

NEWS & *views*

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA FACULTY ASSOCIATION

December 2007

A Message from the President

Though classes are now over, and this is the first official non-bargaining UMFA newsletter of the new academic year, and of my Presidency, I feel as if we have been in fairly close contact already. Collective bargaining, which began last March and concluded three days before our strike deadline in mid-October, necessitated a considerable degree of print communication with Members. I also had a chance to meet and talk with many of you at the various membership meetings held throughout the fall.

Nevertheless, this newsletter provides me with a more formal opportunity to welcome new faculty and librarians to the University, and to send greetings to more established

members of the Association. It also gives me a chance to thank UMFA Members for their support during the bargaining talks so recently behind us.

The UMFA Executive will be meeting in early January to set Association priorities for the new year. The importance of maintaining a high level of communication with Association members will be one of the objectives we discuss. Other issues on the horizon of interest to members include the University of Manitoba administration's connection with Navitas, a private, for-profit educational corporation formerly known as IBT. Navitas has already placed an advertisement in the *Globe and Mail* seeking applicants for

positions in something called the International College of Manitoba, to be located on this campus. UMFA is seeking information about the nature and extent of the administration's commitments to this corporation. You can read more about Navitas elsewhere in this newsletter, along with reports on conferences, and other Association activities.

On behalf of the Staff, the Executive, and the Board of Representatives of UMFA, I wish you all a safe, happy, and restful holiday season.

Brenda Austin-Smith

CAUT Committee of Inquiry at the University of Manitoba

CAUT has set up an ad hoc investigatory committee regarding allegations that there was a violation of academic freedom as well as a violation of the University of Manitoba's policies on the appointment of a department head in the Faculty of Medicine. This situation does not involve a Member of the UMFA bargaining unit, but UMFA will be watching the situation very closely and providing support as requested.

Prior to the decision to set up the committee, Jim Turk, the Executive

Director of CAUT, requested a meeting with President Szathmáry but she refused to meet with Dr. Turk.

The Committee of Inquiry is composed of Dr. Bob Miller, Chair of Family Medicine at Memorial University; Dr. Colin Stoddard, Professor Emeritus from the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University and a former president of the Dalhousie Faculty Association as well as a former Speaker of the Dalhousie Senate; Dr. Ernie Redekop, Professor Emeritus of English at Western University and also a former

President of the Faculty Association there. Dr. Redekop was also a student leader at (then) United College in 1957/58 where he was active in the support of Dr. Harry Crowe in his fight for academic freedom.

The process involved includes interviewing university and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority administrators, and others involved in the matter. A report is then produced on the committee's findings along with any recommendations felt to be relevant.

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2007 - 2008

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University Administration Makes Deal with Navitas

On December 5, UMFA received a call from a Member who had noticed an ad in the *Globe and Mail* for a College Director and Principal of a new Navitas college which would be located on the campus of the University of Manitoba. A visit to the Navitas (NVT) website revealed that this Australian for-profit corporation had issued a press release dated November 26, 2007 which stated that "Building on NVT's success with Fraser International College (FIC), its first college in Canada, the new college will offer pre-university and pathway programs for students seeking to gain admission into the University's academic programs." UMFA contacted Simon Fraser University Faculty Association (SFUFA) to get information about FIC and its arrangements with Simon Fraser University. Questions were then developed for the December 5 meeting of the U of M Senate.

It was clear at the meeting of Senate that hardly any one there knew that the U of M had entered into a Recognition and Educational Services Agreement with Navitas. There had been no submission to Senate for its consideration although The University of Manitoba Act stipulates that, among other things, Senate has general charge of all matters of an academic nature and the power to recommend to the board the affiliation or association with the university of any college established in the province for the promotion of any branch of learning.

The SFUFA has concerns about the operation of the FIC and the terms of its agreement with the university. There, the university has agreed to provide such things as physical facilities, academic computing services and counselling programs to FIC students in exchange for fees related to the tuition costs for the international students attending FIC. Concerns were also expressed about the advanced standing these students may receive in certain SFU programs of study and whether FIC students may receive the benefit of preferential acceptance criteria.

We do not know what the terms of the agreement are between Navitas and the University of Manitoba. Senate was told that the Vice-President (academic) Robert Kerr had taken the leadership role in developing the agreement and that apparently the Council of Post-Secondary Education does not object to the establishment of Manitoba International College. The college will hire its own instructors and staff outside the bargaining units at the University of Manitoba even though its operations will be located on campus. There was also confirmation by senior administration at the Senate meeting that the successful completion of 30 credit hours could permit students to transfer into other U of M programs.

UMFA is continuing to look into this matter. A letter has been sent to the Vice-President (administration) requesting complete information about the terms of the agreement. We are awaiting her reply.

John Loxley to Receive Distinguished Academic Award

Three years ago, CAUT established the Distinguished Academic Award to recognize academics at Canadian Universities who excel in teaching, research, service to the institution and service to the community. The award is given annually. Nominations are submitted to a panel who then recommend a recipient to the Fall meeting of CAUT Council. The award will be made at the Spring meeting of CAUT Council.

