

FA Executive July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2013

President:	Jacqueline Holler
Vice-President:	Erik Jensen
Past President:	Lee Keener
Secretary & Member-at-Large	
SLI representative:	Julie Orlando
Treasurer:	Raymond Cox
Members-at-Large:	
Faculty representatives	Karima Fredj Jennifer Hyndman Stephen Rader
Librarian representative	Gail Curry
Term representative	Wendy Fellers
Grievance Officer:	Kerry Reimer
Executive Director:	Donna Plourde
Administrative Assistant:	Helen Sideen

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

December 6, 2011

In memory of the 14 women who were massacred in Montreal on December 6, 1989. Seek to bring an end to violence against all women.

Faculty Association Upcoming Events:

CAUT Workshop on Association Governance

- Open to Executive Members and all Faculty Association Members interested in becoming more active in the Association
- February 2012 (date TBA)

CAUT Workshop on Promoting Inclusivity

- Open to all Faculty Association Members interested in key equity issues in the post-secondary sector, and strategies to address these issues
- March 8, 2012

UNBC-FA Annual General Meeting

- March 2012

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jacqueline Holler, President

It hardly seems possible that December is upon us, and yet both the snow on the ground and the tired faces of our students make it clear that another semester is at its end. I hope everyone has had a productive term.

Since our September newsletter, the association has gone through a major transition within the position of Executive Director. Our new ED, Donna Plourde, took up her position on 12 October. It has been a delight to work with her over the past six

weeks. We are very fortunate indeed to have her in our shop.

The fall also saw a few significant changes within the university at large. Most of you will have used the new scheduling forms, which separate course needs from instructor needs. The Faculty Association expressed concerns about the prioritization of family considerations, but we have been assured that the intention is to create *greater* possibility for accommodations than existed under the previous scheduling regime. If you do have concerns about scheduling in the coming months, please do contact the Association.

The round of negotiating that just concluded expanded the number of awards given to faculty to recognize outstanding achievement. There are now sixteen University Achievement Awards available in four areas, Joint working groups were established to develop the terms of reference for these awards, and they have presented initial drafts. The association is working through the Joint Committee to ensure that these awards are designed in conformity with the goals established through bargaining and with the principles of collegiality.

Faculty at Brandon University--whose President is our own former Provost, Deborah Poff--went out on strike in October. In keeping with many institutions across the country we have made a donation to their strike fund. As you all know, they recently settled their strike, with terms favourable to the Faculty Association. While specific details are not available until after ratification, the BUFA President's message to CAUT council is available here: <http://www.bufa.org/2011-Strike/Notice-11-11-26b.htm>.

All of this is certainly a reminder of the fact that we, in common with many associations in this province and elsewhere, are about to enter upon a new round of collective bargaining. This issue of the newsletter is largely devoted to discussion of issues related to our upcoming negotiations. Chief Negotiator Darwyn Coxson presents some interesting (and depressing) data on salary comparisons, while the Confederation of University of Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA-BC) offers a primer on BC's bargaining context and the role of the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC). We've also done something unusual in this newsletter, reproducing a letter sent to BC faculty associations by Michelle Mungall, NDP MLA for Nelson-Creston and the Opposition Critic for Advanced Education. While the UNBC-FA does not endorse any one particular political party, Ms Mungall's comments on student aid and issues of accessibility may be interesting to members--particularly since CUFA-BC's surveys of university faculty suggest that student support ranks highly in faculty members' priorities for post-secondary investment. A discussion of the survey appears alongside Ms Mungall's letter.

Finally, as a result of changes in the last round of bargaining, those of us on tenured and continuing appointments can breathe a huge sigh of relief in

2012; we have moved to a truly biennial evaluation process and will not be submitting either PERs or memoranda in this year. Those on tenure-track, probationary, and full-time term appointments will, nonetheless, be required to submit. Donna Plourde has provided an overview of the Spring 2012 process in this newsletter.

As we enter the exam period and the holiday season, please accept our warmest wishes for a successful completion of the semester and even, perhaps, a few days of relaxation in the snow. Happy holidays to all!

