

NEWS & VIEWS

September 2014

From the President's Desk

Tommy Kucera



Warm greetings to all Members of UMFA. I hope you had both a relaxing and a productive summer. Special greetings to all of the new Members

that have joined the University of Manitoba community over the last few months. If you have any questions or concerns about your new position, be sure to contact the UMFA office at 474-8272 or at faum@umfa.ca. We are here to help you.

Over the course of the summer I had several opportunities to meet with Members. In some cases, it was just an opportunity to get better acquainted; in others, it was to discuss an important issue. I am always happy to meet with Members, and I encourage you to contact me at tkucera-umfapres@mymts.net to set up a time.

This fall we hope to fill vacancies in the Board of Representatives. There are a number of constituencies without representation on the Board. Check the UMFA [web site](#) to find out who your

constituency reps are. If there is a vacancy, consider volunteering yourself, or encouraging one of your colleagues to put their name forward. If you have any questions about the duties of a Board Representative, please contact me. We will be organizing informal constituency meetings this fall and winter, and I am looking forward to meeting more of you and hearing your concerns.

Finally I have to announce that our Executive Director, Dr. Linda Guse, has announced her intention to retire in 2015. At the September 18th meeting of the Board of Representatives, we established the Search Committee. Linda's record of exemplary service to our organization and commitment to its values will be very hard to match. Information on the [job posting](#), including the [job description](#), can be found on the UMFA website.

I wish everyone a successful term, and again, please do not hesitate to contact me or the UMFA office with any concerns you might have.

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Your feedback is welcome on this newsletter.

Please send any suggestions/comments to:

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IMPORTANT: Information for Members teaching travel courses or in Summer Session

Members who teach travel courses and/or courses during summer session, in addition to their normal teaching assignments, are reminded to review Article 23 of the UMFA Collective Agreement.

The 2013-2016 Collective Agreement provides that: "A Member who in addition to his/her normal teaching assignment teaches in Summer Session 1 and 2 shall receive a stipend of not less than the following per full six (6) credit hour course:

Year	2013	2014	2015
Stipend	\$8,313	\$8,479	\$8,649

The stipend for a course less than a full six (6) credit hour course shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.

The actual amount of each stipend shall be determined administratively."

(NOTE: These figures are preliminary as the text of the 2013-2016 Collective Agreement is still in process of finalization.)

It is important to note that if the course is a 6 credit hour course for students, then it is worth the 6 credit hours stipend to Members, and the same is true for a 3 credit hour course. If you have received less pay than you are entitled to under the Collective Agreement, please contact UMFA Executive Director Linda Guse at (204) 474-8282 or UMFA Professional Officer Barb Yapps at (204) 474-6034.

REMINDER: Tenure and promotion information for recent applicants

UMFA is reminding Members holding tenure track positions who recently applied for tenure and/or promotion **to contact the UMFA office immediately** if there are any concerns or difficulties regarding a positive recommendation.

Section 19.D of the Collective Agreement outlines the general provisions for tenure recommendation procedures. A similar process for promotions is outlined in section 20.A.3 of the Collective Agreement.

- Upon receiving a probationary appointment, faculty members are given the criteria and weightings as decided by the dean/director on the advice of faculty council
- The dean/director or designate shall be the chairperson of each tenure committee and shall serve in a non-voting capacity
- The duties specifically assigned to the faculty member during the period under consideration, the application of the criteria and weightings and the assessment of the academic attributes and the performance of assigned duties of the faculty member by his/her peers are all taken into account
- The dean/director shall make known the names of those faculty members to be considered by a tenure committee and will invite submissions to the committees by both faculty and students
- Notice of a tenure hearing shall be given to the faculty member at least 5 working days prior to the commencement of the hearing
- The faculty member being considered shall have an opportunity to meet at least once with the tenure committee. The member shall supply whatever material and information s/he or the committee deems necessary to justify being granted tenure. **UMFA strongly recommends Members keep a copy of all materials submitted.**
- If the committee cannot make a positive recommendation, the chairperson will inform the faculty member in writing, indicating the areas of concern that the committee will wish to discuss and establish a date for a subsequent meeting where the faculty member will be able to speak to the concerns. A reasonable time will be given in order to seek advice, solicit opinion and provide further documentation.

