
THE UWFA NEWS

Message from the President

Pauline Pearson, UWFA President

Perhaps is it the cold and dark associated with winter, but January and February have seemed an especially trying time this year. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to all the Members who have lent me their support. The role of UWFA President is sometimes a difficult one, but it would surely be impossible if not for those who provide support and guidance in a wide range of ways and circumstances. To those who have volunteered to serve on UWFA committees, those who participate in events and share their experiences, or those who always give me a smile and a wave, I am grateful.

We have been busy preparing two of the bargaining units for collective bargaining, the Collegiate and the Contract Academic Staff. I am pleased to report that UWFA Council has appointed bargaining teams for both of the units and that we hope to begin bargaining in the near future. I wish both teams the best of luck in reaching new collective agreements.

I would also like to take this opportunity to ask a favour of UWFA Members. Various bodies within the university have been very busy revising and drafting policies and procedures. Many of you sit on committees that either draft or review these documents in their earliest stages. I ask that you be vigilant in bringing these policies to the attention of UWFA, especially if there are any questions about the effects such policies may have on workload, appointment or evaluation of UWFA Members.

Finally, I would like to remind all Members that the Annual General Meeting will be held early in April. At this time, UWFA will be seeking nominations for new members of the UWFA Council. The positions that will be vacant are Vice-President, Treasurer, and Member-at-Large (3 positions). Terms are generally two years in length. Please contact Tracy Whalen (t.whalen@uwinnipeg.ca) for more information or to put your name forward.

Best of wishes to all Members with the rapidly approaching end of term and consequent grading. Fortunately, this also means spring and bicycle season are nigh.

Cheers,
Pauline

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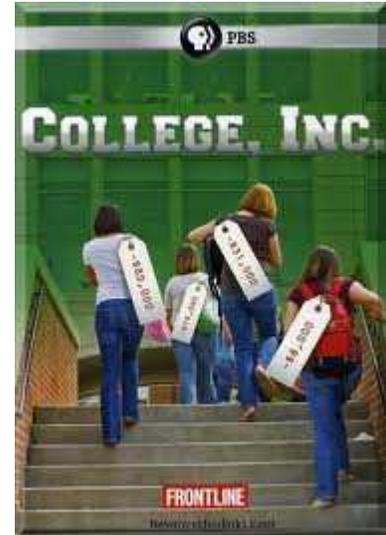
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The UWFA News is also available
online at www.uwfa.ca/uwfa-news.

UWFA Screens *College Inc.*

Kelly Gorkoff, Criminal Justice

On 10 February, University of Winnipeg faculty, staff, and students, along with members of other faculty associations and the general public, viewed (with interest and nervous laughter) the Frontline documentary *College Inc.* The documentary chronicled the story of for-profit higher education in the United States. In response to the market demands associated with living in a credentialist-driven knowledge economy, entrepreneurs like Michael Clifford invest in fledgling colleges, get them back on their feet, and then go public, making considerable profit in the process. They tap into a student market which traditional universities do not: those who are marginalized, older, and in need of credentials. These for-profit colleges spend a large chunk of their budget on advertising and recruitment but only 10-20% on faculty expenses. The focus of recruitment is on high enrollment numbers. The costs of programs, which range from vocational nursing to PhDs in Psychology, are much higher than those in nonprofit institutions. For-profit colleges are consumer driven, engage in high pressure sales tactics, and—here's the rub—depend on government-funded student loan programs to subsidize students.



As the documentary clearly shows, profits come from taxpayers through federal grants and student loans. Private American colleges teach 10% of post-secondary students who account for 25% of student loans and carry twice the debt load of those in public post-secondary education. These private students also account for 44% of all student loan defaults. This situation prompted the American government to reassess the regulation of for-profit schools, address abuses in the system, and negotiate new rules, one of which is the test of gainful employment. For-profits would have to show that students gain employment, allowing them to pay off their loans. Regulations such as these would limit the profit-driven nature of "fast food education" and make the private sector accountable. The battle continues with lobby groups fighting against regulation and former students bringing lawsuits against several for-profits, claiming they did not fulfill their promises and the education they received was subpar.

After the screening, discussion focused on the privatized program Navitas located at The University of Manitoba. Questions about the similarities with the American for-profits revealed some differences, but raised similar concerns including testing, adequate teaching, cost savings to the university and the expansion of these programs. Discussion also centred on corporate cost-saving practices in public not-for profit institutions (such as The University of Winnipeg). These were identified as an increasing use of sessional lecturers, changes to curriculum, and increasing class sizes.

