

# MAFA NEWSLETTER

## Mount Allison Faculty Association

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are now enjoying yet another term marked by relative quiet in the relations between the Employer and the Association. When the Employer is prepared to follow the provisions of the Collective Agreement, it becomes possible to have productive conversations about policies and procedures, and academic governance, without the distraction of a continual buzzing of a swarm of grievances. The Association applauds this willingness of the administration to keep its promises and we believe there is some reason to optimistically hope that this period of improved relations will continue.

In the distance, however, are the sounds of approaching budget development squalls. On behalf of the Association, I would like to raise a question for your thoughtful consideration. In these days of budget restraint when we are all expected to focus on doing more with less, this pressing question arises for the PSE sector: what is the most effective way to trim administrative costs which comprise the fastest growing component of expenditure for many universities?

You will read elsewhere in this newsletter about recent events and workshops attended by members of the Association and the current state of the few remaining grievances. I hope you have a productive and interesting Winter Semester.

Stephen Law  
President of the Mount Allison Faculty Association

### GRIEVANCE REPORT

The grievance process continues to be a fascinating challenge, as I believe it is in every university in Canada. (Please see my report from the CAUT Grievance Workshop in Ottawa, where I had the chance to share

experiences with grievance officers from across the country.) Here at Mount Allison we seem to be regularly re-visiting the same issues, making our task feel pretty Sisyphean. But it does remain fascinating!

The grievance regarding the Ron Joyce Centre for Business Studies is still not settled. (Grievance re: hiring a faculty member into a "Dean-like position" filed in 2009 and subsequent Union grievance filed in Sept. 2010; arbitration held in Dec. 2010.) After this round of collective bargaining, MAFA made a formal request that the arbitrator issue a decision on this issue.

Just in the last few weeks the arbitrator, Bruce Outhouse, has been in touch requesting clarification of the legal arguments for the case. MAFA's lawyer will re-submit his arguments in written form, in the hopes of reaching a decision soon.



In October 2011 MAFA filed a Union grievance regarding late evaluations. Despite written assurance from the Employer that this situation would be rectified immediately,

we were concerned to discover that in January, some members had still not received evaluations for 2010-11. MAFA re-contacted the Vice President in an effort to ensure that this matter be resolved, and we will remain watchful to ensure that evaluations for 2011-12 are completed on time.

December 2011 saw an individual grievance filed regarding sabbatical leaves. The grievance went to Step 2 but was denied by the Employer. With reluctance, MAFA has decided not to pursue the case to arbitration, but again we

will be watching to ensure that next year this process runs smoothly and according to the Collective Agreement.

Finally, arbitration hearings continue during February, postponed since September 2011, for the grievance from April 2011 regarding hiring in an academic department. Some interviews will be conducted via Skype.

Helen Pridmore  
Grievance Officer



### REPORT FROM CAUT FORUM ON ABORIGINAL ISSUES

Quick, how many CAUT members are there in Canada? Now how many of those are of aboriginal descent? The answer to the first is about 66,000, and, if you include elders on staff at some institutions, the best guess at the second is some 400. This half of a percent of the CAUT has met on two previous occasions to discuss issues pertaining to aboriginal faculty and staff. In their third meeting, in Vancouver during November break, I represented MAFA (I am a registered Saskatchewan Métis).

This forum was dramatically different from a regular academic conference, with traditional welcoming ceremonies, traditional introductions of all members, information disseminated through talking circles, and elders' messages. Workshop circles included work/life balance, elders in universities, working conditions for aboriginal academics, and racial issues in the classroom. The circles were filled with roars of laughter, but just as commonly tears of frustration and pain. The emotional safety of the circles allowed the airing of problems, many

of which were tied to conflicts between Western academic responsibilities and ingrained traditional approaches to teaching and learning, and strong connections to community, experienced by aboriginal scholars. I was able to relate to these issues in ways I didn't even expect. An added highlight for me was meeting and spending time with the other four aboriginal members in Atlantic Canada.

In their representation of this segment of society, Atlantic Canadian universities lag far behind the already dismal representation in the rest of Canada. Aboriginal peoples have faced a variety of obstacles to entering and excelling in academia, and after this forum it is clear to me that significant obstacles remain. On the long plane ride home, I had a lot of time to think about what Mount Allison is, and is decidedly not, doing right in this regard. I hope to play a role in addressing the latter.

