

# NEWS & VIEWS

MARCH 2012

## From the President's Desk

Cameron Morrill

Spring 2012 brings to the UM unseasonably warm temperatures and thoughts of . . . bargaining. Our Collective Agreement with the UM runs through March 31, 2013 and UMFA has already begun preparations (see the article on page 3 of this newsletter). The participation of our Members in this process is crucial. Please watch for and complete the bargaining survey which will come via e-mail within the next few months, and do not hesitate to contact your UMFA constituency representative or the UMFA office if you have particular concerns you would like addressed in the next round of bargaining.

Along with the arrival of Spring, the UM's ROSE (Resource Optimization and Service Enhancement) initiative is in full bloom. Some of the problems have become evident as well. Earlier this year, Human Resources unveiled Employee Self Service (ESS) through the JUMP portal. Through ESS, UM employees have online access to benefits information, salary history, T4 slips and a record of the personal information that UM has on file. On February 22, Debbie McCallum sent an e-mail to all employees advising that there had been a possible breach of security within ESS and the service would be shut down until further notice.

The private and personal information within ESS, which includes Social Insurance Number, date of birth and home address, makes a security breach a real concern. University employees are legitimately

worried about the possibility of identity theft. For more information on identity theft, see the website of the [Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada](#).

There has been no further information on this breach since Ms. McCallum's e-mail of February 22 but ESS remains offline. On March 22, the Presidents of the four largest campus unions, of which UMFA is one, sent a letter to Debbie McCallum asking for assurances that no personal information was accessed by unauthorized individuals as a result of the breach or, failing that, what measures the UM is planning to take to protect UM employees from identity theft. Hopefully, there will be an announcement from the administration on this issue soon.

Spring is also a time for renewal. Nominations for the President and Vice-President of UMFA for the upcoming year have now closed and there was one nomination for each position. I am delighted to announce that Sharon Alward is the incoming President of UMFA. Sharon is a professor in the School of Art and has been an active member of UMFA for some years as a member of the Executive, Grievance Officer and, most recently, Vice-President for the last two years.

I am equally pleased to report that Tommy Kucera will be serving as next year's Vice-President of the Association. Tommy is a professor in the Mathematics department and has also served for several years on the UMFA Executive, most recently as Secretary. (Continued next page...)

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**UMFA  
AGM**

**Tues., May 15, 2012  
2:00 p.m.**

**Marshall McLuhan  
Hall**

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## President's Message (Continued from page 1)

Sharon and Tommy both formally move into their new positions on June 1.

Please join me in congratulating and thanking Sharon and Tommy for taking on these new responsibilities. I am confident that they will provide the competent and committed leadership that will be so valuable to us as we head into another round of bargaining. I hope that you will attend the UMFA Annual General Meeting on

May 15 and give Sharon and Tommy your best wishes in person.

## Universities of Western Ontario and Toronto Bow to Access Copyright

Universities across Canada have condemned the unacceptable restrictions imposed by Access Copyright and chosen not to renew agreements with the licensing body. Academics need at least the same access to use of copyrighted materials in the classroom as was the case with the previous agreements. The efforts of universities to restore fair access have now been undermined by the Universities of Western Ontario and Toronto.

In January, both universities signed deals with Access Copyright that effectively allow the agency to monitor faculty correspondence, place oppressive restrictions on use of copyrighted material and introduce ultra-sensitive guidelines that include defining e-mailing hyperlinks as equivalent to photocopying a document. The [fees](#) that Access Copyright leverages against each full time student or equivalent have increased more than seven-fold – from \$3.75 to \$27.50.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has called on other post-secondary institutions to stand up for “fair and reasonable access to copyrighted works for educational purposes” and not to follow the example of U of T and Western.

The agreement between U of T, Western and Access Copyright comes at a time when the issue of use of copyrighted works in education sits before decision makers in Ottawa. Bill C-11 (*An Act to Amend the Copyright Act*) is legislation that seeks to expand fair dealing guidelines to include education, and add additional rights for educators to use copyrighted material. In addition, a series of copyright decisions are

also pending from the Supreme Court of Canada that will clarify the educational use of material. These decisions are expected in the next few months, making the recent agreements even more questionable.

The University of Manitoba is one of many universities that has chosen not to renew agreements with Access Copyright. UMFA supports this decision and has encouraged the administration not to follow the actions of Western and U of T. UMFA does not, however, support the new restrictions placed on UM academics which is a departure from past practice at the UM.

The UM Copyright Office has been conducting information sessions across the university explaining their guidelines regarding copyright material. We have [written to the UM](#) raising our very serious concerns, not only about the new, university-imposed restrictions but also about their requirement that university employees report any suspected violation of the new procedures. If you have any additional information that you wish to share on this matter, or have any questions, please contact the UMFA office.

## Electronic Communications Survey in your Inbox!

UMFA is planning to conduct future surveys (e.g. on bargaining issues) electronically and anonymously to make it easier for Members to participate, as well as shorten the time required for completion and analysis.

