

Newsletter Spring 2020

New Members

Audra Bolton

History Department

Klayton Kelloway

OMAF Research Stations

Kris McNaughton

Ridgetown Academic

Michelle Ragany

Research and Graduate Studies

Graeme Woodall

OMAF Research Stations

Kaylee Moore

OMAF Research Stations

Mackenzie Murdoch

Ridgetown Academic

Grocery Card Giveaway!

In our current circumstances, we have either been directly impacted by the recent changes, or we know someone who has. The Executive recognizes that we could all use a little extra support right now and we would like to offer every member a \$25 gift card (Sobeys or PC) to assist with groceries. Please watch for an email about this. You will be asked to complete a short survey where you will indicate which card you would prefer, and your card will then be mailed to you. We know that not all members have been impacted in the same ways, but even if you feel you don't need this card, we hope you will request it anyway. Gift/donate it to a charitable organization, or a family in need, within your community. We want you to know that we are trying to help. We are in this together!

Social Media

If you're not already, follow us on social media! Here's where you'll get the latest information and updates:



Twitter: @OSSTFTARA



Facebook: OSSTF TARA



Message from the President

In the last couple of weeks, we have been tested. We have been challenged. We are all living through something that our children and grandchildren will talk about for years to come. Whether you are working from home, working at the office, working in the barns, or working in the fields, we are all still learning how to balance our work life, our family life, and our social life. There is no procedure to follow, no roadmap, and no set of instructions on how to navigate this new reality. We are all simply learning on the fly and adapting. The important thing is that we are all here for each other. We will prevail.

For me, personally, I have the ability to work from home while serving you, and I only go out to see members when absolutely necessary. While this may sound like a luxury, it has been far from ideal. Aside from missing the face-to-face interactions, my internet is 'blotchy' at best, and we only have a limited amount of data. It was challenging enough, scheduling all of my online meetings within my allotted monthly data usage, when the provincial government announced e-learning. So, with our 3 small school-aged children now at home, we face new challenges. In addition to factoring in their web time, and ensuring we have enough devices for everyone to use, we struggle to have them actually sit down and do their work, with our assistance. While 2 of our 3 kids are responding well to this way of learning, one is constantly frustrated, as he does not find it engaging at all. I could go on about the challenges in my personal life, but what I really want to demonstrate is that everyone is facing their own personal challenges right now. More than ever, we need understanding and compassion. We need to understand that everyone is coping to the best of their ability, and we need to have compassion for each other, as we move forward through these uncertain times.

Throughout this newsletter, you will learn of several available resources. Your Executive continues to work hard to answer your questions and address your concerns. Please make sure that you are taking care of yourself. If there is anything we can do to help, please ask us. You are a valued member of OSSTF/TARA and we are here for you!

Benevolent Council Applications

The Benevolent Council exists for the purpose of providing assistance to active members who find themselves in extreme financial need due to prolonged illness, accident, or extreme emergency. This assistance can be in the form of benevolent relief grants of up to \$3,000 in a federation year, or simply advice on other ways/means to alleviate distress. This assistance program is offered through Provincial Office and is accessible to any of our members in need. If you have any questions, please contact the president at president@d35.tara.osstf.ca. We will be happy to walk you through the process and the application.



Canadian Emergency Relief Benefit

In response to the current declared state of emergency, the Ontario Government has passed legislation amending the leave provisions of the Employment Standards Act, 2000. The amendments apply to two broad categories of reasons for an employee needing to be absent from work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you would like more information, please contact us at: president@d35.tara.ossf.ca.

Bells and Whistles Solutions

The Professional Staff Association (PSA), has extended an invitation to TARA members to participate in their loyalty program for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, at no cost to us, nor will we need to release any member information. You will receive weekly offers, via your uoguelph.ca email account, from Bells and Whistles Solutions. This loyalty program offers discounted tickets to sporting events, restaurants, group outings, theme parks, etc. While we know that you may not be able to use many offers now, you may find deals you can use later on. We hope that you enjoy this perk and we would love to hear your feedback!

