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# THE UWFA NEWS

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## Message from the President

*Pauline Pearson, UWFA President*

My exams are written and the carols are playing in my office, which can mean only one thing—the end of the term is rapidly approaching and with it a welcome rest. I would like to extend warm holiday wishes to you all and congratulate you on a successful term.

I've now held the position of UWFA President for six months, and it seems timely to reflect on the successes and failures of my tenure thus far. I'm happy to report that more successes come to mind than failures. To end on a happy note, let me begin with the one failure that comes to mind. As many of you may recall, this summer I wrote a letter to Dr. Axworthy about the vacancy management plan and asked that he speak to faculty. Despite a positive reply and subsequent reassurances in late September, no meeting is scheduled. I view this as unfortunate as I know many of you were eager to hear from him. I will continue to encourage him to address the Membership.

But we have enjoyed many successes over the past six months. There was a wonderful soiree on October 27, which was planned by Marissa Dudych and Hugh Grant with the support of the Membership Committee. (See pictures of that event in this issue.) I was pleased to see many of you there and to have the opportunity to meet new faculty. The food prepared by Diversity Food Services was outstanding and the caricaturist appeared to be a real hit, despite my initial reservations. I hope you will join us at future events organized by the Membership Committee. If you have an event that you would like to suggest, please contact Peter Ives.

The Communications Committee, chaired by Tracy Whalen, has produced several well-received newsletters, is working on a new logo, is reviewing our policies on communications, and is contemplating changes to the website. Allen Mills and the members of the Constitution, Bylaws and Policy Committee are actively improving transparency at the UWFA by clarifying the policies of the organization and are increasing the diversity of the UWFA Council by adding a representative for faculty with term positions. Lisa McGifford has successfully negotiated the inclusion of lab instructors as part of UWFA. This means that we are 62 members stronger and can better protect the rights of these individuals. All of the staff and members of the UWFA committees play a critical role in each of the successes that we attain.

CAUT assisted us in providing training in grievance handling and collective bargaining. I am pleased to announce that Catherine Hunter is the new UWFA Grievance Officer and a welcome addition to Council. In addition, the Collegiate faculty have approved a mandate for their upcoming negotiations.

Another notable success that may not be ours, but in which many UWFA Members played a supporting role, is the new Collective Agreement that was successfully negotiated by our colleagues at Brandon University. This success was hard won and a real accomplishment, given the egregious tactics of the University and the Manitoba government to derail the process. Their struggle is a warning and their solidarity is an inspiration to us all. Thanks to all the Members who participated in flying pickets and supported our BUFA brothers and sisters by joining their picket line. As BUFA Member Dick Henley writes in this newsletter, the presence of UWFA Members was very much appreciated and played an important role in their solidarity and morale.

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The UWFA News is also available  
online at [www.uwfa.ca/uwfa-news](http://www.uwfa.ca/uwfa-news).

## Message from the President (cont. from p. 1)

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Of course, I would be remiss not to mention ongoing issues. Student Evaluations of Teaching remain a topic of discussion. We are working together with the Employer to resolve concerns about the summary mandatory assessment, as well as to implement a voluntary formative assessment system that would provide additional information about teaching effectiveness. I am continuing my efforts to resolve difficulties with the new Contract Faculty office (3C70); we are also planning sessions to start preparing for Contract Academic Staff negotiations. I hope both Regular and Contract Academic Staff will join those discussions about a bargaining mandate.

Thanks to all who have made my role as UWFA President so rewarding. I appreciate your dedication, hard work, and support. Happy holidays!

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## A Heartfelt Thank-you from BUFA

*Dick Henley, Brandon University Faculty Association*

BUFA strike headquarters hosted a union Membership meeting on Monday afternoon; it was billed as a Q&A session, but we knew well that it would be a victory celebration. And celebrate we did, an hour and a half of speech-giving and ovation that included a brief synopsis of the contents of our new Collective Agreement, won through the staging of a 45-day strike. An outside observer who had knowledge of the contents of the CA might well wonder the reason for the cheery demeanour of the crowd. It is not as if the new CA would bestow riches upon the Membership, certainly. No, the celebration was about being part of a collective action that challenged established authority (the university administration, the local commercial media, and the provincial government) and emerged at the end of the struggle with BUFA very much intact. Very few Members defected across the picket lines.

