

THE NUFA NEWS

NUFA Communications Committee

February 2016

JARVIS | KUNDRATS | PETERS | WINTERS

Issue # 26

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Making a Statement

by Uldis Kundrats

Marshall McLuhan's observation that "The future isn't what it used to be" points to some important post-strike questions for NUFA members. With just three years and three months to go before the recently ratified agreement expires, it makes sense for faculty to consider what they might expect for themselves and the work they do.

It would be hard to dispute that our labour action last fall functioned as a means of "making a statement" on behalf of FASBU members. Exactly what this collective assertion entailed and whether or not it was correctly understood beyond our ranks is open to discussion. However, it was clear that NUFA members showed the flag on the picket lines and their loyalty in other ways, while sending a strong message in doing so.

During and after the recent faculty strike, personal hardships were endured by some FASBU members. There were sacrifices, too. But the more than a million dollars that the labour action cost our full-time faculty members can be viewed as a measure of their sincere commitment to making our voices heard. The memory of that generosity of spirit will warm our recollections for a long time to come.

So where can we go from here? The financial problems that face Nipissing now are complicated, but can be honestly addressed in a spirit of open communication that takes into account the thoughts and feelings of NUFA members, as well as input from students, staff and representatives of administration.

The will to ask intelligent questions, to share ideas, and to step forward and be counted can continue to be an important element in NUFA's contributions to the life of Nipissing University, as it approaches its silver anniversary as an independent degree-granting institution.

In Comradeship

STRIKE 2015 SPECIAL FOCUS ISSUE



Larry Patriquin Interviews Hilary Earl: Chief Negotiator to Chief Negotiator (01/17/16)

When I was Chief Negotiator in 2006 and 2009, I would have said at the time that the likelihood of getting an agreement was 99%. I would have said the same thing when you were Chief Negotiator in 2012. This time, however, I was 99% certain we would go on strike. Would you make the same assessment about these four rounds of bargaining?

Absolutely, Larry. I worked with you in 2006 and 2009 and I sought your advice in 2012, and the question then was never whether or not we would get an agreement, it was the kind of agreement we would get; but this year there was a shift, a tectonic shift, in the administration's attitude toward collective bargaining and the collective bargaining team. They seemed entrenched and prepared for a strike. It's almost like they *wanted* a strike. In the twelve months leading up to negotiations we had more grievances than we've ever had, and a really bad relationship, frankly, with the administration in terms of resolving labour issues. We used to have good relationships with the administration even though we had different interests, but this time round—but you knew that too, didn't you?

Oh yeah. Everybody knew it.

How did you know it?

Oh, just a feeling in the air. Like you said, a lot of grievances—it was almost like they were determined to not get an agreement.

Given what we ended up with, they should have settled without a strike.

Yeah, it's not like we got a 1:1 teaching load or anything crazy.

And it's not like we were asking for anything insane. Rumour had it they were prepared to keep us out until January. They wanted us to crumble.

In 2015, did you notice any differences on our side in bargaining—with a strike looming like a dark cloud—compared to 2012? Did you and the Bargaining Committee and the Executive do any things differently? Did the ambience in our room change in any way?

There were a number of things that were different. We could have gone on strike in 2009 and we all kind of chickened out at the last minute. There was resolve from the very beginning in this round of negotiations that we couldn't give in, because if we gave in we would have lost any ground that we've gained in the past. Particularly with regard to the Limited Term Appointment issues—things that we had fought for for six years, that we had traded and negotiated for—so I think that there was a resolve this time that we didn't have before. And I do think that our membership let us know this time that they were also ready, that they were behind us. Maybe in labour relations there comes a moment when you have to test the strength of the group and I think our group was ready to be tested and I think everything kind of coalesced at the same moment. The very core and financial foundation of the university was under threat, according to the administration. We had never actually tested their truthfulness before—they would claim the sky is falling and we'd always bought their line—but this time we were prepared to test them, and largely because our membership was behind us.