Colin Laroque

### GRIEVANCE OFFICER ATTENDS CAUT WORKSHOP

I attended the CAUT Senior Grievance Officers' Workshop in Ottawa December 9-11, 2011. The main theme of the workshop was "Mobilizing Members Through Grievances". There was excellent attendance, with representation from faculty associations across the country. Through a series of case studies, presentations and interactive workshops, conference participants explored ways in which to make the grievance process play an active role in the ongoing goals of a members' association.

Some of the issues covered in the weekend sessions included:

- protecting the collective agreement through grievances
- confidentiality in the grievance process
- helping members to stay informed of the collective agreement, how it works, and how they can grieve appropriately via the agreement

Breakout groups regularly interspersed throughout the schedule allowed for members to interact and share ideas. We discussed ways in which we can use grievances to increase our associations' strengths and help members to feel more involved and knowledgeable about how our collective agreements work. Members need to know that they themselves are the power of any association, and so they must be informed and stay involved so as to keep any association alive. It's important for members to keep challenging the language in our collective agreements so that we come to full understanding of it, and so that violations are not "slipped in" by the Employer and tacitly allowed.

And this is where grievances come in. Grievances have both a public and a private face, as they challenge individual

problems but also represent the entire association in keeping the administration to task.

Breakout groups also shared challenges faced by our individual associations. It is interesting to note that in many larger universities across Canada, there are major problems with issues such as harassment in the workplace, denial of tenure and/or promotion, and other problems that we do not face so often at Mount Allison. However, there are still many problems that we share with associations across Canada.

As a new Grievance Officer, I found this workshop extremely helpful. I learnt a great deal about the grievance process and its importance to our association. It was also very useful to meet other Grievance Officers, building a network of shared knowledge and expertise. I am grateful to MAFA members for sponsoring my attendance at this workshop.

Helen Pridmore  
MAFA Grievance Officer

also an opportunity to inform me directly whether or not you allow the SAC to distribute any of your old tests through our test bank. If you do not wish to have your tests distributed through the SAC Used Test Bank, please reply to [sacacademic@mta.ca](mailto:sacacademic@mta.ca) with your name and your tests will be removed. Additionally, the intent of the test bank is to eventually have these available online through a Mount Allison secured source, i.e. Moodle. If you have no problem with your test being available to students through the office, but object to your tests being put on Moodle, please reply to [sacacademic@mta.ca](mailto:sacacademic@mta.ca) and we will ensure they are not put online. I will reiterate that this is a service we provide for the benefit of students and we respect the wishes of those faculty that do not wish to have their materials included within the test bank."

**FNBFA REPORT**

The Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations (FNBFA) Executive has issued a call for members to offer to fill positions on the Executive which are currently vacant.

The President, Dennis Desroches, announced before Christmas that he would be leaving the presidency on January 1. As a result, the Vice President, Rick Hudson, is serving as Acting President. The position of At Large representative also is vacant at this time.

At its February 4th meeting in Fredericton, the members of the FNBFA Board will appoint the new President and At Large representative. Rick Hudson has announced that he will offer to serve as President. If Rick gets selected, it will be necessary to find a new Vice President of the Federation.

Other issues to be discussed at the FNBFA Board meeting include government planning on operating grants and performance indicators. There will be discussion of negotiations at the Université de Moncton. The Executive Director will go over results of meetings she has held with senior bureaucrats. There will also be discussion of meetings the President and the Executive Director have held with the other provincial federations. And there will be planning for a "Lobby Day" for the spring.

**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

**MEMBERS CAN REQUEST THEIR EXAMS NOT BE HELD IN THE SAC EXAM FILES**

It may have come as a surprise to learn that Students' Administrative Council (SAC) currently administers a test bank on campus, as the SAC Vice-President himself wrote in a message sent to faculty on November 21.

Faculty members can send copies of their own tests directly to [sacacademic@mta.ca](mailto:sacacademic@mta.ca) if they support this initiative, or opt out of the programme entirely by emailing [sacacademic@mta.ca](mailto:sacacademic@mta.ca) if they wish to exercise some control over the tests made available to students. They can request to have their tests removed from the files as well as ask to visit in person to see the contents for their courses.

Please also note that SAC is considering making this test bank available on Moodle, and faculty members can choose to allow or not to allow their tests to be posted there.

