

FA Executive July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017

President:	Stephen Rader
Vice-President:	Matt Reid
Past-President:	Jacqueline Holler
Secretary:	Heather Empey
Treasurer:	Wendy Fellers
Grievance Officer:	Catherine Nolin
Executive Director:	Donna Plourde
Members-at-Large:	
Faculty representatives	Kristen Guest
	Paul Sanborn
	Paul Siakaluk
Library representative	Heather Empey
SLI representative	Saphida Migabo
Term representative	Monica Mattfeld

Newsletter Highlights:

- *President's Message*
- *Arbitration Update*
- *CAUT Aboriginal Forum Summary*
- *Aspiring Women Among Us 2015 Article*
- *Carleton University Academic Staff Association Letter*
- *Message from Dr. Ranjana Bird*



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Stephen Rader, President UNBC-FA
Professor, Biochemistry Department*

December 16, 2015 brought us to the end of our protracted contract negotiations. After 3 1/2 years of bargaining, two arbitrations, certification as a union, and UNBC's first strike, we have the limited satisfaction of knowing that both the arbitrator and the Administration acknowledge that our salary structure is broken.

The question now - for faculty and administrators - is how we wish to spend the next 3 1/2 years? Some people are saying that with the arbitrator's decision rendered we should "move on" and "get over it."

There are times and places where an unhealthy fixation on the wrongs of the past prevents progress and relationship building. Yet there are other times when burying the past serves only to further disenfranchise those who have been wronged, to forestall reconciliation, and to allow a bad situation to become worse. One problem we

face going forward is that the administration appears to regard our relationship as inherently combative. Since the spring 2015, we have seen the handling of faculty complaints - that for the past 21 years were handled by the Provost - delegated to administrative staff. We have seen delays in addressing workplace issues for faculty members, and investigations carried out without due care. At the same time, it has been suggested that unhappiness with the events of the last year is a mental illness that requires counselling. Since when is democratic dissent a pathology?

The university's administrators keep telling me that we need to find ways to work together more amicably. At the same time, however, they pursue courses of action that demonstrate a profound lack of interest either in engaging in meaningful consultation with the university community as a whole, or in addressing morale issues with faculty. Before we can legitimately "get over it" and move on, I suggest that the university's administrators demonstrate they are sincere in wanting to change the tone of the relationship to one of mutual respect and trust. An unambiguous commitment to address our issues and concerns would be a far more productive step towards healing our institution than hiring counsellors.

As my message to you is a perspective of 2015, I take a moment to also reflect on the losses of two of our members....our colleagues....and indeed our friends, who were both highly regarded and respected by all: Dr. Jim McDonald (Anthropology) and Dr. Lito Arocena (Environmental Studies). Both individuals leave lasting legacies at UNBC and we, as a community, are better because of who they were and what they contributed. They will be missed.



Photo provided courtesy of the University of Northern British Columbia



ARBITRATION UPDATE

*Ted Binnema, Chief Negotiator UNBC-FA
Professor and Chair, History Program
Jacqueline Holler, Past President UNBC-FA
Associate Professor, History Program*

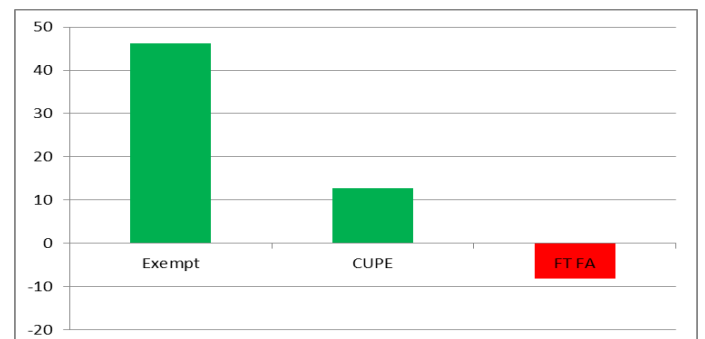
As you know, the UNBC-FA received Arbitrator Lanyon's award on 16 December 2015. By now many of you have had the opportunity to read the award and/or to attend our information meeting on the new Collective Agreement. With the inevitable disappointment behind us, we turn our attention to transition. The Joint Committee is negotiating implementation of the new Agreement, which contains new provisions in many areas, most notably: evaluation; seniority for part-time instructors, term SLIs, and term librarians; and phased retirement. In addition, of course, the schedule for implementation of the compensation component of the award must be worked out. The Association will communicate with you throughout this process, so please watch for our announcements. The FA also urges you to attend information sessions as they are scheduled so that you understand any new procedures as they apply to you.