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I don't think we could have ever done what we did without the strength of the membership. I know I couldn't have. The way this university has always functioned was also under attack: that is, the system of Limited Term Appointments that are converted to tenure-track appointments for as long as you and I can remember was being challenged. This was a breaking point for the institution: are we going to go the route of every other university in the province and become a university that just hires contract people and has no tenure-track appointments or are we going to be a university that stands up and says no? So I do think that was different. I do think this was a moment in the history of labour relations at universities to test that. And I think we won.

In the two rounds of bargaining in 2006 and 2009, the administration's side was led by the Vice President, Academic and Research (VPAR). Despite our differences, I felt their Chief Negotiators (Ted Chase and Peter Ricketts) had the best interests of the university at heart. In contrast, in both your rounds, rather than do the work themselves, our senior administration hired a high-priced lawyer from the outside. Did you find negotiating different under these circumstances? Would things have been different in a tangible way—possibly to the point of even avoiding a strike—if Admin had the VPAR negotiating for them?

I have such mixed feelings about this question and I have mixed feelings about what the outcome would have been had the VPAR been the Chief Negotiator for the administration. Part of the shift at Nipissing in terms of administration and labour relations has been a shift away from academics negotiating to Human Resources negotiating; this is part of the corporate shift at universities more generally. In the province unions now negotiate with HR people and lawyers. And this is a tremendous cost to universities which are public institutions. The University's lawyer, John Brooks, we have heard costs thousands of dollars a day. I don't know if it's true because the VPAR did not respond to a direct question on that in January's Senate. So we don't actually know how much it costs to employ a lawyer—what we do know is it costs. Even if it's only \$5,000 a day, it's still a lot of money and a small institution like Nipissing doesn't have that kind of superfluous money—according to them—to spend on labour relations. The head of HR could have certainly done the negotiations; the problem, of course though, is that HR knows little about the academic side of the house. I'm not sure a Toronto lawyer knows much more.

You seemed to be happy with the lawyer in 2012 so what changed there?

Last time I was happy because our relationship with the senior administration had gone down the tubes. It wasn't a very friendly relationship, it had become personalized, and it caused me as Chief Negotiator tremendous anxiety. And so when they brought in the lawyer it actually de-personalized the situation, which I preferred. This time I didn't like it because the cost of the lawyer went directly against their claim that they are broke. They could have easily carried out their side of negotiations for no additional costs.

There were no shortage of rumours circulating when we were on the picket line. One suggested that a senior administrator was behind the firing of our LTAs, thinking this would make the tenured and tenure-track faculty "fearful" of going on strike.

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Another suggested that a second senior administrator was under the impression they could “break the union,” that the strike would quickly crumble because it was instigated by a few “rabble-rousers” on the Executive. Do you think Admin was surprised by the strike? What do you think the strategy was on their side of the table? Did they have a genuine interest in getting an agreement, or were they simply trying to provoke a strike?

My sense is that they really do view the Union as troublemakers, as a cabal trying to take over the university, that somehow the Union was trying to destroy the university. I have no hard evidence, just rumours, but the rumours were strong, that NUFA is the cause of the problems at the institution. If they believe that then this is really troubling. We (faculty) are the ones who are invested in this institution. We are the ones whose careers are here, our families are here. Our lives are in North Bay; administrators come and go.

Once the parties returned to the table, things moved rather quickly to arrive at an agreement. Many people—including students, parents, and staff—no doubt were wondering: Why didn’t this happen on day two or three of the strike, instead of day 24? What are the dynamics involved in this situation that most casual observers on the outside can’t see?

I was on the inside and I don’t know the answer to that question! Honestly, Mark and I were dumbfounded. He and I had actually prepared that week on the off-million possibility chance that they would actually negotiate the day that we met. We did not go into that meeting anticipating we would get a deal that day. So what changed? Obviously they felt pressure from somewhere. Where that pressure came from I don’t know. So the outside observer and the inside participant are in the same blind spot. I have no idea.

Has your productivity increased since the strike?

Pah!

You know where that question comes from, right?

No. Can you tell me?

There was an article in *Bay Today* in which the President said something like “It’s good to go through this every now and then because it clears the air,” and then he said “I’m sure productivity will increase now that the strike is over.”