BUFA's place in the decision-making apparatus of Brandon University has been secured for another four years, the life of the new contract. It is doubtful that either Dr. Poff or her high priced anti-union lawyer Grant Mitchell will be on hand for the next bargaining round, but BU seems to have a propensity for hiring presidents whose chief ambition quickly turns to a desire to centralise authority over the work that we do, despite whatever they may indicate about intentions before their appointment. Unfortunately, this tendency exists in universities across the country. Indeed, it seems that ever since university presidents began to be paid CEO-like salaries, they have come to believe they should be able to wield the authority of a CEO.

Academic unions are indispensable to the defence of the public universities as we know them in Canada and I'm proud to be a BUFA Member, to have been part of a collective will that found expression through the strike action. Let us hope the union is able to sustain the strong support from its Membership that it now enjoys four years hence.

I did picket duty on the line in Winnipeg. We all have our own personal conditions and circumstances that decide for us how we experienced our strike duties. In my own case, I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the line: great camaraderie; excellent weather; and regular visits of solidarity from our many UWFA supporters. A heartfelt thank you for your solidarity with our cause and the great company you provided. The six weeks fairly flew by.

And now it's a scramble to catch up with teaching responsibilities. And I really should get back to it.

## Conference Reports from our Members

### **The Aggrieved Librarian: CAUT Librarian's Conference**

*Linwood DeLong, Library, UWFA Council Member*

Academic librarians from across Canada attended a very interesting two-day conference put on by CAUT in late October. It was noted at the beginning that a high percentage of librarians feel that there are grievable issues in their workplaces, but only a small percentage of librarians actually launch grievances. To help librarians understand the issues surrounding grievances, participants engaged in plenary discussions and a variety of role-playing scenarios against the backdrop of a fictitious (but true-to-life) collective agreement.

There were lengthy plenary discussions about the role of grievance officers, the advisability (or not) of having the grievor present when the grievance officer meets with representatives of the administration to seek a resolution of a grievance, and the typical content of many negotiated settlements.

One of the noteworthy presentations was an in-depth discussion of the phenomenon often referred to as member-to-member disputes. The presenter for this topic argued strongly that this concept is a misnomer. While members certainly have disputes with other members about issues, the presenter felt very strongly that in most instances the issues concern workplace safety, harassment and bullying and that it is the responsibility of the administration to ensure a proper workplace environment. He stated that faculty associations should not engage in the resolution of member-to-member disputes. The association does have a duty to determine if there is a prima facie basis for pursuing a possible grievance and is well advised to appoint respected, neutral representatives for each party to assist in the information gathering process, he argued. These individuals are there to ensure the integrity of the process, however, and not to take sides on the issue. He felt that the association should take no position on the merit of any complaints until the investigation is complete. This is certainly something that merits further discussion within UWFA.

Clearly grievances are not a good thing and, where appropriate, efforts should be made to resolve issues before they reach the stage of a grievance, but it is equally important for all members of a faculty association to know their rights and to ensure that all of the provisions of their collective agreements are upheld.

### **Learning Circles Meet Linear Thinking: CAUT Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff**

*Jacqueline Romanow, UWFA Member*

The Aboriginal Post Secondary Education Working

Group (APSE) forum began February 1-3, 2008, in Winnipeg, and was hosted by CAUT. The CAUT Equity Committee began work on the development of the APSE some years previous. Each forum has been hosted by CAUT and planned primarily by the APSE working group. The APSE forum empowers indigenous scholars and acknowledges the relevance of indigenous knowledge and practice in the context of APSE forums sponsored by CAUT.

The three-day CAUT Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff began with an opening ceremony that highlighted the indigenous cultures of the communities whose territories hosted the conference, the Coast Salish. It then featured a plenary session, followed by discussion circles. The participants, primarily aboriginal, had a chance to share their own personal victories, frustrations and ongoing challenges within their own institutions.

The first plenary on Friday morning, November 11, 'Recognizing and Naturalizing Indigenous Knowledge in the Academy', was presented by 2 senior indigenous academics from Trent University and the University of Victoria. The discussion circles that followed were divided into 4 primary themes: (1) the role of Elders in colleges and universities; (2) managing work-life balance; (3) negotiating racial diversity in the classroom; (4) working conditions for indigenous academics.

Saturday's Forum focus concerned 'Promotion and Tenure', and although the scheduled keynote speaker, Marie Battiste, was unable to attend, it was very informative. Many aboriginal staff shared the frustration of being over-burdened with administrative duties. The following plenary session continued discussions on key issues: recognition of indigenous knowledge and research methods, the role of elders and the definition of community service. Discussion circles allowed individual participants to share their experiences.