Health and Safety

We know that everyone has been told about physical distancing and we encourage you to maintain a 2-metre distance from persons outside of your household.

If you are working from home and are feeling unwell, please notify your supervisor. They will send you the link to a brief survey, and we encourage you to complete that as well. Please also contact your physician or Telehealth and follow their recommendation(s).

If you are a member working on-site and you are showing symptoms, please stay home, notify your supervisor (and complete the survey), and consult your physician or Telehealth.

If you are still working on-site, please continue to maintain physical distancing and ensure an appropriate amount of space between you and your colleagues. We appreciate that, at some locations, or with certain tasks, this can be difficult. If you have any concerns, please notify your supervisor.

We want all of our members to be safe, and we will work with you to ensure that all measures are being taken to achieve that. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.



COVID-19 Information and Best Practices

Practice Social Distancing

Work from home where possible and avoid gatherings and crowds

Follow usual best practices for Hygiene

Wash your hands for at least 20 sec or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

See page 5 for detailed instructions

Avoid travel

Especially by air and outside of Canada.

When coughing or sneezing

Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand

Frequently clean objects and surfaces

Like doorknobs, phones, and tv remotes

Know the facts about coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

According to the Government of Canada:

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold. Symptoms of human coronaviruses may be very mild or more serious, such as:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus.

Coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets when you cough or sneeze close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands

These viruses are not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water.

For the latest information regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic including the University Action Plans and answers to frequently asked questions, please visit the University website at:

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>



Just a Reminder... Wash your Hands!



Before, During and After preparing food

Before and After eating food

Before and After caring for someone at home who is sick

Before and After treating a cut or wound

After using the Toilet

After changing diapers or cleaning a child who has used the toilet

After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

After touching animals, animal feed, or animal waste

After touching garbage

Check out this video on YouTube demonstrating how to thoroughly wash your hands! Feel free to share with your kids, friends and family.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEzJ_QKjT14



E-Learning

From our President:

As you are aware, the University subscribes to LinkedIn Learning (formerly [lynda.com](https://www.lynda.com)). During this time of physical distancing, and with many of us working from home, employees are able to remotely access several available e-learning courses. We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to take a refresher course, or to learn something new.

I know that some of you have school-aged children at home. I thought I would share some free (or free trial) apps, which my 3 kids enjoy, and that we use as rewards for completing their homework:

- [Scratchjr](#) - teaches kids how to code (free)
- [Teach Your Monster to Read](#) -encourages reading at a young age (free)
- Monster Math - engages kids to solve math problems (free trial)
- Learning Academy, by 'rosimosi' offers a variety of programs and adjusts depending on your child's age up to grade 7 (free trial)

Vacation

We have received many questions about summer vacation and carry-over allotment. While we cannot predict the future, and we don't know what the summer has in store, we encourage all members to take advantage of their vacation days. You need this time to rest and unwind. We understand that this is a stressful time, but your health and safety is a priority.

Mental Health

Please ensure that you continue to reach out to friends, family, and your work family during this time. We know that physical distancing can be difficult but maintaining relationships is more important now than ever. We recognize that these times may cause members to have feelings of anxiety, loneliness, or stress, and we remind you that you can access the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) toll free at 1-800-663-1142 or by visiting [homeweb.ca](https://www.uoguelph.ca/homeweb.ca). Wellness@Work has also launched a new COVID-19 Wellness Resources page which is accessible at any time.

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/wellnessatwork/COVID19-wellness-resources>

We're here to support you as well. Contact us at any time.



