

MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Having had the opportunity to attend CAUT's first Presidents' Forum in early January, I have reached the conclusion that we have a reasonably well-run Faculty Association. Lest I deafen you with the sound of our own back patting, it should be pointed out that most of this is due to those who have served the Association in the past. To paraphrase, we see because we are on the shoulders of giants.

Nevertheless, the Forum has identified a number of changes that could lead to better service for our members. In the coming months, the Executive and Professional Officer will be considering these changes.

There were a number of sessions which I found interesting, including Association renewal, governance, grievance handling and protecting the integrity of academic work. Leaving comment on the last for a subsequent newsletter, the first three can be combined to develop thoughts on the issue of mandatory retirement. Though not discussed formally, it was the topic of a few informal discussions during the weekend.

Under New Brunswick law, age discrimination in the work place is contrary to human rights legislation. Under the grievance-handling session, it was reiterated that human rights legislation is part of our collective agreement through a principle referred to as carriage. However, this right has yet to be enforced in this province; and with our employer. What will it take to operationalize this "right"? Barring the agreement of the employer, only the commitment of MAFA (governance) and the support of our members (renewal) on this issue will bring it to its inevitable conclusion more quickly.

Paul Berry

CAUT/MAFA COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WORKSHOP

During midterm break, Neil Tudiver of CAUT will run the CAUT Collective Bargaining Workshop here at Mount Allison.

This two-day workshop will take place on Wednesday and Thursday, February 21st and 22nd in Centennial Hall, and lunch will be provided. This is a great chance to get training in collective bargaining and negotiation generally, from an acknowledged expert who provides collective bargaining advice to academic staff associations all over Canada. No prior experience is necessary!

Even if you never go to the negotiating table, you are certain to get something out of this session. To register, contact Geoff at 364-2289 or email mafa@mta.ca.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS GEORGE J. DE BENEDETTI BOOK PRIZE

Do you know any students who are excelling in social activism, advocacy work, or student, university-wide and/or broader community issues?

If so, why not nominate them for the George J. de Benedetti Book prize, awarded annually to a student who best embodies these commitments. The prize, which includes a book and \$200 cash prize, is given in recognition of the many years of outstanding service to the Mount Allison Faculty Association, Mount Allison University, and Canadian university academic staff by George J. De Benedetti, retired professor of Economics (1968-2000).

Nominations must arrive in the MAFA office by February 28th, 2007, and the prize will be awarded at the MAFA Annual General Meeting in April.

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS!

MAFA FILES A GRIEVANCE

It may require an Arbitrator's decision

MAFA filed a union grievance with the Employer in mid-December. Union-initiated grievances are often concerned with general contract violations, rather than harm done to an individual.

It involves a matter of policy, specifically the Employer's blanket decision that no tenure-track appointments will be made for the 2007-08 contract year despite the fact that there are only a small number of permanent openings.

Article 16.09 (and Article 19.09 in the case of Librarians) requires that permanent slots be filled with probationary rather than term appointments. MAFA is concerned that the current strategic planning process does not justify delaying making tenure-track appointments *in all cases*. The Employer disagrees.

We are concerned that making tenure-track appointments could be delayed past next year if we allow the Employer's current rationale to go unchallenged. We are sure that everyone recognizes that the academic freedom and job security afforded by tenure-track appointments is the corner stone of our professional practice as academic staff.

We have met with the Employer as provided for in Article 37 and have not been able to settle this matter. Interpretation of Art. 16.09 has been subject of disagreement for almost twenty years, and it was grieved numerous times in the 1990s. Consequently, at its meeting of January 18th, your Executive voted unanimously to request that the New Brunswick Minister of Labour appoint a single arbitrator under the provisions for Expedited Arbitration. This procedure is not the norm, but is used in cases where one of the parties seeks a timely resolution, in order, in this case, that tenure-track appointments could still be advertised and made.

This is our first arbitration since the Ian Newbould era (1991-2001). It is our hope that we can still settle this with the Employer before the arbitration takes place.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REPORT

MAFA's Collective Bargaining committee is now meeting weekly in preparation for negotiating a new collective agreement.

The current collective agreements, covering all full-time and part-time academic staff, expire on June 30th, 2007.

The committee is led by Bill Lundell (Collective Bargaining Officer, History), and includes Paul Berry (Commerce), Wendy Burnett (MLL), Jeff Lilburn (Library), Terry Craig (English), Erin Steuter (Sociology), and Jennifer Tomes (Psychology).

Feel free to contact any member of the committee with your thoughts on the upcoming round of negotiations.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

February 21

Deadline for those employees granted a Sabbatical leave to confirm in writing intent to take the leave or postpone it for one academic year (Article 23.21).

March 1

The Vice-President (Academic and Research) will write to employees regarding eligibility and criteria for Sabbatical Leaves and Librarian's Leaves - Article 23.07 also see Article 23.13

March 31

Elections to the Sabbatical Leaves Committee will be completed - Article 23.02(g)

Several recent faculty contract settlements noted by the CAUT Defence Fund

At its fall 2006 Trustees' Meeting the CAUT Defence Fund approved strike support payments to a record four academic staff unions simultaneously.

Happily, settlements have been reached at Brock, Carleton, Nipissing and St. Mary's. In the first two cases, the settlements were reached within hours of a strike deadline and several Defence Fund Trustees were about to depart home to join their colleagues on the line as 'flying pickets'.

Academic staff at these universities showed unwavering resolve in pursuing a fair settlement. They backed their negotiating teams with strike votes of over 90%. For faculty protected by the Defence Fund the economic threat of a pay interruption is minimized by knowledge that an \$18 million Defence Fund guarantees strike pay of at least \$75 per day (tax-free).

Just for comparison, the Defence Fund considerably exceeds the annual academic salary budget at Mount Allison.

Our colleagues at two Nova Scotia universities are still without settlements and we wish them speedy success.

MAFA's Status of Women Committee Defines its Priorities