

# THE UWFA NEWS

## Message From The President

By Kristine Hansen, UWFA President

I hope we've all settled into the fall term, even if the summer weather initially made that difficult. This will be a busy year for UWFA, with the Collegiate and Contract Faculty units about to begin bargaining, and with the Main Unit contract expiring at the end of March, 2010. There will be many opportunities for member participation as we prepare bargaining mandates and conduct negotiations. I urge everyone to respond to those opportunities for input, and to volunteer for UWFA activities when the call goes out. UWFA members made an impressive show of solidarity this past year in refusing to accept salary concessions, and I'm expecting that same spirit of solidarity to stand us in good stead as we face this year's challenges.

We will be planning both a membership meeting and a social event in the near future. If you're a new member, please be sure to attend and get connected to your union. If you're not a new member, please consider inviting a new member to attend with you. The UWFA newsletter will continue to appear, now edited by Tracy Whalen from Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications – thanks, Tracy. The newsletter welcomes member submissions, so please consider writing something. And please remember – it's only through our members that UWFA can become aware of many problems, contract irregularities, and issues we need to address, so please communicate. Best wishes for an interesting and productive year.

### New UWFA Website

With the dawn of a new academic year comes the dawn of a new era for the UWFA website. Located at [www.uwfa.ca](http://www.uwfa.ca), the new UWFA website has been completely redesigned!

Send your comments, questions and concerns to the UWFA Office at [uwfa@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:uwfa@uwinnipeg.ca).

### Issue 5, September 2009

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Find Your UWFA News Online at  
<http://www.uwfa.ca>

### New Faculty Orientation Lunch

Are you new to our campus? If so, UWFA would like to meet you! Come out to our New Faculty Orientation Lunch and meet members of the UWFA Executive and find out more about what UWFA can do for you.

When? Monday, October 5, 2009 at 12:30

Where? Faculty and Staff Club, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Wesley Hall

# Pension Plan Update

By Wendy Josephson, Pension Trustee

## UWFA Appointed Trustees

Jim Clark has completed his one-year term as UWFA-appointed Trustee to the University of Winnipeg's pension plan. Many thanks to Jim for his hard work on behalf of pension plan members. UWFA has appointed Hans Werner for a three-year term to replace Jim. Wendy Josephson continues for the second year of her two-year term, and Karen Zoppa for the remaining two years of her three-year term. Karen is continuing as the Chair of the Board of Trustees for the pension plan, and serves on the Operations Committee. Wendy is on the Defined Contribution Committee.

## Board Minutes Available Online

Agendas of upcoming meetings of the Board of Trustees and meeting minutes are now posted online at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/hr-benefits-pension-trustees>. Other documents, including the plan's Trust Agreement and 2008 financial statements, can also be found there. The full text of the pension plan can be found at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/hr-benefits-pension-home>.

## Developments on the Defined Benefit Pension Surplus Distribution

The Board of Trustees had sent a request for information to the Superintendent of Pensions this February to achieve clarification on several technical matters involved in complying with the Superintendent's 2006 order regarding the pension surplus distribution. The original decision had been subject to an appeal, which was decided in January 2009. The Board of Trustees received the Superintendent's response on July 20, which provided clarity on most of the matters we had asked about. Based on the Superintendent's responses and the terms of the Trust Agreement, the Board of Trustees decided at a meeting on July

28th that the best feasible course of action for the pension plan and its members was to make the surplus distribution as a cash payment to eligible members. The Superintendent of Pensions informed us in her July 20 letter that distribution of the surplus by way of cash payment would require approval from the Canada Revenue Agency. Therefore it was not possible for the Board to meet the Superintendent's previous August 31 deadline for distribution of the surplus to members. The Superintendent granted the Board a further extension to January 31st, 2010 to accommodate the obtaining of permission from CRA. Trustees very much hope that this matter will proceed expeditiously from here on, and will do everything in our power to ensure that it does.

