

# MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the term of this executive soon coming to an end, I wish to begin by thanking all members who served on the MAFA executive and on MAFA committees this year. It has been a pleasure and honour to serve alongside you. I also wish to thank MAFA's Professional Officer, Geoff Martin, without whose efforts my job as President and the jobs of all Executive members would be infinitely more demanding.

As you will read in greater detail below, this has been a busier-than-expected year with regards to grievances. The number of grievances filed started at one last May yet grew to ten by January. While several of these grievances have been resolved, the number of grievances MAFA was required to launch over the course of the year remains a source of concern.

Since publication of the last MAFA newsletter, executive sub-committees have completed two significant projects: a review of the terms and conditions of the Professional Officer position and a review of the MAFA Constitution and By-laws. The former, which involved comparison of duties and remuneration levels with those for comparable positions at faculty associations across the country, has resulted in a recommendation for the creation of a new Executive Director position to be responsible for duties that do not fall within the scope of the Professional Officer position. As previously announced, Geoff Martin has been appointed Executive Director on a contract basis and the Executive is committed to his continuation in this

position, in addition to the Professional Officer position, after the upcoming Annual General Meeting).

The latter project involved a complete review of all articles of the Constitution and of all By-laws and resulted in recommendations for revisions and the addition of one new Constitution article two new By-laws. All recommendations will be presented to the full membership for approval at the AGM next month, with proposed changes to the Constitution and By-laws circulated ahead of the meeting.

Since beginning my term as President last May, I've represented MAFA at five FNBFA Board of Directors meetings and attended several CAUT meetings and events in Ottawa. Most recently, FNBFA had been preparing for the annual "Meet the MLAs" event, an especially important event this year due to the Fall provincial election. Unfortunately, the event was postponed due to the early adjournment of the NB Legislature, and plans are now underway to reschedule for early June. In January, I attended the CAUT Forum for Presidents where I, along with MUNFA President Robin Whitaker, was part of a plenary session on anonymous student opinion surveys. Other presentations focused on issues surrounding performance indicators and metrics used to measure faculty productivity, and on strategies faculty associations may pursue in resisting increasing corporatization and managerialism at Canada's universities. Next month, MAFA Vice President Leah Garnett and I will attend CAUT Council on your behalf, where discussion of these issues is sure to continue.

## GRIEVANCE REPORT

Finally, as I have addressed issues related to the working conditions of contract academic staff in each of my previous newsletter reports, I will do so again, this time by referring back to a passage from my first report in the September 2017 newsletter:

With the strong support of our membership, fair and equitable working conditions for our part-time members is an achievable goal. Mount Allison University celebrates its commitment to leadership and high-quality education and can, if together we demand it, claim its place as the first university in Canada to offer working conditions for part-time academic staff that are on par with those of full-time staff.

As the efforts of faculty and librarians at Ontario Colleges demonstrated last fall, improvements to working conditions need not always occur in small, incremental steps. Sometimes, significant gains are achieved through a collective leap. Faculty at Ontario colleges are now protected by academic freedom language in their collective agreement because, together, they recognized that it was not reasonable or acceptable for academic staff to carry out their professional activities without the rights and protections assured by academic freedom.

In recent rounds of bargaining at Mount Allison, MAFA has been successful in achieving for part-time members monetary gains that are proportionally higher than gains achieved for full-time members. Still, the disparities between part-time and full-time member working conditions are great and are not limited to salaries. With preparations for the next round of collective bargaining soon to get underway, we can remember and draw inspiration from the efforts of our Ontario colleagues as we imagine what sorts of collective leaps might lead to fair and equitable working conditions on our campus.

Jeff Lilburn  
President

In late January 2018 Mario Levesque (Politics and International Relations) resigned as Grievance Officer and David Thomas (Politics and International Relations) agreed to finish the term, which ends April 30, 2018.

There were nine open grievances at that time and no new ones have been filed since. Members of the Executive and Grievance Committee volunteered to step in and take charge of one or more grievances. Updates on developments since the December 2017 newsletter are below.

2017-01 - This individual grievance surrounds potential violations of various articles of the Full-time Agreement including harassment and accommodation of disabilities in the workplace. It is at step 2 and settlement discussions are now underway between MAFA and the Employer.

