

THE UWFA NEWS

Message from the President

By Kristine Hansen, UWFA President

With the start of a new term, the UWFA Executive Council and UWFA's various committees are also starting work again. Over the summer, an agreement was reached in Collegiate negotiations. However, although the Main Unit negotiating team has been busy preparing proposals, there have been no MU negotiating sessions to date, due to the University's lack of a Vice President Academic. We anticipate that negotiations will have begun by the time you receive this message. It's been great to see substantial member involvement in preparations for Main Unit bargaining. Substantial numbers of people participated in the activities of the Collective Bargaining Committee, which prepared a negotiating mandate. There also was good turnout at the consultation meetings that led up to its preparation and at the Main Unit general meeting that endorsed the mandate. It's good to know that as we proceed to the table, we can expect a good proportion of our members to be involved. As we know from the experience of our Collegiate negotiators and from the discussions we held with the Employer last spring, this is likely to be a very difficult round of bargaining – one that probably will require substantial resolve on our part to achieve the bargaining mandate.

In other areas of the Association's operations, we are looking forward to positive consultations with the new Vice President Academic, John Corlett. Also, the Main Unit LMC will be meeting regularly again. It sometimes takes a while to get LMC decisions implemented, but in general, the committee has been a good mechanism for addressing various problems. The Collegiate settlement included the establishment of a Collegiate LMC as well, and it will meet before long. Members are reminded to bring to UWFA's attention any problems with adherence to the Collective Agreements – it's only due to your vigilance that we become aware of many of the issues that need to be addressed.

I wish everyone all the best for the term in teaching, research, and administrative work. The faculty and librarians are the permanent core of the University, and what we do is essential to its existence. Let's keep that in mind as negotiations proceed.

More information about the status of Main Unit bargaining is available in this issue of the UWFA News. The Association will do its best to keep you updated throughout the bargaining process – watch your email and www.uwfa.ca for updates.

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

Bargaining Update

Our first meeting with the University took place on Monday, October 4. The first meeting set the bargaining protocol and scheduled regular meetings. The bargaining protocol is not contentious and we have already agreed to meet twice weekly. All that remains to be decided is the exact timing of meetings. We will continue with the planned schedule until bargaining is completed.

Once we have agreed on the protocol we will exchange proposals beginning first with matters of governance. We expect to be able to begin the exchange on October 8.

The Association's bargaining team consists of Wendy Josephson (chief negotiator), James Currie, Richard Jochelson, Linda Dixon and Lisa McGifford. Daniel Draper is providing administrative support to the team.

The University bargaining team is led by Laurel Repski.

Challenging the Ontario Public Sector Wage Freeze

By Hugh Grant, UWFA Treasurer

Brian Stevenson must be having an interesting time in his new position as President at Lakehead University.

Shortly after his arrival in Thunder Bay, picket signs went up on campus. On August 16, some 150 clerical, administrative and technical staff at the Lakehead and Laurentian campuses of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) went on strike. The medical school is a separate legal entity from both universities, but Stevenson chairs NOSM's board of directors.

Support staff at NOSM are represented by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, are affiliated with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and are members of the CAUT Defence Fund. The strike came after mediation failed to resolve several outstanding issues, from wages and benefits to hours of work. The strike extended into its sixth week and there had been pressure exerted by students, faculty and other staff to reach a negotiated settlement. A tentative agreement was reached on October 4.

The strike at NOSM must be viewed in the context of the Ontario Government's attempt to impose a wage freeze in the public sector for two years. This freeze was announced in the March budget, in July the government began a series of consultations with public-sector employers and unions seeking compliance with its wage-freeze policy. The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) reports that only 25% of public sector contract settlements since March have had zero wage increases and that the consultation process has only served to slow the pace of bargaining. Moreover, a recent arbitration award gave 17,000 nursing home workers a 2% wage increase.

