

Nipissing University Faculty Association

General Membership Meeting of November 5, 2013

4:30 pm in H104, Lecture Theatre (Bracebridge), Room 207 (Brantford)

Executive Members Present: Rob Breton, President
Susan Srigley, Vice-President
Gyllian Phillips, Past President
Joseph Boivin, CASBU Officer/Secretary
Sal Renshaw, Grievance Officer
Jeff Scott, Grievance Officer
Pavlina Radia, Member-at-Large
Manuel Litalien, Member-at-Large

Executive Member Regrets: Dan Walters, Treasurer
Mike Parr, Member-at-Large
Corina Irwin, Member-at-Large

Recording Secretary: Angela Fera, Executive Assistant

Approximately 50 Members of NUFA attended, with several on Skype and video-conference.

1.0 Approval of the Agenda

MOTION #1: Moved by Laurie Kruk, and seconded by Gyllie Phillips, that the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

2.0 Approval of the Minutes

MOTION #2: Moved by Gyllie Phillips, and seconded by Laurie Kruk, that the minutes of the NUFA Annual General Meeting of May 8, 2013 be approved.

CARRIED

3.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

No business arising from the minutes.

4.0 Correspondence to the President/Executive

No correspondence.

5.0 Reports from Executive Members

5.1 President

Rob began his report by indicating that there were a number of internal and external matters he wished to address. The internal matters included: CASBU negotiations, CFTL, program prioritization, education reform and program reform, university policies, health and safety, and the special joint committee on pregnancy, parental and adoption leave. The external matters included: differentiation, Bill C-377 and educational development.

On CASBU negotiations, Rob reminded everyone how essential it was to show support for the CASBU bargaining team. CASBU negotiations could begin as early as February of 2014. He stated that the CASBU CBC is working hard to make this a better place for us all, and he asked the Membership to take some time to listen to and understand the CASBU point of view or express thanks and support however possible, so that the CBC can continue to prepare for what will certainly be a difficult round of bargaining. The CASBU CBC consists of Mark Crane, as Chief Negotiator, Joe Boivin, Corina Irwin, Laura Rossi, Rhiannon Don, and Scott Kaufman.

On the CFTL, Rob stated that this was on the Association's radar and was cause for concern. In a meeting with President Degagne, Rob spoke about some of the problems surrounding the CFTL – its reach and the rules under which it operates. Rob asked Mike a number of questions about the CFTL. Does it understand that academic units are responsible for programming? Does it understand that it is not an academic unit? Does it understand that the delivery model of a course is an academic decision, to be made by an academic unit? The Presidents decided to work towards forming a committee to discuss these and other questions. The committee could be the JCAA. If the Membership had any specific questions it would like addressed, or any stories to share, these could be sent to Rob or to Angela.

On program prioritization, Rob stated that this is both an internal matter and a provincial issue. The Ontario Government is encouraging universities to engage in “program prioritization” and “course re-design” in the name of productivity and financial savings. At Guelph, Brock, and Wilfrid Laurier, they have gone much further than we have gone here, but part of Nipissing's proposal for the Productivity and Innovation Fund identifies “Program Prioritization” as a “Priority Area of Focus”. The administration is asking for money to develop a “formal methodology for the prioritization of [our] programs in the context of [our] strategic plans,” that adheres to the ideas of US consultant Robert Dickeson. That is, to hire consultants to do this. Of course the administration has also hired an Associate Vice-President to review all programs (Education reform and Program reform). Rob stated that although we don't need to panic, we need to make sure the Employer abides by the Collective Agreements and Senate processes, every step of the way. In other universities they've operated by

hand-picking faculty to sit on the committees, in order to be able to say that they have buy-in by the faculty.

On University policies, Rob stated that of course he had in mind the recent “Policy on Political Activities and Events”, but that the Employer was also working on other policies that might be just as frightening, such as a “Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research”. Rob reminded the Membership that the Employer can write policies, and we as employees will be subject to the policies. However, we have Collective Agreements, so when policies run against the CAs, we complain. We can grieve if they attempt to enforce the policy and impose discipline on someone who violates it (if the so-called violation is an act that is enshrined in the CA). The NUFA Grievance Committee is also investigating whether or not to launch a policy grievance. Rob stated that Senate has a role to play here as well and needs to put on the pressure on the administration. He was also very happy to that see David Tabachnick, Gillian McCann and others are mounting another kind of campaign.

At this point the question was asked as to why we needed a policy on the responsible conduct of research, when that was already covered by the Tri-Council. Rob responded that the University had been asked by the Tri-Council to put something in place. The administration has adopted much of what is already in the Tri-Council documents. What they have not included is that they need to abide by the Collective Agreements and cannot write in separate discipline procedures. Rob reminded the Membership that it was important for everyone to know the discipline article in the Collective Agreement since the more familiar one is with the article, the less these policies appear as intimidating.