Sunday was the concluding day of the forum, and morning discussion circles focused on the need to provide CAUT and other organizations with a list of items for action. Overall the conference highlighted key issues raised by aboriginal university staff members across the country. Its greatest strength was the feeling of solidarity, of shared frustration and of hope that it generated. It was great to learn that there are many other indigenous academics out there facing similar challenges in their careers and in their institutions. Creating intellectual and physical space for indigenous voices, philosophies and knowledge is no easy task in an institution premised on linear western rationalism. However, the fact of knowing that this struggle is being waged collectively across the country through diverse means and voices was ultimately very empowering.

## UWFA Party for New and Returning Faculty

On 27 October, Hugh Grant and Marissa Dudych, with the support of the UWFA Membership Committee, organized an event for new and returning Faculty Members. Around 110 of our Members made the trek to the Atrium of the new Richardson College for the Environment, where they enjoyed delicious food and

drinks from Diversity Food Services, conversation, music, and, yes, the talents of our acclaimed caricaturist.

Keep an eye out for more events put on by the Membership Committee in the coming term.



Above, an aerial view of the party in progress. Below, some UWFA Members kindly oblige with a pose.



# Changes to Canada Pension Plan

*Jim Clark, UWFA Salary and Benefits Committee Member*

Human Resources recently circulated a memo about changes to CPP that start in January, and earlier offered a related seminar. People between 60 and 65 collecting CPP and still working will be required to make CPP contributions. However, people 65 to 70 years of age, collecting CPP, and still working must decide whether to contribute to CPP or not.

Specifically, the university will start deducting CPP contributions from salaries of members aged 65 to 70 in January 2012, even if they collect CPP, **unless** the administration receives a form instructing payroll to not deduct further CPP contributions. A decision to contribute should be based on such factors as the benefits of further contributions and their cost.

## Benefits

The additional contributions will produce increased benefits, called Post-Retirement Benefits (PRBs). The **yearly** PRBs beginning in 2013 from additional contributions for 2012 are shown below, assuming earnings in 2012 of at least \$50,000.

Year	Month Born			
Born	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
1943	\$406.94	\$400.90	\$394.85	\$388.80
1944	\$382.75	\$376.70	\$370.66	\$364.61
1945	\$358.56	\$352.51	\$346.46	\$340.42
1946	\$334.37	\$328.32	\$322.27	\$316.22
1947	\$310.18	\$304.13	\$298.08	\$292.03

These values, and those for other salaries, are available at:

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/isp/cpp/prb/index.shtml>

Each year of additional contributions produces a further increase in PRB, which is estimated into the future at:

[https://srv111.services.gc.ca/PRB\\_01.aspx](https://srv111.services.gc.ca/PRB_01.aspx)

The following FAQ answers many questions (e.g., no survivor benefits with PRB):

[https://srv111.services.gc.ca/PRB\\_FAQ.aspx](https://srv111.services.gc.ca/PRB_FAQ.aspx)

## Cost

CPP employee contributions are 4.95% of pensionable earnings matched by 4.95% from employers. The dollar amount of contributions therefore depends on salary. People with maximum pensionable earnings of \$50,100 or more in 2012 will contribute \$2,306.70, matched by the employer. This represents 4.95% each of \$50,100 minus \$3,500. For salaries below this,

subtract \$3,500 and multiply by .0495. For example, a salary of \$30,000 minus \$3,500 equals \$26,500 times .0495 = \$1,311.75 in CPP contributions.

## Weighing Costs and Benefits

The challenge is weighing costs and benefits. When I researched this topic on-line, some people said essentially to “take the money and run,” the apparent “reasoning” being that it is better for individuals to have the money than government. And one Member’s accountant told him the same thing. But other sites, the government, and several people I consulted implied or stated that people will probably benefit over time from further contributions to increase pensions, given longer life expectancies. Others were reluctant to make recommendations because personal circumstances vary (e.g., salary, tax rates, whether money is needed now, life expectancy).

One approach is to estimate how many years of increased pension are necessary to earn back the additional deductions, and then guess whether you will live longer. Recalling that the PRB begins the year following the additional contributions and does not allow for survivor benefits and ignoring employer contributions, taxes, possible earnings from untaxed portion of money not deducted for CPP contributions, indexing of PRB, and other factors, the estimated years to retrieve employee contributed funds would be 2,306.70 divided by 292.03 equals 7.9 years for someone born October 1947 and 2,306.70 divided by 406.94 equals 5.7 years for someone born January 1943. If these calculations are valid, living longer produces some benefit from continuing to contribute past 65.