UNBC-FA CONSTITUTION REVIEW

As previously announced in our July 2011 Newsletter, the Faculty Association Executive struck a working group to review the Faculty Association's constitution. The work and proposed changes to the constitution by the working group are progressing and recommendations will be put forward early in the New Year to the FA Executive Committee and general membership at the Spring 2012 AGM for consideration and approval.

If you have any comments or suggestions on the review of the constitution, please send your comments to: dplourde@unbc.ca or fac-assoc@unbc.ca.

2012 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REVIEW (PER) PROCESS

Donna Plourde, Executive Director

You may recall that during the last round of faculty negotiations the Performance Evaluation Review (PER) process was changed to bring the review of all Faculty Association Members under the same 2-year review cycle (versus the previous *alternating* 2-year review cycle). What does this mean for you? Given that all Members were evaluated during the Spring 2011 PER process, the next PER process for *Tenured* and *Continuing Members* will take place in Spring 2013. The interim year process whereby Members met with their Supervisor to exchange memos was also removed from the Agreement so there is no submission of a PER or memos or review for *Tenured* and *Continuing Members* in Spring 2012.

If you are a *Tenure-Track*, *Probationary* or *Full-time Term Member*, you will continue to be reviewed annually and you are required to submit your PER to your Supervisor in Spring 2012 by the second Friday in February, which is **February 10, 2012**. Article 21 of the Faculty Agreement guides you through the process of preparing and submitting your PER, and the review process itself.

If you have any questions or need further clarification about the Spring 2012 PER process, please contact the Faculty Association Office.

CAUT FORUM FOR ABORIGINAL ACADEMIC STAFF Vancouver, November 10-13, 2011

The CAUT Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff was held in Vancouver and three UNBC faculty and staff members were able to attend sponsored by the UNBCFA – Dr. Alyce Johnson, Karyn Sharp and Rheanna Robinson. It was the first time attending this meeting for all three members. The opening of the forum followed Aboriginal practice with a wonderful welcoming by the Coast Salish peoples to their territory, and a welcome by James L. Turk, Executive Director of CAUT.

The forum was divided into three days of plenary sessions which were centered on issues common to Aboriginal faculty and staff across all academic institutions. These issues focused on goals and suggestions for: recognizing and naturalizing Indigenous Knowledge within the Academy; how this can be achieved – e.g. through the incorporation of Elders into the structures of the Academy; how to maintain our balance in the Academy, as we are often asked to represent all Aboriginal peoples through our participation on numerous committees; and finally the issues that we face within the Academy, ranging from racism, lack of respect for our disciplines/perspectives and lack of recognition for our work as it doesn't hold to 'standards' of Western academics.

This forum was informative and provided much insight on the progress and limitations of our own institutional practices and policies. From this we highly recommend that other FA Members be sent each year, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and especially senior administrators, as this forum provided great insight into the issues Aboriginal faculty and staff face when trying to walk the line and maintain balance between Western standards and Aboriginal reality. Please note a fuller more detailed report and presentations to the FA will follow.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the CAUT Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff.

Dr. Alyce Johnson
Karyn Sharp
Rheanna Robinson

ON-GOING CALL FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We still have vacancies on the following Faculty Association Committees:

- *Personnel and Equity Committee*
- *Benefits Committee*
- *Communications Committee*

The mandate and duties of these committees are outlined in the Faculty Association's Constitution, which is available on our website: www.unbcfa.ca. Please consider putting your name forward to serve on one of these committees.

