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President, OURA

One of the highlights of the OURA executive's activities is planning the annual OURA conference. This is the fourth time that I've been involved and while sometimes we go into the process with a theme and focus in mind, other times, like this year, standing committees were given free reign to program sessions that are relevant to them and the things they want to learn and know more about. In the end without any intentional planning or design, a theme did emerge resulting in the tagline for OURA 2015 i.e. "Activate the Future".

It seems what is top of mind for our members is how to better prepare ourselves for the challenges we may face in the future whether those challenges are technological, societal, financial, legislative or related to how we work with our teams and colleagues. This year's program features a mix of dynamic plenaries, practical sessions of best practices in place at universities, speakers providing insights into new and innovative approaches and roundtables to collaborate on solutions. We believe there is something for everyone and we hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Please read on below and [visit the website](#) for information on the program and how to register.

OURA 2015: Activate the Future!**February 11-13, 2015**

Please join us for the OURA 2015 conference, once again located at the Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre Hotel.

Why you should attend:

- The return of highly informative leadership sessions as well as new 30-minute breakout sessions

- Outstanding plenary speakers including Dr. Ann Cavoukian (Ryerson University) and Max Valiquette (innovation and trends expert)
- OURA awards luncheon - a great opportunity to recognize the achievements and contributions of our members
- A multi-day format with flexible registration options allowing for greater professional development opportunities
- OURA AGM on Thursday morning
- Convenient downtown Toronto location - a great starting point to explore all the city has to offer with colleagues and friends

The complete program, registration and accommodation information can be found on the OURA website. [Register today!](#)

OURA 2015 Awards

OURA awards recognize the achievements and contributions OURA members make to the collective. This year we will be presenting the following awards during a special luncheon on Thursday:

- Innovation Award
- Award of Achievement
- Honourary Award
- Award of Excellence

Nominations may be submitted by any OURA member in good standing to the attention of Charmaine Hack, Vice-President using the appropriate nominations forms by Friday, January 9, 2015. Forms and more information can be found on the [OURA website](#).

OURA EXECUTIVE - CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Serving on the Executive Committee of OURA is a great opportunity to be involved in the issues facing all of us, to work on furthering the professional development of OURA members, and to further develop your network of professional colleagues. We encourage you to consider volunteering your time to your organization, and are accepting nominations for the following positions:

- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Member-at-Large (2 positions)

Nomination forms and full details about each position can be found on the [Call for Nominations page on the OURA website](#). Completed nominations should be sent to the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Effie Gatsinos, no later than **Friday, January 9, 2015**.

STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATES

Admissions Updates

By: Parisa Memari

Chair, Standing Committee on Undergraduate Admissions

The Standing Committee on Undergraduate Admissions has had a busy and productive year. We met a few times by teleconference and discussed a broad range of topics including:

- ARRUC Doc Alerts
- PIF (Feasibility Study on International Documents)
- Gender and Title on OUAC applications
- Electronic Transcripts for non-101s (e.g. Parchment/Naviance)
- Paper or electronic offers and refusals
- TOEFL and IELTS scores

Our recent focus was on planning the OURA Conference sessions to reflect the changes that are occurring in admissions. Our goal was to provide our members with a program that is interesting and informative. We are excited that some of the more complicated issues around admissions will be well explored through the many sessions organized for the conference. We hope you plan to attend the conference.

I would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Undergraduate Admissions for their efforts throughout the past year.

I hope to see you in February at the OURA 2015 Conference!
Parisa Memari

Graduate Studies Updates

By: Deborah Russell
Chair, Standing Committee on Graduate Studies

The Standing Committee on Graduate Studies has been concentrating on planning the sessions for our upcoming conference. Again we will be having two sessions of our very popular roundtable for current hot topics as well as sessions on academic integrity, mental health of graduate students and process innovations. More information on this and our other exciting sessions can be found on the [OURA website](#).

Almey Tse Soriano and Alice Brummell have been looking at the OURA Graduate Studies International Admissions Placement Guide. We are always looking for suggestions of countries that need to be researched and updated.

Matt Dumouchel from Western University will become Chair following our Annual General Meeting, which will be held late Wednesday afternoon during the conference. At this meeting, a vote will be held for committee membership for the upcoming year. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in serving on this

committee as Vice-Chair or a member at large, please send your nominations to me.