## Conclusions

Retirement planning is complicated, including whether to resume CPP contributions to increase your PRB earnings. But based on this analysis, I conclude with some reservations (not being an accountant) that many people appear to benefit from the PRB, as argued by the government and some financial advisors. If you instead want to stop CPP contributions, the required form should be submitted to payroll by 15 December. The form and instructions are at:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/cpt30/README.html>

For more information on CPP changes, see:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/cpp-rpc/cpp-menu-eng.html>

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/isp/pub/factsheets/posrtrben.shtml>

## UWFA Invites Book Reviews

Jane Barter Moulaison, UWFA Communications Committee Member

In an unstable global economy, universities appear to be increasingly under siege. From the corporatization of higher education to the violent clampdown on student protest, academic freedom is threatened on perhaps an unprecedented scale in modern times. Find out what other scholars are prognosticating about the future of academic work. Members are invited to select from the following list of recent publications on higher education to write a review of approximately 500 - 700 words. For their labour, they will be rewarded with the book they have chosen to review. Reviews will be published in the UWFA News on a regular basis as a way of engendering dialogue on “big picture” changes to higher education and our university’s conformity or resistance to such change. Please contact Jane Barter Moulaison ([j.bartermoulaison@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:j.bartermoulaison@uwinnipeg.ca)) to obtain a book to review.

Arum, Richard and Josipa Roska (eds.) *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Brown, S., J. Perrault, J-A Wallace and H. Zwicker (eds.) *Drowning but Waving: Women, Feminism and the Liberal Arts*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2011.

Coates, Ken C. and Bill Morrison. *Campus Confidential: 100 Startling Things You Don't Know About Campus Universities*. Salisbury: Lorimer Press, 2011.

Côté, James E. and Anton Allahar (eds.) *Lowering Higher Education: The Rise of Corporate Universities and the Fall of Liberal Education*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Cox, Richard J. *The Demise of the Library School: Personal Reflections on Professional Education in the Modern Corporate University*. Duluth: Library Juice Press, 2010.

Morphew, Christopher C. and Peter D. Eckel (eds.) *Privatizing the Public University: Perspectives from Across the Academy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2009.

Nelson, Cary. *No University is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Radder, Hans (ed.) *The Commodification of Academic Research: Science and the Modern University*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.

Woodhouse, Howard. *Selling Out: Academic Freedom and the Corporate Market*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009.

## UWFA Supports the Occupy Movement

On 14 November, UWFA Council voted to publish the following statement of support, provided by Peter Ives, in our newsletter and on the UWFA website, <http://www.uwfa.ca>.

We stand in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street and other Occupy Movements including Occupy Winnipeg.

Over the last several years, we have watched as those at the very top have prospered while the fortunes of those below the very top have stagnated or declined. The gap between rich and poor is greater than ever before in our lifetimes, and we need to stand up for those who are trying to improve their circumstances and provide for their families. The conditions of the lives of many aboriginal people exemplify the continuation of poverty in a society where massive wealth and power is concentrated in the hands of a very few. This is the legacy and continuation of colonialism.

The dedicated students whom we teach at institutions of higher education are being forced to pay more for tuition and go deeper into debt because of cuts in state funding, only to find themselves unemployed when they graduate. Many university faculty positions are now insecure, part-time jobs. In addition, there has been pressure against collective bargaining processes and continuing questions of the pension and benefit security.

Therefore, it is time to stand up for what is right. We applaud the action the Occupy Movement has taken to highlight the inequity and unfairness of the society in which we live.

We strongly support the movement and wish it every success. We are in this together.

## About the UWFA News

The UWFA News is compiled and published by the UWFA Communications Committee. The Committee is comprised of Tracy Whalen, Allen Mills, Peter Ives, Laurence Broadhurst, Andy Park, Jane Barter Moulaison, Mike McIntyre, Roberta Gottschalk, and Marissa Dudych. For more information on the UWFA News, please contact Tracy Whalen at [t.whalen@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:t.whalen@uwinnipeg.ca).

*The UWFA News accepts submissions from University of Winnipeg Faculty Association Members on issues of interest. Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily of the Association or its Executive Council.*