Seven articles from the 2012—2014 Faculty Agreement have been referred (by agreement of the parties) to working groups for potential revision. This may result in potential updates and changes. These committees will begin their work sometime this semester, so please watch for updates. Two committees were also mandated by the Arbitrator's award: one will ponder the faculty compensation structure, the other how more efficiently to manage post-retirement benefits. Again, these committees will be communicating with you as they begin their work.

With the receipt of the award and the conclusion of nearly four years of continuous bargaining, negotiations have come to an end. We are all understandably exhausted. Nonetheless, Members should remain vigilant. First, there is much work to be done to prepare for the negotiations that will begin in three years' time. There are numerous issues that remain unresolved, most significantly the large (and continuously growing) gap between UNBC faculty compensation and the salaries earned at other institutions. We urge all Members to continue to engage with this and other issues. A second cause for vigilance is that there are many issues aside from contract negotiations that call us to action and engagement. UNBC's budgetary and academic planning exercises are an excellent example, as is collegial governance. We urge

Members to participate fully in all of these important venues for change and renewal.

We also encourage Members to bring an academic's critical and evidence-based perspective to these exercises. For example, do you have the impression that the number of full-time faculty at UNBC has been declining in recent years, while the number of non-teaching employees has increased? If so, you are not mistaken. In fact, information provided to the UNBC-FA by the university's administration reveals that the complement of Full-Time UNBC-FA Members has fallen by 8.2% since 2010 (see the graph below). Meanwhile, CUPE employees have increased by 13% and Exempt employees by a staggering 46%. Indeed, the university has renovated office space to accommodate the additional Exempt employees. We do not intend to disparage our valued colleagues among the staff at UNBC, but the trend at UNBC does raise some important questions about the priorities of the institution.



Percentage Increase (Green) or Decrease (Red) in the Number of Exempt Employees, CUPE Employees, and Full-Time FA Employees, 2010-2015. (Data source: The Employer, September 2015)

In a speech delivered on 23 October 2015, Ernie Barber, Interim Provost and Vice-President Academic at the University of Saskatchewan, noted that "faculty do the only work that the university gets paid for: research and teaching." We might add that students look to faculty, more than to anyone else, for their education. But while student tuition is increased 2% each year, the administration at UNBC seems intent on undermining the central function of UNBC.

The administration of UNBC appears to have been busy over the past five years testing the theory that "if you reduce teaching, student enrollment might still increase." The faculty complement in many of UNBC's academic departments has dropped so much over the past years that prospective students quite reasonably do not anymore consider UNBC an attractive option. Students have fewer courses to choose from, fewer fields in which to specialize. The data are now in, and conclusions can be made: if we gut academic departments, students will go elsewhere. As the administration at UNBC has

been conducting this experiment, its budget surpluses have been the envy of other small universities in the country. Clearly, one of the central questions that any Academic Planning exercise at UNBC should consider is “how, in the context of UNBC’s very healthy financial position, can UNBC invest in its faculty to better achieve its mission and vision, and attract more students?”

Instead, the administration at UNBC is pretending that Academic Planning ought to proceed on the assumption that a financial crisis is looming. It does so by suggesting that its future costs will be much higher than they actually will be. For example, data provided by the Employer during arbitration show that total salary costs at UNBC were \$46.7 million in 2014-15. Yet, it budgeted \$51.6 million—a 10.5% increase—for salaries in 2015-16! Given that the CUPE contract and UNBC-FA guarantee that salary increases at UNBC will be very modest until 2019 at least, we can only conclude that the Board of Governors is greatly exaggerating its future costs to try to convince you that plans for the future will demand austerity.

The fact is that UNBC is in an enviable financial position. It has more than enough resources to restore the tenure-track faculty complement in each department so that academic departments can again offer suites of courses that are attractive to prospective undergraduate and graduate students, *and* consider other strategic hiring, to boost enrollment. UNBC owes it to its students, and to the people of northern British Columbia, to do this speedily.

During the 2014 negotiations, Members displayed an extraordinary resolve, commitment, and engagement that led to a strong first Collective Agreement. Now, that same energy can be fruitfully directed toward ensuring a strong future for UNBC.



