

MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association

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November 4, 2009

25th Anniversary Edition!

It's only

239

days until the expiration of our two collective agreements...

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Collective Bargaining subcommittees have started meeting in open forums (or *fora* for those who prefer to be correct), with several occurring this week. We hope to be able to map out positions for the Negotiating team earlier than we have done in the past. The team will then prepare the package for negotiations with the Employer.

There continue to be new grievances (as can be seen in the Grievance report), while old grievances are working their way towards arbitration. As reported in earlier newsletters, the tenure-denial grievance from last year was turned down by the arbitrator, and the Executive has decided not to take the arbitrator's decision to judicial review. This grievance and arbitration was one of the more difficult ones in our

history, and I would like to thank all those involved for the hard work put in on this case.



Some of you may have seen the rather ignorant editorial in the *Telegraph Journal* on October 26, where the newspaper claims that universities need to cut back, so duplication of programmes should be eliminated (does this

mean that English literature should be taught at only one of the universities?), administrative functions such as payroll should be done jointly by the four universities (and exactly how much will this save?), and tenure should be abolished

so that high-profile short-term academic appointments will be made (and how much will these high-profile people charge if they have no job security and no benefits?). It is unfortunate that many refuse to acknowledge the effects of systematic underfunding of core operations over many years on the quality and accessibility of university education, and that they seem so unaware of what universities actually do.

On a more positive note, let me say again that our preparations for our celebration of the 25th anniversary of the first contract are proceeding. Tomorrow, November 5th, is the 25th anniversary of the signing of the first contract, but we will hold our official celebration at the end of term on December 8th.

Rick Hudson

GRIEVANCE REPORT

A New Union Grievance, and Two Ongoing . . .

On October 26, 2009, MAFA filed a new union grievance over the terms of employment of a number of part time faculty members, who have been hired to teach half of two sections of one three credit course but are each being paid only one half the rate of a 3 credit course stipend. The MAFA grievance officer will be meeting soon with the University Grievance Officer.

As this newsletter goes to press the MAFA executive is preparing for the November 3rd hearing in the arbitration over the Employer's attempt to appoint an IT specialist in the Library to the MASA rather than the MAFA bargaining unit. The three-member arbitration panel is chaired by Bruce Outhouse of Halifax, with Bob Cook from St. Mary's University and Moncton lawyer Robert

Basque, Q.C., serving as sidepersons for MAFA and the Employer, respectively. It is expected that this first hearing will deal mainly with questions of standing and procedure and that the substance of the case will be addressed at a later hearing. All of the hearings will be held in Moncton and are open to the public. Any members interested in attending can contact the MAFA office for details.

The three member arbitration panel which will hear MAFA's union grievance in the matter of the appointment of the Director of the Ron Joyce Centre for Business Studies (RJCBS) is now being formed.

Loralea Michaelis

UPCOMING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING MEETINGS

Union rights Subcommittee, Thursday, November 12th, 10:30 am, Dunn 111.

Librarians' Issues Subcommittee, Friday, November 6th, 9 am, Bell Library Room M12 (main floor of the library).

Benefits Subcommittee, Wednesday, November 4th, 3 pm, Bennett Building, Room G03.

All members are welcome!

MAFA MEMBER APPOINTED TO LOOK INTO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AT BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Berkeley Fleming (Sociology, Mount Allison) and Jennie Hornosty (Sociology, UNB at Fredericton) have recently been appointed by the Canadian Association of University Teachers to serve as an *ad hoc* investigative committee into whether academic freedom is being infringed at Crandall University (formerly known as Atlantic Baptist University) by the requirement of a faith test as a condition of employment.



Having conducted their initial fact-finding work, the committee members have begun interviews with interested parties, following the completion of which they will consider the evidence carefully and

formulate a report to be presented to the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee of the CAUT.

PART-TIME MEMBERS AWARDED RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY STIPENDS

MAFA would like to advise its members that Dr. Olga Zhaxybayeva (Biology/Biochemistry) and Prof. San Patten (Sociology) have been awarded the 2009-10 Mount Allison Part-Time Research Stipends.

Dr. Zhaxybayeva, a specialist in computation biology and evolutionary genomics, has received the support to help her answer the question, "Is there evidence that bacterial diversity is organized into discrete clusters?" Professor Patten has received the award in support of her research in "Community-Based HIV Prevention Interventions."

Each recipient receives a standard stipend (\$5220) as salary support for their research.

"I am very impressed that ten of our part-time members applied for these awards and with the high quality of their research proposals," says MAFA President Rick Hudson.

FNBFA Report

On October 3, I attended a media workshop, organized by the FNBFA with the participation of the CAUT's David Robinson. Members of the various member-associations were present, with several members from AUNBT, both Fredericton and Saint John. As we know, AUNBT is in a particularly difficult negotiation at the present time. The workshop was very useful. As is usual with FNBFA events, part was in English and part in French, with Gilles Allain, the FNBFA Executive Director, doing the French part of the workshop.

The FNBFA Board, consisting of representatives of the six member-associations and the four members of the Executive, will be holding a retreat in Fredericton on November 7th and 8th to discuss governance questions. The retreat will be facilitated by Lori Morinville of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations. The decision to proceed with the retreat was made in a conference call of the Executive in late September, following a meeting of the President (Linda Lequin) and Executive Director with members of AUNBT Saint John.