My God, I am just trying to figure out how to put my life back together after the past eight months. I cannot tell you how many hours I put in and how much my research has suffered—I am just trying to catch up. Productivity, *ha!* That infuriates me. There’s clearly no understanding of what this takes for us and from us. Labour relations are their job, what they get paid for, their responsibility—and they hired it out. We’re all volunteers, our jobs are teaching and research: they clearly don’t understand that nor do they realize the toll it takes on careers.

And I don’t think they understand the long-term ramifications because I look at this and say—I mean, my line to people is—“My days of extra-mile-ing it are over.” I think that they get paid to waste our time.

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I agree with you.

I want that in the interview. We're done!

Thank you, Larry. Listen, I curse you and I love you, because you are the one who handpicked me, groomed me, and I thus far have not been able to handpick a successor. And this is a problem too. The amount of work that went into this is a full-time job. And people can see that and so no one wants to do it. So if there's anyone out there—if there's anyone out there who really wants to sacrifice, you know—

—their lives—

—their lives—

—and their research agenda—

—and their research agenda and their families, please volunteer to be Chief Negotiator!

The Spirit of Collegiality

by David Tabachnick

I Introduction: The Spirit of Collegiality

University governance resembles a byzantine beast, with different branches articulated through varied levels of legislation and bylaws, not to mention a plethora of ever-changing policies and practices. Students may see it as opaque and distant; professors often view it as an overly bureaucratic distraction; and university presidents seem to treat it as an obstacle at worst or a rubberstamp at best.

However, behind all of this, lies the true spirit of university governance: collegiality. This spirit of collegiality necessarily guards against the pronounced tendency in any organization toward the centralization of power. That is to say, in a proper functioning system of collegial governance, no person or part of the institution can dominate the decision-making processes nor gain a concentration of power whether in influence or resources. In turn, because decision-making involves many people or constituencies, this system should be further characterized by democracy and transparency and associated elements of autonomy and inclusiveness. All told, the “beast” mentioned above should not be opaque or distant, overly bureaucratic, obstructionist or a rubberstamp but built in this proper spirit of collegiality.

II University Government in Canada

In Canada, collegiality was introduced to the university system in the wake of the 1966 Duff-Berdahl Report. This influential document reveals a surprising parallel between the problems of then and now. Under the title “University Government in Canada,” the report noted the growing practice of university boards to overstep their financial mandate to influence educational policies.

Not only did this lead to an increasing ineffectiveness of academic senates, it also empowered presidents to ignore policies that came from senates that had any spending implications, preferring instead to defer to boards. The marginalization of senates had a damaging cascade of effects, including turning deans into mere instruments of the president's office. Instead of supporting faculty in the creation of educational policy, they became full time administrators having to submit to the president's agenda. This “take-over” created high tension and dysfunction in the system.

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What followed was a successful multiyear effort to strengthen the role of senates, to include faculty members on boards, and to create a general culture of transparent governance. This was achieved in part through the development of a fully functioning bicameral system. The assertion of a strict separation of responsibilities between boards and senates, with boards dealing with the “finance and property” side and the senate mandated to deal with academic affairs, was meant to acknowledge and utilize the areas of expertise of the members of each body. One of the new roles of the president, as a member of each chamber, was to assure that this separation was maintained, avoiding the undue influence of the board in senate business and vice-versa.

III The Unofficial Third Branch

However, along with major growth in enrolment and program expansion, this also introduced greater complexity into the postsecondary system that lent itself to the growth of an unofficial third branch of governance: administration. At the time, the role of administration was much smaller and far less costly than it is today. But, as will be discussed more below, this unofficial and often unaccountable group eventually came to dominate the institution.

Another critical and complicating element introduced around the same time was the steady growth of faculty unions through the 1970s. While this was in part prompted by economic recession and associated pressure by governments to decrease costs within institutions, it was also a reflection of broad failures to protect academic freedom. In truth, despite the many reforms prompted by Duff-Berdahl, there was still almost no legal recourse for violations of the aforementioned strict separation between financial and academic matters. Unions, rather than honour among colleagues, had to be counted on to ensure fair and equitable treatment.

