

MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association

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March 2023

GENERAL MEETING REMINDER

Please plan to attend MAFA's Annual General Meeting at 2 pm on Friday, April 14th on Teams. Between now and the meeting you will receive further information and documents will be on the Teams MAFA channel. Our Retiring Members' Party will also be held the same day, at 4:30 pm at the University Club.

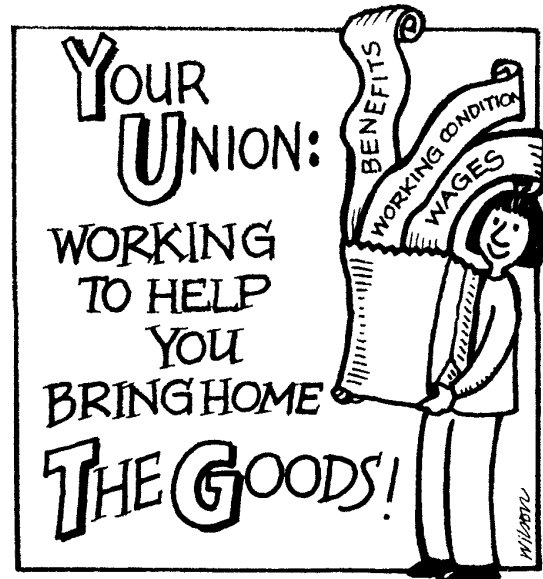
Hope to see you then!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As most readers will know, the UPEI faculty association went on strike last week (<https://www.upeifa.ca/2023/03/20/strike-update-2/>). The outcome of their efforts will help to establish the context for MAFA's negotiations in 2024-25. As is usual, MAFA has made a monetary donation to their strike fund, but individual members can also offer important support by joining one of the driving pickets organized by the CAUT Defence Fund. Watch for email announcements.

The breakdown in negotiations at UPEI follows a difficult year for labour negotiations at universities in the Atlantic region, where inflation has surpassed the national average. In Nova Scotia in 2022 all settlements were achieved after strike action (CAUT Facts and Figures, Jan. 2023, pp. 3 and 7). Acadia University Faculty Association (AUFA) were on strike for four weeks in February 2022 before it agreed to submit outstanding issues to interest arbitration. Their final gains included stronger

language on academic freedom, a clear path for converting part-time appointments to full-time, and a 6 percent increase in salaries over the three years of the contract. Faculty and librarians at the Université de Sainte-Anne made history with a seven-week strike—March 3-April 24, 2022—the longest at a university in Atlantic Canada, before the administration agreed to submit to arbitration. They were awarded a salary increase of 8% over three years.



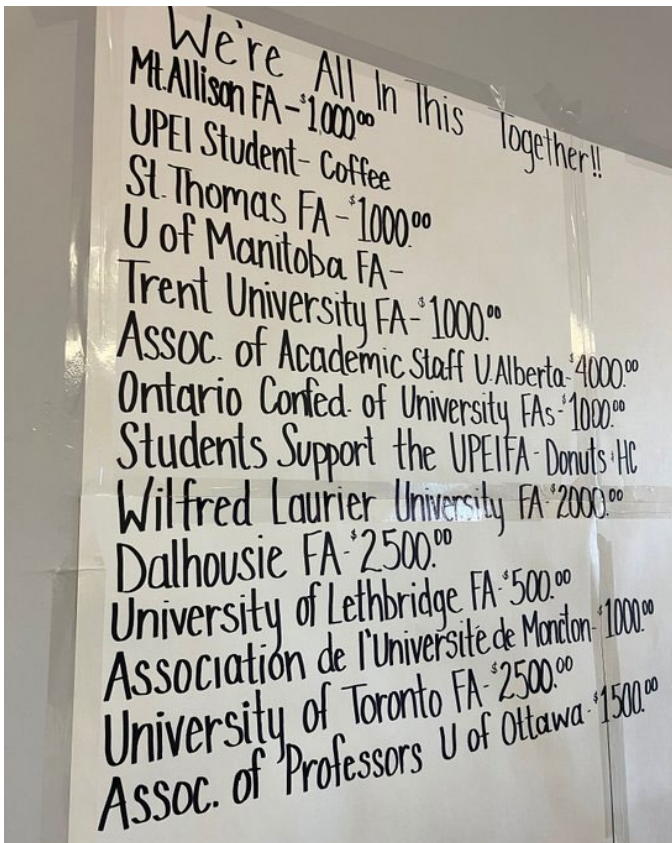
In 2023 we have already seen faculty strikes at University of Cape Breton (Jan. 27-Feb. 6) and Memorial University (Jan. 30-Feb. 13). At CBU major issues were salary, the University's failure to respect the collective agreement, and the quality of education for international students (CBU faculty on strike for higher wages | CTV News). The settlement included a salary increase of 8.9% over three years.

