

UNBC-FA Newsletter

University of Northern BC Faculty Association

February 2009

FA Executive 2008-2009

President:	Darwyn Coxson
Vice-President:	Jacqueline Holler
Past President:	Chris Hawkins
Secretary:	Neil Hanlon
Treasurer:	Richard Lazenby
Members-at -Large:	Jenia Blair Vivian Fayowski Gail Curry Paul Bowles Jon Swainger
Grievance Officer:	Deborah Poff

**The Winter 2009
Annual General Meeting date is:
Tuesday March 10
12 noon to 1: 30 pm
Bentley 7-172
Lunch is provided**

President's message.

I am pleased to see the continued participation of members in the life of the Faculty Association, as indicated below by the names of members willing to let their names stand for membership on the Association Executive. The next two years will be critical for the Association as we enter into another round of contract negotiations. The recently announced Provincial budget telegraphs a tough bargaining year, with a repeat of the 0% across-the-board salary mandates for the public sector. However, we have many pressing policy issues at UNBC, including those raised by the issue of salary compression as reported upon below. The Association will shortly be choosing a bargaining team, whose first task will be to meet with members and determine what concerns should be a priority for contract negotiations.

Election of a New Association Executive.

The term of the current Faculty Association Executive will end on June 30th of this year. We recently had a call for nominations and are pleased to announce the following executive positions have been filled by acclamation:

President:	Jacqueline Holler
Vice-President:	Ken Prkachin
Treasurer:	Jalil Safaei
Member-at-large (SLI):	Julie Orlando
Member-at-large (library):	Gail Curry
Member-at-large (term):	Alex Lautensach

The Association will be holding an election for the general member-at-large position. The declared candidates are Penny Barrett, Jennifer Hyndman, Erik Jensen, and Pranesh Kumar.

Please look out for a paper ballot with a brief bio of the candidates which will be sent out via inter-campus mail.

CUFA BC Wants to Hear from YOU!

By Dr. Paul Bowles, President, Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC

CUFA BC, the provincial organization that represents the interests of faculty association members at UBC, SFU, UVic, UNBC and RRU, wants to hear from you. Universities in Canada fall under provincial jurisdiction and CUFA BC's main activity is engaging with the provincial government and other policy-makers to shape post-secondary education policy in British Columbia. Rather than being buffeted by the political winds for the next four years, CUFA BC is engaged in a strategy-building process to help shape policy after the next provincial election. In order for this to be successful, we need to hear from you.

The post-secondary education landscape in BC has changed significantly over the past 20 years. The main expression of this change is the twin expansions in numbers of students and numbers and types of institutions. Over the past 20 years, full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment has close to doubled at BC's public post-secondary institutions. Funding has increased too, but has not kept pace with increasing enrolment and inflation. The result is that real funding per FTE has fallen significantly. CUFA BC estimates that funding would have needed to have been \$327 million higher in 2008-09 just to have maintained the 2000-01 real value of funding per FTE. This would have required an 18% increase in public institution funding for 2008-09.

The institutions providing post-secondary education have expanded in tandem with increasing enrolment. In the early 1990s, there were only three public universities in the Province; now there are eleven. There are four universities with full research mandates: UBC, SFU, UVic, and UNBC. These four universities plus Royal Roads University have the authority to grant doctoral degrees. Added to these are Thompson Rivers University, a 'special mandate' university, and five new 'special purpose, teaching universities'.

This changing system raises many issues for faculty association members at CUFA BC's member institutions. Of course, funding issues loom large in how they impact our ability to do our jobs and to serve our students. But there are others. Our research shapes our teaching and how this can best be done is an issue that affects us all. The external direction of research priorities and dollars requires our attention. We are continually asked to be "accountable" to government but how should this be measured and what is the role of institutional autonomy? "Internationalization" is a frequently lauded goal but how should this proceed?

These, and other issues, raise complex questions of principle, of empirical fact and of appropriate balance and trade-offs. While some of these questions are common to all post-secondary institutions, many take particular forms when applied to research universities and, indeed, many are unique to them. All of these issues impinge on the daily lives of the faculty members and librarians at CUFA BC's member universities.

To initiate a discussion of these issues, and to develop a strategic policy response to the changing BC landscape, as CUFA BC President I have penned a discussion paper entitled "20 Questions for 2020". The next step is to ask YOU for your thoughts and answers.