April 28, 2020 Day of Mourning

The National Day of Mourning, to recognize workers killed or injured while at work, will soon be upon us. The pre-pandemic theme for this year's Day of Mourning was to be "Prevent Occupational Cancer: Stop Deadly Exposures Now". With the global community facing the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that we also recognize the extraordinary work being done by so many OSSTF/FEESO members. Our university support staff members, many of whom are designated as providing essential services, are still going into work every day. Others continue to provide vital services by working from home. Our essential services school board employees, such as custodians, maintenance workers and tradespeople are, in many cases, being asked to assist with such vital operations as developing safe school re-entry protocols. Our IT and technical support staff members continue to provide support to facilitate remote learning programs. These members, along with many others not specifically mentioned, continue to go to work daily, so that we can stay home, stay safe, and work remotely. Their efforts are worthy of recognition on this particular Day of Mourning.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, the Canadian Labour Congress and local labour councils are busy reshaping plans for the Day of Mourning. In-person events will not go forward but the Day of Mourning will still be recognized. Please visit the WHSC for more information at:

<https://www.whsc.on.ca/Events/Day-of-Mourning>.

Annual General Meeting

After some discussion at our last Executive meeting, it was decided that we would continue with our Annual General Meeting. Since we already do our meeting via webex and our voting is all done online, we felt that there was really no need to delay it. We are planning to hold our AGM on June 10th at noon. We will be recording the session so members who are unable to attend can watch it at a more convenient time. We will also expand the voting window to open on June 10th and close on June 11 at 4:30PM to allow more time for members to access this. Please remember that you will need your 'Edvantage' card or union number to vote. If you don't have this, please contact membership-database@osstf.ca or call 1-800-267-7867.

Enrichment Fund Applications

We are still accepting Enrichment Fund Applications, for awards of up to \$250. The purpose of this fund is to assist members with costs associated with their pursuit of learning and professional development opportunities. If you haven't taken advantage of this negotiated benefit, please go to our website (<http://www.d35-guelphlara.osstf.ca/>) for an application. Once completed, please submit it to president@d35.tara.osstf.ca.



TARA Executive

President

Joe Rooyackers

Vice President

Elizabeth Copland

Provincial Executive**Liaison**

Dave Warda

Member Services Officer

Laleh Hatefi

Secretary

Laurie Winn

Treasurer

Caitlin Brookbanks

Secretariate

Rob Shaheen

Vineland

Glen Alm

Simcoe

Rachel Riddle

Kemptville & Alfred

Tom McLean

Ridgetown

George Woudenberg

New Liskeard

Candy Keith

Communications

Sharon Lee

OTIP Update

The OTIP Bursary Program is turning 25!

Do you know a student who could use \$1,500? Now open for applications, the OTIP Bursary Program, offered by the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP), is awarding 25 bursaries — the most since the program's inception! If you or a close relative will be attending post-secondary school during the 2020-21 academic year, you have a chance to win \$1,500 to help with school expenses.

For more information, visit

www.otipinsurance.com/article66



Staying Busy Word Search

N F I T N E S S K Y V Q E C S
K O H J M T W O R Y Y C B R E
Z C I Z K Z O E G E D G J J R
J J L T H C V M K O J H G H I
A D Y R A I V L O X G C F C E
K T W E L C G P O O M N M T S
Z F A E K W U T B O Q G F A L
J E D K E F E D B H K K J R V
U P X B E W Z O E V B R P C J
W O E L R O R D B D N B Y S P
X X T O C V U A Y R C E T R A
F O W C K A M T I D B X H Q N
V E K I N B E O X G J X H S O
Z B P P X P G Z O Z U T S N N
V W B X E I V O M Z S B B N L

Complete the Word Search by April 30th, 2020 and send your answers to:

president@d35.tara.osstf.ca

If your answers are all correct, your name will be entered into a draw for a chance to win a \$100 Gift Certificate at the 2020 AGM!

Given the current situation, let's explore some activities that you can engage in on your spare time!

1. Stay active by engaging in **FITNESS** at home! Follow [gryphons_fitness](#) on Instagram as they run some online classes, or search for videos to your liking on Youtube or other platforms.
2. Continue your **EDUCATION**, or learn a new topic through LinkedIn Learning !
3. Communicate with loved ones through online meeting software like **Zoom**, or **Webex**
4. Start a **BOOK** club and meet online (Social Distancing!)
5. Utilize resources for kids at [Scratchjr](#)
6. Learn to **COOK** new recipes, or order **TAKEOUT** and **DELIVERY**
7. Just relax, and start a new **SERIES** or **MOVIE**

