

AUFA Communicator

Acadia University Faculty Association Newsletter

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In this issue:

The AUFA President Communicates	1
CAUT Council	3
Lakehead Breached Contract with Campus Closure, Arbitrator Rules	6
AUFA Departmental Representatives	7
Report from the Association Grievance	8
Dates to Remember	9
Editorial Policy	10

The AUFA President Communicates

Most of you know about the sorry state of the university's current operating budget. Debt payments eat up a significant portion of revenue and although enrolment is moving in the right direction, a return to a campus of 4,000 students is not likely. The Acadia experience is dependent on its faculty and the ability of that faculty to provide the Acadia experience to students is dependent on the number of them and the number of us.

Background: Undergraduate enrolment at Acadia reached 4039 full-time and 646 part-time students in 2003/4. Enrolment declined annually thereafter to a low of 2988 full-time and 758 part-time students in 2008/9. Acadia's tuition plus compulsory ancillary fees in 2003/4 was \$7058. In 2008/9, tuition plus compulsory ancillary fees totalled \$7842. This was the year that Acadia-issued laptops disappeared, tuition was lowered but ancillary fees almost tripled. It also appears to be the first year that the university attempted to adjust to the financial impact of declining enrolment on both tuition and government grant revenue. It was already too late.

Current Situation: Our 13th Collective Agreement, signed in August of 2010, includes a memorandum of agreement which acknowledges the reality of an inadequate operating budget: "Notwithstanding the provisions of this Collective Agreement, the Parties agree that vacancies that occur in the bargaining unit during the term of the Agreement may be left unfilled for the duration of the Agreement." Recognizing the impossibility of normal growth or even maintenance of the existing academic salary budget puts a negotiating team in a very hard place. One choice is the usual financial exigency clause which in reality leaves the "what to chop" question in other hands. *Our choice was to negotiate an attractive early retirement incentive.*

At the end of December, three of our long-time colleagues retired. More will leave every six months thereafter for the duration of this contract. Academic units are struggling to determine how they will manage. Every retirement represents a loss of five courses. Sometimes, a retirement means the loss of the sole source of expertise in a sub-discipline. Every retirement means a

The AUFA President Communicates (cont'd)

reduction in our operating budget deficit. And every additional student means the same thing. Two halves of the solution; unfortunately, the two are largely incompatible.

Looking Ahead: What will Acadia look like in the spring of 2014 when we begin negotiations for our 14th Collective Agreement? We should have a larger enrolment and perhaps a fairer share of government money to increase revenue. We will have a balanced operating budget, but Acadia's debt will continue to take a large chunk of that budget. Still, there should be the ability to return the money lost from academic units which previously enabled us to run field trips, supply our laboratories, and perhaps even provide refreshments at occasional events!

In 2014, will Acadia be in a position to fill the vacant faculty positions and return to the complement numbers established by our Collective Agreement? How I wish I could assure you that this will indeed be the case; that financial evidence in 2014 will allow us to negotiate a return to full complement. This assumption looks more than a little dangerous to me right now. Making it requires that we not advocate for the academic leadership we so desperately need today; to fiddle, if you will, while Rome burns.

The problems with reducing costs through retirements are many. The largest of these is the vastly different scenarios faced by different academic units. Some will lose over 50% of complement. Some will see their accreditation from an outside professional body endangered. Some will experience a small but nevertheless difficult complement reduction. Some will have no vacancies at all.

Academic units are struggling to determine how they will get through the next few years. Some are looking at larger class sizes, some at reducing course offerings; some await word on course replacement positions. We do this largely without a clear view of the future. Are we making change to get us through the next three years? Or are we building a new model for the long term? If it is the latter, we'd best remember the essentials of a uniquely Acadia education. More large classes and fewer opportunities for faculty/student interaction don't seem to me to be a "made for Acadia" solution. Neither does assignment of a larger percentage of courses to part-time faculty. **How badly we need a way to affirm what matters to teaching and learning at Acadia and to create a new way to be that Acadia!**



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The AUFA President Communicates (cont'd)

Faculty complement remains in AUFA's hands. The complement number remains in our Collective Agreement, suspended temporarily through the Memorandum of Agreement. We can work towards a 2014 negotiating mandate that retains that complement number, fills the vacancies which result from retirements and resignations and leaves us ultimately unchanged. But then, there are those budget numbers....