On health and safety, Rob reported that there are innumerable health and safety issues on all three campuses and a very confusing reporting structure. It has come to his attention that faculty don't complain as perhaps they should, perhaps because the reporting structure is Byzantine or perhaps because we tend to adopt an “Oh Nipissing!” attitude towards things. Rob encouraged the Membership to report when something happens. Members should use the “Injury, Incident Reporting and Investigation” form which may be found on the Human Resources webpage, under forms. By completing this form, as we understand it, compels the Employer to act on the incident, to investigate and to address the issue. If you have what you believe is a maintenance issue, but could become a health hazard, Rob asked that Members contact Kelly Morris, our representative on the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC). For instance if one has a wet or yellow ceiling tile, or anything that one thinks puts anyone at risk (mould is an issue and is not always visible), they should contact Kelly.

With regard to the Special Joint Committee on Pregnancy, Parental, and Adoption Leave, Rob presented statistics from 13 universities in Ontario, including ours. The total number of weeks that a birth mother receives paid leave ranges from 20 to 52 weeks, with Nipissing at 17 weeks, the lowest in the province. Rob stated that the Employer recognizes this issue which is why we have Appendix K in the FASBU Collective Agreement. This is a big step; however, although the SJC can make recommendations, the Employer is not compelled to act. Rob, Rosemary Nagy and Kurt Clausen will represent the Association on the SJC and their proposals will be:

- 1) to increase the number of weeks of parental / adoption top-up from 12 to 15;
- 2) to allow the birth-mother to claim the parental top-up in addition to the "Pregnancy" top-up (moving her from 17 weeks of top-up to 32 weeks of top-up -- all top-ups remain at 95%); and
- 3) to eliminate the language of Employment Insurance and begin to call a benefit a benefit.

A special meeting was held for the Membership on October 30 to discuss the proposals, but if anyone has any other suggestions, they may contact the Association representatives on the SJC.

Rob then moved into the external issues. With regard to differentiation, Rob stated that this could mean many things. The government has been talking about differentiation along with program prioritization. Differentiation can mean many things, such as a university developing a special research focus. It can also mean program prioritization (you don't need certain courses at every university) or it could mean teaching-only universities. Along with the Presidents of the other Northern Ontario universities, we have been working towards developing a public campaign on what differentiation means specifically for the north: on what students would lose with differentiation, and what our communities would lose with differentiation. Rob stated that he hoped that the Employer and our interests would be the same with regard to differentiation, and that we would be starting to collect research that directly affects the North.

At this point, a number of questions were asked. How do these processes override the Collective Agreements? Rob responded that he did not yet know, but that the Program Productivity and Innovation Fund does not make any reference to collective agreements or to Senate. His fear was that CAs and Senates were being "ripped up in a back room". However, whether by the province or by the Employer, the Association would fight back, and that the line has not yet been crossed.

The question was asked as to where cuts were being made and that a university is not just about professional programs. Rob responded that in his conversations with President Degagne, although sports programs were important, it was good programs that attract students. Members asked Rob to remind the President that a first rate university requires active scholars and that anything else is second rate. Rob stated that this would be part of our public campaign. Also, in regard to the fact that teaching and good scholarship go hand in hand, we could be working with the Southern Ontario universities to get their support. A question was asked as to whether there was a committee to track the discussions on differentiation. Rob responded that this was something we could consider, but that OCUFA was on it and that other southern universities who are not in the U15 are on it too. Both CAUT and OCUFA were tracking and representing our views. Rob stated that the Membership need not panic, as this government may not be there in twelve months, but we still must be vigilant and proactive. Differentiation could be devastating to the North and to North Bay in particular.

On the issue of Bill C-377, Rob reminded the Membership that this is a private members' bill that would impose onerous reporting requirements on trade unions, labour organizations, and employee associations – on us. David Robinson, Associate Executive Director of CAUT for Research and Advocacy stated: "It would force every association to file detailed information about all their activities

and the individuals and companies with whom they do business. That information would then have to be posted publicly on a Canada Revenue Agency website.” The Senate initially refused to pass Bill C-377 and took the unusual step of returning the Bill to the House of Commons with major amendments. The Federal government has now rejected all the amendments and last week sent Bill C-377 back to the Senate in its original form. Although NUFA provides financial information to the Membership, it would not want to give that information to the Employer. Members can our Senator to protest. She is Marie-P. (Charette) Poulin or alternatively, Members could contact the Member of Parliament. Information the Bill and the Senate contact information is available in the NUFA Office.

Rob reported that along with Natalya Brown and Linda Piper, he recently attended the FEED Conference (Faculty Engagement in educational Development) in Hamilton. The main question for the educational developers attending was, “should teaching faculty how to teach be a centralized, mandatory regulation?” The main questions for faculty attending were, “who are these people and what on earth are they talking about?” The conference represented the “CFTLs” of the world, in an effort of consultants to try and convince the taxpayers about ways to save money. This is on our radar and cannot be ignored. The consultants are getting big resources to do this, but it begs the question “who are they to tell us how to teach?”

There is a striking difference between our CFTL and other centres. Ours is trying to impose online courses/degrees, when in fact, it is supposed to be a resource for faculty.