**“WE’RE NUMBER ONE!”
AN UPDATE FROM THE CHIEF NEGOTIATOR**

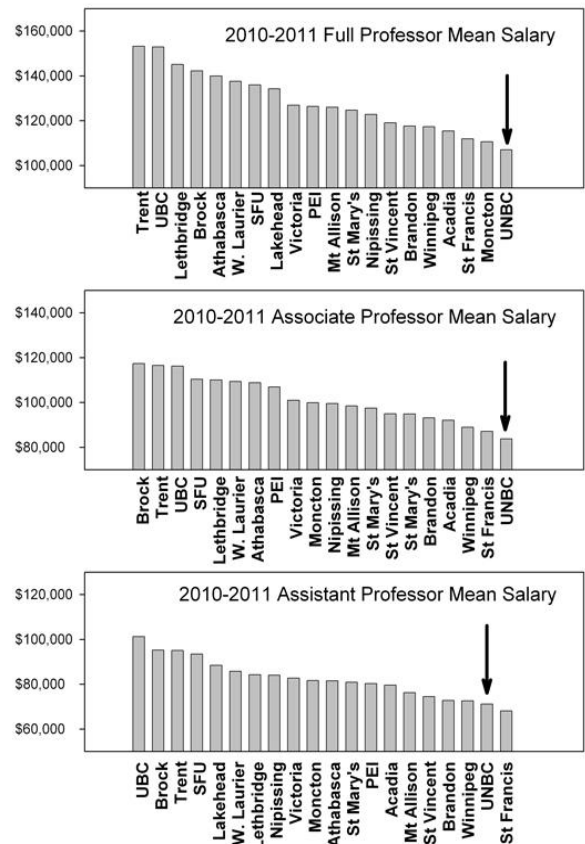
Darwyn Coxson, Chief Negotiator

UNBC has recently gained favourable national exposure from our ranking by Maclean’s. To quote the UNBC website: “Maclean’s magazine has ranked UNBC fourth in Canada – and best in western Canada – among 22 small universities for the second year in a row. In 2005 and 2006, the only universities that ranked higher than UNBC were all more than 150 years old.”

Sadly, there is another ranking where UNBC sits in the number-one spot, and that is our relative position at the bottom of salary comparisons with comparable Canadian universities. As the below graph illustrates, UNBC now sits at the bottom of the rankings for full and associate professor mean salaries, and is only second from the bottom for assistant professor mean salaries. This comparison with other small Canadian universities (also including the other BC research universities on this graph) demonstrates dramatically the outcome of a decade of government-enforced wage controls in B.C., with the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC) mandate in the last agreement being a 0% across-the-board salary increase (see also below article on PSEC: “Under Daddy’s Thumb: Bargaining in the Public Sector”).

Although sometimes the counter-argument is made that costs of living are lower in Prince George than in Vancouver or Victoria, and hence our salaries have more purchasing power, I am not so sure if this argument stands up well in comparisons with Lethbridge, Thunder Bay, Wolfville, or Sackville. Further there are many additional costs to career progression at UNBC, especially the significant travel required to meet with colleagues and peers at other institutions.

The University community, including management, Faculty Association Members, and students alike, need to remind the B.C. government that a long-term freeze on education funding is not sustainable. Although early indications from PSEC suggest that the University may have greater flexibility to reallocate funds internally to meet salary needs (within an overall continuing budget freeze), this will be challenging, given the many costs of meeting our institutional mandate at UNBC. Nonetheless, feedback from our Members indicates that salary issues must take greater precedence in the upcoming bargaining round. The status-quo is not sustainable.



Don't forget to complete the on-line Faculty Negotiations Survey 2012 by the deadline of December 16, 2011.

NEWS from CUFA-BC

*David Mirhady, President
Robert Clift, Executive Director
Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia*

Under Daddy’s Thumb: Bargaining in the Public Sector

Stripped of its technical details, bargaining is about creating and maintaining a relationship. The two sides need each other, and the negotiation of a contract is the ritual by which they determine how they’re going to get along for years to come. Such mutual dependence is difficult enough to manage between two people. But when one of them is continually on a cell phone trying to make sure the ambitions of an overweening parent are satisfied, it is a recipe for dysfunction. University administrators and faculty associations have been following this recipe for the past 18 years.

In this case, the overweening parent is the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC). Established in 1993 by the then NDP government, the legislated purposes of PSEC are to ensure coordination of human resource policies and collective bargaining activities among public sector employers and to improve communication and coordination between public sector employers and employee groups.

From its inception, the Council's mandate has included a form of wage controls, which is currently known as the "bargaining mandate". The bargaining mandates given to public sector employers always include a general limit on growth in wage and benefit costs (e.g. 0% growth on total compensation) and sometimes include more specific directives. Over time, the range of items covered by PSEC's bargaining mandates has expanded to include virtually everything that has a cost implication.

