

MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With this newsletter this year's Executive looks to the end of its term on April 30. This is my second and final year as MAFA President, with a much anticipated sabbatical approaching. These two years as President have been among the most challenging for our association: we have been through a strike, an interest arbitration, and a record high number of grievances and arbitrations. But they have also been among the most rewarding: we have established a strong public presence through our new website and our intrepid entry into social media; we have raised the level of our understanding of Mount Allison's financial and human resources; and we have gained a greater regard for each other as colleagues, for those many occasions on which each of us has offered the other examples of our generosity, moral resolve, and abundant good humor.

This newsletter well testifies to what we have accomplished. It has been the work of many hands, members who have shared their best work – their critical judgment no less than their research and data skills! – so that we can enter our truths into the public record, and in this way create a wider community of interest in the university that we imagine for Mount Allison.

In this newsletter we also find disheartening evidence of where our efforts over the past two years have failed to yield as much as we had hoped. Despite the explicit citation of inadequate sabbatical replacements in the Faculty Council non-confidence motion of April 2014 – supported by a resounding majority of 60-1 – sabbatical replacements have plummeted even further. Grievances and even grievance settlements are managed by the Employer with stingy cynicism, grievance arbitrations with lavish expenditures on legal counsel, the cash flowing freely, clearly, for the really important things. The current administration appears to be more detached than ever before from academic values, more preoccupied with public relations spin and reputation management campaigns, more determined than ever to control rather than support the life of the university.

We draw courage and resolve from the recognition that things are far worse than we thought. What is happening at Mount Allison is happening at universities across the country and around the world: the graduate student contract workers on the picket lines at York University and the University of Toronto, the faculty on strike at the University of Northern British Columbia, the student and faculty occupations at the University of Amsterdam are shining a bright light on the neoliberal demolition of the university; they are calling for the democratic recovery of public institutions; they are calling for the restoration of academic control of academic work and collegial governance; they are calling for emergency measures to address the catastrophe of casualization and precarity in the academic workplace; and above all they are calling into question the incongruity of austerity under conditions of unprecedented prosperity and abundance.

But if things are far worse than we thought, they are also far better. Because here, at Mount Allison, we find that there is something that we can do. MAFA puts into our hands the collective resources and the collective agency by which we can participate in this wider struggle. Because we have a union we can accomplish far more with the critical consciousness which is the stock-in-trade of all academics. We have in our hands the tools that allow us to intervene in our own workplace, on behalf of a world of greater democracy and greater justice. And we count this as a great benefit.

Many thanks to you all, to the members entire as well as the members on the two Executives and Bargaining Teams with whom I had the honour to work more closely, for the opportunity that these past two years have given me, to be more on behalf of others than I could have ever been on my own.

Loralea Michaelis
President

SABBATICAL REPLACEMENTS AT MOUNT ALLISON, 2010-16

The table and charts below were created from data provided to the Senate by the office of the Provost in partial fulfillment of the Senate motion of January 13 2015 and (where the Provost's data was incomplete), from MAFA's own records.¹

The data confirms what many members will have already suspected: sabbatical replacement has declined significantly over the last three years. Calculated as full year equivalents (FYE, based on standard annual teaching loads), including sessional, term, and stipendiary appointments, the total replacement for sabbatical leaves has fallen from between 90% and 100% to below 30% in 2015-2016. The replacement of full year sabbaticals by full-time replacements, which has hovered between 75% and 85%, has fallen to 11% for the upcoming year.

This reduction in sabbatical replacements is compounded by the relative decline in the full time tenured complement which we have also been experiencing over the same period, despite the fact that student enrollment has remained relatively steady.² Departments already struggling to deliver their programs with limited resources have been placed under even greater strain; departments that may have been managing well enough are now thrown into crisis, joining the swelling ranks of the over worked and the under resourced which now describes the Mount Allison faculty experience.