Other potential work stoppages at Ontario universities may lie ahead. The University of Western Ontario Faculty Association on October 1 voted 87% in favour of job action. The Carleton University Academic Staff Association will be holding a strike vote on October 4 and 5. An arbitration compensation award at the University of Toronto is expected in the next few days which will also determine the pattern for negotiations in Ontario.

Striking Up Conversations With Other Unions

By Mark Golden, UWFA External Relations Officer

UWFA has formal links with other unions through its membership in the Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, Winnipeg Labour Council and the Manitoba Federation of Labour. These links find their most practical expression during strikes or lockouts. Though UWFA members have regularly voted to give the executive the option of taking job action during negotiations, we have never struck (or been locked out). Other unions have been less fortunate or more determined. UWFA often offers support to those who find themselves on the picket line. Though faculty unions which strike or are locked out receive financial support through the CAUT Defence Fund -- to which UWFA makes annual payments -- UWFA often makes a small additional contribution, and sometimes sends a delegation to bolster picket lines. For example, many UWFA members joined instructors in the Brandon University psychiatric nursing program in picketing the Rice Building two years ago, a carload drove up to U of M to support striking members of the Canadian Auto Workers in October 2007 and another was set to help locked-out AESSES workers there last month when a settlement was reached. (This was not necessarily a direct consequence.) Such expressions of solidarity are not confined to university campuses. Though Terry MacLeod, CBC Radio's morning man, has one of Winnipeg's most recognizable voices, some UWFA members first heard it in conversation while they walked the Portage Avenue picket line in 2005. UWFA members can count on similar support from other unions here and outside Winnipeg if our negotiations lead to a strike or lockout.

Attention CF Members!

By Teresa Cordeiro, UWFA CF Representative

As contract faculty, you need to be filling out your activity reports annually and submitting them to the chair of your department. These reports serve as a valuable record and resource, whether to continue teaching the current course and/or for future teaching opportunities at the University.

Fill out your activity report for the past academic year 2009-2010 and submit it before February 1, 2010.

The Wonderful World of Office Allotment

By Tracy Whalen, UWFA Secretary

It's likely not news to anyone reading this piece that the University of Winnipeg is in the middle of flux and shift, space-wise. The Faculty of Business and Economics, along with the Division of Continuing Education, is soon moving into the new Buhler Centre. Departments in the Faculty of Science are next year sliding down one block west into the Science Complex and Richardson College of the Environment. For those not moving into the new digs, consultations have taken place to determine departments' preferences for future locations.

Especially during times of substantial reorganization, it's important that instructors know what to expect when it comes to their office space. There is the question, for instance, of study leave, especially if a scholar's ability to do research requires space on campus. Certainly, no policy can cover every situation, but it helps for instructors to know who, exactly, one might turn to when the rug is swept out from under one's feet... along with the shelves, desk, and tastefully painted walls. What policies exist? How well circulated are they?

The word "leave" (as in "study leave") sums up quite tidily what one is expected to do during a sabbatical: go away, vamoose, study elsewhere. Not every member has the ability to leave, however (faculty with family responsibilities, say). Some researchers stay put because their archival resources, ethnographic communities, and/or equipment are located in Winnipeg. The Main Unit collective agreement, unfortunately, does not shed a lot of light on the issue of office allotment during a one-year leave. Article 26.18 states as follows:

Members on research/study leave are encouraged, but not required, to leave the University during part or all of their period of leave. Should Members choose to stay at the University while on research/study leave, the Employer shall continue to provide normal support services, except that an office shall be provided upon availability.

This final phrase, "except that an office shall be provided upon availability" leaves some questions unanswered. When is an instructor to be reasonably informed of office availability (or lack thereof)? Who has priority in such cases? What if there is no office available, but the researcher needs one?

These questions are not idle ones. Currently, one UWFA member remains uncertain about his office situation during his leave. This researcher needs an office—he runs memory-heavy data programs on his desktop computer, which he upgraded at his own expense. A deal had been worked out with the university that he would share his office with another person who needed the office only once a week or so. When this arrangement changed, the researcher was told on Labour Day weekend (two months after the start of his leave) that he had to vacate his office. Not only that, he would not get it back again until September 1, 2011, two months *after* the end of his leave. As this faculty member pointed out, he has taken a 20% cut in pay to work on his research full time; he would expect to be given better notice and to have his office back (or something higher up on the room chain than a broom closet) immediately upon his return to full-time teaching and administrative responsibilities.