The documentary provided a compelling picture of the commodification and marketization of knowledge and the corporatization of higher education affecting all of us working in this era of academic capitalism.

Note: A DVD copy of *College Inc.* is available in the UWFA office for Members to borrow. Contact Marissa (uwfa@uwinnipeg.ca) for more information.

Liberal Education and Canada's Modern University

Allen Mills, UWFA Vice President

In 1852 John Henry Cardinal Newman published *The Idea of a University*. His conception of the university was that it was a place where ALL knowledge should be taught, academic and practical. Newman's book is famous for its elaboration of what he called liberal education. Liberal education was something that was broad and enquiring, an education of such breadth that it would, as he put it, enlarge and enlighten the mind. He juxtaposed liberal education with a purely practical one which he saw as based on "mechanistic" knowledge. A practical education was inevitably narrow and delimiting and fell short of true education with its expansive sense of knowledge shaping a mind that in the ideal would value such things as illumination, criticism, reason, judgment, moderation and wisdom.

If any set of ideas embodies the ideals of the modern university in Canada, it is likely some version of a liberal education. The knowledge that we are bound to impart to our students is one that is supposed to be broad, critical and non-sectarian.

Part of this education is that in regards to political matters a university is not to be a place of propaganda or sectional proselytizing. A breadth of subject and a critical disposition towards all political positions are considered proper. The classroom and lecture hall are not to be places to make political acolytes. Nor is the university a state institution; it is part of civil society and it should respect the remarkable plurality of knowledge and political commitments of the society around it.

We are losing this liberal sense of the university. Partly it is because of the various compromises that we feel, perhaps wrongly, are necessary to overcome our financial impecuniousness. It is also that the university has been overtaken by a crusading pragmatism which essentially argues that knowledge is only valid if it has practical consequence, so that the purpose of the university is to emphasize practical courses and programmes. This does not bode well for the liberal arts. We now supplement the traditional utilitarian disciplines of medicine and law with other versions of practicality: business, education, kinesiology, poverty studies and redeeming the world through human rights. Of course none of these subjects in themselves are unworthy and for many of us, myself included, the values they may embody are important ones but they are values to be acted on in our lives outside the university and not made the basis of

projects to insinuate them into students' minds in the classroom.

So what is raised by these programmes' advancing prominence is the question of whether the university is being diminished as a place of broad and general liberal education. Certainly it is the view of many faculty at this university that their heartfelt commitment to providing a liberal education is both unappreciated and underfunded by those who make decisions in this place.

Part of their concern is that projects of practical education in fact shortchange the students who enroll in them. If Newman is right, then professional and utilitarian education is completed only when the student is encouraged to transcend the narrowness and hidebound nature of her education and be exposed to alternative world views and critical perspectives. Yet Newman was not opposed to practical courses of studies in universities. He simply wanted to ensure that the student who took them was exposed to a broad range of other forms of knowledge. Newman went on to assert that the professional possessed of both practical *and* liberal knowledge was in fact better equipped to be a professional.

Many practical programmes are not just technically narrow but they are also intellectually limiting. Many of them presuppose determinate political and causal assumptions about the world and what it means to act in it. And so faculties of business seem to require an iron-clad acceptance of laissez-faire and unregulated markets and in other programmes perhaps the dominant motif is that urban poverty is only solvable through community development. These are of course "political" views that can be contested and should be critically examined in a university. Yet often such practical programmes create such a hothouse of internal intellectual conformity that it comes to be believed by the student that not only does social acceptance reside in repeating the mandated shibboleths of the programme but that his 'academic' achievement itself is measured simply by articulating the political incantations rather than through meeting and fulfilling standards of academic proficiency. What emerges is a notion of the practical programme as an enclave of prescribed political conformity. Perhaps the wages of insularity are closed-mindedness, not a quality of a liberal education and not what one expects of the modern university.

