

Member-at-Large Candidate Theresa Bianco's answer to written questions.

1. Question

"What do you think you have brought to the union and why have you chosen to run again?"

Sent by Tracy Hecht

Answer by Theresa Bianco

Now in my second mandate and seeking a third, I bring experience, strategic judgment, and a clear understanding of how to advance members' interests effectively. Union work is complex: it requires not only conviction, but also an ability to navigate institutional dynamics, anticipate the Employer's priorities, and position our arguments accordingly. My experiences on both the Board of Governors and Senate have further strengthened this capacity and helped inform my more strategic approach within the Executive.

Over the past two years, I have focused on making meaningful, if sometimes less visible, contributions. As EDI Chair, I conducted a comprehensive audit of our Collective Agreement, identifying gaps and proposing concrete language improvements informed by best practices at other Associations across the country. My role has also shifted toward more direct intervention in day-to-day issues affecting members, while also designing an EDI hub (nearing completion) to better support and inform the membership. Through my work on the Joint Equity Committee and as a grievance officer, I have advocated for members, contributed to policy development, and pushed for more responsive, trauma-informed processes and post-complaint supports.

I am running again to build on this work, deepen these initiatives, and continue advocating effectively for members.

2. Question

"In your position statement you say you would work to strengthen communication across the membership and help foster a culture of respectful but productive debate. The concept of genuine dialogue seems to be sorely lacking recently in CUFA. Can you elaborate on how you would go about doing so?"

Sent by Norman Ingram

Answer by Theresa Bianco

Communication within CUFA *has* become more challenging. When members feel uninformed about processes or decisions, frustration grows, and debate can too easily become difficult to sustain constructively.

Part of rebuilding our communication, then, must involve careful attention to how information flows between the Executive and the membership. Members benefit from clear, timely access to accurate information, along with meaningful opportunities for input. The removal of the CUFA forum disrupted

one avenue for informal exchange; it is understandable that this change was experienced by some members as a loss. Other avenues of communication are needed, recognizing that each offers different strengths and limitations. Open forums can be valuable but in the absence of attentive moderation can perpetuate misunderstandings, intensify disagreements, and discourage participation. Other channels are also needed. I have been working on developing a more structured engagement framework that reinforces transparent, inclusive, and accessible communication practices – one that would include regular updates, clear explanations of decisions, and opportunities for members to ask questions and engage in evidence-based discussion.

The goal is not to minimize disagreement—a normal and healthy feature of any democratic association—but to support conditions in which disagreement remains informed, constructive, and grounded in mutual respect.

3. Question

“I would like to get your opinion on what CUFA should do to ensure job security and academic growth for those members holding ETA positions. What do you see as the biggest issues facing those members?”

Sent by Gail Fayerman

Answer by Theresa Bianco

ETAs need a more equitable, sustainable career structure. Since becoming an ETA in 2008 (after two years as an LTA), I have seen our working conditions gradually improve, but further gains are needed in workload, status, and career progression.

Workload remains inequitable partly because “normal” duties are defined differently across units. Job security is also uneven, tied in part to [“the availability of work”](#) [Art. 14.12 a)]. Like TT colleagues, ETAs only attain stability with a contract without end date on second reappointment. Yet, even after permanence, our roles depend upon teaching needs, leaving ETA members vulnerable to program changes.

On status, the Employer has promised revised rank and title in the next CA—a symbolic step that acknowledges ETAs’ essential contribution to teaching. We also need access to substantive opportunities: meaningful service assignments, greater participation in governance, and an equitable sabbatical leave scheme mirroring TT provisions, with LTA years credited.

Finally, ETAs enter *as scholars*, but current provisions neither enable nor recognize the research some undertake.

Heavy workloads, inconsistent definitions of “normal,” and lack of recognition for optional research entrench a two-tier system. Gains in these areas these would shift perceptions, strengthen ETAs’ role, and enhance our career satisfaction.