

FA Executive July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2015

President:	Jacqueline Holler
Vice-President:	Erik Jensen
Past President:	Lee Keener
Secretary & Member-at-Large	
SLI representative:	Julie Howard
Treasurer:	Wendy Fellers
Members-at-Large:	
Faculty representatives	Ken Prkachin Stephen Rader Matt Reid
Librarian representative	Eleanor Annis
Term representative	Wendy Fellers
Grievance Officer:	Fiona MacPhail
Executive Director:	Donna Plourde

Newsletter Highlights:

- *President's Message*
- *Constitution Review*
- *CUFA-BC:
Unionization of Professors
Engaging the New Government*
- *Teaching Award Recipient:
Dr. Catherine Nolin*



Fall 2013 Annual General Meeting

Friday, October 25, 2013

12:00 noon – 1:30 pm

Bentley Centre

CAUT Fair Employment Week: Contract Academic Staff Reception

Friday, October 25, 2013

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

FA Lounge

Certification Information Session

November 22, 2013

First, the negotiation of our 2012–2014 collective agreement, and the road to arbitration that began with the breakdown of negotiations in November 2012, are finally coming to an end. Your negotiating team spent a great deal of time preparing for mediation in June; when it failed, we dedicated ourselves to preparing for arbitration. After several months of sustained labour, we produced a substantive statement of and argument for our position. That brief and the Employer's were exchanged on Friday 18 October. You can now read both briefs on the UNBC-FA website (<http://unbcfa.ca/category/faculty-negotiations/>). And as you know, on Monday and Tuesday, 28–29 October, the team will be in arbitration hearings before Vince Ready. We are confident that our proposal rests on the firmest possible evidence, and we look forward to advancing our arguments before such a distinguished arbitrator.

While preparation of our arbitration brief has dominated recent months, the ordinary business of the Association has of course continued unabated. One aspect of that "regular" work was planning and cohosting, with UBC-FA, the CAUT Western Regionals Conference, which took place in Vancouver last week (18–20 October). I'm particularly grateful to Executive Director Donna Plourde, who (as I learned) counts conference organizing among her many other talents. Attendees had high praise for the excellence of the conference and the flawlessness of the organization; both are attributable to Donna and her counterpart at UBC-FA, Deena Rubiliak, who worked tirelessly and cooperatively to ensure the meeting's success and set a new standard for the Western Regionals.

The conference took on many issues relevant to all of us in Western Canada (and probably beyond): changes within the granting councils, the current bargaining environment, and government funding to universities (among other topics). PSE funding was also a focus of the fall CUFA-BC meeting in Vancouver in September, where we were privileged to discuss the issue with the new Minister of Advanced Education, Amrik Virk. CUFA-BC President Rick Kool reports on that meeting, and other provincial matters, in this issue of the newsletter.

Another long-simmering pot has been the revision of the FA Constitution. As David Casperson's article in this newsletter relates, revision was an initiative advanced under the presidency of Lee Keener and completed (albeit slowly) under mine. The changes clarify committee structure and issues around membership. The revisions will be discussed at this Friday's AGM, and put to a vote thereafter.

With our arbitration brief submitted and the hearings just around the corner, our thoughts turn to the *next* round of negotiations, soon to begin. We will start our consultation process no later than January, and we look forward to a shorter process this time around. The other research universities—all of whom went to arbitration—are also discussing "the next round," and how to serve members' interests at the bargaining table. Unionization has been discussed as a way to enhance associations' ability to bargain. The University of Victoria Faculty Association has launched its first-ever certification drive, whose progress you can follow at <http://www.uvicfa.ca/>.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jacqueline Holler, President

Happy foggy October! It's been a frantically busy time at the Faculty Association, but a number of important initiatives have come to fruition as I write this.

SFUFA, in turn, is seriously studying the question. I participated in a panel discussion at SFU on 17 October and was struck by the familiarity of issues there—not just compensation, but “managerialism” and what members perceive as the diminution of the academic mission of teaching and research.

In response to UNBC-FA Members’ requests, and a motion at the spring AGM, the UNBC-FA will also be hosting information sessions on certification. The first will take place on 22 November. We look forward to your attendance and questions.

Foggy though it may be outside—and occasionally inside—the Admin Building, inside the UNBC-FA offices we continue to seek clarity on how best to serve your interests and further collegiality, academic freedom, and the academic mission. I hope to see each one of you at our gatherings in the coming months!



Photo courtesy of UNBC



UNIONIZATION OF PROFESSORS
INEVITABLE

*Robert F. Clift, Executive Director
Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC*

We usually picture university professors as individuals: lecturing in classrooms, debating in seminars, or working on their research. When we picture them in groups, it’s typically at graduation, conferences or as part of a large research project.

So reports that University of Victoria academic staff have commenced a union certification drive and that faculty at SFU and UNBC are considering forming unions may, at first glance, seem a bit out of character.