Reflecting on Manitoba Tuition Fees

Linwood DeLong, Library, UWFA Council and Communications Committee Member

The National Day of Action on February 1, organized by the Canadian Federation of Students, provided an occasion to reflect on the topic of tuition fees at Manitoba universities. The average undergraduate tuition fees in Manitoba have increased from \$3,271 (in 2007/2008) to \$3,645 (in 2011/2012) according to Stats Canada. This is lower than the Canadian average (currently \$5,366) but there are other issues. There are compulsory ancillary fees, which are higher at The University of Winnipeg than at U of M or Brandon (U of W: \$842; U of M: \$700; Brandon (Science): \$747) and there are the substantial additional fees that are charged to foreign students. U of W international students pay \$11,117; those at the U of M pay between \$10,978 and \$13,417; those at Brandon pay \$6,050 - \$6,427 (<http://www.aucc.ca/canadian-universities/facts-and-stats/tuition-fees-by-university/>). The Canadian average for international students is \$17,571. According to CAUT, "tuition fees are currently the single largest expense for most college and university students, and are increasing more than any other cost faced by students, and far faster than inflation" (<http://www.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=1027>).

Other issues that need to be considered are student debt and the availability of financial assistance for students. According to Statistics Canada, "in 2007, two years after graduation, loans exceeded \$20,000 on average for graduates with student debt (both government and non-government) at the bachelor's and doctorate levels." A detailed study of the class of 2005 found that "well over one-half (57%) of the graduating class of 2005 had student loans, up from 49% 10 years earlier, [that] average student debt on graduation rose from \$15,200 to \$18,800 during the same decade [and that] the proportion of borrowers who graduated with debt loads of at least \$25,000 increased to 27% in 2005 from 17% in 1995."

According to an article in Maclean's ("The **university experience should be more than just an education**" Nov 7, 2011. Vol. 124, Iss. 43) the University of Winnipeg ranks 15th out of 19 un-

dergraduate institutions in the percentage of total operating expenditures devoted to scholarships and bursaries. Information about the Canada and Manitoba student loan program can be found at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/educate/sfa/pages/ourprogram/funding.html>.

It's interesting to note that, on average, students in Manitoba had the lowest average per capita student loan in 2009/2010 (http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/Publications/annual_report/2009-2010/tables/average_loan.shtml) but Manitoba students have close to the highest rate of default on student loans (http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/Publications/annual_report/2009-2010/tables/default_province.shtml).

Funding for First Nations or Aboriginal students is also a matter of concern. The AUCC reports that "the Canadian Aboriginal population grew by 47 percent between 1996 and 2006 (almost six times faster than the non-aboriginal population which grew by 8 percent) but only 8 percent of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 in Canada have a university degree. Federal funding to support Aboriginal students attending a postsecondary institution has increased at only two percent a year since 1996 while tuition has increased at an average of 4.4 percent a year since 1998" (<http://www.aucc.ca/policy-issues/aboriginal-education/>).

University funding and the manner in which funds are dispersed within an institution are a very complex matter, but there is no denying the facts that Canadian students are very concerned about tuition fee increases, which are nationally higher than the rate of inflation, and that the UWFA needs to be in constant dialogue with students and the administration, to ensure that the provincial government is aware of these issues and that students continue to have access to affordable education.

(see also: <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action/pdfs/future/fees-2011-12.pdf>)

A Fourteenth-Century Debate over Academic Freedom

Jack Zupko, Chair, Philosophy

The Middle Ages gave us many good things, chief among them being the institution we all work in today, the university. The first universities, founded at Paris, Oxford, and Bologna, rank among the longest continuously-existing institutions in human history, right up there with the Catholic Church and the British Monarchy. But as with all other human institutions, universities had to devise ways of resolving conflicts that arose among their stakeholders. Almost from the beginning, medieval universities witnessed major disagreements between secular and ecclesiastical authorities, university administrators and teaching masters, teachers in the different faculties (originally, Arts, Law, Medicine, and Theology), students in different colleges (Paris grouped its students according to national origin, with predictable results), and last, but not least, between town and gown. Tavern keepers often complained about students taking over their establishments, fighting, and, of all things, drinking without paying!

I work mostly on philosophy in fourteenth-century Paris. The figures I study were part of a lively intellectual community in which masters competed fiercely with each other in public debates, hoping to attract more students (and the tuition revenue they brought with them). Not surprisingly, the biggest academic freedom issue among masters concerned teaching jurisdiction. Since masters were licensed to teach by faculties, each faculty could control to some extent who was allowed to teach its curriculum – not unlike the guild system by which coopers, masons, and other tradesmen organized themselves. The domain of the Arts masters was the logical and scientific works of Aristotle, plus Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, texts that had only recently become available when they were translated into Latin in the twelfth century. By contrast, theologians lectured on the Bible and Peter the Lombard's *Sentences*, a compendium of theological authorities whose competing views theology students were expected to 'harmonize'. You would think that with such clearly-defined curricula, protected by university statute, conflict between the faculties of Arts and Theology would simply never arise.