These bargaining mandates have no legal status. If a public sector employer were to ignore them and sign an agreement with an employee group that exceeded the mandate, the employer would not be hauled up in front of a judge to face the consequences of violating provincial law. Rather, Daddy, in the form of the Minister of Finance, could withhold a portion of the willful child's allowance, in the form of the government operating grant.

As is the case with other dysfunctional families, Daddy's determination of what is appropriate is somewhat arbitrary.

For NDP governments, social equity was the primary factor in determining the bargaining mandates. Under that regime, university faculty were considered privileged, undeserving of Daddy's generosity.

For Liberal governments, labour market considerations have played the largest role. They have at times benefited university faculty, such as in the 2006-2010 agreement when all faculty members received a market adjustment on top of the across the board increases received by all public sector employees. But they've also been a source of irritation, such as when Daddy has authorized salary increases for specific classes of faculty members under the banner of "market considerations."

The net result of these somewhat arbitrary distinctions by successive governments is that faculty salaries have lost ground to inflation.

In 1993/94, the average starting salary for an assistant professor at a BC public university was about \$50,000. If, for the next 18 years, that assistant professor received only the across the board salary increases given to all faculty members, today she/he would earn \$63,120, an increase of 26%. If that assistant professor's salary had increased by the annual growth in the BC Consumer Price Index instead, she/he would be making \$66,183, an increase of 32% — a gap of 6 percentage points.

This gap reached its zenith in 2005/06 when our hypothetical assistant professor's salary was fully 10 percentage points behind inflation. The special compensation for faculty members in the 2006-2010 agreements reduced the gap to 2 percentage points by 2009/10, but the gap is again increasing as the result of the most recent agreements, which do not provide for any across the board salary increases.

This hypothetical example is obviously an over simplification. There are many other components to determining faculty members' salaries — rank, years in rank, merit increments and market supplements all play a significant role in determining salary. The consequence of the arbitrary nature of government bargaining mandates is that these other components have become the only reliable means for faculty associations to stem the erosion of their members' salaries.

This regime has turned the traditional bargaining process on its head. Rather than investing significant effort in preparing analyses and arguments in support of general wage increases for all faculty members, faculty associations have had to be more and more creative in using other components of compensation to achieve gains for their members.

After the last round of bargaining, there was a consensus among CUFA BC member faculty associations that they have reached the limit of the salary improvements they can achieve through these other components. Any future improvements are going to have to come through across the board increases.

Government's appetite for across the board salary increases was significantly diminished by the recent referendum results in favor of eliminating the HST. In a post-results news conference, the Minister of Finance indicated that there will be a new round of government belt-tightening to deal with the costs of reintroducing the PST.

What does this have to do with appropriate levels of faculty compensation? In theory, very little. In practice, everything, since PSEC will inevitably try to impose several more years of wage freezes to deal with government financial problems unrelated to the universities. At some point, this cycle of dysfunction has to end. Perhaps now is the time for the universities to get out from under Daddy's thumb.

Professors' Priorities

Imagine that the provincial government wanted to make a new investment in BC's post-secondary educational system -- an additional \$15 million -- a pretty modest amount in the government's scheme of things. Then give the professors of BC's research-intensive universities -- UBC, SFU, UVic, UNBC, and Royal Roads -- ten choices as to what to do with the money.

In August and September, the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC did just that, asking its members to respond to this made-up scenario. We intentionally excluded increased salaries even though these have fallen well behind inflation over the last twenty years.

What resulted? First of all, the survey demonstrated the professors' great commitment to students. Of the ten choices we offered, faculty members indicated that supporting excellent graduate students was their top priority, with more than one quarter making it their first choice. When we tallied the top three choices, more than half had included such support for this next generation of scholars.

When we combined the first choices for other ways to support students financially -- increased support of aboriginal students (6%), a tuition freeze (12%), increased bursaries (11%), and reduced interest on student loans (6%) -- we found that this overall indicator of student support ranked even higher than the support for grad students, with more than one-third of the first choices.

Nearly 20% of faculty voted to use the funds for recruitment and retention, a top-three choice of more than four in ten of the respondents. Our sense is that this number indicates the frustration of faculty members with the declining buying power of university faculty salaries, especially in BC's red-hot real estate market. Even though recruitment and retention money targets only a limited segment of the faculty, it was the only choice we offered that suggested higher salaries.