Wendy Bedingfield, AUFA President

CAUT Council

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Council was held November 26–28 in Ottawa. Your AUFA representatives to Council on this occasion were AUFA President Wendy Bedingfield, AUFA Vice-President Karmen Bleile, and AUFA Secretary Herb Wyile. Although Herb and Karmen had attended Council before, this was Wendy's first time at Council. As usual, there were a number of interesting presentations made to Council and also mentioned were some contentious issues on the horizon. Here are some of the highlights of the meeting.

On the first day of Council we had a series of presentations. One presentation was on **the state of higher education in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza**. A number of speakers discussed the issues faced by faculty and students who work in these areas and those in other countries who collaborate with faculty in these areas. In particular, they discussed how checkpoints and other security measures can make it difficult for students to be able to attend university classes on a regular basis or to leave the country to study abroad. The panel also mentioned that casualization of the workforce and a "brain drain" are affecting post-secondary institutions in Israel. Further, in post-secondary institutions in the West Bank and Gaza low salaries, high teaching loads, and poor infrastructure, coupled with academic freedom and mobility restriction issues, are common. Finally, one panellist spoke of the problems that she has encountered as a result of working with Palestinian colleagues. She noted that because she works with Palestinian colleagues and travels to the area for collaborations, she has an elevated security risk.

Another particularly interesting presentation focused on the **recent developments in the United States and Great Britain** and the implications they have for post-secondary institutions in Canada. Great Britain has proposed a change to how it funds university education. The government has proposed that direct funding to universities be cut and that it be offset by a substantial increase in tuition. In theory, the university will still have the same amount of money coming in but the source will be different. However, it will not all have to come out of students' pockets directly. Students will be eligible to apply for a loan from the government that the student repays. Students will repay what they can afford and after many years the unpaid balance will be forgiven. On the surface, it appears that universities are simply getting the money from the government in a different way. However, this approach has serious implications for post-secondary institutions. In particular, since tuition dollars rather than government grants to the institution itself will be funding the uni-

CAUT Council (cont'd)

versity, the programs that are particularly popular with students will thrive but other programs that are not as well subscribed could suffer. In other words, funding for programs depends on students choosing those courses. As a result, departments that have been keystones of universities for centuries could disappear if students fail to register for courses in these areas. Also, fallout from the mid-term elections in the US was discussed. Concerns were raised regarding educational funding bills being lost in the shuffle and changes related to composition of committees related to funding for research. Other issues surrounding the increasing insertion of corporate culture into post-secondary institutions in exchange for financial support and challenges to union recognition in many states were presented to Council. Since many trends in the US filter their way north, we must be aware of these issues.



Over the course of Council, Jim Turk, the Executive Director of CAUT, presented information covering **a wide variety of issues that affect faculty and post-secondary education** in general. The content of many of his presentations was quite disturbing for faculty members at post-secondary institutions. It was particularly shocking to hear the number of academic freedom cases that are currently underway across the country. Although discouraging on one hand, it did illustrate to us the important role that CAUT plays in defending both academic freedom and the individuals involved in these cases. Clearly, AUFA's contribution to the Academic Freedom Fund is money well spent. Jim also updated us on the state of post-secondary education funding. As funding for post-secondary institutions from the public sector decreases, universities are looking for greater help from wealthy donors and corporations. In exchange for donations, some wealthy donors and corporations have been given influence over academic matters. Thankfully, in Canada some of these arrangements have been overturned once such agreements became public. However, in the US, there is a disturbing trend of university partners losing academic control of their research when they enter into research collaborations with industry. Jim stated that links between universities and corporations could be of merit, but he emphasized the importance of protecting researchers' rights in such collaborations. Jim also discussed the state of research funding in Canada. He talked about the changing structure of the granting councils and highlighted, in particular, the declining presence of faculty on these councils. It was shocking to hear that over the course of the past few years representatives from corporations who sit on these councils have come to outnumber faculty. To illustrate, there are 7 corporate members on the SSHRC granting council and only 3 faculty members. Likewise, NSERC has 8 corporate

CAUT Council (cont'd)

representatives and 4 faculty representatives on its council. The only granting council in which research faculty have a dominant voice is MRC/CIHR. He also discussed the changing funding priorities of granting councils. For example, NSERC funding of individual research through Discovery grants has declined and increased funding has been directed towards Innovation grants which foster partnerships with industry. The success rate for Discovery grants has also dropped from 83% in 2002 to 58% in the most recent adjudication of grants. Finally, there is a growing emphasis on funding projects that have a demonstrable economic impact.