Photo provided courtesy of the University of Northern British Columbia

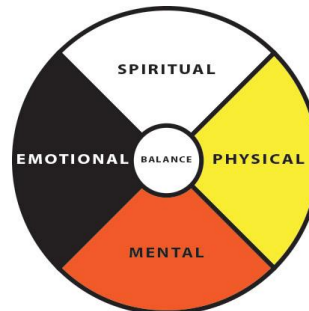


CAUT Aboriginal Forum
November 2015

Agnes Pawlowska-Mainville, Assistant Professor FNST
Susan Burke, Lecturer Social Work

We would like to thank the UNBC Faculty Association for providing us with the opportunity and the funds to travel to Winnipeg and attend the Canadian Association of University and Teachers (CAUT) Aboriginal Forum.

The conference has provided us with numerous ideas to consider when we think about “Indigenizing the academy” as well as ways to overcome barriers faced by Indigenous scholars as well as scholars doing research with Indigenous communities.



Often, when Indigenous scholars think of balance, they think of the four quadrants of the medicine wheel (please see image). Each one of the four colours represents the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental which, when equally nurtured, can lead to a balanced life. It is in this context that we will discuss faculty in the following section.

Some of the physical barriers include distance from family and communities, racism and misunderstanding of certain practices or ways of doing things. Chronic over-extension is one of the things fatiguing researchers as many have more frequent interactions with students, higher research and service expectations as well as multiple commitments. Oftentimes, Indigenous researchers are expected to be the agents of social change and are asked to be guest speakers in classrooms, with no reciprocity, which can be discouraging. Demands from communities are an additional barrier to academic careers as they may often add to the physical exhaustion of scholars. Furthermore, such barriers lead to emotional distress including isolation, lack of co-ethnic colleagues and hence mentorship. While separation from community and cultural discontinuity is often a factor, tokenism and the need to be seen as “all things Indian” tend to be widespread problems across Canadian universities.

So while universities attempt to indigenize the academy, how can some of these barriers be overcome? The idea of indigenizing the academy is a concept that is difficult to untangle and many institutions may view “application” of the idea

differently. Where some universities like UNBC may begin the process through initiatives such as changing UNBC signage to the Lheidli T'enneh dialect of the Dakelh language or bringing in more Elders into the classrooms, many of the discussions at CAUT pushed for institutional change as well. Some of those include hiring more Indigenous faculty, encouraging cross-Indigenous mentorship and finding creative ways to celebrate success at a community level. UNBC may already be in the process of leading the way with numerous initiatives; however, many CAUT attendees also spoke of a realistic work-life balance and called for universities to re-think the 40-40-20 ratio for faculty, Indigenous scholars and those working with communities. Given that UNBC continues to be in the process of negotiating a stable agreement, perhaps re-balancing faculty workload and numerous other commitments Indigenous researchers may have could be one of the ways academia can learn from a medicine wheel.



Aspiring Women Among Us 2015: Women Science and Environment

Annie Booth, Professor Ecosystem & Science Mgmt

November 2015 saw the inaugural offering of the Inspiring Women Among Us event (IWAU), held November 13-25 (the 2015 theme: Women, Science and Environment), leading up to UNBC's December 6th Day of Remembrance and Action Against Violence Against Women (held November 25th while classes were still in session).

IWAU, conceived as an annual event, was the brainchild of Zoe Meletis (Associate Professor, Geography Program, UNBC) and was co-organized by Zoe and Annie Booth (Professor, Ecosystem Science and Management Program, UNBC). A wonderful planning committee and three great student assistants made this event possible.

IWAU hosted 34 activities between November 13-25 in addition to the UNBC Memorial ceremony for the National Day of Remembrance, Action on Violence Against Women, and the Montreal Massacre, held on November 25th. One of our goals was to make this an inclusive community event extending beyond the UNBC Prince George campus. We succeeded in this regard; we were able to hold several in the greater community of Prince George, and at our sister institution, the College of New Caledonia. As well, two UNBC campuses outside of Prince George, UNBC-Terrace and UNBC-Quesnel, also hosted events. We were inspired by the degree of community buy-in, and a number of events were organized by

individuals not on the IWAU Planning Committee. Such involvement showcased community resources, diversified activity types and locations, and enriched the expertise/time availability to offer these activities. People were extremely generous in organizing and offering these activities.

There was also a related precursor event, on Dec. 5th: Dr. Si Transken themed her usual 'Creativity and Coffee Night' which raises funds for the Northern Women's Centre housed at UNBC, as 'Inspiring Women', and many Inspiring Women performed that night. Including this event, IWAU attracted over 803 individual attendances. We were also delighted that the City of Prince George Mayor and Council were willing to support IWAU early on, by proclaiming November 13-25th Inspiring Women Among Us week, and by wearing our event t-shirts.