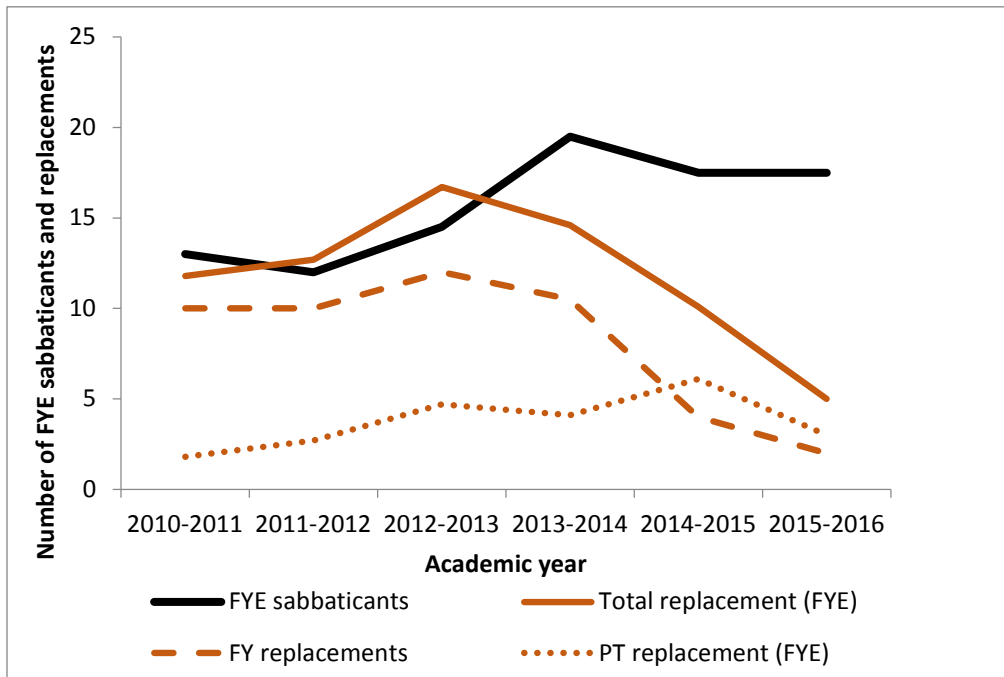
The impact of the reduction in academic resources on the quality of academic work at Mount Allison is difficult to calculate. More time spent on teaching affects the quality of our teaching as well as energy that would

¹ The Senate motion called for department-by-department data on sabbaticals and sabbatical replacements for the academic years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016. Data provided by the Provost's office was missing sabbatical replacement data for 2010-2011 and did not distinguish between full or half sabbaticals. MAFA has rectified these omissions but MAFA has **not** corrected any errors and anomalies in the Provost's data, as follows: a term replacement reported in Chemistry for 2011-2012 but no sabbatical is reported in that year, and an excess of reported full year equivalent (FYE) replacements over reported FYE sabbaticals for the years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. The overall trend is not significantly affected by these errors and anomalies.

² For an analysis of student enrollment patterns at Mount Allison since 1997, see "Is there an Enrollment Crisis?" at <http://www.mafa.ca/publications/enrollment-crisis/>. For an analysis of changes in the full time faculty complement at Mount Allison relative to changes in student enrollment since 2002, see "Budget Priorities and the Academic Mission at Mount Allison" at <http://www.mafa.ca/publications/budget-priorities/>

normally be reserved for our research. Programs carefully crafted according to the standards of our fields are diluted. To be sure, faculty are called upon by their own high professional standards to fill the resource gap without diluting their programs, and without diminishing their own contributions as teachers and as researchers. But even the most heroic efforts will find their human limit, sooner or later. By their very nature the consequences of human resource decisions are not immediately apparent, and, adverse or advantageous, likely compound with time. What is known for sure is that those who are responsible for these decisions will have departed well before their full impact on the institution is known.

Figure 1: Change in sabbatical replacements over six years. The number of full-time and part-time sabbatical replacements (total number and as a proportion of sabbatical leaves) has decreased dramatically since 2012-13.