Update: 2013-2016 Collective Agreement

Members will soon receive an email asking if they would like a hardcopy of the 2013-16 Collective Agreement when it is ready for print. The Agreement has not been finalized yet, as UMFA and the administration only received the arbitration award on June 17. The revised [salary schedule](#) has already been posted on the UMFA website. Minor changes to definitions, job titles and wording were implemented in a number of articles. For your reference, the major changes to the Agreement are as follows:

- A substantially improved academic freedom clause that includes recognition of the academic's right to academic freedom, the right to criticize the employer, the right to contribute to social change through free expression of opinion on matters of public interest and not suffer penalty for that expression;
- The elimination of mandatory half-time appointments at age 70 and the addition of a pre-retirement option for those over age 65 to elect to go on a half-time appointment for five years followed by retirement;
- An article on structure specifying that where the administration wants to alter schools, departments or the Library system (e.g. amalgamations), Members will receive a written copy of the proposed alteration, have the right to a secret ballot vote on the administration's proposals and to receive the same material on the proposed alteration, including any amendments, that the administration will send to Senate;
- Changes to the duty to return to work from maternity/parental leave with allowance for term and contingent appointments. Where a Member's term or contingent appointment expires during the period on leave, or expires prior to the Member fulfilling the obligation to return to work for 6 months, and the University does not renew the appointment, there is no obligation to return for 6 months and no obligation to repay;
- An increase of \$50.00 to the Healthcare Spending Account (HCSA) in year two of the agreement bringing the annual maximum to \$650. In year three of the contract, there will be a \$75.00 increase bringing the maximum to \$725;
- An increase to the parking fee (totaling \$39.25 over three years) as follows:
 - ◆ 2.9% in year 1 to a maximum of \$572.35,
 - ◆ 2.0% in year 2 to a maximum of \$583.80 and
 - ◆ 2.0% in year 3 for a maximum of \$595.48;
- A Letter of Understanding on performance assessments/evaluations where, in assessing/evaluating the performance of Members generally, or in relation to tenure and promotion, and when setting criteria for research, publication and venue, the university agrees to act reasonably, fairly, in a non-arbitrary manner, in good faith and consistent with the principles of Academic Freedom; and
- A Letter of Understanding that specifies, as long as the University budget continues at or above current levels, the number of UMFA Members will equal or exceed 1120 for the term of the 2013-16 agreement.

Behavioural learning objectives

UMFA has recently learned that some Members are being asked to include several behavioural learning objectives in their course outlines. These objectives are to state a detailed list of what each student will have learned by the end of a particular course.

On the surface, learning objectives (or learning outcomes) may appear to be a routine element of a course or program outline. While assessing student work is pivotal to the teaching and learning process, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) says that establishing learning outcome measurements implies that having academic staff judge student work and performance is insufficient. “Instead, teachers in colleges and universities are being asked to use measurements that essentially reduce student learning to quantifiable standards. It is not a far stretch to see how the results of these assessments could be used, and most certainly abused, to evaluate the “effectiveness” of teaching and learning at the institutional, departmental and individual instructor level.”

In some post-secondary institutions, learning outcomes are being adopted as part of accreditation requirements. For example, Simon Fraser University developed their learning outcomes in order to meet the requirements for accreditation with the North West Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

In professional programs like Dentistry at the UM, accreditation requirements are translated into learning outcomes in order to gain [accreditation](#) with the national professional organization. Accreditation enables graduates of the Dentistry program to seek licensure throughout Canada and the United States after successful completion of a National Board

Examination.

Aside from program requirements for accreditation in professional programs, some of the concerns raised about learning outcomes by The Faculty Association at Simon Fraser included:

- They undervalue the learning process by focusing only on outputs;
- Standardized learning outcomes are a threat to autonomy and academic freedom;
- They add to faculty workload;
- Pre-determined learning outcomes run against the educational missions of universities, as “universities should not seek to meet rigid objectives, but rather advance knowledge by exposing students to intellectual uncertainty, ambiguity and experimentation.”

