



## VIUFA Vice President

### 2023-24 Report

Since the April 2023 VIUFA AGM, I have been privileged to have a year of learning and working in the role of Vice President, with the VIUFA Executive, on behalf of our collective interests as a faculty association.

Prior to this year, the role of the Vice President had less definition. As part of work this year to develop greater clarity for a few executive roles, the VIUFA Terms of Reference now structures the Vice President portfolio this way:

#### Duties

The Vice-President shall:

1. Assist the President in all matters;
2. During the absence of the President, assume all duties of the President;
3. Chair the Job Action Coordination committee, in bargaining years; and
4. Develop and maintain external and internal communication for the Association, including managing the VIUFA website and generating bulletins, briefs and newsletters in both traditional and social media systems.

#### Functions

- Attend Executive and General Membership Meetings;
- Represent VIUFA on other committees or at meetings as requested by the President and VIUFA Executive;
- Report at Executive meetings and the Annual General Meeting;
- Be a signing officer in relation to VIUFA's operations; and
- Attend Table Officers' meetings.

I found this description of duties and functions helpful in providing clarity of scope and expectations, and I hope that it may be kept current for future benefit. Importantly, the VP may still support activities of the Executive and VIUFA Committees as needed, and bring to the role their particular skills and expertise. For me, this has meant offering perspectives from the Academic Governance role that I held in a previous VIUFA executive, as well as experience and approaches from my academic, scholarly, and professional practice related to libraries and information, and background in academic management and with other boards and committees.

#### **Support for the President**

We were fortunate to have a year without need for the VP to assume the duties of the President, but it was an extremely busy year, in which I could support the President's role by attending some meetings of FPSE and chairing local meetings as needed. These few occasions were helpful for me to gain

greater insight into our local association's relationship with the Federation, and into the responsibilities of the VIUFA President.

## **Communications**

Communications is key to the VP portfolio, and I was set up well in April 2023 with the task of implementing a strategy that our previous VP Kathleen Bortolin designed, to manage the volume of email communication and make more effective use of the VIUFA website and other channels. The plan was to issue one newsletter-type email to the membership every month, summarizing key areas of VIUFA work, and linking to detail on the website or elsewhere. With a break over Summer, we did keep up about a monthly pace, with a little more frequency in the late Fall with an increase in VIUFA work and need to update members. We continued over the year to develop the workflow and the presentation of the newsletter. As needed to address time-sensitive matters, ad hoc email messages are still being sent to members. To date, we have received informal feedback about the newsletter that has been generally favourable, and are happy to have more input from members, either via the VIUFA VP or VIUFA Office.

Through the year we also addressed other communications matters. I worked with others in the VIUFA Executive team and office to review our social media strategy, considering that VIUFA should seek to be both practical and values-aligned in choosing means and platforms for engagement. Consequently,

- We have disengaged from the VIUFA account on X (formerly Twitter) and removed that presence and branding from the VIUFA website.
- As approved by the Executive in the Fall, VIUFA now has a hosted server and presence in the Fediverse (Mastodon), one of a few Canadian faculty associations to have taken this step so far.
- I have been amplifying VIUFA and affiliate news and events through the <https://social.viu.ca> channel.
- While this forward-looking strategy strengthens, we also maintain a presence on Facebook / Meta although this continues to be not very active and I have not been posting there. We also monitor other possibilities.
- For those who use RSS to read online news, the most recent newsletter included information and links related to receiving VIUFA website and social media updates by RSS.

As indicated by my predecessor VP, the website needed attention, and it still does. Through this year I've worked with our VIUFA team on some maintenance related to content and the website platform and to improve navigation. However, I think we could benefit from thoughtfully considering what we expect the website to do for us beyond storing and presenting files, particularly given the foreseeable fragmented state of social media as a place to convene community online.

## **Job Action Coordination Committee**

This year as VP, I served as the chair of the Job Action Coordination Committee, which was formed to coordinate action and communication regarding job action to support meaningful negotiations. Because bargaining concluded successfully with a new collective agreement, no job action was required, but through the Fall the committee met to consider and lay the groundwork for actions in support of negotiations, while also discussing potential for a sustained role for the committee in building solidarity and member awareness of VIUFA activity on behalf of members, outcome of or related to collective

bargaining between rounds. I think this was a good intention that could serve VIUFA well over the longer term, and I hope that the next Executive and Committee may follow it up.

Thanks to members of the Job Action Committee for their work and enthusiasm over this past year: Johnny Blakeborough, Imogene Lim, Luke McLeod, Katharine Rollwagen, Zora Soprovich. Thanks to Bargainer Jane Wodlinger for keeping the committee informed and to Laura Buechler for committee support.

### **Table Officers**

As a new table officer, I attended meetings, listened, learned, offered perspectives on matters of discussion, and helped to identify items for reporting and communication.

### **Thanks to members for your trust**

A year ago, I did not expect to become VP of VIUFA, and when asked to consider it I immediately thought up reasons why other folks would be better suited. I still can. But I hope that I have reciprocated your trust with some service of value. I do feel that at the end of a year I am at an early place with aspects of VP work that I might continue to develop, and I am willing to do that by standing for re-election. If another member seeks and succeeds to the VP role, I hope to have left the portfolio in a good place to continue from as we work together --

in solidarity, Dana McFarland