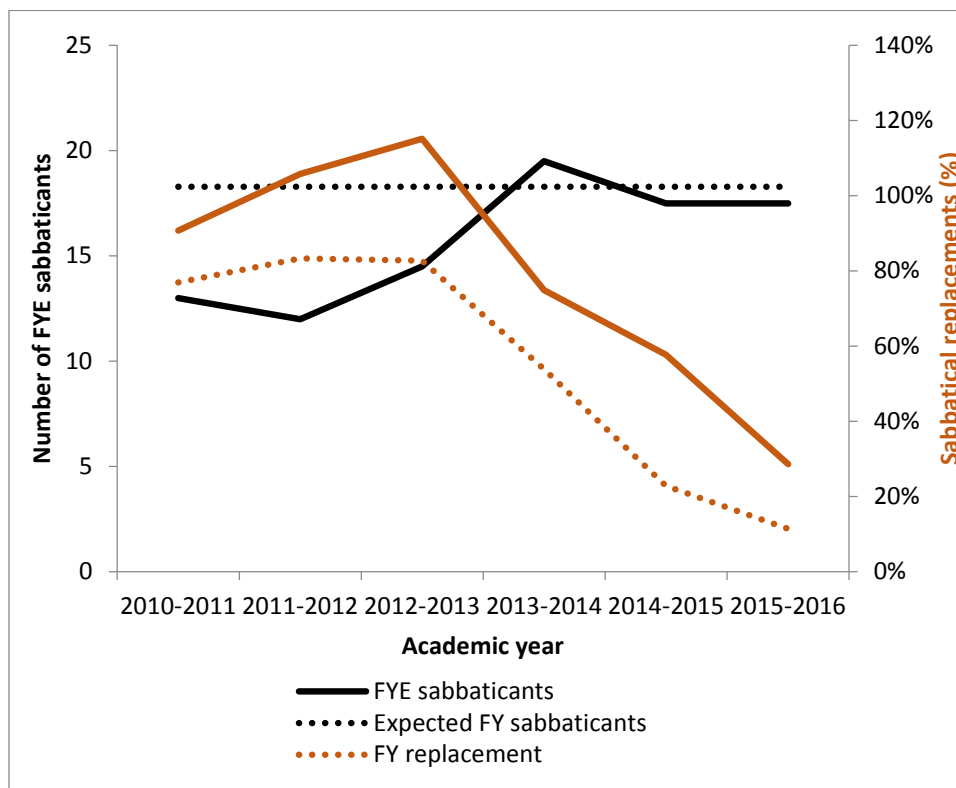
How do we interpret the data, then? What does it tell us about the kind of university that Mount Allison has become? The most significant omission in the data provided to Senate by the Provost’s office is also the most telling. The Senate motion requested information not only on sabbatical replacements provided but also sabbatical replacement **requests** made by departments: Article 23 of the Full Time Collective Agreement requires the Dean to consult with departments and programs with upcoming sabbaticals about their replacement needs. Despite this formal requirement of consultation, the Provost’s data passes over this part of the Senate motion in silence. And yet it is surely the most important information of all, if we are to have a sound understanding of the likely impact of sabbatical replacement decisions on academic programs and academic work.

It is academics who are most qualified to provide advice on academic matters, on what resources programs require, and what resources are necessary for academic work of various degrees of quality. The fact that the Provost’s office considered this advice to be not worth the trouble of assembling and reporting speaks volumes about the current administration. What the data shows is that decisions about academic resources have become increasing disconnected from academic judgments, from the judgments of those who have been trained in their various specialized fields and hired and tenured by Mount Allison to ensure that the institution maintains its credibility as a university, as a centre of academic research and teaching. Having set aside academic judgments about academic resources, this administration has become independent of the university.

Table 1: Total number of sabbaticals (full-year equivalents), full-time replacements, part-time replacements (as full-year equivalents), the total replacement (full-year equivalents), and FT and total replacement as a percentage of the FYE number of sabbaticals for all departments and programs combined.

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Sabbatical FYE equivalent	13	12	14.5	19.5	17.5	17.5
Full time replacements	10	10	12	10.5	4	2
PT replacements as FYE	1.8	2.7	4.7	4.1	6.1	3
Total replacement (FYE)	11.8	12.7	16.7	14.6	10.1	5
FT replacement (%)	77%	83%	83%	54%	23%	11%
Total replacement (%)	91%	106%	115%	75%	58%	29%

Figure 2: Change in sabbaticals and replacements over 6 years, relative to the expected rate of sabbaticals given the size of the full time complement. In 2013-14, there were 128 FT tenure-stream faculty and this is approximately the same as the average from 2007-08 to 2013-14.³ Those are the individuals primarily represented in these sabbatical data. Based on this long term average number of faculty members, we would expect an average of about $128/7 = 18.3$ FYE sabbaticals per year over this period.



³ MAFA Interest Arbitration Rebuttal Brief (2014), Table 1, page 12, which was compiled from (i) *Mount Allison University Review of Operations, 2004-05*, page 10, (ii) *Mount Allison University Review of Operations, 2005-06*, page 10, (iii) R. Campbell: *Reflections on MTA's Budget, 2013-14* (May 9, 2013), slide 8, and (iv) *Mount Allison University Arbitration Brief* (2014), §38.