Over the next decades, many more reports, reviews and recommendations came and went. But the 1993 report of the Independent Study Group on University Governance (ISGUG), commissioned by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), identified a new and perhaps even worse problem that had taken hold on campus.

Its authors noted, again and despite many reforms, that senates remained ineffective and were now marginalized by “an administrative group of senior officials” made up of presidents, vice presidents, and deans that had recentralized power, dominating the university with little sense of accountability. Surprisingly, these secretive “university management groups” had not only displaced the power of senates but also of boards. It now seemed that both chambers no longer even functioned as rubberstamps but only as mere window-dressing to give the appearance of collegial governance or camouflage for the closed doors behind which the real decisions were being made.

This led the ISGUG to observe that, “It is not surprising, therefore, that faculty and students have come in many institutions to regard service on the senate and particularly on its committees as a waste of time” (1).

IV The Problem of Executive Dominance

By 2004, this problem only worsened. With noted regret, the CAUT came to conclude that:

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(1) Independent Study Group on University Governance, Governance and Accountability. Ottawa: CAUT, 1993, p.12.

[W]e must finally recognize that university senates have not proven to [be] reliable and consistent vehicles through which academic staff can ensure their proper role in the academic governance of their institutions. We believe that academic staff associations must turn to collective bargaining to ensure their position in academic decision making as part of their terms and conditions of employment. (2)

All told, the precipitous growth of administration through the 1980s and 1990s triggered corresponding efforts by unions to rein in the centralization of power or, what might be called, executive dominance. Indeed, because this new management paradigm circumvented traditional decision-making processes, ignoring the will of academic senates, faculty again had little other recourse but to turn to the legally binding power of collective bargaining.

Inescapably and necessarily, the often contentious relationship between “administrative groups” and faculty unions is not (and should not be) characterized by collegiality but adversariality.

Because this adversarial system has largely supplanted the collegial governance system, there is a tendency to mutual mistrust under the observation that each party attempts to increase their power over the institution with no clear or set separation of responsibilities.

On the one hand, this “evolution” should not be surprising as it mirrors the employee/employer or worker/management division found in most workplaces. It might be argued that the “spirit of collegiality” is a noble if not antiquated idea. Yet, on the other hand, universities are unique organizations that have a mandate to serve the public good backed by institutional autonomy and academic freedom. In turn, there can neither be closed-door decision-making nor a singular focus on workers’ rights.

V The Province

Alas, in the contemporary university, the spirit of collegiality is also kept at bay by other countervailing forces. Most notably, there has been an effort by the province to influence and intervene in the post-secondary sector by tying new funding to a broad and somewhat misleading demand for “accountability”. In part, this is a reaction to public outcry against “unaccountable” administrators.

This drive began during the Harris era but the McGuinty government made it a major part of its postsecondary policy.

The 2005 *Rae Report* called for “[a]utonomous, flexible institutions working within a framework of public accountability” (13) while avoiding increased “government control” (16). However, the McGuinty government’s corresponding *Reaching Higher* plan then required universities to sign “multi-year accountability agreements” to access a Quality Improvement Fund, a major source for new money. This “policy lever” represented a significant intervention by the province in the function and direction of the University leading to a decrease in institutional autonomy. Everything from the imposition of “Quality Assessment Frameworks,” related “learning outcomes,” renewed calls for “differentiation” and the divisive and deleterious “prioritization process” stemmed from this accountability push.

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And, while the Wynne government's newly released *Final Consultation Report* has some good news for teaching-oriented undergraduate institutions, it also proposes a major increase of "performance funding" and "policy levers" to further influence the character and content of universities in the province.

The net result of these efforts seems to have further transferred decision making away from traditional governance structures. Still, the promised introduction of a new funding formula that de-emphasizes enrolment may provide an opportunity to return to a focus on quality and the classroom experience, areas more aligned with the mandate of academic senates.

VI Conclusion: The Renewal of Collegiality?

