

# MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association

Room G2, Centennial Hall Tel: 364-2289

E-mail: [mafa@mta.ca](mailto:mafa@mta.ca)

Web Site: [www.mafa.ca](http://www.mafa.ca)

January 2016

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we make the transition from one term to another our attention has shifted from marking papers and exams to preparing for winter-term courses. For MAFA, the chief work this past term was to lay the foundation for bargaining next year by starting consultations about your priorities for negotiations. Discussion of your goals and priorities will continue this term. For more information, please see the collective bargaining report in this newsletter.

Following the receipt of the arbitrator's decision in October, MAFA representatives met with the employer to discuss the decision. Our discussions revealed that we have very different interpretations of the meaning of the arbitration decision. In December both parties wrote to the arbitrator with questions designed to resolve the ambiguities and help us implement the decision. We have now received the arbitrator's answers to these questions, available on [member.mafa.ca](http://member.mafa.ca).

This year I have participated in several CAUT events, including two national council meetings and a forum for association presidents. Challenges to academic freedom, difficulties in negotiations, administrations' failure to follow negotiated collective agreement language, erosion of collegial governance, and austerity politics are experienced by our colleagues across the country. At each meeting I am reminded of the value of our local associations and the remarkable work done at the CAUT office in Ottawa. Shared knowledge, mutual support, and the evidence that our efforts strengthen our universities is a powerful combination that

gives us tremendous strength.

This fall I have learned about the ways our collective agreement works for all MAFA's members and about the many ways difficulties can arise in our workplace. If you have any questions about your rights and responsibilities under the agreement, please contact me, Geoff Martin, or any member of the Executive. We are here to help.

Andrew Irwin

Mathematics & Computer Science

## MAFA MEMBERS VOTE AGAINST THE REAPPOINTMENT OF THE PROVOST

In order to provide some direction to MAFA's representative in the provost reappointment process, the Executive decided to hold a vote via secret ballot on January 8-12.

The yes/no question was as follows: "Do you support the reappointment of the current Provost?"

The results were as follows:

Yes: 10

No: 76

Total: 86

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REPORT

Thank you to the many people who have responded to the Collective Bargaining survey. Your feedback

will help the committee to identify possible priorities for the upcoming round of contract negotiations. As was indicated in the preface of the survey, these questions are only a first step toward this goal, and will be followed up by a series of meetings with the membership that are focused on topics coming out of the results of the survey.

The survey is now closed, and we are pleased to report that we received a hundred and one responses. It is the committee's hope that the survey will be able to serve as a clear guide to forming the topics for the group meetings, and that the meetings in turn, will provide a chance for more in-depth discussion with members. Although we have tried to be as comprehensive as possible, it is unlikely that we have identified every issue that is of importance to our members, and we therefore hope that you will take the opportunity to attend the meetings, or to contact the Collective Bargaining Officer (cdown@mta.ca) with ideas and concerns about this process.

We presented the results of the survey, in broad strokes, at the MAFA general meeting on Friday, December 11. The first topic-based meeting, on Leave Replacements happened on Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, from 12:30 to 1:30 pm, with another timeslot for the same topic on Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, from 12:30 to 1:30 pm. More meetings will be scheduled in the next few weeks -- the next meeting is January 28 -- please see the "Coming Event" column later in this newsletter for details.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Collective Bargaining Committee (Rob Cupido, Suzie Currie, Steve Law, and Elizabeth Millar) for their hard work in preparing the survey.

Chris Down  
Fine Arts

**GRIEVANCE REPORT**

The only new grievances since the last newsletter are #2015-10 and #2015-11, the first regarding improper handling of sabbatical leave applications by the Employer and the second concerning the Employer's failure to consult and report to Senate

on the requests from academic units for hiring and plans for hiring for the coming year under Article 16.05 of the Collective Agreement.

Several grievances continue to be in progress, and two are moving towards arbitration.

With bargaining "season" around the corner, I think that this is an appropriate time to engage in a brief review of all grievances mentioned in the newsletters in the last three years, along with a brief categorization, in order to assist us in seeing where the points of friction are, and to help plan for negotiations.

Looking through this data for calendar years 2013-2015 we see that the same issues often come up:

<i>Matter</i>	<i>Number of grievances</i>
Discipline	3
Tenure & promotions	5
Hiring	10
Sabbaticals	4
Evaluation	6
Other	12

Evaluation, discipline, hiring and tenure and promotions together constitute 24 of the 40 listed grievances, which helps to illustrate that overall, issues of job security are a primary mover of grievances and a major area of Employer violations of the Collective Agreement. The assault on members via negative evaluations on either teaching or research has been particularly egregious, and we have two such cases currently heading to arbitration. The Union can help you, but only if we know that you've been targeted. You may feel embarrassed or alone, but before you accept a negative evaluation at least talk with us. If you don't challenge it, it may be used negatively against you at a later time.