GRIEVANCE REPORT

In the calendar year 2014, there were 22 grievances filed. This is by far the most that have ever been filed in a year. Since the beginning of 2015, two new grievances have been filed: one deals with hiring a part-time professor, and the second one deals with a sabbatical leave issue. A list of the grievances outstanding at the end of 2014 can be found in the November 2014 newsletter at <http://www.mafa.ca/publications/newsletters/>

We are still using the numbering system introduced last year, where we refer to grievances by the calendar year, followed by the number of the grievance that year. The most recent grievance filed is thus 2015-02.

There are currently 11 grievances outstanding. For two of them (2014-22 and 2015-02), MAFA and the Employer are in discussion, and it looks like we may reach agreement without going to arbitration.

Since the November newsletter, two grievances have been resolved through agreement of the two parties, while two cases (involving three grievances) are before arbitrators.

The grievances which have been settled through agreement since the November newsletter are:

2014-14: Unsatisfactory teaching. The Employer agreed to have the dean reissue the evaluation with a Satisfactory for teaching, and with the commentary about teaching replaced with a neutral statement.

2014-06: Sabbatical replacement policy. The Employer stated that the policy announced, which MAFA had alleged would violate parts of the Collective Agreement, was actually only a draft policy that has not been finalized, is not being followed, and that the Employer intends to follow the Collective Agreement in the area of appointments.

Since September 2014, there have been arbitration hearings on 5 grievances. As reported in the November newsletter, decisions were rendered in

that month on 2014-08 (arbitrator Couturier) and 2014-11 (arbitrator Haines). Both dealt with the operations of the Tenure and Promotion committee in 2013-14. Neither decision was contested by either party, and MAFA is currently checking to make sure the Employer follows up with the arbitration orders.

Since the beginning of January, we have had 4 days of testimony and argument, concerning two cases: grievances 2014-17 & 2014-19 (arbitrator Haines) and also 2013-07 (arbitrator Breen). The two grievances 2014-17 & -19 were combined since they dealt with a single case where a dean gave an unsatisfactory evaluation to a faculty member and



then imposed discipline on the faculty member for receiving the unsatisfactory. All testimony and argument has been completed for 2014-17 & 19, and arbitrator Haines has stated he will render his decision in early April.

Grievance 2013-07 has to do with the Employer's responsibility to maintain the York Street Children's Centre, as agreed under a Memorandum of Agreement (which forms part of the Collective Agreement). The Employer claims that its promise in the MOA to "continue to maintain" the York Street Children's Centre does not include replacing the flooring even when the provincial inspector says

it should be replaced for health reasons. (The flooring currently consists of carpeting which has been there for a couple of decades.)

The first day of the 2013-07 arbitration was taken up with opening statements and testimony from the Director of Administrative Services. Many interesting details of the relation of our Employer to the York Street Children's Centre came out during this testimony. The hearing was adjourned before the Dean of Arts could give testimony on bargaining history. It will resume on May 15.

Given that there are 11 open grievances, even if we reach agreement on the wording for the two cases where talks are advanced (2014-22 and 2015-02), and if we ignore the three cases currently in arbitration (2014-17 & -19, and 2013-07), there are 6 cases where there is no indication of agreement being near.

Richard Hudson
Grievance Officer

ZERO TUITION CAMPAIGN

An exciting and important campaign was launched last week at Cape Breton University (CBU), calling for an end to tuition for post-secondary education in Canada. More particularly, the campaign calls for an early transition to a policy of free tuition for all those who require it, including all First Nations students. This would be followed by a staged move towards the abolition of post-secondary education tuition fees altogether by a date to be defined through a process of constructive consultation with federal and provincial partners.

An open letter to the leaders of all federal parties has been drafted and the campaign organizers have invited Faculty Associations, Students Unions, and University Presidents across the country to add themselves as signatories. At CBU the presidents of all three campus groups have already signed. The MAFA Executive voted on March 10 to add its support to the campaign. We urge members to add their voices to this timely discussion.

For more information about the campaign, and for copies of the three presidents' letter, as well as an opportunity to sign a petition, go to the campaign's web page:

<http://www.zerotuitioncanada.org/>

MAFA 2014-2015 EXECUTIVE

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(Politics and International Relations)

David Thomas, Vice-President
(Politics and International Relations)

Zoe Finkel, Past President
(Geography and Environment)

Robert Rosebrugh, Treasurer
(Mathematics and Computer Science)

Jane Dryden, Collective Bargaining
(Philosophy)

Michael Fox, Membership
(Geography and Environment)

Richard Hudson, Grievance Officer
(Commerce)

Lori Ann Roness, Part-time Officer
(Sociology/ MASSIE)

Andrew Irwin, Chief Negotiator
(Mathematics and Computer Science)