Rick Hudson

MAFA CONGRATULATES MEDICAL DOCTORS ON SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION

MAFA offers its congratulations to the New Brunswick Medical Society, which recently achieved a four-year contract with the Government of New Brunswick. In each of the four years, retroactive to April 1, 2008, the doctors will receive pay increases of 3.75%.

This is despite the provincial government's claims of a voluntary wage freeze for the civil service and parapublic sector, including municipalities, universities, public education, and health care systems.



According to the President of the NB Medical Society, the doctors have also made a “commitment” of a two-year wage freeze beginning in 2012, but this is subject to future ratification and possibly negotiations.

Source: *Fredericton Daily Gleaner*, *Saint John Telegraph-Journal*, *Moncton Times-Transcript*, all October 22, 2009.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, 2009-10

Please mark these dates on your calendar:

Fall General Meeting, Tuesday, December 8th, 1:30 pm,

Avard Dixon G12

MAFA 25th Anniversary Celebration – Tuesday, December 8th, 4:30 pm, University Club

Spring Annual General Meeting, Monday April 12th, 3 pm, Avard Dixon G12

Retiring Members' Party, April 12th, 4:30 pm University Club

MAFA 2009-2010 EXECUTIVE

Richard Hudson - President (Commerce)

Peter Brown - Past President (English)

Jeff Lilburn - Vice President (Library)

Rob Cupido - Unit 2 (History/Continuous Learning)

Maritza Fariña - Membership (Modern Languages and Literatures)

Zoe Finkel - Collective Bargaining (Geography and Environment)

Gina Grandy - Treasurer (Commerce)

Loralea Michaelis - Grievance (Political Science)

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3. Provision of Marking Assistance

One way to help alleviate workload issues is to guarantee marking assistance for larger classes. For example at York:

A Course Directorship shall at a minimum be assigned assistance to reflect course enrolments above fifty (50) as follows:

- 1. The assistance assigned shall be at least in the form of marker/grader assistance.*
- 2. The assistance shall be at least at the rate of fifteen (15) hours for each block of five (5) students, or portion thereof, exceeding fifty (50).*

One way to guarantee sufficient funds for Teaching Assistants is modeled in the Trent contract:

A total allocation of \$6.50 per student-course based on the University's total official undergraduate enrollment in the current academic year shall be used to provide members with marking assistance.

4. Days for Research and Scholarly Activity

Some faculty unions have included protected time for research and other professional responsibilities in their agreements, setting aside time each week free of scheduled teaching or information service duties. For example at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design:

During a teaching semester each full-time faculty member shall devote one day (or its equivalent at the discretion of the faculty member) per week to their Professional and/or Scholarly Activities.

The Chair of the Workload subcommittee is Diana Hamilton (dhamilton@mta.ca).

The members of the collective bargaining committee are: Zoe Finkel (Chair), Helen Pridmore, Jeff Lilburn, and Erin Steuter. Feel free to contact mafa@mta.ca with any bargaining ideas or suggestions.

The MAFA Collective Bargaining Committee welcomes all faculty and librarians to the start of a new round of negotiations. Our collective agreements with the Employer expire in July 2010 and our committee is in charge of preparing a package of items that will improve our working conditions.

Collective Bargaining Dialogue #2: Workload

With larger enrolments at Mount Allison this year, concerns about heavy workload are near the top of the list of priorities for our members in this round of negotiations.

Academic staff carry complex workloads, comprised of responsibilities for teaching, professional practice in the library, research and creative activities, and service to the institution, their professions and the community.

Here are some of the ways that other universities have dealt with the issue in their collective agreements. Let us know your thoughts by coming out to the workload subcommittee focus group (stay tuned for dates and times) or contact the MAFA office (mafa@mta.ca).



1. Complement

The complement of full-time academic staff is a key component of workload. If complement is not protected, the employer may replace full-time positions with per-course appointments which have much lower rates of pay, virtually no job security and rarely have access to benefit plans or pensions. Since per-course appointments are usually teaching-only positions, their use tends to increase the relative work for full-time faculty to serve on department, faculty and university-wide committees. For example at Laurier:

(a) the University agrees that the number of tenure-track and tenured appointments in the Bargaining Unit shall not be fewer than the number of those appointments in the 2004-2005 contract year (365);

(b) the University agrees to continue to use the FTE student/FTE faculty ratio of 23:1 in determining the faculty complement. During the life of this Agreement, the University shall endeavour to lower the student/faculty ratio to 21:1;

Penalty clause: if administration fails to make the ratio over two consecutive years, administration pays the number of faculty needed to make the ratio times the floor of the Assistant Professor. This sum divided equally among the Members of the Bargaining Unit employed as of September 1 of the second year by April 18 of the second year.

2. Limits on Class Size and students per instructor

Some universities set a maximum class size and a maximum number of students per semester, appropriate to the size of the institution and its commitment to small class sizes. For example at Saint Thomas in Fredericton:

No Employee shall be required to teach more than 60 students in a class. No Employee shall be required to teach more than one hundred and forty (140) students per semester in the standard teaching load.

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