This November, CAUT Council voted unanimously to give this national award to Professor John Loxley of the University of Manitoba. John Loxley is an exceptional researcher, community activist and teacher held in high international regard for the variety and quality of his contributions on a career spanning more than 30 years. He has an extensive publication record, which includes 14 books and monographs published or in preparation and approximately 80 papers. As well, he has prepared more than 37 reports for organizations such as the United Nations, the Canadian Labour Congress, the government of Italy, UNIFEM (the United Nations development fund for women) and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. He has a strong commitment to improving accessibility to quality health and social care among economically marginalized groups and individuals. Evidence of this is found in his work as a consultant to the Manitoba Department of Health on a review of Ancillary Health Programs, his position as chair of a pharmacare audit report expert review panel and his consulting work with the First Nations child welfare agencies in Canada.

John has always been a strong supporter of and contributor to the Faculty Association. With his outstanding academic achievements, his contributions as a teacher and mentor of graduate students, his role in influencing public policy, and his contributions to the community, Dr. Loxley is a highly deserving recipient of the CAUT Distinguished Academic Award.

Harry Crowe Foundation Conference Report

The Harry Crowe Foundation is named after the professor at United College (now the University of Winnipeg) who was fired in 1959 after he made observations about the role of the church in the college, and about the federal government of the day, in a private letter mailed to a colleague while he was away from Winnipeg on sabbatical. Outrage over his firing resulted in resignations by several other of his colleagues, and gave birth to an organization committed to the preservation of academic freedom in Canada: the Canadian Association of University Teachers. CAUT established the Foundation a few years ago, and inaugurated a conference focused on academic freedom issues to be held every two years.

I attended the second Harry Crowe Foundation Conference, “Protecting the Integrity of Academic Work,” in Ottawa from the 2-4 November. Over the course of the weekend, we heard panel presentations by a variety of international scholars about threats to academic integrity posed by the growing expectation of academics to be productive as defined by number of publications above all else, by financial pressures on scholars and on institutions to produce commercially viable research results, and by the increasingly managerial style of university administrations. Harry Arthurs, President Emeritus of York University, gave a talk on the research scandal behind the Valery Fabrikant affair at Concordia. Michele Brill-Edwards, former Senior Physician in the Health Protection Branch of Health Canada, spoke on the manipulation of scientific research in government-run environments. David Healy, Professor of Psychological Medicine, Cardiff University, and author of *Let Them Eat Prozac*, spoke on practices such as the “ghost-writing” of medical research articles by pharmaceutical staff writers. Arthur Schaefer, from the University of Manitoba, gave a presentation on the Olivieri and Healy cases as examples of corporate effects on scientific norms; and Blair Stonechild, Professor of Indigenous Studies, First Nations University of Canada, shared his struggles to maintain his academic freedom in the difficult environment at FNUC.

Though sobering—one of the panels was entitled “Collegiality Lost: When Bad Things Happen to Good Scholars”—the conference was uniformly fascinating. The erosion of academic practices such as peer review under the pressures of corporate funding and “academic entrepreneurship,” along with the very real danger to which volunteers in drug trials are exposed as these forces re-shape research protocols, surfaced as chilling examples of how threats to academic integrity become much more than merely academic issues.

Western Regional Conference of Faculty Associations

The Western Regional Conference of Faculty Associations was held this year in Saskatoon in mid October. The annual two day conference provides an opportunity for representatives from faculty associations to exchange information on current issues affecting their work environment, including matters related to collective bargaining. Plenary sessions on workload problems, equity issues and bullying in the workplace provided a basis for further small group discussions. Susan Prentice from the Sociology Department at the University of Manitoba was one of the presenters on equity issues, and in her presentation she highlighted the slow progress being made in addressing salary inequities between men and women.

Each faculty association also reported on key issues affecting their workplace, including results pertaining to collective bargaining. A new three year agreement was recently ratified at the University of Calgary. Faculty members there, where the average salary is \$100,000, will receive annual increases of 5%, 4.5% and 4.5% over the next three years.

A common theme at this conference was the attempt being made at a number of universities to erode established practices of collegial governance. Despite all the evidence about the value of more participatory approaches to management and university administrations' lip service to collegial governance, the trend in universities is to adopt a highly centralized model of corporate governance. This is reflected in actions such as the removal of effective decision making power from committees and other organizational bodies set up within the university to ensure that the voice of the faculty members has some influence.

Workload is emerging as a major issue at all universities and a 2006 workload study at the University of Alberta indicated that members worked an average of 52 hours a week on university duties. The off-loading of administrative duties coupled with insufficient administrative support resources continues to exacerbate these problems. Interestingly, technology was described as 'making matters worse not better'. The President of CAUT reported that one of the attempts to address the workload issue in collective bargaining has been to limit the number of courses taught as part of a faculty member's annual workload. For example, several universities limit the annual teaching workload to five courses and Brock University considers four courses to be a full teaching load. It is more difficult to prescribe limits to administrative duties, although there have been efforts to establish a process within units to review and establish workload guidelines which must then be followed. Efforts have also been made to protect full time teaching positions by establishing ratios of full to part time faculty because most of the service responsibilities within units are carried by full time faculty members. The solutions to increasing workload demands remain in the formative stage, but across the country more and more faculty associations are placing this issue at the top of their bargaining priorities.

On this and other issues, it is never too early to begin preparing for the next round of collective bargaining.

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