

In This Issue

[2010 OURA Innovation Award](#)

[UIP Review: Torch Passed to OURA](#)

[Standing Committee Update - Scholarships and Awards](#)

[Standing Committee Update - Graduate Studies](#)

[Standing Committee Update - Secondary School Liaison](#)

[Standing Committee Update - Admissions](#)

Quick Links

[Ontario University Registrars' Association](#)

[Meet your 2010 OURA Executive](#)

[OURA Survey Articles](#)

[Job Postings](#)

[Calendar of Events](#)

[Council of Ontario Universities](#)

[Ontario Universities' Application Centre](#)

[e-INFO](#)

[Graduate Studies International Admission Placement Guide](#)

[Common Scholarship Application Proposal](#)

[ARUCC](#)

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Message from the OURA President

**By: Heather Brown
President, OURA**

Welcome to another addition of OURA In Tune - the newsletter designed to keep you updated on your Association and industry activities. It is an honour to serve as the President of OURA. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ray Darling for remaining on the executive for additional year as Past President. Your continued support is much appreciated. I look forward to working with the 2010 executive team. We have a great group of enthusiastic members who will be bringing a mixture of experience and a wealth of knowledge to the table.

The OURA Executive is already busy planning for the 2011 OURA Conference which we are looking to hold in Muskoka. We received some great feedback from the 2010 conference and will be using this feedback to assist us with planning for 2011. We are determined to make this conference the best yet!

The Standing Committees continue to be active with a number of initiatives. Please see their reports in this edition for detailed information on their continued work.

As you are aware, the OURA Executive has been working with the UIP Review Team to decide the future of the UIP. The UIP Review report was endorsed by the OURA Executive last December. The report has since been endorsed by both the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) and the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) with the directive to move forward with the report's recommendations and to have an action plan in place by October. Kristina Neilsen's (Chair, Standing Committee on Secondary School Liaison) featured article - UIP Review: Torch Passed to OURA outlines the first steps already taken by the Executive team.

If you have any suggestions for OURA in terms of our communications, professional development activities or advocacy initiatives, please do not hesitate to contact me at heatherb@nipissingu.ca . I encourage you to get involved as much as you can.

Have a safe and happy summer!

Heather Brown, President

2010 OURA INNOVATION AWARD

Brock is the recipient of this year's Ontario Universities Registrars' Association (OURA) Innovation Award, which rewards universities for improving the quality and reducing the cost of academic admission.

The OURA Innovation Award recognizes and rewards achievements in the following areas: admissions, registration, examinations, scheduling, transcripts, systems, records, calendars, scholarships and awards, secondary school liaison, and related activities. Brock's Office of the Registrar won for its Electronic Academic Calendar Submission/Revision Project.

The award is valued at \$5,000 and is given in the form of an endowment to fund a student scholarship.

The Office of the Registrar, in partnership with ITS/Web Development, developed a web-based system to facilitate the Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Calendar Revision Submission process. This project improves the annual process by which the academic calendar is developed and produced, and improves efficiency, productivity and cost savings. The first year of implementation, collaboration and support from the academic units and the undergraduate program committee have contributed to a successful launch of phase one.

The award was accepted by Barb Davis, Registrar, and Gloria Gallagher, Associate Registrar, during the OURA Annual Conference held March 1 to 3 in Toronto. The two also presented a conference session on the project and will make a similar presentation at the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada Conference in June.

"I would like to acknowledge the exceptional work of both Mwinchande Chande in the Office of the Registrar and Geoff Martin in ITS, and to thank members of UPC and everyone in the academic units for their support and enthusiasm in embracing this project," Davis said. "It is very much a community effort."

Samantha Craggs - Brock University

This article first appeared in [The Brock News](#)

UIP Review: Torch Passed to OURA

The UIP Review torch was officially handed to the OURA Executive from the UIP Review Committee at a recent meeting held at the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) in Guelph. Key stakeholders were present from the Review Committee, the OUAC, the OURA Executive and the Standing Committee on Secondary School Liaison (SCSSL).

The UIP Review report has been endorsed by OURA and the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) with

directive to have an action plan in place by October, in time for the next OCAV meeting.

The SCSSL will continue to coordinate the logistics of the UIP with the support of the OUAC and a new steering committee tentatively named the Ontario University Secondary School Program (OUSSP-SC). The membership of the OUSSP-SC is being shaped now with representation from the General Committee on Secondary School Liaison (GCSSL), one Registrar, a Senior Director/Administrator, the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), the OUAC and the e!Info Editorial Board (IEB). The OUSSP-SC will report to the OURA Executive in addition to the OUAC. It will operate in a similar fashion to the OUF-SC.