GRIEVANCE REPORT

At Memorial, where working conditions for contract workers and the issue of collegial governance were major issues, significant gains were made, including a salary increase of 12 percent over 4 years (MUN's faculty association ratifies new agreement | CBC News). The Dalhousie Faculty Association achieved their settlement in conciliation, with a salary increase of 8% over three years (<https://www.caut.ca/latest/2023/01/dalhousie-faculty-association-ratifies-new-collective-agreement>).

The clear lesson for MAFA is that significant improvements to the collective agreement are possible in spite of adverse economic conditions but negotiating them in 2024-25 will require hard work and collective resolve.

Karen Bamford
President



MAFA is in a good place on the UPEI strike donor's list – quick off the mark and at the top

It has been a slightly calmer period on the grievance desk during the winter months; there have been many successful resolutions of issues. Although there remain divergent perspectives between the employer and MAFA over what constitutes a new correspondence course (triggering a start-up payment), six grievances were settled favorably for our members. Please be in touch with Geoff Martin early on in the process as you receive your contracts for the spring and summer to allow everyone to troubleshoot potential issues. It becomes more difficult to deal with differences of opinion after a contract has been signed.

Summary

MAFA has worked on 8 grievances since the December 2022 members meeting:

1 individual grievance has been moved to arbitration.
5 individual grievances were settled after being moved to arbitration.

1 individual grievance was settled at step 1 (on same issue as above).

1 individual grievance was settled at step 1.

Detail

1) Change to work duties without consultation (FT Articles 4 and 12); employer mandating 3 days per week on-campus attendance for member to accomplish technologically mediated work. One individual grievance (2022-11) was filed in October 2022. After being denied at step 2, this grievance was moved to arbitration set for August 22, 2023 with Michel Doucet presiding (single-arbitrator hearing).

2) Employer refusal to pay start-up payments for new correspondence courses (PT Articles 4, 30, and 32). Six individual grievances (2022-02, -03, -04, -05, -06, and -10) were filed in June and July 2022. MAFA settled one grievance (2022-04) at step 1. MAFA moved the remaining five grievances to arbitration, but recently settled all of them.

3) Employer refusal to recognize First Right of Appointment (FRA; PT Articles 4 and 17). One individual grievance (2022-12) was filed in December 2022. MAFA settled the grievance at step 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Pearce
MAFA Grievance Officer

JOINT LIAISON REPORT

December 2022-March 2023

The Music Conservatory has been treated with acoustic panels and we asked about further treatments to the lobby and other public places and were told there no plans to do so due to their limited exposure to high sound levels. We asked about the Hearing Conservation Policy implementation and were told that once a new Health and Safety Officer is hired, they will review. We note that a long-serving Mount Allison support-staff employee has just been hired for this position.

We had a report of high levels of carbon dioxide in one room from a member, which is generally an indicator for lack of turnover of air volume through ventilation. The administration tested this room and says they found acceptable levels.

We continue to ask about training on the new self-service platform. Some limited training has begun.

HR (ahem, People and Culture) has been directing some of our members to Manulife (for management of short-term sick leave). We are not clear why this is the case for some and not others and have asked for clarification. We are also monitoring the implementation of this new program.

Issues with course timetabling have been noted and we have asked about it. We are told that efforts to correct any problems are being put into practice.

We have asked about equity objectives and reports, specifically the annual report for Senate required by full-time clauses 16.05 and 19.05. We are told a report is forthcoming. This has been an oversight for some time by the Employer in providing the report.

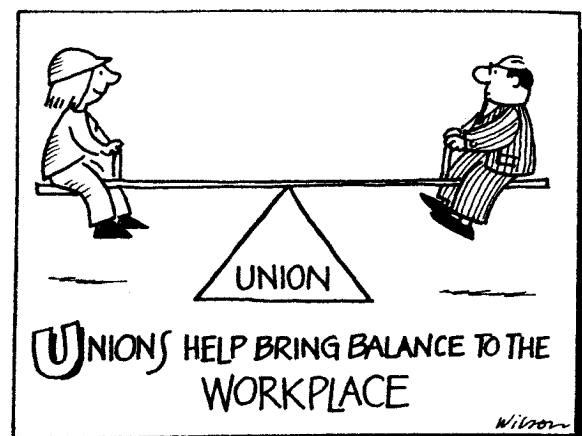
We have asked for the email contact information for

new members as they join to facilitate communication. We have been told that a few *de facto* policies are barriers. We were told they are working on correcting this.