Another area of concern is that while learning objectives have traditionally been qualitative, there has been a growing pressure to create objectives that can be measured quantitatively. This has already happened in the United States, where, according to CAUT, “the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and Community College Learning Assessment (CCLA) were developed by the Lumina Foundation and the Council for Aid to Education to identify the value added from a college or university education. To do so, the tools test students on generic skills both at the beginning and the end of a degree/diploma program. The CLA and CCLA are being tested by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario to determine if the results are valid in the provincial context.”

CAUT also points to the elementary and high school system in the United States, where it says “attempts to

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Behavioural learning objectives (cont.)

‘measure’ and ‘assess’ appropriate ‘student learning outcomes’ have had a deleterious impact on public education...they have encouraged the growth of simplistic standardized and high stakes tests used to punish and reward schools and teachers.”

UMFA does not automatically receive new or revised policies or procedures that are proposed at the department or faculty/school level. The development and implementation of learning objectives at UM requires close vigilance. We rely on the Membership to keep us informed of initiatives in their unit and so please let us know about your concerns.

CCPA target of audit by government

In 2012, the Federal government announced that it would monitor the political activities of charities to see whether or not they were spending too much money on these activities. According to the Canadian Revenue Agency, “a registered charity may take part in some political activities as a way of furthering its charitable purpose(s). However, charities do not have complete freedom to support any cause they like. Special legal rules apply to charities because of their charitable and tax statuses.”

Previously, auditors looked at political actions as part of a larger audit, but it would appear that these audits are now targeting groups that speak up against government policies. Despite the CRA saying that it pays no attention to the political views of organizations, according to the Canadian Press, at least five of the 10 political-activity audits in 2012-2013 were conducted on charities in one category: environmental groups, all of whom oppose the government’s energy policies.

The CRA is planning 60 political-activity audits by 2016 and has expanded the scope to include anti-poverty, foreign-aid, human rights, and animal-welfare groups. One of the organizations selected in this next wave of audits is the left-leaning research institute, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), which is registered as an educational charity and is critical of government policy. After submission of an Access to Information

Request, the CCPA learned that the rationale being used for the audit is that CCPA allegedly conducts “biased and one-sided research activity”. Interestingly, right-leaning research institutes like the C.D. Howe Institute and the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, are not currently undergoing audits.

As a result of these audits, a petition has been started by two university professors, calling on Minister of National Revenue Kerry-Lynne Findlay to “place a moratorium on its audits of all the various think-tanks that claim charitable status, until such time when truly neutral criteria can be implemented in the selection and conduct of fair, transparent and even-handed periodic audits. Audits should be focused on the financial management and integrity of the organization, not on the content of the research it conducts.” The petition adds that even though the CCPA is critical of government policies, it “does not make it a partisan organization promoting a narrow agenda” and that differing conclusions should be welcome, even if they don’t agree with those of the government. Nearly 500 academics from across Canada have signed the petition.

If you wish to read and sign the petition, it can be found here: <http://www.progressive-economics.ca/2014/09/11/a-petition-of-academics-against-the-ccpa-audit/>.

Investigations

In the last two months, there have been six investigations of our Members' alleged misconduct. Some of these have been formal investigations under either the University's *Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy* or the *Responsible Conduct of Research Policy*, and their associated procedures. The university is increasingly vigilant regarding the use of grant monies and Members are being asked to provide rationale for expenditures. Other investigations have looked into complaints from students.

If you are the subject of an investigation, even at the early information gathering stage, we strongly recommend that you immediately contact UMFA for advice. Where meetings are held to investigate alleged inappropriate behaviours, UMFA Members have the right to have an UMFA representative attend such meetings with them.

UMFA welcomes all Members back and extends best wishes for the year ahead!

As always, we welcome your feedback and comments.

Please contact: umfa-communications@umfa.ca.

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