

Kristine Smitka
Vision Statement, Biography, and Relevant Experience

Vision Statement

As the current Vice President of the AASUA, I am intimately connected to member engagement, organizational governance, and bargaining. I am also a Trustee on the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Defence Fund, which provides financial support to Canadian academic-staff unions who are on strike or have been locked-out by their employer. This position puts me in contact with academic union-organizers from across the country, and I would like to draw on the networks I have made over the last two years as VP of AASUA to put our organization in a strong position as we continue in this important round of bargaining.

In Fall 2023, I Chaired the Bargaining Planning Committee, which deepened my understanding of all seven constituencies' bargaining priorities. Any Officer of the AASUA should understand the diversity of voices that constitute AASUA's 4,096-person membership. Our members are scholars, educators, clinicians, librarians, professional administrators, lab workers, and sports coaches. When I speak as AASUA's VP in a meeting with the Provost or in an interview with the media, I work to give voice to the complex issues I have heard members communicate to me in constituency assemblies, via email, or at member-engagement events.

While I am proud of AASUA's opening bargaining proposal, I know that our organization's ability to advance our proposal resides in an engaged membership. A sage colleague told me, "the union doesn't do things for us; we are the union." In highlighting the collective, this statement asserts that the strength of the union resides in our membership, but for this power to be mobilized, we all need to engage in the organization and the bargaining process.

This is why I have spent the last two years responding to feedback regarding how to invite more voices into our organization. As a result of my advocacy for improved member-engagement, there is now a standing agenda item on every Council and Executive meeting, where we, as an organization, keep ourselves accountable to our goal of increased member participation. Recently, this has taken the form of NASA and AASUA joint-solidarity events which I co-organized: the Strategy of the Strike panel and the solidarity social at the University Club.

I am standing for re-election because the work of AASUA's current Executive is not finished. I would like to build on what I have learned in my first two years in this role to provide steady and experienced leadership to an increasingly engaged membership, so that all of us can support our bargaining team, so they can advance our priorities at the negotiating table.

Please vote for experience, hard work, and inclusivity!

Biography

I am a Full Lecturer in the Department of English and Film Studies, where I coordinate first-year English, which involves supporting 61 different instructors teaching across 182 sections; in the 2022-2023 academic year 7,219 undergraduate students went through first-year English, which is a required course of many programs. I am also the Associate Director of the [Centre for Literatures in Canada / Centre de littératures au Canada](#) (CLC) in the Faculty of Arts. My

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current research focusses on the discounting of books by large vendors, which threatens to homogenize the Canadian publishing industry, and by extension, the voices that circulate in local communities. I teach classes on Canadian literatures and book history, both of which draw on my interest in Canadian publishing.

Relevant AASUA Experience

Vice President (June 2022-ongoing)
Chair, Governance Committee (June 2022-ongoing)
Chair, Bargaining Planning Committee (Sept. 2023-Dec. 2023)
Acting Vice President, AASUA (Jan. 2022-June 30, 2022)
Director, Academic Teaching Staff (ATS) and Executive Member (July 2020-June 2022)
Chair of Communications, Job Action Committee (July 2021-Mar. 2022)
Chair, Advocacy Committee (July 2020-June 2021)
Chair, Grievance Appeals Committee (Aug. 2021-Dec 2021)
Councillor (July 2018- June 2020)
Member, Equity Committee (July 2016-June 2017)

Relevant CAUT Experience

Trustee, CAUT Defence Fund (July 2022 – ongoing)
Member, CAUT’s Contract Academic Staff Committee (Aug. 2019-June 2022)

Relevant University of Alberta Experience

Associate Director, Centre for Literatures in Canada / Centre de littératures au Canada (CLC),
Faculty of Arts, Jan 2023-June 2023)
Acting Director, Centre for Literatures in Canada / Centre de littératures au Canada (CLC),
Faculty of Arts, Jan 2023-June 2023)
Member, Chair Selection Committee, Department of English and Film Studies, (Oct. 2023-
present)
Member, Undergraduate Programs Committee, Department of English and Film Studies,
(Sept. 2022-present)
Member, Academic Teaching Staff Evaluation Committee, Faculty of Arts (July 2019-
June 2020)