A potentially racist action was taken by a student in a course context and we asked the Employer about how to protect our members, other than the Student Code of Conduct. It is a complicated matter but the member believes the employer responded adequately. That said, it is important to consider how to respond to such actions in future.

It was noted that we need more Equity Panel members. Please feel free to volunteer!

We have asked for an increase to the mileage and per diem meal rates. We have been told that this is being considered but have not had any increase confirmed.



Final payment of part-time members for correspondence teaching during spring/summer was discussed due to a delay last summer. We suggested a midterm payment. It was suggested the new Director of Distance Learning would ensure this delay is avoided in the future.

It was noted that the limits of access to student transcripts would be a barrier and problems for faculty. However, they are essentially going forward nonetheless. Pending final confirmation, faculty will need to make requests to access student transcripts once the new system is in place.

Toni Roberts and Geordie Miller

REPORT ON THE CAUT EQUITY CONFERENCE

On February 10th, 2023, two MAFA members, Emily Austen and San Patten, participated in the online events of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Conference called Activism for Equity. The first day of the conference generated a strong sense of solidarity and inspiration, with an opening panel of three leaders on Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, Accessibility (EDIA) issues within academic staff associations who shared lessons and successes. We also participated in breakout sessions on issues of access and accommodation, and on anti-racism; a Q&A session on equity issues in relation to human rights law in Canada; and a second set of breakout sessions on communicating equity and on engaging and mobilizing academic staff for equity. These discussions highlighted progressive shifts in organizational infrastructure, stable funding, and direct recourse through dispute resolution and contract negotiation mechanisms.

San and Emily found it inspiring to hear about action being taken on other campuses, and feel energized about advancing EDIA issues at Mount Allison. A key message was that EDIA action must be grounded in a commitment to collective liberation for everyone, rather than wanting to “help” the oppressed. Rather than tinkering with existing policies and rules, structural change at institutional levels are the only way to ensure equitable opportunity for success for racialized, Indigenous, disabled, queer, and other underrepresented members in a re-envisioned environment.

A second central concept was that ideas and actions can't only be led by those already in the “in-group” of institutions, i.e., faculty members and administrative leaders who are already succeeding within these institutional structures. True progress on EDIA must start with building relationships, engaging and consulting with, and listening to the people who aren't thriving here yet, those in our community who we hope will play a more prominent role in academia within the next 10-15 years. One step could be hiring advisors who can review policies and processes (including the faculty Collective

Agreement) through a lens of how these structural documents can better serve academic staff who self-identify as members of underrepresented groups. An important note is that academic staff who identify as part of underrepresented group(s) should not have to bear the burden of “volunteer” labour, but these should be paid roles. It is not only unjust but entirely counterproductive to EDIA goals to hire members of underrepresented groups into positions in which they are unfairly burdened or inadequately supported compared to their colleagues.

We also heard some other ideas from other institutions that may be worth exploring here at MtA: including language within our collective agreement on domestic violence leave; providing facilities on campus for pumping and storing breast milk; identifying and supporting EDIA-focused projects within our institution as research ideas for honours students in various disciplines; holding an annual retreat for academic staff on EDIA themes to share good practices, learning, and frustrations; ensuring that regular reviews of academic units include an EDIA review; organizing safe and non-judgmental spaces for professional development such as “White Fragility Clinics” that explore the role of whiteness in racism; and being mindful of the importance of casual communal space for organic, trust-building conversations and connections among academic staff (a crucial role for spaces such as the University Club).



There was also extensive discussion of ways to expand inclusion and consideration of Indigenous perspectives, and contribute to actions for Truth and Reconciliation. Some academic institutions, for example, have committed to ensuring Indigenous representation on certain committees (e.g., Tenure & Promotion), to build recognition of Indigenous scholarship and incorporate Indigenous perspectives. There has also been introduction of bereavement leave policies that extend beyond one's own immediate family, to better recognize the grief and loss felt by members who are part of communities that face tragically high mortality rates (e.g., due to opioid crisis, suicides). These members need more time to fulfil their roles within their communities: to help family and community to heal, to try to help prevent the next loss, to help themselves heal through participation in cultural ceremony.