It was not all bad news, however. At Council the member from Lakehead University announced that they had won their arbitration with respect to the university's decision to close the university for several days and not pay its employees. The arbitrator determined that it was a violation of the collective agreement and a settlement has been reached with faculty but they are still waiting to come to an agreement with respect to compensation for librarians and contract staff. There was also a celebration of the resolution to the 12-week strike at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. The NOSM representative received a rousing round of applause and was asked to speak to Council. She spoke of the trying circumstances they faced over the course of job action but she also thanked CAUT for all of their help and support. She also thanked all of the different associations who contributed funds while they were on strike. It was clear from her presentation that this support made a huge difference to the resolve of her members. She noted that there are still challenges ahead but she was happy that favourable terms had been reached for her members.

With respect to CAUT itself, there was the usual **business of approving a number of policy statements and model clauses**. Changes to model clauses related to Academic Staff Complement, Successor Rights (related to amalgamation and mergers of academic institutions), Legal Liability, Redeployment as a Result of Closures or Restructuring of Academic Units, and Job Security and Seniority for Contract Academic Staff were approved (with amendments from the floor in some cases). We also ratified the new Staff Collective Agreement for the employees of CAUT. However, as one potentially contentious issue resolved itself without debate, another issue arose and it will be the subject of further debate at next Council. Once again, the **two issues involve the Women's Committee**. The first issue was that the CAUT Women's Committee was bringing forward a motion requesting the removal of the current Chair of the Women's Committee. However, prior to this discussion it was announced that the Chair of the Women's Committee had submitted her resignation. While that contentious issue resolved itself quite easily, the question of her replacement created a new, unexpected issue. The remaining members of the Women's Committee brought forward their nominee for Chair of the Women's Committee. She is currently a member of the committee and had unanimous support of the Women's Committee. However, concerns were raised by others because this individual is an Associate Dean at her institution and is not a member of a bargaining unit, although she is an associate member of CAUT. A great deal of debate ensued. CAUT bylaws allow for associate members to serve on CAUT committees but some individuals felt that it was potentially risky to have an individual who could be on the other side of the bargaining table sit as a member on the CAUT Executive. It was decided that she would be acclaimed to the position (as she was the only candidate) but that at the next CAUT Council,

CAUT Council (cont'd)

policy around associate members who are not in bargaining units would be readdressed. Clearly, this is an issue that we in AUFA should think about so that our representatives who attend CAUT Council in the spring will have a better sense of what the membership thinks with respect to this issue.

If you have any questions or would like more details about CAUT Council, please feel free to contact Wendy (wendy.bedingfield@acadiau.ca), Karmen (karmen.bleile@acadiau.ca) or Herb (herb.wyile@acadiau.ca).

Karmen Bleile
Wendy Bedingfield
Herb Wyile

Lakehead Breached Contract with Campus Closure, Arbitrator Rules

An arbitrator has ruled in favour of Lakehead University Faculty Association's grievance against the institution's [closure](#) last December. Lakehead administration shut down the campus for 4 days before Christmas in a bid to reduce costs. The move reduced the annual salary of professors, which drew the ire of the faculty association. In her ruling, the arbitrator states she found that "by instituting a shutdown, it was not open to the university to unilaterally reduce the annual salary of faculty members by four days." In the arbitrator's view, the university's action constituted a breach of the collective agreement between Lakehead and the faculty association. tbnewswatch.com

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AUFA Departmental Representatives

The primary responsibilities of the AUFA departmental representative are to help improve communication between the AUFA executive and individual members of the bargaining unit, and to ensure that bargaining unit members understand their rights under the Collective Agreement and know who to contact if they need help.