If you thought this, you would be wrong. What medieval curriculum committees did not appreciate when they built their courses around authoritative books was that authorities frequently write about the same topics, which can generate controversy when they do not say the same thing. Tensions naturally developed between secular and sacred texts, and how properly to interpret them. This is what happened in the case of Nicholas of Autrecourt (c. 1295-1369), a theologian whose teachings were the talk of the University of Paris in the 1340s. Basically, Nicholas was an anti-Aristotelian who sought to shield Theology from what he saw as the predations of pagan wisdom; left unchecked, Nicholas worried that philosophy would entirely supplant theology as the highest discipline at the University, forcing him and his colleagues to the margins. So (and this is where it gets interesting for me, as a philosopher) Nicholas deployed a brilliant skeptical attack on Aristotle and Aristotelianism, contending that "Aristotle in his entire natural philosophy and metaphysics possessed [demonstrative] certainty of scarcely two conclusions, and perhaps not even of one." The Arts masters, needless to say, did not take this lying down. They criticized Nicholas' reading of Aristotle, and when Nicholas persisted, eventually brought him to trial for violating their curricular mandate: just as philosophers in the Faculty of Arts could not teach theology without a license, so theologians like Nicholas could not go around lecturing on Aristotle unless they were licensed to teach in the Faculty of Arts. At his trial, which began at the University of Paris and was later moved to Avignon (it seems the Pope thought he had to get involved too), Nicholas was asked to explain his views in public, before a jury of academic masters and ecclesiastical authorities.

When his answers did not satisfy the jury, a list of condemned articles from his writings was drawn up, and he was asked (not told) to recant and burn his works, which he did at Paris on November 20, 1347.

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Evidently his career prospects did not suffer as a result of this episode, as he was made Dean of Metz Cathedral three years later. (A handful of Nicholas' works were in the possession of other masters and so managed to avoid the flames, which is how we know today about his views.)

What would have happened to Nicholas had he refused to recant? He would have had to surrender his teaching license, along with all the rights and privileges that went with being a theologian: he would have lost membership in an exclusive profession at a prestigious institution. But his own life and limb were never in jeopardy. Contrary to popular belief, medieval scholars whose views were condemned were not burned along with their works – that gruesome practice came along much later, after the Reformation.

Are there some modern parallels here? What strikes me about the whole case is the scrupulous attention given to due process by the authorities involved, long before such rights became constitutionally protected in the modern era. Nicholas' trial lasted more than six years, mainly because those involved insisted that all sides be heard, and that Nicholas have a fair chance – multiple fair chances, in fact – to explain what he was teaching. Today we like to think of academic freedom as absolute, even though it isn't (I take it that there would be a problem if I started offering courses on thoracic surgery, given that I have no medical training). But within disciplinary or even faculty boundaries, those who would infringe upon academic freedom must bear a heavy burden of proof. The medieval academy certainly had that right.

The Manitoba Government has created a new website where workers can find out which employers have been penalized for violating workers' rights under the Employment Standards Code. You can visit it here:

http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/standards/asset_library/pdf/current_admin_penalties.pdf

CAUT Call for Book Reviews

Linda Rumleski, CAUT Special Assistant to the Executive Director

If you are interested in reviewing one of the books below for the *CAUT Bulletin*, please let me know as soon as possible (rumleski@caut.ca). *Bulletin* book reviews are typically 800 words, and we would like to receive the review within three months of our sending you a review copy of the book.

Miller, William Ian. *Losing It: In which an aging professor laments his shrinking brain, which he flatters himself formerly did him noble service.*

Docherty, Thomas. *For the University: Democracy & the Future of the Institution.*

Roach, Kent. *The 9/11 Effect: Comparative Counter-Terrorism.*

Duménil, Gérard & Dominique Lévy. *The Crisis of Neoliberalism.*

Newfield, Christopher. *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class.*

Clark, Ian D., David Trick & Richard Van Loon. *Academic Reform: Policy Options for Improving the Quality & Cost-effectiveness of Undergraduate Education in Ontario.*

Duménil, Gérard & Dominique Lévy. *Capital Resurgent: Roots of the Neoliberal Revolution.*

Tyson, William. *Pitch Perfect: Communicating with Traditional & Social Media for Scholars, Researchers & Academic Leaders.*

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.

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.