## Surveying the Members of the Defined Contribution Plan

The Defined Contribution (DC) Committee of the pension plan's Board of Trustees is in the process of reviewing the plan fees, the range of fund options, and the quality of service currently being provided to pension plan members. The Committee intends to survey all members of the DC plan this fall on their experiences and preferences regarding the plan. In the survey, members will be asked about their satisfaction with the number and types of fund options and the current default fund, and they will be asked about their reactions to a number of possible future scenarios, such as a reduction in the number of options available. They will also be asked about their satisfaction with the website and customer care telephone number provided by Sun Life Financial for plan members, and any errors or other problems they have had with the services provided by Sun Life. The DC Committee will survey members on-line, by e-mailing all DC members a link to the survey. Provision will be made for DC plan members to complete a hard copy of the survey if they prefer that format.

## UWFA Bargaining Update

The Collegiate Unit Negotiating team is Karen Zoppa (Chief Negotiator), Michael West, Jim Trellor, and Lisa McGifford. The draft mandate for the Collegiate Unit was approved. Now that this has occurred we can begin drafting proposal language.

The members of the Contract Faculty Unit Negotiation Team are Hugh Grant and Lisa McGifford. The draft mandate for Contract Faculty bargaining was approved recently by the UWFA Executive. Some proposal drafting has already occurred and we expect to begin bargaining this term.

The Executive Council has begun to look at striking the various committees needed for Main Unit collective bargaining. UWFA has been tracking specific matters that require attention in the upcoming round of negotiations.

More information may be available at our website: [www.uwfa.ca](http://www.uwfa.ca).

### Still Waiting...

*By Pauline Greenhill*

Remember the administration's request in March 2009 that UWFA members take days without pay? (See article "Who is better at math? Lloyd or Pauline" in the last newsletter ([www.uwfa.ca/may-uwfa-news](http://www.uwfa.ca/may-uwfa-news))). While the University of Winnipeg President suggested that the University of Winnipeg's administration had shrunk since his arrival, their own administration charts clearly indicate that they had grown in number by over 50% since Axworthy took over, greatly outpacing faculty growth at just under 18% for the same period.

During that meeting, I asked him if he would provide the figures to support his contention.

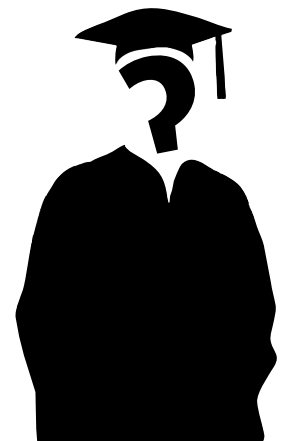
## It's Not Too Late To Donate!

The University of Winnipeg Faculty Association Bursary and Scholarship Fund is more than a third of the way toward reaching its goal of raising \$250,000 in donations, and we raised this from nearly a third of UWFA's members. We're excited to have done so well over the summer, and hope to push through to reach our goal by Christmas.

In the meantime, the need continues. The University President has promised to fund scholarships and bursaries to at least 60% of last year's level. In order to improve on that level of funding, donations are needed. Do contact Pauline Greenhill at 786-9439 or [p.greenhill@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:p.greenhill@uwinnipeg.ca) if you want to make sure that a particular award is given full funding. I'll tell you how to do it. I'm also happy to answer any questions you may have and/or to help you direct your money where you want it to go. Mavis Reimer (786-9185 or [m.reimer@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:m.reimer@uwinnipeg.ca)) or Pauline Pearson (786-9853 or [p.pearson@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:p.pearson@uwinnipeg.ca)) can also answer questions.

When your departmental representative comes by with an envelope, we urge you to give.

**Have you  
seen this  
person on  
campus?**



**fair employment week**

week of action for contract academic staff

**October 26 – 30, 2009**

[www.caut.ca](http://www.caut.ca)

# A Cautionary Tale: Lessons from Thompson Rivers University

By Tracy Whalen, UWFA Secretary

It's a cautionary tale for those of us who decide to teach a course with someone outside the bargaining unit---in this case, a university president. A few weeks ago at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, professors Rachel Nash and Mark Wallin showed up for their first class of English 116, which they were teaching with TRU President Kathleen Scherf. They anticipated the media blitz which accompanied it---reporters and cameras and questions in the classroom on the first day---because the class was seen as a "rarity" (to quote a local publication). What they did not expect, however, is that they would ultimately be responsible for the course themselves. The TRU collective agreement prohibited Scherf from teaching at all; further, the other two professors were not notified about the status of the course until the day Scherf actually stepped foot in the classroom and was then pulled. The course was to have been primarily the president's, with Nash and Wallin teaching smaller seminars. Right now, the two professors are quickly working to pull the much-publicized course together, taking what they can from Scherf's notes and adjusting their schedules to accommodate new lecture times.