2017-02 – MAFA filed a Union grievance in September 2017 regarding the employer's decision to engage a private company, eXplorance, to manage the administration of student surveys. This grievance went through all the processes in the collective agreement short of arbitration. As members will know the Employer decided not to use the eXplorance Blue software which rendered this grievance moot. MAFA has allowed the grievance to lapse without prejudice to MAFA's position on the issues.

2017-04 – This individual grievance was filed by MAFA in September 2017 and surrounds issues in the timing rooted in workplace harassment procedures. MAFA and the Employer recently settled this grievance.

2017-05 – MAFA filed a Union grievance in October 2017 regarding actions by a Dean that appeared to be the implementation of a new evaluation system for our members. MAFA and the Employer are in discussions to settle this.

2017-06 – This individual grievance was filed by MAFA in October 2017 and surrounds contractual issues for a member. MAFA and the Employer

reached a settlement on the issues in late December 2017.

2017-07 – This individual grievance was filed by MAFA on behalf of a member who is a respondent in a workplace harassment complaint. The subject matter addresses the tension between academic freedom and behavior that may be defined as harassment under the Employer’s policy. MAFA and the Employer are in discussions to settle this matter.

Since the December newsletter, three grievances have been filed.

2017-08 – This individual grievance centres on a member’s view that Article 18 was not properly followed in their department and that there has been inadequate consultation on an important issue by the Employer. This grievance proceeded through steps 1 and 2 and MAFA decided in March 2018 to allow this grievance to lapse without prejudice to MAFA’s position, based on the Employer’s willingness to take some action to address the situation.

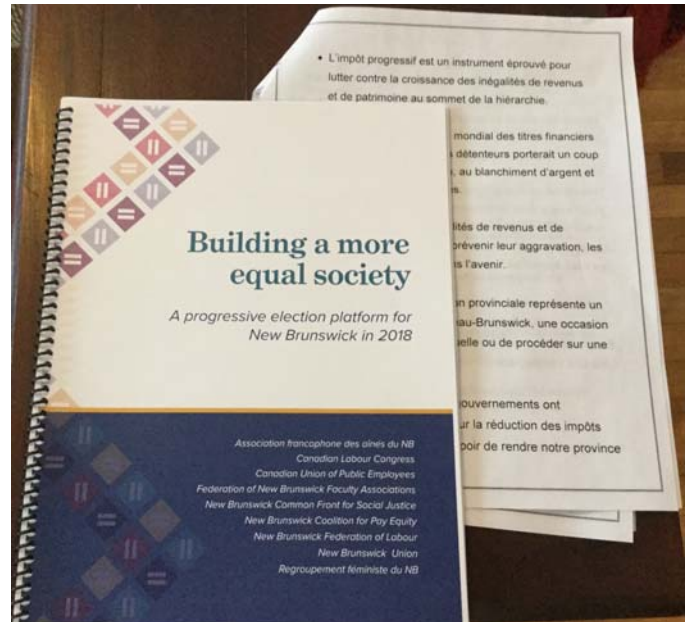
2018-01 – MAFA filed an individual grievance on behalf of a member on the grounds that the Employer did not take a promised action that might have ameliorated the member’s work situation. The Employer is in the process of fulfilling this commitment.

2018-02 – This individual grievance was filed by MAFA on behalf of an individual member concerned about the posting of part-time work, without regard for courses that should be allocated based on the First Right of Appointment for Part-time Continuing Appointments, versus part-time work that should be advertised. The Employer has committed to revisiting this and ensuring that work is allocated consistent with the Part-time Collective Agreement.

Thanks to members of the Executive and Grievance Committee (Leah Garnett, Andrew Irwin, Stephen Law, Lorelea Michaelis and Toni Roberts) who stepped in to move these issues towards resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

David Thomas (Grievance Officer)  
Geoff Martin (Professional Officer/Executive Director)



As part of MAFA’s commitment to coalition work, Geoff Martin provided assistance to a number of New Brunswick unions and social movements in the drafting of a progressive election platform for 2018. The hope is that this will generate public awareness and press the existing parties to consider these ideas. To see the platform, go to the web site of the Common Front for Social Justice at:  
<http://frontnb.ca/?id=233>

**INFORMATION SESSION ABOUT THE NEW CAREER DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS**

MAFA will hold an information session to describe the new Activity Report and process for biennial Career Development Reviews for tenure-track members at the end of April. Please stay tuned for more details.