Art activities became an important component of the IWAU event and brought in both different perspectives and very different audiences for the various activities. There was a Night of Poetry inspired by Women in Science and Environment and IWAU organized Prince George premieres for two newly released films: The Power of One Voice: A 50-Year Perspective on the Life of Rachel Carson (powerofonevoicefilm.com) and The Mask You Live In (therepresentationproject.org/film/the-mask-you-live-in/), a film about the impacts of destructive cultures of masculinity in North American society. Global Friday and NRESi co-sponsored some great speakers and a number of panels and workshops offered diverse opportunities to celebrate women in science and environment.



Photo provided courtesy of the Inspiring Women Among Us 2015 Facebook page

The organizers collaborated with the UNBC Development Office and the UNBC President to establish a new Inspiring Women Among Us Award. This award will be 'non-academic' in nature and will be available to any woman who has faced significant challenges in getting to UNBC. We aim to be able to offer two annual awards (likely of \$500 and \$1000) to students, based on financial need. Contributions are welcome to assist women in need

within our UNBC community.

We are already planning the next IWAU event for November 2016. We had a great planning committee and hope many will join us in the spring to start planning for this year, however we'd also welcome new members and new ideas for speakers, workshops and other events.

Please, join us! And thanks for all the support.

Friskjen (Pum) van Veldhoven
President, Carleton University Academic Staff
Association

On behalf of the Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA), I'd like to express our appreciation to the unions, students and the public for their show of solidarity while we continue to defend academic freedom.

It is still somewhat of a mystery to CUASA as to how Carleton's Board of Governors felt justified to scold and threaten Professor Gorelick with discipline and removal for blogging when recent news releases have shed light on much more egregious conduct of other governors. Just as CUASA condemned the Board's attack on academic freedom, CUASA condemns the Board's lack of action to protect the peaceful actions of students. The comparison of the exercise of legitimate democratic rights to the tactics of "Brownshirts and Maoists" is unacceptable.

Students have the right under Carleton's 'Human Rights Policies and Procedures' to an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, intimidation and censorious actions and comments. This policy was put in place to ensure that all members of the Carleton University community, including students, have a safe space to express contrary views in a peaceful manner and without fear of reprisal.

The Board cannot claim to operate in the best interest of the Carleton community if it continues to act surreptitiously. CUASA will continue to firmly stand in opposition of the Board so long as it purposefully ignores the principles of academic freedom and fails to apply its rules equally to all members of the Board.

I would like to extend our thanks and solidarity to our fellow unions who are actively defending the rights of their members who may feel insulted, harmed and intimidated by the Board's actions. As well, we express our deepest sympathy to those students who themselves feel that their reputation, as concerned scholars, have been harmed when exercising their right to peacefully protest.

In solidarity,

This letter is being provided by Dr. Bird to communicate to those that have been concerned about her departure and to communicate her thanks to the UNBC FA membership

Greetings and a note of thanks.

Due to my sudden and unexpected departure from my position as the VP Research, I did not have the time to reflect and thank all of you for your support during my term, which lasted for less than three years.

Before taking on the responsibilities of VP Research, UNBC was experiencing declining research funding. With your support, we were able to strengthen the research ethos at UNBC by establishing a research office which is organized with highly competent staff, sensitive and responsive to your needs. We worked together to not only stop this trend in declining funding, but increased research funding to the university by 21%. This was recognized by MacLean's Magazine in their article Best of the Best ranking the UNBC as the top small university in 2015. According to MacLean (page 90, November 7, 2015), "The University of Northern British Columbia has finally done it. After years of bobbling in between second and third place in the Primarily Undergraduate category, it has reached the pinnacle. The Prince George based school moved up one spot in student awards and three spots in total research dollars to clinch its position." It is unfortunate that I cannot continue to serve you as VP Research, but want you to know that I value your support and friendship. The past year has been full of ups and downs. During the past year, I was told "you are in the weeds." I do not know what it means. Certainly my self being "in the weeds" was required to bring about positive impact on UNBC Research.

Together, we worked hard to increase research funding and put UNBC in number one spot. You are recognized nationally for your effort. It was a privilege to serve you and I hope to enjoy your continued friendship in the future as I return to UNBC as a faculty in 2017.

Wishing you all the very best for 2016 and beyond.

Ranjana



Faculty Association Office

The Faculty Association Offices are located in
Rooms 3084/3089 Administration Building

Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm

Donna Plourde, Executive Director
donna.plourde@unbc.ca, 250-960-5816

Wendee Copeland, Professional Services Officer
wendee.copeland@unbc.ca, 250-960-5313

visit our website at: www.unbcfa.ca