

# MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association

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September 2015



This past April, Monika Boehringer (Modern Languages) (left), celebrated her retirement with colleagues Marie-Claude Rogosin, Marc Lee and Gabriela Fischer, at MAFA's Retiring Members' Party. Brian McNally (Library) also retired this past summer.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to new faculty and librarians and welcome back to members returning from leaves!

In the four months that I've been president, I've learned a great deal. The Workshop for New

Presidents hosted by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) was very informative and has helped me appreciate the work done by CAUT. The Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations (FNBFA) is actively working to ensure our views are heard as the provincial government makes plans for the future of post-secondary education. At the local level, MAFA works to promote the well being of the university

and represent all members. For this we depend on your active involvement, so I invite you to contact me with your ideas, questions or concerns.

Last fall an arbitration decision established our new collective agreement, but proposals by the Employer to change the information required for evaluation, tenure, and promotion were not resolved by the deadline of June 15. A committee, mandated by the interest arbitrator, met through the winter and spring to discuss these proposals, but our work did not result in agreement. We are now awaiting the arbitrator's decision.

This year the Collective Bargaining committee of MAFA will be soliciting your views about the terms of the collective agreement as they work to develop new proposals. Our current collective agreements expire on June 30, 2016, so bargaining will begin again soon. It is your concerns and goals that guide the work of the bargaining team and the association. Please make time in your busy schedules to participate in the preparation for collective bargaining. More details appear in the collective bargaining section of this newsletter and will be forthcoming through the fall.

I invite everyone to our New Members' Party, on Friday, September 25, 2015, starting at 4:30 pm, in the University Club. There will be free soft drinks, food, desserts, and drink tickets plus a cash bar. For the new members, the highlight of the party is undoubtedly meeting returning members. Spouses, partners, and children are all invited. Child-care expenses are reimbursed. The party is free. I hope to see you all there.

Andrew Irwin  
Mathematics & Computer Science

**GRIEVANCE REPORT**

The number of grievances so far in 2015 is lower than in the same period in 2014. While this represents a positive step, we are concerned about the number and nature of violations of the collective agreement. In particular the Employer's actions are threatening job security and are at odds with

historical interpretations of the Collective Agreement.

Grievances are numbered as year-#, where the # is a sequential number based on the number of grievances filed that year.

Grievance 2013-07, concerning the Employer's responsibility to maintain the York Street Children's Centre, per the Memorandum of Understanding attached to the last Collective Agreement, has been to arbitration and decided in the Employer's favour. While this is a disappointment, it is also a learning experience as to how the Employer now views past practice as not binding. In the past, the Employer had maintained the YSCC in an adequate manner and this practice had continued until the problem of a necessary carpet replacement (in the opinion of a provincial inspector) arrived, which the Employer did not wish to pay for. We grieved, citing the language of the Memorandum of Understanding, but our argument, based in part upon past practices, was unsuccessful.

The takeaway is that this and other areas of the Collective Agreement which rely on reasonable past practices, but are of unclear wording, will need to be firmed up in the next round of negotiations, lest other similar situations affect the membership.

Grievance 2014-15 was filed in response to an "unsatisfactory" evaluation of a member's teaching and appears to be related to the subtle pressure to make Anonymous Student Questionnaire (ASQ) data available to the Employer. This appears to be another example in which the Employer has rendered an inadequately justified negative evaluation, thus putting the member onto the annual evaluation cycle. MAFA is concerned that members who receive a series of unsatisfactory evaluations and are on the annual cycle may have difficulty getting out of this situation and that this may undermine the job security of tenured members.

Grievance 2014-18 was filed regarding an "unsatisfactory" evaluation of the member's research. From the general perspective of the membership, it is very much a sibling to 2014-15. This case is particularly egregious on the face of the case, since the member had been recently peer

evaluated positively at the time of the "unsatisfactory".

In both of these grievances MAFA is going to arbitration via three-person panels. MAFA and the Employer have named sidespersons and we continue to work on the joint appointment of neutral chairs in both of these cases.

In calendar year 2015 MAFA filed two grievances in January but both of these were resolved. However, in August MAFA has filed seven grievances (2013-03 through 2015-09) all largely based on the same set of facts. In all three faculties, part-time members have seen correspondence courses cancelled for the upcoming fall term even though they hold letters of appointment for the 2015 calendar year issued this past December or January. We're pleased to report that we have settled with the Employer, and that the individual grievors' cancelled courses will be reinstated as a result.

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There may be members who have experienced similar situations, in particular unjustified negative evaluations. We urge you to be in contact with your Union. You are not alone. Having your professionalism attacked in this way can be shocking and you may feel the urge to withdraw, but from what we have seen so far this isn't a reflection of your skills but rather, of internal Employer politics. It may also be that certain identifiable groups have been targeted, knowingly or otherwise.

If you are in one of these situations, or are otherwise suffering from a violation of the Collective Agreement, please come forward and seek help before you suffer irreparable harm. We can only help if we know about your case!

Louis Béliveau  
Commerce (Honorary Member)  
Grievance Officer

**MOUNT ALLISON ACADEMIC STAFF  
COMPLEMENT HITS 11 YEAR LOW**

If you're feeling overly busy maybe it's because our full-time numbers are at an eleven year low, Illustrated by the following data.

Year (in Sept.)	Full-time complement	Part-time complement
2015	142	N/A
2014	146	46
2013	156	49
2012	160	48
2011	162	39
2010	155	32
2009	154	35
2008	157	34
2007	160	28
2006	152	35
2005	152	36

Full-time numbers include all academic staff except for those on maternity/child care leave or disability.

Numbers only go back to 2005 because that was the first year after the full-time bargaining unit was expanded to include full-time sessional contract staff, instructors and teaching post-docs. MASSIE teachers are also not included in the data, since they have only recently been added.