Full-time members who have not gone through the CDR process are encouraged to attend this session and to review the revised Article 14 in the full-time collective agreement.

## STUDENTS ARE NOT MOUNT ALLISON'S CUSTOMERS

Last week, Mount Allison faculty, librarians, and staff were alerted to a professional development workshop called "Customer First" taking place on our campus in April. The workshop promises to help employees build the skills needed "to effectively deliver services to even the most challenging of customers." Some of us may be forgiven for wishfully thinking that the message was sent to the academic staff at a university in error. Alas, this does not appear to be the case.

So who are these challenging customers? Well, it seems that in the eyes of our administration, we the members of the academic community are each other's customers. Students, co-workers, and parents, too, all are included in the workshop's description of who is a customer.

The promotion of such an event would be shocking if it were not so consistent with other decisions and actions taken by university administrators across the country. The ideas that education is a commodity and that students are customers are, after all, not new and emerged, as Henry Giroux and others have described, alongside the adoption of corporate management practices, increasing reliance on contingent part-time faculty, and declines in collegial governance. Countless books and articles have documented the erosion of academic values and rise of corporatism on our campuses. A sampling of just a few of the titles of these works offers a glimpse of current conditions and realities: *University, Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education*; *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State and Higher Education*; *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*; *The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, the Assault on Academic Freedom, and the End of the American University*; *Neoliberalism and the Global Restructuring of Knowledge and Education*; and *The Corporate Campus: Commercialization and the Dangers to Canada's Colleges and Universities*.

The blatant promotion of a customer service model on this campus is deeply disturbing as it suggests

alignment with trends towards corporatism and commodification of higher education that have generated so much critical attention and concern. Is this the direction we want for our university? Once again, it would appear that diverging visions for the academy and for this institution have been revealed.

Jeff Lilburn  
President



## JOINT LIAISON REPORT

Since the last newsletter, there were three Joint Liaison meetings on December 14, 2017, January 19, and March 2, 2018. Katherine DeVere-Pettigrew, Leah Garnett, Diana Hamilton, Geoff Martin, and Jeff Ollerhead were all present at two meetings. At the third meeting Sabine Beisser replaced Katherine De Vere-Pettigrew.

We have discussed the following topics:

- Ongoing questions regarding joint appointments and how they affect letters of appointment, department composition, and tenure and promotion review
- Future plans for correspondence courses and their administration
- The Provost's proposal for Decanal restructuring
- Mount Allison's plans to address EI changes for maternity and child care leave
- Questions about the roles Deans play in relation to departmental procedures, faculty

research, and student surveys

- Issues regarding letters of appointment and payment schedule for Part-Time members
- Sabbatical deferrals
- Questions about a pending WorksafeNB case
- Procedures regarding the assignment of course releases
- The implementation of student surveys as mandated by the collective agreement and the Senate
- Plans for Faculty Evaluations and CDRs for 2018
- Questions about the two Indigenous tenure-track positions and how the hiring committee for these positions will consult with departments not represented on the committee
- Maple League course programming and administration
- Questions regarding the adoption of Office 365 for employee email

Respectfully,  
Leah Garnett

**IMPORTANT CHANGES TO TIMING OF  
EVENTS IN THE NEW FULL-TIME  
COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT**

Sabbatical reports are now due 20 days after your sabbatical ends

Activity Reports -- Due May 15

Notification of intent to apply for early tenure or promotion -- due August 1

Application for sabbatical -- due August 15

Application for tenure or promotion — due September 15

**COMING EVENTS**

All MAFA members are encouraged to attend these coming events:

MAFA Annual General Meeting and Election, Friday, April 13, 12 noon, Avarad Dixon G12

MAFA Retiring Members' Party, Friday, April 13, 4:30 pm, University Club

**MAFA 2017-2018 EXECUTIVE**

**Jeff Lilburn, President (Library)**

**Leah Garnett, Vice-President (Fine Arts)**

**Andrew Irwin, Past President (Mathematics and  
Computer Science)**

**Stephen Law, Treasurer (Economics)**

**Diana Hamilton, Collective Bargaining (Biology)**

**David Thomas, Grievance Officer (Politics and  
International Relations)**

**Lori Ann Roness, Membership  
(Sociology/MASSIE)**

**Toni Roberts, Part-time Officer (Sociology)**