Over the past few months, we have researched a number of online survey tools to find one that allows for secure access, complies with Canadian privacy laws and provides the ability to gather survey information with the respondents remaining anonymous. UMFA recently launched the first electronic survey on Member Communications, through a tool called FluidSurveys.

This short survey will evaluate current communication methods and tools, and help UMFA determine the best ways to communicate with Members in an effective and timely manner. We will let you know the results.

Please be sure to take a few moments to complete the survey, as your feedback is important to us. The deadline for survey responses is Friday, March 30.

## Bargaining Preparations Begin

As explained in the December 2011 UMFA [newsletter](#), the current UMFA Collective Agreement runs through March 31, 2013. Preparations are beginning for the next round of bargaining with the administration.

On February 28, the Executive Council and UMFA staff met to discuss bargaining preparations. This process began with the group reviewing notes from a debriefing session held last winter after the previous round of bargaining, paying particular attention to areas requiring improvement and suggestions made for the next round.

The group also discussed establishing the Collective Agreement Committee (CAC). The CAC consists of the UMFA Executive, UMFA Bargaining Team and other members named by the Board of Representatives. The CAC reviews Member suggestions for improving the Collective Agreement. These suggestions arise from constituency meetings, the Board of Representatives, questionnaires, individual input and identification of issues by UMFA Executive and staff.

There were discussions on establishing a communications committee and on various ways to reach out to the Membership to ensure Members receive timely and relevant information throughout the preparation and bargaining processes. The group also discussed general timelines for items such as the bargaining survey and constituency meetings.

The work that will be occurring over the next year is vital to a successful round of negotiations. There will be many opportunities for Members to bring forth concerns and suggestions. We **need** to hear from you!

UMFA will continue to keep the Membership informed on opportunities for input and will provide regular updates throughout the negotiation process.

# WiseWork

Workplace Safety & Health Corner

## Preventing Office Injury

We often don't think about the strain we put on our bodies in a workday until a routine task becomes painful to do. A sore neck, a stiff back or a tingling wrist and hand can be warning signs of something more serious. According to SAFE Manitoba - a partner of the Workplace Safety and Health Division and the Workers Compensation Board that seeks to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses through promotion, protection and education - musculoskeletal injuries (MSI) are the leading cause of time missed from work amongst Manitoba employees.

An MSI is an injury to muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels or related soft tissue, including a sprain, strain or inflammation. These injuries are caused by improper, repetitive movements or poor positioning – whether it's poor posture, workstations that are not ergonomic or the use of improper lifting/moving techniques. MSIs do not necessarily require participation in strenuous activity to occur. MSIs can affect academic staff that do a lot of work on their computers, even if they don't use any heavy equipment or do any lifting. Carpal tunnel, for example, is a common injury that can occur from not having appropriate wrist support when using a keyboard or mouse.

Here are some tips from SAFE Manitoba on how to adjust your computer workstation to reduce the risk of MSIs:

### Chair

- Armrests should be directly under shoulders and adjusted to support elbows – not elevate them;
- Adjust the seat so that it is flat or tilted slightly forward;
- Adjust the chair or the keyboard so that elbows are level with the keyboard.

### Keyboard, mouse, screen

- Angle the keyboard so that wrists are flat or slightly tilted away;
- Your screen should be directly in front of you and at least an arm's length distance away;
- The mouse should be directly beside the keyboard;
- Sit close to the keyboard to avoid over extending your arms.

### Posture, body positioning

- Sit straight in your chair, keep your feet flat on the floor and knees bent 90-100 degrees. A footrest is recommended if the chair height raises your feet off the floor;
- Change body positioning, stand up and stretch as much as possible to keep blood flowing;
- Use a document holder next to your screen to reduce strain on your neck from looking down at your desk;
- Use a head-set or speakerphone if you are on the phone frequently, rather than cradling the receiver between your neck and shoulder.

If you have any concerns about proper office set up in your location, or require information on preventing MSIs, contact your local area safety and health committee representative, or the UMFA office.

## Cross Country View

UMFA stands in solidarity with faculty associations across the country as they fight for better working conditions, compensation, and rights for their members. Below are summaries of where other faculty associations currently stand in their negotiations.

***Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA)*** – The last contract for DFA’s 870 members expired on June 30, 2011. Negotiations began on April 1, 2011. In December, frustrated by the slow pace of bargaining on non-monetary issues and administration’s refusal to talk about monetary issues, DFA requested the services of a conciliator. The first day of conciliation was February 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, and DFA tabled a complete package of proposals on non-monetary and monetary items as well as a pension proposal. The proposal on pension structure acknowledged that DFA Members would be willing to discuss a jointly sponsored pension plan so the University would get solvency relief under Nova Scotia pension legislation. Without this relief, the administration would have to pay \$50 million a year toward a pension deficit.