Looking forward to seeing you in February,
Deborah Russell

Records and Systems Updates

By: Margaret Bura

Chair, Standing Committee on Records and Systems

The Standing Committee on Records and Systems met in February 2014 at the OURA conference to set the priorities for the coming year. The Committee is dedicated to aligning its goals and initiatives with the feedback received from OURA members. We met again in September to finalize 2015 OURA conference session topics. I am happy to report that we have selected a variety of presentations addressing the issues and interests most relevant to the records and systems area:

- A User-Centred Redesign of U of T's Student Web Service
- Every Student Counts: Two Institutions Use Two Approaches and One Early Alert Technology Solution to Retain Students - joint session from OCAD University and Ryerson University
- PESC User Group Update: Standards 'R' Us from OUAC
- Transcript Service Enhancements at University of Toronto
- Automated Course Wait Listing from Ryerson University
- Electronic Survival in the Jungle of Today's World by Ryerson University
- Transforming Data into Meaning by Business Intelligence team from UofT
- 'Staffnet' presented by Western University

As always, we are considering the themes relevant to current functions of the Registrar's Office and the management of our respective student information systems. We look forward to seeing you at OURA 2015!
Margaret Bura

Scholarships and Awards Updates

By: Valerie Sarkany

Chair, Standing Committee on Scholarships and Awards

The Standing Committee on Scholarships and Awards is excited to present to you an array of guest speakers at OURA 2015 that are equally informative and thought-provoking:

- Session 1: Ontario Human Rights Code: This session will provide an overview of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Scholarships and Awards. Participants will learn about best practices for designing scholarships or awards in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

- Session 2: How to Create a Financial Literacy Program with Minimal Resources: Learn from OCAD University`s CREATiveFund\$ program that builds financial skills via workshops, web tools, video and print resources, and financial counselling.
- Session 3: Exploring FIPPA: Attend this session to learn more about the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act - the legislation driving privacy matters at Ontario universities. The session will introduce you to the Act's overarching privacy protection principles, and discuss best practices for avoiding breaches and maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the records you manage every day.
- Session 4: Net Tuition Calculator: See a demonstration of a web application created at Western that merges a financial calculator with the net tuition message that financial aid programs reduce the sticker price of tuition.
- Session 5: Scholarship and Awards Roundtable: Discuss hot topics, including entrepreneurial awards, organizational structure and best practices to increase award applications.
- Session 6: Income Contingent Loans & the Future of Accessibility: Lorne Sossin, Dean of Osgoode Hall, will discuss the Income Contingent Loan Pilot Program at Osgoode Hall, where tuition is paid to the school not while they study but when the graduate`s salary has reached a defined threshold.
- Session 7: Financial Consumer Agency of Canada: To discuss the evaluation of a financial literacy program and its outcomes, and to provide feedback on what works and what doesn't with respect to financial literacy programs.
- Session 8: The Future of the Digital Community in PSE: Hamza Khan, Coordinator, Student Affairs Creative @ Ryerson University, discusses how the nature of digital engagement is shifting and what we can do to keep pace.

The Annual General Meeting of the Standing Committee on Scholarships and Awards will be held on Wednesday afternoon at 4pm. Please consider sharing your time and talents for the benefit of your OURA colleagues.

We hope to see you at the 2015 Conference!

Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Sarkany

Secondary School Liaison Updates

By: Paula Johnson
Chair, Standing Committee on Secondary School Liaison

UIP - Wrap Up

We successfully completed 8 weeks of the University Information Program. While there were a few hiccups, it was all handled professionally and efficiently by the members of the UIP-Working Group. Special thanks to Marisa Modeski (Ryerson), Casey Hinton (OCADU) and Marlin Gold (York) for their leadership with this group.

Ontario Universities' Fair (OUF)

The OUF was a resounding success this year with numbers that exceeded last year's total attendance. There is no question that this event will continue to grow despite the declining demographic predictions. We continue to struggle with space issues and crowd control, especially on the Saturday. The current committee is looking at ways of mitigating these issues for next year and moving forward.

Changes to Terms of Reference

The SCSSL recently underwent a process of reviewing the current Terms of Reference and provided a series of 25 motions to the General Committee on December 4, 2014. All motions were passed and subsequently accepted by the OURA executive. The changes were made in an effort to better reflect the mandate of the SCSSL (soon to be known as the Standing Committee on Student Recruitment - SCSR - pending an AGM vote) and its numerous activities and responsibilities. They also solidify the UIP-Working Group structure as part of our Terms of Reference.

Paula Johnson

Samantha Read
Communications Officer
Ontario University Registrar's Association, 2014

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