Biology

Eric Alcorn
Phil Taylor

Engineering

Darrell Crooks

Nutrition and Dietetics

Connie Foote

Business Administration

Terrance Weatherbee

English and Theatre

Andrea Schwenke-Wyile

Philosophy

Paul Abela

Chemistry

Vlad Zamlynny

History and Classics

Jennifer MacDonald

Physics

Mike Robertson

Computer Science

Darcy Benoit

Languages and Literatures

Janice Best

Political Science

Geoffrey Whitehall

Earth and Environmental Science

No representative

Library

Patricia Gallant

Psychology

Karmen Bleile

Economics

Paul Hobson

Mathematics and Statistics

Eva Curry

Recreation Management and Kinesiology

John Colton

Education

John Guiney Yallop

Music

Mark Adam

Sociology

Barb Moore

Report from the Association Grievance Committee



Have any ideas for future newsletter articles? Drop us a note and let us know what's been going on.

During negotiations for the 13th Collective Agreement (2010, CA), AUFA negotiated a change in the wording of Article 14 that requires members have representation for all proceedings related to discipline. AUFA has also initiated a process of revising *Acadia University's Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination* (2007, PAHD). In part, the motivation for revising this policy was the recognition by members of the Association Grievance Committee that the policy, although applicable to AUFA members, contains procedures inconsistent with the CA, particularly where matters of discipline are concerned.

Although requiring representation in Article 14 of the CA and revising the PAHD are independent initiatives, they are linked in important ways. Complaints raised through the PAHD are investigated following PAHD procedures that are not necessarily consistent with procedures for dealing with complaints or deficiencies specified in the CA. An AUFA member accused of harassment or discrimination could go through the entire procedure specified in the PAHD without representation or the rights of redress afforded in Articles 14 and 15 of the CA. Furthermore, if the administration determines discipline is warranted, the appeals process specified in the PAHD is the grievance policy in our CA. This is problematic given grievance typically relates to violation of language in a CA and not language in other University policies. It is unclear how grievance could be used to protect members' rights with regard to discipline arising from a complaint filed under the PAHD.

It is clear that this policy needs to be revised to protect our members adequately, whether they are filing a complaint or whether a complaint has been filed against them. Fortunately, this is underway. Meanwhile, the Association Grievance Committee strongly encourages members to consider demanding representation from AUFA or legal counsel if they are involved in any process associated with the PAHD. Although mechanisms to ensure fair process are not currently in place, representation may encourage fair practice during the complaint process.

Association Grievance Committee



Dates to Remember

January 31

The President shall communicate the Board's decisions on . . . renewal of appointment – no later than 31 January. . . . [Art. 12.75(a)]

The DRCs shall . . . make recommendations to the URC [on] . . . promotion to full professor: no later than 31 January. . . . [Art. 12.21(c)]

The LRCs shall . . . make recommendations to the URC [on] . . . promotion to librarian IV: no later than 31 January. . . . [Art. 51.21(b)]

February 1

The Employee shall . . . accept or reject any offer [reconsideration for leave of absence] by 1 February. [Art. 24.71]

Employees shall . . . confirm acceptance of an offered leave by 1 February. [Art. 24.20]

The Head shall write a letter to each part-time Employee . . . regarding teaching development. For fall-term courses, this letter shall be submitted by 1 February. . . . [Art. 15.66]

Consultation [allocation and schedule of teaching responsibilities] . . . shall normally be completed by 1 February. . . . [Art. 15.50(h)]

Deadline for the receipt of [research monies] applications . . . 1 February. [Art. 25.55(c)(ii)].



Tell your friends

Know someone who would like to receive this newsletter? Let us know and we'll add her or him to our mailing list.

Editorial Policy

The *AUFA Communicator* is the newsletter of the Acadia University Faculty Association (AUFA) and is intended to keep its members and the Acadia Community up to date and informed. The *AUFA Communicator* is published quarterly during the academic year and serves the following purposes:

1. to provide a means for the free exchange of ideas, views, and issues relevant to the AUFA and the Acadia community
2. to provide feedback and information useful to the AUFA to maintain its effective operation in fulfilling the objectives of the AUFA and its membership
3. to provide documentary records of matters pertaining to the AUFA
4. to serve all the functions of a newsletter

The Communicator Committee, under the direction of the AUFA Executive, takes responsibility for the contents of the *AUFA Communicator*. The opinions expressed in authored articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Communicator Committee. **We encourage your contributions (letters, articles, article summaries, and other pertinent information).** Anonymous material will not be considered for publication; however, under special circumstances, the *AUFA Communicator* may agree to withhold the author's name. The Communicator Committee retains the right to edit and/or reject contributed material.

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