At the time of writing, the policy for space allotment had not been received by the UWFA Communications Committee. We hope to have more information soon and will continue to keep the membership informed about space allocation policies in the next UWFA newsletter.

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, Mark Golden, Peter Ives, Roewan Crowe and Daniel Draper.

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.

Testy, Testy

By Jim Clark, Psychology

Unnamed workers renovating Wesley Hall bathrooms discovered a Senior Administrator Questionnaire (SAQ) designed to select people for the U of W's top positions. Sample items appear below. The correct answer is always agreement, and I include possible rationales.

1. *When funds are limited, spending on administrative hiring and functions yields the greatest benefits.* The rationale is a variation of trickle-down economics; spending at upper levels allows for maximum benefit downstream.
2. *A fragmented faculty is better than an integrated faculty.* The free market logic is that multiple units working in competition with one another for students and associated benefits, notably faculty members, is the best road to success. Fragmenting academic units has the added benefit of furthering objective #1 because the appointment of more intermediate administrators justifies additional administrators above them.
3. *In evaluating new academic units, only the total number of students enrolled matters, irrespective of whether or not students have been poached from other departments.* Although programs built on poaching will increase costs with no increase in revenue, true administrative minds recognize the fallacy of such simplistic arguments.
4. *Senior administrators should make all decisions about the goals and processes of the institution, with minimal input from faculty, students, or the Board of Regents.* Chosen as leaders for their special qualities, administrators are best able to generate and evaluate different courses of action, ideally without interference from people not so endowed.
5. *Challenging societal problems have not been solved simply because there has been a lack of concern, effort, and political will, not because of any lack of knowledge that requires basic research and scholarship by disciplinary experts.* Scholarly research into the putative complexities of national and international inequities, for example, is irrelevant and serves only to perpetuate the "ivory tower" view of universities that we want to escape.

I trust these questions will help colleagues aspiring to administrative positions to behave appropriately.

The University as One Might Like It

Recently the Catholic Church beatified Cardinal John Henry Newman, the famous 19th century divine, the penultimate step in his becoming a saint. Newman was justly famous for his work *The Idea of a University*. Tom Axworthy, a noted alumnus of this university, tells of reading Newman in order to be better able to perform as a speech writer and adviser to Pierre Elliott Trudeau in the 1980s. Newman and Axworthy's comments are very relevant in the ongoing debate about the purpose of a university:

"As I read the *Apologia* and *Idea of a University*, I took three concepts out of Newman that I thought influenced Mr Trudeau and that, in retrospect, I think have some continuing validity. The first is . . . that knowledge should not be examined as a series of specialties, but as a conceptual whole – that there is a unity in knowledge for which an educated person should strive . . . I remember meeting (Trudeau) and asking him what he had been reading lately. I was not exactly expecting the latest novelist, but was taken aback when he told me he was re-reading Marcel Proust's *A Remembrance of Things Past*. The broadening aspect of knowledge was obviously something that attracted him.

Second, Newman made the point that knowledge should be appreciated on its own terms. There is a beauty and sensitivity to understanding knowledge and truth and one should not just look at understanding as useful; there is an intrinsic worth to the subjects themselves. . .

Third and lastly. . . Newman also argued that the idea of a university, the idea of broad knowledge, and the use of reason and knowledge on their own could inform faith."

From Tom Axworthy, "Faith and Personal Experience" in *The Hidden Pierre Elliott Trudeau*.

The University as One Might Like It is an ongoing column featuring short submissions from faculty members on the University as they would like to see it. If you'd like to submit your idea of what the University should be, contact Tracy Whalen at t.whalen@uwinnipeg.ca.