The overall number of grievances is down over the last year – 11 in 2015 versus 22 in 2014 – though still an increase from 7 in 2013.

I believe that keeping such records on an ongoing basis is useful, especially as it will assist the bargaining team with negotiating priorities. It is thus something which I intend to update on a real-time basis from now on.

I unfortunately missed the December General Meeting, as it conflicted with the CAUT Senior Grievance Officers' Workshop in Ottawa. This workshop, however, was a chance to speak with other grievance officers and compare notes, and my very strong conclusion is that MAFA members are faced with a relentless assault on job security via the Evaluation process, unparalleled in other universities across the country.

Louis Béliveau  
Commerce (Honorary)



**IN SURVEY RESULTS, HEADS POINT OUT THE DIFFICULTIES IN RELYING ON PART-TIME, STIPENDIARY FACULTY**

As members will know, over the last couple of years, and particularly starting this year, the Employer has decided that sabbaticals and other leaves can be replaced using part-time stipends rather than full-time sessionals, term appointees or full-time instructors.

In October MAFA surveyed twenty-two of our heads and program directors on their experiences in trying to hire individuals to teach term courses on a stipendiary basis. We are pleased that all the heads and program directors responded to the survey.

This was a qualitative survey and the results were interesting. The themes that came out of the survey are presented below from the most to least common. More than one theme was often found within a single response.

The most common theme, raised by 15 respondents, was that the challenges of hiring part-time faculty means that often full-time members must adjust their teaching duties in order to list or advertise a course that someone will apply to teach on a part-time basis. This can disrupt teaching rotations and new 'preps' can undermine research and creative activity.

The second most common theme, raised by 10 respondents, is that they attribute their success in filling courses by recognizing that only certain offerings can be filled via stipend. Whereas a full-time sessional or term contract might attract a pool of candidates with broad skills, for a majority of departments/programs, relying on stipends means that certain courses can't be offered.

Two themes are tied for third place, each with 7 respondents. In one case, respondents said "there is someone local or nearby" who is willing to teach on stipend. Almost all of these respondents worry about what will happen if the person decides not to teach anymore at the part-time rate. In another case, 7 respondents said that they only list or advertise a course if they already know that one good candidate will apply. They have come to the conclusion that it is a wasted effort to advertise except under these circumstances.

Two themes were also tied for fourth place, with 4 respondents. That number said that they experienced a "failed search" for a stipendiary hiring in the last year or two. The same number said that stipendiary staff are almost impossible to hire

in their discipline so they don't even want to try, even with the knowledge that travel expenses will be provided for those who live beyond 50 km from Sackville.

Finally, on the bright side, there were three units, in the Faculty of Arts, which reported that they have no difficulty finding stipendiary staff in most courses in their disciplines. They say this reflects the large number of qualified people in these fields and the relatively low number of full-time openings.

To sum up, in the large majority of cases heads and program directors are concerned about their ability to continue to offer their programs given the challenges to attracting qualified, part-time academic staff in Sackville.

Geoff Martin  
Professional Officer

**REPORT ON FNBFA'S WORKSHOP ON  
MENTAL HEALTH IN THE UNIVERSITY  
WORK PLACE**

This day-long workshop held on October 30<sup>th</sup>, was presented by Laura Lozanski, CAUT Health and Safety Officer and Pink Larkin lawyers. Attendees included faculty and librarians from U. de Moncton, STU, UNB, and MTA.

Mental health is defined by the World Health Organization as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community." A psychologically safe workplace promotes workers' well-being and works to reduce harm.

Laura Lozanski, CAUT Health and Safety Officer, noted that stress leave rates have been "skyrocketing" in recent years, across all professions. Mental health is included in the N.B. Occupational Health & Safety Act, under the "general duty clause" 9.1(a) which requires employers to take every reasonable precaution to ensure the health and safety of their employees. The

Act requires employers to establish a written health and safety program, which should include mental health issues. Joint Health & Safety Committees (JHSC), also required under the Act, play an important role in identifying workplace hazards and recommending corrective action to the employer.

Building inspections need to include not just identifying physical safety hazards, but also talking to employees to find out if they are experiencing any triggers for mental health issues. (Triggers can include noise, poor indoor air quality, unreasonable workload, job insecurity, harassment, etc.) The aim is to diagnose the workplace, not the workers, and to prevent mental health problems from occurring. The employer cannot refuse to deal with hazards identified without good reason. Employees also have a responsibility for their own and their colleagues' health and safety, and need to communicate concerns to the employer, the JHSC, and the union.