5.2 Treasurer

On behalf of Dan Walters, Angela reported that our accounts were on track with revenue. Expenses so far were below budgeted, and that at the moment there was a balance in the operating account of approximately \$60,000.

5.3 CASBU Officer

Joe reported that the previous week was Fair Employment Week (FEW). FEW is an initiative across North America to recognize the contributions of contract academic staff at post-secondary institutions. He informed the Membership that we have 188 Members of the full-time academic bargaining unit, and to date, 186 Members of the contract academic staff bargaining unit. Last week Angela, along with Laura Rossi of CASBU, posted approximately 200 posters across the campus regarding FEW, and that a number of posters had been designed with messages specific to CASBU and reflecting the proposals being drafted for the next round of collective bargaining.

The CASBU CA expires on April 30, 2014. Preparations have been underway for over a year. The proposals are near completion and the emphasis in this round of negotiations is to recognize the long-term service of contract academic staff who have helped to make Nipissing University what it is today. Many CASBU Members have taught at Nipissing over over 10 years. Based on the Employer’s calculations, approximately 30% of on campus courses are taught by CASBU. Over 450 courses are taught by CASBU. Not only contributing to teaching, many CAS volunteer their time on the Senate, NUFA, and other committees and organizations on the campus, and also contribute to research conducted at Nipissing. Nipissing would not be able to function without the contribution of CAS, and

the solidarity of all NUFA Members is essential during negotiations. Joe encouraged the Membership to find out who the CASBU Members are, and to be sure to include them in discussions. Although the Association maybe divided into two bargaining units, we are all united by the common goal of making Nipissing University the finest post-secondary institution that it can be and that CASBU is counting on everyone's support in whatever shape or form.

6.0 Reports from Standing Committees

The President suggested an omnibus motion to receive all of the written Standing Committee Reports and Reports from Representatives on Other Committees, which were circulated by e-mail to the Membership in advance of the meeting.

MOTION#3: Moved by Susan Srigley, seconded by Gyllie Phillips, that the written reports of the Scholarships Committee, Communications Committee, Social Committee, Gender Equality and Diversity Committee, CAUT Defense Fund, and Joint Health and Safety Committee (Brantford), be received.

CARRIED

The reports are appended to these minutes.

6.1 Collective Bargaining Committees

Joe provided a brief report on CASBU collective bargaining in his CASBU Officer report.

6.2 Scholarships Committee

6.3 Grievance Committee

Rob presented a report from the Grievance Committee. The committee met formally 12 times since the AGM (May 13, May 22, July 3, August 6, September 3, September 10, September 17, September 24, October 1, October 8, October 22, and October 29). At the May 13 meeting, the three Vice-Presidents were invited to discuss issues of health and safety, and at the October 8 meeting, the Dean of APS and the Director of CFTL were invited to discuss issues around contracts for courses taught through the CFTL. During that time there were 24 issues; thirteen Member issues with twelve resolved or closed and eleven Association issues, with one going to Stage One of the formal grievance procedure and five resolved or closed. Of the 24 issues, seven were in the Faculty of Applied and Professional Studies, four were in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and nine were in the Faculty of Education. The other four pertained to all three faculties.

6.4 Constitution Committee

No report.

6.5 Communications Committee

6.6 Social Committee

6.7 Gender Equity and Diversity Committee

Kurt Clausen reported that the committee had met once and that they were planning on a second part to the survey regarding gender ratios at Nipissing. He also reported on the Employer's now positive response to an on-campus day-care. He indicated that in researching day care across the country, we are at the 1956 level. Comparatively, 5% of universities have no day care facilities. Most of those, unlike Nipissing, are store front type universities. Contrary to what was last being discussed, the Employer is now interested in building its own facility rather than with the YMCA, NBDHC or First Kids Place.

7.0 Reports from Special Committees

No reports.

8.0 Reports from Non-Association Committees or Representatives

8.1 CAUT Defense Fund

See Item 6.0.

8.2 CAUT Council

See Item 5.0.

8.3 OCUFA

See Item 5.0.

8.4 University Harassment and Discrimination Committee

8.5 Joint Health and Safety Committee

See Item 6.0.

8.6 Pension and Benefits Advisory Committee

Dana Murphy reported that the Pension and Benefits Advisory Committee had met recently. Members need to be aware that two funds have been removed. They are the Balanced SLI Diversified and Jarolowsky Fraser. These have been removed due to key changes in their organizations around those involved in the buying and selling. It is expected that this turnover will have an effect on the productivity of the funds.

Dana also mentioned the discussion around some of the dangers for the many who spend most of the day sitting at our desks. There are benefits implications to this workplace requirement and UTS is looking into how changes can be made to assist the Membership. Kelly Morris indicated that

ergonomics has been a long-term health concern for the JHSC. A Member asked if natural light deprivation was an ergonomic concern. Kelly responded that although a health concern, it is not considered ergonomic.

Dana also reminded the Membership of the group and individual sessions November 19-21, by representatives from Standard Life and encouraged Members to review their portfolios.

9.0 New Business

No new business.

10.0 Next Meeting Date

TBA

11.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm by consensus.

Approved