In recognition that we are on unceded territory, we can also be more active in building reciprocity and reconciliation, doing what we can to give back for all that we have taken. With respect to employment opportunities across MtA (not only in academic positions), we should develop relationships that would help us create a proactive recruitment strategy for hiring from the local Mi'kmaq community; advertising on our website isn't enough. Finally, we could also expand existing scholarships and bursaries for Indigenous students, especially those from local communities. Again, we'd need to build relationships with the local Mi'kmaq community to learn how best to expand opportunities and supports for Indigenous students.

We would like to thank MAFA for supporting our attendance at this Conference, and we hope that in future years, MAFA representatives will be able to attend in person as there would be even more opportunity for engagement and informal conversation with like-minded colleagues from across Canada.

**PRIX NICOLE-RAYMOND AWARDED FOR
2023**

MAFA's Executive is delighted to announce that Geoff Martin has been awarded this year's Prix Nicole-Raymond Award by the Federation of New

Brunswick Faculty Associations (FNBFA).



The award was established in memory of Professor Nicole Raymond (Université de Moncton), and her contributions to academic life through teaching, research activities and involvement in professional associations. The Federation bestows this Award to a person, group of persons or organization in recognition of a distinguished contribution to the advancement of the labour movement, or to the cause and/or public profile of post-secondary education. Below are extracts from the letter of nomination:

Most of you will know Geoff in his joint roles as MAFA's Professional Officer since 2006 and, since 2018, as its Executive Director as well. However, Geoff has been supporting MAFA since he first arrived at Mount Allison more than thirty years ago on a one-year teaching contract (1991-1992).

Despite his precarious position, he not only joined MAFA when they went on strike that year, but also served on the Communications Committee. He subsequently played a key role in the effort to bring part-time faculty into MAFA, serving on the Part-Time Organizing Committee and the Part-Time Unit Negotiating Team in 2003-2004, and serving on the MAFA Executive, 2004-2006. Since then, Geoff has been a crucial part of each successive round of contract negotiations. He thus has an unparalleled knowledge of the contract and its history that he places at the service of the Association. More than anyone, he embodies MAFA's institutional memory.

Without question, he has become our linchpin.

[. . .]

Members are unanimous in their praise of Geoff's competence and dedication. Toni Roberts (MAFA Collective Bargaining Officer) notes that "Geoff has worked tirelessly to advocate for members, particularly our most vulnerable." [. . .]

Geordie Miller (MAFA Vice President) recalls, "When I was first hired at Mount Allison in 2015, I reached out to a former Mount Allison employee, just to get the lay of the land. Geoff is the first person with whom I was told to get in touch. 'You have to email Geoff Martin.' Geoff was and remains so patient in taking the time to help me understand a given topic, ranging from the practical (grant applications) to the theoretical (employment relations). He embodies solidarity."

As Stephen Law, CAUT Defence Fund Trustee for MAFA, observes, "Geoff Martin has for many decades provided unswerving support to the members of the Mount Allison Faculty Association. In addition to careful attention to the day-to-day operations of our Association, Geoff has been a force in organizing campaigns, in negotiations, and in the labour movement in New Brunswick. He has been active in network-building and outreach. He has engaged in extensive public commentary to increase public understanding of labour issues in the academic sector and beyond. As a former President and Chief Negotiator of the Association I often had the opportunity to be grateful for his tireless efforts and cheerful advice."

The award will be presented to Geoff at the FNBFA Annual General Meeting, May 11, 2023. Previous winners include MAFA members Elmer Tory (1995), Gwendolyn Ebbett (1997), George de Benedetti (2001), Thilo Joerger (2005), Rick Hudson (2012), and Stephen Law (2019).

Congratulations, Geoff!

COMING EVENTS

All MAFA members are encouraged to attend these coming events:

2022

Friday, April 14, 2 pm **MAFA Annual General Membership Meeting** (on Teams)

Friday, April 14, 4:30pm University Club, **Retiring Members' Party**



MAFA 2022-2023 EXECUTIVE

Karen Bamford, President (English)

Geordie Miller, Vice-President (English)

Matthew Betti, Treasurer (Math and CS)

Maritza Fariña, Past President (Modern Languages and Literatures)

Melissa Grey, Part-time Officer (Biology)

Josh Kurek, Membership and Advocacy Officer (Geography and Environment)

San Patten, Equity Officer (Sociology)

Linda Pearse, Grievance Officer (Music)

Toni Roberts, Collective Bargaining (Sociology)

Geoff Martin, Executive Director and Professional Officer