Pink Larkin lawyers Joël Michaud, David Mombourquette, Brenda Comeau, and Dominic Caron noted an increase in legal cases involving mental illness (depression, anxiety, addictions, etc.). The Human Rights Act and our own collective agreement require the employer to treat employees with mental disabilities fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner. The employer is not allowed to ask for a specific diagnosis, but has a duty to accommodate based on a doctor's prognosis. Accommodation should involve working with the union and the employee. If the employer refuses to accommodate, or the accommodation is discriminatory, a grievance should be filed. A new trend noted was that employers are more easily granting leaves, but are more stringent about requiring proof of fitness to return to work. All documents presented will be posted on the FNBFA website.

Anita Cannon  
Ralph Pickard Bell Library

**PART-TIME MEMBERS AWARDED  
RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY  
STIPENDS**

MAFA would like to advise its members that Michael Laurence (Politics and International Relations), Toni Roberts (Sociology), and Rory Lucyshyn-Wright (Math and CS) have been awarded the 2015-16 Mount Allison Part-Time Research and Creativity Stipends.

Laurence won the award for a project entitled “Neuroscience of Democratic Citizenship,” while Roberts’ project was entitled “Explorations of trans and medical discourses of sex and gender achievement: A Content Analysis.” Lucyshyn-Wright received his award for a project entitled “Applications of category in geometry and functional analysis.”

The stipend, valued at \$6164, is salary support for research and creative activity. Under Article 29.02 of the part-time collective agreement, applications submitted by part-time members are considered by the Senate Research and Creative Activity Committee. Applications are due August 31<sup>st</sup> during each annual competition.

“I am very pleased that we have negotiated these awards,” says MAFA President Andrew Irwin. “It really does help these members undertake the full range of activities that we expect in academia.”

**MAFA PARTICIPATION IN THE NB  
PROSPERITY NOT AUSTERITY  
COALITION**

By Geoff Martin  
Professional Officer

This past June a number of trade union leaders and social activists gathered in Moncton to form a new organization in New Brunswick called the NB Prosperity Not Austerity Coalition. Along with the other members of the FNBFA, the MAFA Executive agreed to join the coalition and I agreed to participate in the six-person steering committee.

This bilingual coalition is made up of over 30 groups representing tens of thousands of New Brunswickers, particularly students, social activists, seniors, artists, social service providers, professors, nurses and others in public and private-sector unions.

The purpose of the coalition is to question what seems to be an unthinking acceptance of the need for austerity in the form of yet more cuts to the services that governments provide and to those who provide them. So far the coalition has held one major organizational meeting and we now have a Steering Committee, composed of Patrick Colford (NB Federation of Labour), Odette Robichaud (CUPE NB), Johanne Perron (NB Coalition for Pay Equity), Pauline Richard (Common Front for Social Justice), Jean Sauvageau (Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations), and me.

So far members of the steering committee have met with Finance Minister Roger Melanson and the leaders of the three major opposition parties, the Greens, Progressive Conservatives and New Democrats. We also have a presence on Twitter (@NBProsperite) and Facebook (NB Prosperity Not Austerity/Prosperité Non Austérité N-B). We have begun to write for the provincial newspapers and other media outlets to make their readerships aware of our arguments and goals.

We believe that the next several months will be crucial. The Gallant government is preparing the provincial population for an austerity budget, announced for February 2, despite the voters’ repudiation of austerity in the recent federal election. They have recently released their Strategic Program Review document outlining possible areas for further cuts and sources of new revenues. Things are not looking promising for the university sector at this time.

The coalition’s major goal over the next one to two months is to do research on the alternatives to austerity and to work with Coalition members to prepare them to question and oppose austerity, particularly in the post-budget public period. Then once the budget comes down activists from our member organizations will be in a stronger position to hold local meetings and provide leadership in

anticipation of the implementation of austerity measures announced in the budget. We will keep you updated as things unfold.

## 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 representatives, Fiona Black and Chris Down (MAFA), Karen Grant and Ron Sutherland (Employer), and Geoff Martin (MAFA Professional Officer, secretary), have met three times since our last report. MAFA representatives have sought clarifications regarding the following: staffing (e.g., McCain fellowships, failed sabbatical replacement searches); employee benefits (e.g. tuition rebate); facilities (e.g., repairs to Hart Hall); and labour relations (e.g., fairness in evaluation processes, early retirement). MAFA has also repeatedly sought information on the details of the strategic planning process around faculty re-organization, appointment of deans, etc. None has been forthcoming at this time, but the Union continues to urge—somewhat fruitlessly, it appears—the importance of consultation and transparency in this process. The Employer has brought concerns about effective correspondence between itself and MAFA to the table for discussion, as well as a general request that MAFA use informal channels for information in addition to Joint Liaison meetings.

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.

Fiona Black  
Religious Studies

## COMING EVENT

Please mark this date on your calendar.

You are cordially invited to come to a bargaining unit members' meeting to discuss "pensions and salaries" on **Thursday, January 28th from 11:45 am to 12:45 pm at the University Club**. This will be held on the large room on the right side of the building. MAFA will provide coffee/tea/dessert and those in attendance will also be able to order off that day's menu.

## 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)**