However, throughout the long history of universities, professors have always worked collectively to protect academic freedom, the quality of education and research, and the integrity of the academy.

For the past 30 years in Canada, this collective action has largely taken the form of unionization. Today, approximately 80% of university academic staff in Canada are members of faculty unions.

The idea that this relatively elite group needs to form a union may seem a bit absurd. It’s not like they are being forced to work in dangerous conditions for substandard pay.

Professors, librarians and other academic staff are, however, being forced to reduce the quality of their teaching, research and service, and are increasingly being bullied by their bosses.

Long gone are the days when professors enjoyed relative freedom from interference by university managers and government officials. Directly and indirectly, today’s professors are constrained in many ways in their ability to provide the high-quality teaching and research that their students, and the taxpayers, expect.

Their professional judgment is routinely questioned, and sometimes overridden, by university managers with little knowledge of the faculty member’s academic field. If academic staff resists this managerial bullying, they may be subject to retaliation ranging from petty bureaucratic roadblocks all the way to putting their careers at risk.

Truly hideous cases, such as the persecution of University of Toronto whistleblower Dr. Nancy Olivieri, will make headlines and garner international attention and action. However, small-scale bullying and intimidation is routine and goes on relatively unnoticed. The affected individuals have to put up with the misery or leave their university in hope of finding better working conditions elsewhere.

Unfortunately, managerial bullying is not the result of a few bad eggs. It is the result of political and economic forces driving the universities in particular directions, heedless of the effects on teaching, research and the working lives of academics.

Rather than accept these difficulties as inevitable, professors, librarians and other academic staff have organized faculty associations to act as a brake on managerial excess and to protect the individual and collective rights of faculty members.

For many years, university faculty associations operated in a bit of legal limbo. They were effective only to the extent that senior university managers agreed there was more value in solving problems than in creating conflicts.

However, the changing political and economic landscape has created a new breed of university manager who has traded leadership for 'boss-ship' and who is often more concerned with the bottom line than the quality of the student experience and scholarly output. This new breed of manager would rather impose their will than cooperatively solve problems.

Consequently, faculty associations can no longer afford to exist in a legal limbo. When university managers are increasingly using legal means to enforce their will, faculty associations need access to the widest range of legal tools to protect their members and the quality of education and research.

It's for this reason that academic staff at BC's research universities are considering forming unions. There is no other legal framework that gives an employees' organization more power to protect its members and to solve problems than does the Labour Relations Code.

That university faculty feel they need the protection of a union to properly do their jobs is an indication that the university is operating less like a community of scholars and students and more like a private corporation. Although academic staff will never give up on the community ideal, they can no longer ignore the very real change in the way our universities operate.

To this end, unionization of university faculty in BC is inevitable. I will not be at all surprised if, in the very near future, UVic, SFU and UNBC join UBC, RRU and the vast majority of Canadian universities in forming a faculty union.

Faculty Association and what committees were joint committees to which the FA appointed members.

Because of concurrent negotiations activity, timelines stretched. Many items were considered: quorum of the executive, whether or not the Executive Director and Grievance Officer should be members of the executive.

In 2012 Donna Plourde replaced Gwen Lew on the committee, and Jacqueline Holler (as President) became a member. Draft changes were prepared for the Fall 2012 Meeting of the FA, but were shelved as committee members and the Association concentrated on negotiations.

The changes coming forward to the 2013 Fall meeting are a tiny part of those considered by the committee. For the most part, these changes are an attempt to make the constitution clearer, to remove internal contradictions, and make other minor changes.



Photo courtesy of UNBC



CHANGES TO OUR CONSTITUTION

David Casperson
Associate Professor, Computer Science Department

An ad hoc committee to review the UNBC-FA Constitution was struck in March 2011, and initially consisted of Lee Keener (ex-President), Gwen Lew (Acting Executive Director), Karima Fredj, and David Casperson.

The original intention was to report to the executive prior to the Fall meeting of the Faculty Association with possible recommendations on changes.

Items initially of concern to the committee related mainly to succession planning and member representation. These included possible changes to the model of Vice-President, and possibly changing term structure so that elections were staggered.

There was also some concern about how committees were appointed and/or elected, and about clarity with respect to what committees were committees of the



ENGAGING THE NEW GOVERNMENT

*Richard Kool, President
Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC*

With a Bachelor's Degree in History and Economics from Simon Fraser University and a distinguished career as a law enforcement professional with the RCMP, the Minister of Advanced Education, the Hon. Amrik Virk looks like a perfect advertisement for the value of a 'liberal education'.

The personal and societal value of a liberal education, and the value of a university as a place for both specific training as well as general education, were discussed with the Minister during his somewhat historic meeting with the CUFA BC Council in September. Somewhat historic, in that no one at the table, including long-time Executive Director Robert Clift, could remember the last time a Minister of Advanced Education attended our Council meeting.