The first task of the OUSSP-SC will be writing Terms of Reference, prioritizing and researching changes and improvements in consultation with key stakeholders. The OUAC, OURA Executive, and SCSSL look forward to implementing the UIP Review report with the OUSSP-SC.

A virtual event targeting Grade 11 students is seen as being a quick deliverable from the report as research has already been initiated. An Ontario University Virtual Fair working group is being struck to look at the feasibility of a pilot event as early as spring 2011.

The University Information Program (UIP) Review came to a close in 2009. The UIP Review Committee, working under the direction of the management consultancy firm The Change Alliance, worked very hard to complete the report and recommendations.

Kristina Neilson, Chair SCSSL

Scholarships and Awards Updates

By: Kelly Dickinson
Chair, Standing Committee on Scholarships and Awards

The Scholarships & Awards Standing Committee has only been able to meet once by teleconference this year. We are extremely busy at this time of year with awards activities, and many of us also have other duties like financial aid which adds to the volume of activity flowing through our already busy offices!

Our focus this year will be on planning the annual conference. We received some really positive feedback from our members last year on the variety of sessions and opportunities for members to exchange ideas, and we will continue our planning with this in mind. We know that many of our members found it difficult to be away from the office and were not able to stay for the workshop day, so we are

going to evaluate whether we will offer that optional third day at the next conference. Topic ideas or presenter suggestions from our members are most welcome!

The Committee also discussed two other topics on our teleconference: 1) Advancement-related issues and best practices, and 2) Technology in the awards office. What we find is no matter what topic we discuss, we all have different perspectives, processes and challenges that are unique to our institutions; finding common ground and coming to agreement on a solution or approach is difficult. We are trying to find the best way to support our members, which promotes the exchange of ideas and information so that our members can take back what they need to their own institutions for adaptation and adoption.

Advancement-related:

We will likely have a follow-up session to Noël A. J. Badiou's session on Special Programs Under the Ontario Human Rights Code that gives us more detailed information so that we can better understand how to navigate the increasingly complicated world of targeted awards as we receive more pressure to create affirmative action or other targeted awards from donors with special interests. We need to understand when and how we can accept these awards, what is meant by a Special Program and how to set one up if required.

We discussed the possibility of checking in with our members if they would like to have a secure place on our web site where we could post sample institutional awards agreements, policies and forms in order to assist other members in developing their own materials and processes. Members often exchange information with each other upon request, but this might be a helpful repository of this type of information. We could also post other relevant documents.

Technology-related:

We have spent a few years discussing award technology solutions. The conversation started when the Committee explored the possibility of a "common award application" which was being developed with OUAC. The idea at the time was that the required data would have been included on the application for admission through OUAC. While significant work was done on this piece, OUAC was not able to move forward on this project due to cost and other priorities. Subsequently, we started exploring the possibility of introducing a common data standard for entrance bursaries and awards so that students would be able save their application data in a particular data file format which could be recognized by participating institutions, uploaded into their existing systems and automatically mapped to their own data standards into their processes. The student benefits by not having to complete so many applications requiring the same or similar data, and the institutions benefit by having students apply for any and all entrance awards for which they might be eligible. The ScholarSelect site shows how this process works.

Although many of our members expressed general interest in this, there has not been overwhelming support for the Committee to take any particular action on the technology front as many institutions already have their own processes in place that work for them, and those that don't aren't sure how to adopt this solution or if it would be a benefit. Recently, Brock adapted its system to accommodate the ScholarSelect data file and has agreed to share some insight about how the process was developed and works for them, perhaps at a conference session. At this point, the Committee will not take any further action with respect to technology.

If there are any general Scholarships & Awards members who would like to comment on the above activities, or make a suggestion/referral for our annual conference, please let me know!

Kelly Dickinson, Chair

Graduate Studies Updates

**By: Rosemary Springett
Chair, Standing Committee on Graduate
Studies**

The Graduate Standing Committee held its first meeting via conference call on July 9, 2010. J. Codd was selected as the recording secretary of the committee.

The value of the Graduate Admissions Guide was noted. E. Arena has once again agreed to manage the Guide this year. Three items relating to the Guide were discussed.

1. E. Arena was asked to look into a possible name change from the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). At this time, there is no need for a name change in the guide.

2. The IAU Education System section of the UNESCO site is currently under review. If the site address is updated, references in the Guide will need to be updated.

3. An electronic document that lists a specific grading scale for all universities in Australia was reviewed and will be added to the guide.

