



# Memorandum

## Re: Recommendation for Bernice Schrank Award

**Date:** May 26, 2020

**To:** CAUT Council

**From:** Brenda Austin-Smith, President

CAUT established the Bernice Schrank Award in 2013 to recognize outstanding contributions to the enforcement of academic staff workplace rights through grievance/arbitration.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I am very happy to recommend that this year's Award be presented to Dr. Jeannette Gaudet, from the Faculty Association of St. Thomas University (FAUST). The nomination letter for Dr. Gaudet speaks of her sixteen years in the role of Grievance Officer for the association, in addition to previous service in various positions on the FAUST Executive Committee. In her capacity as Grievance Officer, Dr. Gaudet has responded with focus and effectiveness to a number of attempts by the administration of the University to challenge, weaken, or just circumvent the collective agreement. Dr. Gaudet led the association in successful arbitrations against the denial of leaves and increments, and is preparing for more arbitration hearings against the use of so-called "letters of expectation" as forms of disciplinary action. Perhaps the most significant of her achievements, though, was championing grievances against the administration's attempts to deny union status and benefits to Contract Academic Staff who were teaching in First Nations communities. This was, as one former FAUST President puts it, a "serious attack on part-time seniority among other infractions," and took place even as post-secondary institutions are called upon to respond with care and integrity to the TRC recommendations on education as a part of reconciliation.

Activist colleagues in FAUST commend Dr. Gaudet's dedication to the principles of union representation, no matter how difficult the case may be. Dr. Gaudet is also praised and admired for her calm and reasoned interactions with administration, with the aim of securing the best outcome for FAUST members as her guide. All of the letters submitted in support of Dr. Gaudet's nomination refer also to the value she places on educating union members about their own rights, and how to claim them. For example, Dr. Gaudet helped to form FAUST's Grievance Committee and trained new Grievance Officers. Dr. Jeannette Gaudet is, according to her union colleagues, "the most dedicated and the most effective voice our membership has for the defense of collective agreement



**Brenda Austin-Smith // PRESIDENT // PRÉSIDENTE // MANITOBA**

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provisions through the grievance process." It is a great pleasure to recommend Dr. Jeannette Gaudet for this award.