On the first day of conciliation, the administration’s bargaining team said they did not have a mandate to discuss monetary issues, which included the pension proposal. It was not until the third, and last, day of conciliation that the administration’s team agreed to talk monetary issues. At the 11th hour the team put forward a monetary offer, with a demand to remove pension from the collective agreement and a 34-page Pension Trust Agreement it wanted signed at the table.

DFA held a strike vote from February 13 to 16, and moved their offices to a strike headquarters. On February 24, the conciliator filed his report and with a strike mandate from the members, DFA was ready to legally commence a strike within two weeks of the report submission. A general meeting for bargaining unit members was held on February 29, with DFA members voting 92% in favor of rejecting the administration’s latest offer. The two negotiating teams again met in the presence of a conciliator on March 1.

On March 8, the Provincial government exempted Dalhousie University from the solvency test, thus removing a major block to a deal. On March 11, only hours before the strike was to start, a tentative agreement was struck. The DFA Executive Committee

met to discuss the tentative agreement, and make a recommendation to the membership, which was put to a ratification vote at a general meeting on March 16 and 19. With 95% of participating voters in favour, DFA ratified a new three-year collective agreement with Dalhousie University.

The deal, retroactive to July 1, 2011, offers cost-of-living increases of 1.25% in each of the first two years, and 1.75% increase in the third year. Increases were also applied to the basic salary scales and steps between each year of service in an attempt to bring Dalhousie University’s compensation in line with other comparable universities.

In addition, members will increase their contributions to the pension plan by 2%.

***Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association (WLUF)*** - WLUF’s collective agreement ran until June 30, 2011. After months of negotiations, the Association remained at an impasse with the administration. WLUF had concerns that proposals by the administration for changes in the teaching structure would have the effect of decreasing the research capabilities of full time-faculty while also increasing their service responsibilities. The administration also introduced proposals that would reduce pension benefits and ultimately eliminate the existing pension plan, reduce retiree health benefits, and implement a low-cost second-tier teaching stream that would not allow for any significant research or service.

The two sides entered into conciliation on January 24th. During conciliation, WLUF continued to press the administration for a revised compensation proposal, but the administration refused to do so. As conciliation was not successful, mediation began on February 29.

A tentative agreement was reached at 3:00 a.m. on March 2 after two full days of discussions with a mediator.

At meetings on March 12 and 13, members voted 83.5% in favour of ratification of the tentative agreement. Few details on the agreement are available at this time. In terms of pensions, the new agreement includes a plan that will see member contributions increase from 7% to 7.5% below YMPE (continued...)

## Cross Country View (Continued from page 5)

(Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings) and 9% above YMPE. The administration's contribution remains at 7%. In addition, the Minimum Guaranteed Pension Benefit will be adjusted annually by an amount equal to 50% of the increase in the Consumer Price Index for the previous year, to a maximum of 4% per year, cumulative from retirement.

**University of British Columbia Faculty Association (UBCFA)** – UBCFA has just begun negotiations. The Association proposals include introducing a new article to ensure investigations are conducted with procedural fairness and natural justice; a modification of an article to assure greater equity at the University; modification of an article to provide for clearer development and dissemination of departmental workload policies; and a right of reappointment for lecturers as well as priority for sessional members over external applicants for newly created lecturer positions.

### University of Regina Faculty Association (URFA)

URFA began negotiations in November, and according to a recent update, they seem to be on track. Over 20 collective agreement articles have been opened including articles on retirement and termination of employment, academic freedom, appointments, working environment, benefits, provisions and leaves. A key issue noted in the Association's February update, is the nature and scope of academic freedom and the right of academic staff to participate in governance of the institution.

### Other associations currently/soon to be in negotiations

- Concordia University Association
- University of Lethbridge Faculty Association
- Mount Saint Vincent University Faculty Association
- Nipissing University Faculty Association
- University of Northern British Columbia Faculty Association
- University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Association
- St. Francis Xavier University Faculty Association
- Ontario College of Art & Design Faculty Association
- York University Faculty Association
- Simon Fraser University Faculty Association
- Trent University Faculty Association
- University of Victoria Faculty Association
- St. Mary's University Faculty Union

## 2011-2012 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

President

Cameron Morrill

*Accounting & Finance*

Grievance Officers

Sharon Alward  
Brad McKenzie

*School of Art  
Social Work*

Vice President

Sharon Alward

*School of Art*

Members-at-large

Brenda Austin-Smith  
Tom Booth  
Alison Calder  
Mark Gabbert  
Nancy Hansen  
Michael Shaw

*English  
Biology  
English  
History  
Disability Studies  
Biology*

Past President

Brad McKenzie

*Social Work*

Treasurer

Pat Nicholls

*Libraries*

Executive Secretary

Tommy Kucera

*Mathematics*

### UMFA STAFF

Linda Guse, Executive Director  
Barbara Yapps, Professional Officer  
Candace Weselowski, Communications Officer  
Louise Robidoux, Administrative Assistant  
Jettie Zwiep, Administrative Assistant