Along with his Deputy Minister, Chief of Staff and Ministerial Assistant, Minister Virk was a very engaging and interesting presence at Council. It seemed clear that he is taking a real interest in his new portfolio, and we all hoped that he would remain in the portfolio longer than his four predecessors (whose terms were measured in months, rather than years) so that we can develop a more productive working relationship with him and his staff.

Many times in the discussion, Minister Virk said there was the need for right 'equilibrium' in higher education, again perhaps reflecting a long-ago Greek philosophy course while at SFU, stressing the search for Aristotle's 'Golden Mean'.

Yet a message that came out quite clearly from the Minister was that the equilibrium was going to tilt towards making the government's Liquidified Natural Gas initiative a strong focus. The desire to direct the BC post-secondary institutions towards applied research relevant to the government's economic interests also came through loud and clear.

The relationship between Canada's institutions of higher education and the desires of government and industry to influence and direct what is researched and even what subjects are going to be taught is likely to become increasingly fraught.

Standing up for the integrity of the academy is going to be something that faculty, hopefully in concert with our institutional administrations, will have to do collectively. CUFA BC Council discussed taking this topic as a theme for our upcoming second conference, in March or April 2014.

Robert Clift and I also attended the Legislature's *Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services* on 20 September. We opened our presentation with a broad statement about the value of post-secondary education:

University education is a societal good by any measure: university graduates on average are less likely to be unemployed, have higher annual earnings, have lower rates of absenteeism, have higher pension earnings, and are more resilient during economic downturn than workers with other levels of education. They also pay much more than the total cost of their education through income taxes over their lifetime earnings....they are more likely to volunteer, to belong to a voluntary organization, to attend public meetings and to be politically engaged than people without a university degree. Higher levels of education are also positively correlated with healthier lifestyles; university graduates experience lower rates of depression and mental illness, and report a higher degree of satisfaction with life even after accounting for differences in gender, age and income.

We stressed the need for affordable higher education, and noted that over the years, many of the presidents of the faculty associations making up CUFA BC were the first in their families to attend post-secondary education; a fact made possible by the more generous government support offered that generation in past decades.

We particularly stressed the need for more support for First Nations and Métis students, to get to university, to be successful in their undergraduate studies, and to go further into post-graduate endeavors. In particular, we noted "Our institutions need to support [Aboriginal students'] intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual needs within a context respectful of social and family context, community, culture and place."

The lack of a BC Graduate Fellowship program was again brought to the attention of the Committee, as we noted that BC loses promising post-graduate students to other jurisdictions that offer great financial support. Since students tend to want to stay and live in attractive locations where they have completed their graduate studies, more graduate support should translate into more BC graduates making their homes, and their contributions to our economy and society, in BC.

Finally, we talked about the difficulty in labour relations between the faculty associations and the university administrations due to the presence of the Public Sector Employees Council, who are invisibly sitting, always, in the background of any contract negotiations.

"Universities are full of bright, committed and sophisticated administrators and managers who should be trusted to manage the funds provided them. It should be their responsibility to bargain honestly and in good faith with the faculty associations, within the constraints of those budgets. University labour negotiators should not be forced into the PSEC cookie cutter approach to negotiations. We recommend that government save the money it now spends on PSEC, perhaps creating a few

new scholarships from those savings, and let the parties bargain in good faith ...”

In conclusion, CUFA BC will continue to work hard to be engaged with both the Government and the Official Opposition, working to represent the interests of faculty and higher education at every opportunity.

Please note that during the remainder of the month of October, office hours will be restricted because of arbitration. We apologize for any inconvenience to our members and appreciate your patience and understanding.



CAUT ABORIGINAL FORUM
November 1-3, 2013

Role of Aboriginal Academics in Social and Political Change

CAUT is hosting its 4th Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff, which will be held November 1-3, 2013 in Toronto. Organized with the guidance of CAUT's Working Group on Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education, this will be an opportunity for Aboriginal academic staff from across Canada to get together to share information, discuss issues of common interest and provide advice to CAUT and our member associations. Forum highlights include discussions on:

- Being an Activist Scholar in the Community and in the Public Arena
- Cultural revitalization
- Working with external allies
- Being an Activist Scholar within the Academy
- Educating colleagues and senior administrators

The Faculty Association is pleased to be sponsoring Tina Fraser and Jessie King to attend this forum and look forward to their report to our membership after the forum concludes.



2013 CAGS AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING OF
GEOGRAPHY:
DR. CATHERINE NOLIN

The UNBC-FA extends sincerest congratulations to another one of our very own members, Dr. Catherine Nolin, on being the recipient of the 2013 CAGS award for excellence in teaching. Dr. Nolin's colleagues described her as “... *innovative in her teaching, highly committed to her students, and devoted to enthusing them about scholarship with a purpose to better the world in which we live.*”

To read Dr. Nolin's full citation, visit:

http://www.cag-acg.ca/en/catherine_nolin.html