The tale does not end there, however. Not even a week after this drama, the TRU community received a memo which conveyed surprising news: Scherf was fired by the board of governors. She had arrived to great fanfare only one year before, and while the specific reasons for her dismissal have not been made public, Ron Olynyk, who chairs the board, said that they lacked confidence in her leadership skills and judgement. (Some media sources reassured readers that it was not because she was flamboyant, was known for using the word "dude," and had streaks in her hair. Whew.) Newspapers like *The Montreal Gazette*, *The Vancouver Province*, and *Kamloops this Week* have all commented on the generous severance package Scherf has been awarded. As president,

she would have received an annual salary of \$225,000. With the dismissal she has been granted a full year's sabbatical along with severance pay, a package that totals \$268,750 (over \$40,000 more than she would have made as president). A quick look at university president severance packages reveals that expensive leave-taking is not unusual.

A last note: Unlike Scherf, our president here at the University of Winnipeg is allowed to teach in a faculty position (and does, in fact, teach Canadian Foreign Policy). So we're safe, union-wise, should we decide to team-teach with Lloyd Axworthy.

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## Pop Goes the Union

By Tracy Whalen, UWFA Secretary

Unions pop up often in popular culture. We can find representations of union business in television, films, books, cartoons and other media forms. Both *Entertainment Weekly* and Chris Turner's *Planet Simpson* named "Last Exit to Springfield" the best episode of *The Simpsons* ever. In that episode, Homer becomes (for a brief, brief time) union president of the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant, fighting for a union dental plan. Lisa Simpson needs braces more than Homer and his membership need the free keg of beer offered at every meeting. Chris Turner describes the episode as follows: "There are references to *Citizen Kane*, *Batman*, the Three Stooges, the Beatles and Dr. Seuss. Episode 9F15 of *The Simpsons* should be taught in schools, in history, economics, social studies, literature *and* art classes. It's flawless" (84).

So check it out. And send along other notes about unions in popular culture. Is there a union video game? A film worth mentioning? A book we ought to pick up after the craziness of term quiets?

Send along a note to Tracy Whalen (t.whalen@uwinnipeg.ca). I'd love to hear from you.

# Community May Not Extend Past Words

By Mark Golden, UWFA External Relations Officer

The University of Winnipeg's commitment to the local community does not always extend beyond words.

A local academic publisher (and sometime U of W instructor in Sociology) has questioned the recent decision to contract out the management of the new campus bookstore to a mammoth multinational. Follett Higher Education runs over 800 college bookstores in the US and thirty-something in Canada.

Wayne Antony of Fernwood Publishing welcomes the bookstore's future move to a bigger space with more general stock. But he doubts that Follett will be able to meet the specific needs of the U of W -- especially given its lack of familiarity with the community. An August Follett press release spoke of competing with the McNally Robinson outlet in Portage Place. This moved to Polo Park eighteen months ago.

"Fernwood ... has dealt with the various Follett-run bookstores for years," Antony wrote in a September letter to U of W President Lloyd Axworthy. "In our experience, Follett-run stores are anything but community-oriented. The stores all look the same, are run the same, and focus on profit rather than being part of the intellectual life of their institutions and of their surrounding communities." In general, he concludes, they offer no advantage over university-run bookstores.

Full-time members of AESES now employed by Beyond Words, the university's present bookstore, have been offered positions at the new store. To date, one has accepted, one is uncertain, one has taken a job elsewhere, and one has retired. Follett does not welcome unions in its stores.

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## UWFA Update

There have been some changes to the UWFA Executive Council since the last issue of the UWFA News: Linda Dixon has taken over as Library Representative and Karen Zoppa has taken over as Collegiate Representative. Welcome to you both!

Looking to contact a member of the UWFA Executive? Their contact information is available at [www.uwfa.ca](http://www.uwfa.ca). The Executive meets at least once a month and is responsible for the overall operation of the Association.

## About The UWFA News

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The UWFA News is compiled and published by the UWFA Communications Committee.

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