The committee discussed potential topics for the 2011 OURA Conference. Although at a preliminary stage, some members will be investigating the feasibility of a few topics. Further discussion and planning will occur during our next meeting in August.

Rosemary Springett, Chair

Secondary School Liaison Updates

By: Kristina Neilson
Chair, Standing Committee on Secondary School Liaison

The Standing Committee on Secondary School Liaison (SCSSL) met in March to start planning for the 2009/10 recruitment cycle and again in May to put those plans into action.

The SCSSL is pleased to welcome many new members to the committee this year, including a few recent additions to the Ontario Liaison community. These members offer a new perspective to historical approaches.

The schedule for the 2010 UIP has been determined and the planning process is well underway and schedules are finalized. Details will soon be available on the [OUF website](#). Standing committee members are working hard to establish a rotation of schools within each community. The majority of the UIPs are now bus weeks, where all university representatives travel together. The additional bus weeks were implemented in 2009 for concern over representative safety and moving toward greener initiatives. A discounted bus rate has been negotiated this year which will translate into cost savings for each university.

Regional Dialogues were well received this year by over 1000 counsellors (almost double the 2009 registrations!) Dialogues were held at six university campuses across the province from May 3 - 10. A number of enhancements were implemented this year including a collaborative [Resource Document](#) and online registration. The resource document saw all 21 universities work together to provide a comprehensive overview for secondary school guidance professionals at their request. Upon introduction to the guidance community, the document was met with a loud applause during the welcome of the first dialogue.

Plans for the 2010 Ontario Universities' Fair are well underway. The [OUF](#), happening September 24-26 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC) will be host to over 100,000 students, parents and counsellors. A new reusable bag, branded with the OUF logo and [e!nfo](#) website has been designed for distribution at the OUF. This move will allow one common bag to be distributed and save universities from producing their own giveaway bags. This initiative is one of many steps toward hosting a greener event.

You'll notice some changes to [e!nfo](#) this cycle. Newly added to the site are links directing students to international admission requirement, special consideration policies and the Common University Data Ontario (CUDO) for each institution.

Other exciting programs and resources the liaison community

continues to work on include branding, the enhancements to critical paths for the SCSSL roles and tasks, Liaison Workshop to be hosted at Laurentian University August 18 - 20, and the Liaison Community Website.

Kristina Neilson, Chair

Undergraduate Admissions Update

By: Rebecca Hamilton
Chair, Standing Committee on Admissions

The Standing Committee on Undergraduate Admissions serves as a resource for Admission offices facing unusual or difficult admissions-related issues. We host two forums - one in the Spring and another in the Fall, immediately prior to the semi-annual OUCA meetings in Toronto. Senior Admission representatives from each university are invited to attend the day long forums for sharing information and discussion around common issues and challenges in Admissions.

At our Spring Forum 2010, hosted at Ryerson University on April 14, discussions were held on a number of topics including:

- Hong Kong Diploma for Secondary Education
- American curriculum courses and/vs. AP courses
- Websites and posting of minimum averages required for admission
- CEGEP English courses - 603 vs.604
- University challenge credit courses
- Ontario high school (101) application - how can we make it better? * International recruitment and admissions
- ELP test scams
- BC Provincial Exams - who wants them and who doesn't?
- Chinese applicants and the SAT/ACT tests in lieu of CNUEE/NCEE
- "Combo" applicants - students transitioning between different curriculums mid-way through high school years
- Ontario "105" application and possible mandatory fields
- Letters of Permission and prerequisite checking - whose responsibility is that?
- "Official" transcripts

It is evident that we have many concerns in common, and the lists of challenges and new issues just keep on flowing and growing. There is no doubt amongst all of the participants that these information sharing forums are of great benefit to all of our offices.

With this in mind, one of our initiatives for 2010 will be to attempt to organize Regional Roundtables for the benefit and participation of admission staff members from all

participating universities. From a simple concept a few weeks ago, we already have two volunteer institutions willing to host one day events for either in-person or via video-conferencing, in early October. While arrangements are still in preliminary stages, we see this as a great opportunity for admission staff at all levels to network and learn from each other, in a similar way that their admission directors do during the semi-annual Admission Forums. We will keep you all posted on our events as we become more organized and dates and participation become firm.

Topics for discussion are always welcome by your OURA Admissions group. Please feel free to email me with any undergraduate admission-related questions that you need answers to. New topics for our forums and our proposed October 2010 Round tables will be most welcome:

hamiltnr@mcmaster.ca

Rebecca Hamilton, Chair

SINCERELY,

W. Aaron House
Communications Officer
Ontario University Registrars' Association, 2008

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