There is considerable experience and expertise in our membership—members who may have undertaken research on some of these questions or who have thoughts and opinions based on their experience working at one or more of the universities. I hope that you will read the discussion paper and will want to take up the challenge of providing answers. The discussion paper and details of how to respond to it are available at www.cufa.bc.ca/universities2020

A long time ago, Bob Dylan announced that "the times they are a-changin'". That is very true of BC's post-secondary sector today. CUFA BC is responding to those changes and thinking strategically about the future. We want - and value - your input to guide us in this process.

Salary compression at UNBC

One of the major areas of shared interest in past contract negotiations between the UNBC Faculty Association and the University of Northern British Columbia has been to insure that the salary structure would allow UNBC to remain competitive in the recruitment of new faculty. Given the constraints placed on across-the-board salary increases by provincial government bargaining mandates the parties have largely used increases to salary floors as a means of insuring that UNBC remains competitive in the market for new faculty.

This strategy of raising salary floors has had major consequences at UNBC. Salary floors have risen by ca. 20% since 2001. However, your only point of access to these new (higher) salary floors is when you are first hired at UNBC or when you are promoted to the next rank. This has led to the situation where newly hired (or promoted) faculty can be awarded salaries that are close to (or even exceed) those of more senior faculty in the same rank. This salary "leapfrogging" has commonly been described as salary compression. If left unrecognized, salary compression can have serious impacts on the life-time earnings of senior faculty, especially at the rank of full-professor, where faculty have no means of gaining access to new (higher) salary floors through the promotion process. They remain locked into career progression based on previously set (lower) salary floors.

At UNBC both parties to the faculty agreement recognized that changes to salary floors had the potential to create salary compression. As a result, the current faculty agreement mandated that parties examine salary compression and make recommendations to correct identified salary adjustments (Article 48.7). In November 2008 UNBC set up a Salary Compression Working group under the Salary Anomalies process, with members jointly appointed by University and Association. The committee members (Darwyn Coxson, Bill Owen, and Lito Arocena) made the following recommendations based on their analysis of UNBC salary data.

Recommendation 1: *That Chairs meet with senior faculty at the Assistant and Associate Professor ranks to discuss what steps can be put in place to more rapidly facilitate individuals obtaining promotion to the next rank. We would recommend that the University and Faculty Association identify additional means of supporting senior faculty at the Assistant and Associate Professor ranks to facilitate their career advancement to the next rank.*

Recommendation 2: *That a minimum salary floor, as outlined in Table 1, be adopted effective July 1, 2009 for all Full Professors at UNBC. We project the cost of implementing this recommendation at \$36,143.00, based on a July 1, 2009 implementation. Under this recommendation salary adjustments for faculty with less than ten years in rank would total \$12,863.25, these predominantly awarded to the more senior faculty members in this group, where salary compression is more severe. Salary adjustments for faculty with greater than ten years in rank would total \$24,364.44. **Implementation of salary adjustments for this senior faculty cohort is critical, given the severe salary compression/stagnation that they have experienced at UNBC.***

Recommendation 3: *That a salary floor of \$72,320.00 be set for all years in rank after 6 years in service at the Assistant Professor rank. We project the cost of implementing this recommendation at \$12,960.00, based on a July 1, 2009 implementation. **The Assistant professor salary data displays characteristic of severe salary compression.** This proposal does not fully address the problem of Salary compression at the Assistant professor rank; however, it does restore some characteristics of a progression through the rank based salary structure.*

The University indicated to the Faculty Association at the January JCAA meeting that they would not be implementing recommendations 2 and 3. This is disappointing, as it breaks the long-standing practice of the University to implement recommendations arising from the salary anomaly and compression process under the Faculty Agreement. Notwithstanding the initial response from the University, however, the Association is continuing discussions with the University in hopes of obtaining a partial implementation of these measures. This report will clearly be an important item of information for our 2010 negotiation team.

A complete copy of this report is available at the Faculty Association website [unbcfa.ca](http://www.unbcfa.ca) under <http://www.unbcfa.ca/newsletter.html>

FA OFFICE HOURS: The FA office is in Rm. 3085 Admin Bldg. Core office hours are 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. Contact Suzanne at local 5816 or via e-mail at: fac-assoc@unbc.ca if you wish to arrange a meeting at a more convenient time.