Like almost all universities before it, Nipissing is about to engage in a review of university governance. Tellingly, the original call for such a review put forward by faculty and Senate was disregarded (if not "slow-walked") by the president and only agreed to in a collective agreement signed after an almost month-long strike. Needless to say, this is not the ideal environment to discuss a renewal of collegiality. Under such a broad mandate, there is also a danger that the committee charged with leading the review will be overwhelmed by thousands of pages of documents and unsystematic processes of consultation.

As discussed above, many of the problems that plague our university are found in other institutions. In turn, not only should we understand the decades-long developments and forces that have brought us here but identify the ways other universities have embarked upon and implemented governance renewal.

The very worst (and all too common) outcome of the review will be a report that few read and no one acts upon. Under the banner of collegiality, it is up to all of us— board members, administrators, students, and faculty alike—to first recognize and account for the dysfunction in our institution, locate and articulate ways to fix it, and then implement solutions steadfastly.

collegiality



Interview with Susan Srigley, NUFA President (01/26/16)

by Sarah Winters

In your first year as Union president we had our first-ever strike. How did *that* feel?

Terrifying! And then when I saw how incredibly strong and committed we were and how we all stood together it was exhilarating.

Which of your jobs as president during the strike was the worst?

Having to talk to some angry parents. I felt for them and their concerns for their children and their desire to have their kids back in the classroom—of course that desire was also mine—but on top of that I had to manage the damaging effects of the university bargaining in public. It wasn't just the faculty being on strike that made them angry, it was the misinformation that the administration were posting on the university website about faculty salaries and an inflated representation of their offer.

How many parents did you end up talking to, approximately?

I responded to a lot of emails—but there was one set of parents in particular who called every other day and bounced back and forth between talking to the President of the university and to me. Because my cell phone was the primary contact on all media releases I ended up talking to that mother for 45 minutes one evening at home. By the end of the conversation I think we had turned a corner...

Which of your jobs as president during the strike was the best?

Welcoming the flying pickets for a 7am breakfast each Friday at the only unionized hotel in town (the Best Western) and bringing them to the line. I loved visiting the line every day and talking to my colleagues about what was going on, organizing with other labour groups in our community, and going to rallies.

In terms of going to the line, one day you went to Bracebridge and one day you went to Brantford—is that right?

Yes, Todd, Gillian, Manuel and I went to Brantford one day during the strike to join their picket line and rally. I missed our visit to Bracebridge because my beloved dog had just died, but my VP Amanda Burk stepped up to fill my place and another great group (Gyllie, Manuel, Todd and Dean) drove down with about half of our flying pickets. During our trip to Brantford we had the opportunity to talk and hear about, on a very human level, the experience of students and faculty, both full and part-time, in the wake of the administration's decision to close their campus. What was amazing to me was their solidarity during the strike, a relatively small group as opposed to us here on the North Bay campus—but still standing firm, still being out there on that picket line and yet reeling from the news that their campus is set to close. Hearing about how devastating this has been for all of them, for their families—it was a painful, eye-opening experience for all of us there. It's very different when you're there and talking face to face with your colleagues about how this has affected them, as opposed to hearing an announcement in Senate. That was really powerful. And hard.

You did a lot of media interviews.

Yes.



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How did you learn to do that stuff?

There was a media-training module at the CAUT workshop for new presidents in May. Little did I know when I was doing the media training that I would be thrown into my own crash course very soon. It is all about short, clear messages. Most of the news clips from my interviews during the strike were no more than 15 seconds. It is not the occasion for lecturing or persuading someone of an argument. Nothing, not even that media training, can prepare you for it—what really happens is that you learn on the ground as you go. It definitely got easier as I went along. The hardest thing in those interviews was when I had to respond or react to whatever the administration had just said. Many times the press would meet me immediately after they had met with the employer and then they'd throw me some outrageous statement that the employer had just made, awaiting my reaction. What got me through it was my colleagues on CBC (Collective Bargaining Committee) and the Executive: every time we put out a press release or the administration had posted something, we would spend several hours analyzing it and working on a response. Part of that process was to create talking points for me when I spoke with the media. Mark Crane offered a lot of his time to work with me on preparing for interviews. He was my "on-site" media trainer. He was especially good at helping me to distill clear, strong messages and to ensure we had reliable data to argue our position. For instance, when the university president stated that faculty are paid relative to the size of the institution (!) and so we should be the second-lowest-paid in the province as the second-smallest university, Mark helped me to gather the real numbers on our comparator institutions for my interview with Jason Turnbull on CBC.