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REPORT**

Our current collective agreements (both full-time and part-time) expire on June 30, 2016 so it is once again time to identify any of the terms and conditions of our work that we would like to change. Successful negotiations next year will depend on the work we do this year gathering together your concerns, hopes, and priorities.

Starting early in the fall term, the Collective Bargaining Committee will hold consultation meetings focused on topics of interest such as replacing teaching lost to leaves and releases,

improvements to the part-time collective agreement, the usual concerns about compensation, and any other area of our collective agreements you have concerns about. Feel free to identify issues of particular importance to you at any time – but particularly before the consultation meetings so that we can get input from as many members as possible.

Details will be forthcoming in the next few weeks. Please plan to consider carefully and discuss with your colleagues the workplace issues we face and the steps that should be taken to improve our jobs.

MAFA's Collective Bargaining Officer is Chris Down (Fine Arts) and the Collective Bargaining Committee will be appointed shortly.

### **JOINT LIAISON REPORT**

Article 6 of the Collective Agreement allows for representatives of MAFA and representatives of the Employer to meet on a regular basis to review and hopefully resolve any matters of concern beyond any issues that are currently being resolved under a grievance or arbitration procedure. The MAFA Executive is committed to the ideals of this committee arrangement as a way of fostering good communications and an effective working relationship with the Employer, as well as a respectful and cooperative approach to the overall employment relationship here at Mount Allison.

This year's Committee includes Fiona Black and Chris Down as the MAFA representatives and Karen Grant and Ron Sutherland as the Employer representatives. Geoff Martin, MAFA Professional Officer, acts as a resource and recording secretary for the group. The committee has agreed to meet once every month and MAFA representatives have already been engaged in the spring and summer period, dealing with such matters as procedures for tenure and promotion, proposed new policies around research, and stipendiary appointments.

In the past, the Committee has discussed a range of concerns, including appointments procedures, tenure and promotion communication issues and procedures, as well as the nature of the relationship

between the parties and agreement on more timely and information-rich communications. While this committee has no power to bind either party, we hope that Members will feel free to highlight any issues or questions they might have on the terms and conditions of employment to the MAFA executive so that we might raise these concerns and possibly resolve them as quickly as possible.

### **ATLANTIC QUEER CAUCUS MET AT MOUNT ALLISON IN JUNE**

MAFA representatives hosted this meeting, the third in an ongoing set of annual meetings discussing queer and other equity issues on campuses in Atlantic Canada.

The general tenor of the meeting was informal, with a focus on meeting and supporting queer and allied faculty in the Atlantic region. Major points of discussion included:

- intersectional equity issues on Atlantic campuses, and the role that CAUT can play in widening the discussion about equity. It was recognized that the majority of equity discussions, on campuses and in collective agreements, centers purely on matters of biological sex, and few universities in Canada have language that even recognizes any other equity seeking groups. It was further noted that this stems, in part, from the fact that by definition these are minority groups, and while members are generally sympathetic, minority issues are frequently the first to be set aside at bargaining time. Equity is an issue that CAUT recognizes as a major one on the horizon, and the national organization is therefore excited to participate in this caucus, and hopes to use it as a model for wider equity discussion across the country.
- visibility is a major issue on a number of campuses, and while Universities themselves may wish to appear queer positive, the workplace reality may differ substantially
- some initial efforts such as Pride activities and the creation of gender neutral washrooms were recognized as important and successful, while recognizing the need for wider activities both within and across Universities.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, 2015-2016

Plans for future activities and strategies to improve the environment to be more inclusive for all equity seeking groups include:

- formal recognition of unceded Aboriginal lands at all future AQC meetings
- creation of a “flying squad” of people who are ready and willing to respond if/when an incident occurs. This squad should be ready to provide a voice for equity issues, and to speak to both media and administration.
- create gender neutral washrooms on all campuses in Atlantic Canada
- hold an AQC conference, focused on gender/equity studies, and providing a venue to explore queer issues in the classroom, both as a course topic and as a lived experience (as it is recognized that just because an instructor is queer does not mean that the focus of courses they teach must therefore be about queer issues)

Future meetings are planned: UPEI in June 2016, Acadia in June 2017, and Memorial University plans to hold both the AQC meeting and the first AQC conference in 2018.

There were 11 members in attendance, from a variety of Atlantic Universities, as well as from CAUT: Acadia University, Cape Breton University, Memorial University, Mount Allison University, Mount Saint Vincent University, St. Thomas University and the University of New Brunswick. The Atlantic Queer Caucus emerged three years ago out of the LGBTIQ2S working group structure within CAUT, and has brought together a variety of people with expertise in queer issues.

Andrew Hamilton-Wright/  
D. Linda Pearse

Please mark these dates on your calendar.

Friday 25 September 4:30pm University Club, New Members' Party

October 26-30, Fair Employment Week

Friday 11 December 10am (Room: TBA), MAFA General Membership Meeting

Friday 11 December 4:30pm, University Club, MAFA End of term social event

2016

Friday 15 April 12 noon (Room: TBA), MAFA Annual General Meeting and Election of Executive for 2016 2017

Friday 15 April 4:30pm University Club, Retiring Members' Party

## MAFA 2015-2016 EXECUTIVE

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

**Fiona Black, Vice-President (Religious Studies)**

**Stephen Law, Past President (Economics)**

**Louis Béliveau, Grievance Officer (Commerce [Hon. Member])**

**Chris Down, Collective Bargaining Officer (Fine Arts)**

**Catherine Lovekin, Membership (Physics)**

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

**Robert Rosebrugh, Treasurer (Mathematics and Computer Science)**