If we add together the various indicators of support for students, both graduate and undergraduate students, we find that more than 60% of the faculty members made students their first choice, outnumbering recruitment and retention money for professors themselves by more than three to one.

It's also interesting to note those options that faculty chose least-often, especially since governments, both federal and provincial, have opted for versions of these proposals in the recent past. Targeted funding to support research in key economic areas was popular with only 4% of respondents, endowed research chairs in areas identified by the universities with only 2%, and an increased number of student spaces -- giving the money to the universities rather than to students -- with 8%. A favorite with university administrators -- funding for teaching awards -- was the top choice of only 6%.

The interest among professors for greater student, and especially graduate student, support is no accident. There are no BC fellowships for top graduate students, while both Alberta and Ontario have fellowships of \$10-15,000 for students at the Master's and Doctoral levels in non-professional programs. This difference gives universities in those provinces a great advantage over BC universities in recruiting the best graduate students.

Having excellent graduate students is crucial to the success of all aspects of the university. Because graduate students are also closely involved in the research and teaching programs of university professors, attracting the best of them positively affects both research and undergraduate teaching.

Many graduate students end up settling where they do their studies, so new fellowships will also attract more highly-educated people to the province permanently, not just for their graduate studies. These highly-educated individuals bring a wide range of benefits -- intellectual, cultural, and economic -- to the province. Increasing support for post-secondary educational institutions brings benefits to all.



LETTER FROM THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION CRITIC FOR ADVANCED EDUCATION, YOUTH AND LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Michelle Mungall

MLA, Nelson - Creston

Dear Faculty Association,

It has been a great Fall as I tour the province to meet with administration, faculty and students at all twenty-five public post-secondary institutions. Additionally, the Legislature has been in session since October 3. This is what brings me to this letter today. I am writing to give you an update on recent events in the Legislature regarding post-secondary education.

As you are aware, students in British Columbia are saddled with the highest student loan interest rate in the country, on top of rising tuition and an average student debt load of \$27,000. Students, graduates and instructors all agree that student debt is too high. The presidents of B.C. universities have added their voice on this issue, calling on the Liberal government to improve financial assistance for post-secondary students to bring the province in line with what is offered in other key jurisdictions across Canada.

The Minister of Advanced Education promised last June that her Ministry was conducting a review of potential changes for student financial assistance, with changes slated for this Fall. Unfortunately, the beginning of the school year has come and gone and we have yet to see the results from the review, much more any changes to StudentAid BC.

Last week in the Legislature, I called for Minister

Naomi Yamamoto to release the results of this review. Instead of tabling the findings and bringing forward much-needed improvements, the minister side-stepped the request. I was left with the distinct impression that the Liberal government is paper-shuffling and not getting the job done. You can have a look at the video transcript where I posed these questions to the minister by following this link: <http://bit.ly/SABCReview>, or viewing the transcript below.

The minister has said that B.C. has one of the best student aid packages in the country, but the fact is, between 2000 and 2009, undergraduate student debt grew by 14-per-cent while not one penny was available for financial needs-based grants. Students in B.C. are racking up debt faster than anywhere else in Canada and it's costing more to pay it off.

It is important that the Minister immediately account for the whereabouts of this review and release its results. Changes to reduce barriers to post-secondary education and alleviate the overwhelming weight of student debt are long overdue.

I will continue to work on this issue as well as advocate for \$100 million into a leading needs-based student grant program and for the elimination of interest on students loans.

(Please note that this article is for information only and the opinions expressed by the opposition critic M. Mungall do not represent an official position by the UNBC Faculty Association.)

Faculty Association Office: The Faculty Association Office is located in Rm. 3085 Administration Building.
Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm
Drop-in hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30am – 12:00noon
By appointment: Monday–Friday, 1:00pm – 4:30pm

Contact Donna Plourde at 250-960-5816 or email at dplourde@unbc.ca to schedule an appointment. Information on the UNBC Faculty Association is also available on our website at: www.unbcfa.ca



To all of our Members and their families...wishing you Season's Greetings