This is the message sent to faculty:

"As the SAC begins increasing promotion of its Used Test Bank, it has come to my attention that many faculty are unaware of this service that the SAC offers to students. The service has been around for at least the past two decades with tests (not exams) originally submitted from the deans and faculty until the last ten years when they have been submitted by students. Students are able to take a photocopy of old tests to use as study preparation material. The intent of including this section in this e-mail is to give faculty the opportunity to submit blank copies of their old tests directly to the SAC at [sac@mta.ca](mailto:sac@mta.ca). This is

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 Monday, March 5th, 2012, and the prize will be awarded at the upcoming MAFA Annual General Meeting.

## REPORT FROM CAUT LIBRARIANS CONFERENCE

With the encouragement of the MAFA Executive, I was able to attend the biennial Librarians Conference sponsored by the Canadian Association of University Teachers, which took place in Ottawa on 28 and 29 October. The theme for this year's conference was "The Aggrieved Librarian: enforcing workplace rights through the collective agreement."

The Librarian's Committee arranged well a packed schedule of interesting and diverse sessions. There were seventy-eight participants from fifty-two universities across Canada, and it was a pleasure to renew some acquaintances with librarian colleagues. I particularly enjoyed sharing discussions and a table for most of the two days with former Mount Allison librarian, Moira Davidson (now at Lakehead University), Betty Jeffrey (University of Prince Edward Island and member of the CAUT Librarian's Committee), Pierre Goguen (Université de Moncton), and Fred Ziegler (University of Alberta).

A CAUT Assistant Executive Director, Michael Piva, gave the first address, presenting an overview of the historical development of the right to grieve, the definition of grievance, and the role of the association in advancing grievances. This was followed by a session discussing five different workplace conflict scenarios and whether they might constitute grievance procedures under the collective agreements. In this context it was pointed out that grievances are carried out with the employer (and not between members), and that provisions of collective agreements usually trump institutional policies.

Mariette Pilon, CAUT's General Counsel, addressed the role of labour boards, arbitration tribunals, and the association's Duty of Fair Representation of its members. Doug Vaisey (Saint Mary's University) considered if, and why, academic librarians are reluctant to exercise their right to grieve. It was acknowledged that some librarian concerns are not so important to faculty associations, and he cautioned that grievance arbitration procedures not be undermined where institutions have policies of "civil respect" in place. Also, a definition of 'collegiality' again surfaced.

After considering a sample grievance article from a

collective agreement, Michael Piva outlined the role of the grievance officer and the responsibility to the griever. Delegates then broke into pairs in workshop role-playing of griever and grievance officer.

To open the second day Peter Simpson, a CAUT Assistant Executive Director, noted that it is the employer's burden to provide a safe and healthy workplace, and that a distressful workplace results in decreased productivity, health issues, and other concerns. Member-to-member disputes must be couched in the need for the employer to manage workplace issues. There followed another workshop role play where delegates were separated into groups of four consisting of individuals acting as either the griever, the grievance officer, the library head, or the human resources officer. Griever and grievance officer met to reconsider the arguments, while library head and human resources officer considered the facts of the situation as presented to them. The two sides then met with each other to attempt to arrive at a negotiated settlement. We reconvened to discuss settlements and matters arising from such bargaining, as well as strategies and skills to conclude successful agreements. Peter Simpson reviewed the gains and losses after a settlement is reached. Unsettled grievances have to be resolved by arbitration, a process reviewed by Mariette Pilon. Concluding remarks by Francesca Holyoke (Librarians Committee Chair) referred to "the skills learned to defend libraries, librarians, and librarianship."

Peter Higham

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, 2011-12

**Annual General Meeting**, Thursday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012,  
3:30 pm, Flemington Auditorium (Rm 116)

**Retiring Members' Party**, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 4:30 pm,  
University Club

## MAFA 2011-2012 EXECUTIVE

Stephen Law - President (Economics)

David Thomas - Vice-President (Politics and Inter-national Relations)

Richard Hudson - Past President (Commerce)

Leah Garnett - Collective Bargaining (Fine Arts)

Helen Pridmore - Grievance (Music)

Lori Ann Roness - Part-time/Unit 2 (Geography and Environment)

Robert Rosebrugh - Treasurer (Math and CS)

Renata Schellenberg - Membership (Modern Languages and Literatures)