions and agreements on any of these terms.
- It introduces new and ill-defined principles, such as the very expression “Institutional Impartiality”
- It associates the principle of academic freedom with narrow understandings of the scholarly authority of academic staff.
- The policy expands the authority of the University over the academic freedom to make collective statements. To cite CAUT, “*As individual members with the rights of academic*

freedom and freedom of association, academic staff have the right to support collective departmental statements espousing beliefs about political or social issues.”

- To use the words of our sister association UBC, the policy “*curtails the academic freedom and past rights and practices of our membership to engage in and disseminate the outcome of collegial decision-making,*”. CUASA will continue, like UBCFA, to “*preserve the rights of all of its members to engage in full and unrestricted consideration of any opinion and to use their collective voice to participate in the social discourse of our time.*”
- The very process by which this policy has been drafted and is now heading for the meeting of the Board of Governor runs against the principles *of collegial decision-making on academic matters.*

3. The policy is unsafe

- Statements this vague and far reaching have the effect of restricting the speech of the most vulnerable parts of the university community. This often weaken the very people who are best place in the university to amplify the voices of people in the larger community..
- More largely, the policy represents an act of silencing on issues on which CUASA members have expertise. It threatens them with discipline for actions that are ill defined and actions that are legitimate.
- The recent draft creates an equally ill-defined system of complaint that invites suspicion and vague allegations, managed by a staff which, in recent conversations, we understand has not been consulted.

Conclusion

To conclude, in the end, the policy has to be compliant with the collective agreement between CUASA and Carleton University.

And if the University wants to restrict the speech of its own administrators, nothing stops them to write a policy about this.

To summarize, 1. This new policy is unnecessary ; it is based in a manufactured crisis. 2: It is an overreach or administration the jeopardizes academic freedom and the very tenets which teaching, learning and research require to thrive, and 3: the policy poses a real danger of silencing those academics and community members who are already most marginalized amongst us.

For this, CUASA repeats our call that **the projected policy should be withdrawn.**

Meanwhile, CUASA continues to work together with the University towards, and I cite the Collective Agreement one more time, “*the common good of society [which] depends upon the search for truth and its free exposition.*”