What was the very lowest point of the strike for you, emotionally?

Hmm, that's a tough question. [Long silence] I don't know that there was a specific low point. For the most part I felt good, if a little tired. There were certainly moments of deep frustration and exasperation with the administration—actually, I will pinpoint one of those moments: when they suggested that we had been lying to our membership. That was probably the lowest moment because it was a very clear attempt on the part of the employer to try and divide our association and the solidarity that was so strong among us.

What was the very highest point, emotionally?

For me, the day that the sit-in students made their statement to the president and marched up the south walkway and joined us on the picket-line with their signs saying "we support our profs" and "standing together": that moment of solidarity—which also happened to be the last day we were on the line—was brilliant. I was truly overwhelmed and delighted. I think that was a real high point for so many of us, and we had collapsed the two lines into one and were all there to welcome them with food and hugs and chants and marching. That was a really great day. Those students were so courageous.

What do you miss most about the strike, if anything?

Wearing jeans and a NUFA t-shirt to work every day. Ivan's soup. Rallies!!! I miss seeing my colleagues every day. Since we've been back of course we've had to scramble to finish marking and courses and start new ones but we are back in our classrooms and our offices and we don't have that same contact with one another on a daily basis. Seeing everyone every day was great and I do miss that a lot.

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There was a very close bond that was formed between all the members of the Exec and the CBC: we were huddled for hours in our cramped room at strike headquarters for very long days and weekends. Our CASBU colleagues were so incredibly supportive of us, bringing us treats and honking when they had to go through the line. Our Exec CASBU officer (Rhiannon) and CASBU member-at-large (Joe) were part of those huddles via Skype because they had to be on campus. But they'd drop by headquarters when they could, delivering mail and joining the line with us. As CASBU prepares for bargaining we need to show our support and stand with our CASBU colleagues. So for all of the craziness, intensity and difficulty of being on strike, we were a really good team, and it was sort of . . . well, fun.

What are you happiest about in the new Collective Agreement?

I would say the Special Commission on Governance. I think that this is a really important step for the university. If you feel that things are broken in respect to governance and governance structures, and I think we do, then this represents a possibility—and I'm not saying it will fix everything—but it's something concrete that we can begin to do together to address the issues of governance.

How did your academic discipline inspire or reflect your style of leadership?

[Laughter]

You don't have to answer.

No, that's great. Well, you know, some might say that as a professor and specifically as a professor of Religious Studies I can tend to be a bit of a preacher in the classroom—but I really did feel this sense of trying to bring people together, to support one another, to think collectively and fight for what is just and fair. How can you not draw those religious parallels standing on a picket-line with a megaphone and getting people roused and cheering? They might as well have been saying "Amen!" (In fact I think some may have said that at certain moments!)

Do you have anything else you want to add?

I would just suggest the importance of us continuing to think about this strike and what it meant for us as an association—I don't want us to lose the momentum of our solidarity. Something really important and special happened when we were on strike together. I want to keep that in our collective memory and I hope that we continue to foster the solidarity and support we have for one another as we move forward.



From the Gallery

by Angela Fera, NUFA Executive Assistant

On December 3, 2015, I had occasion to attend the Nipissing University Board of Governors meeting. Below are some of my brief observations from that meeting, some of which left me astonished, but most left me with more questions than answers.

- ➔ There were guests/observers (of which I was one of about six) who were not acknowledged or made to feel welcome in any way. (We quietly made our way through the room and found a free chair, where we could, away from the board table.) Why wouldn't the Board of a publicly-funded institution recognize those individuals who represent a number of constituent groups (e.g. faculty, staff, students, the public or the press), and who have taken the time and interest to attend?
- ➔ There were at least seven or eight administrators who were, I imagine, guests/observers as well, sitting at the board table, having dinner, and giving the appearance of being actual Board Members to those sitting in the gallery. Were they not guests/observers like me, and would they not have to be recognized as such?
- ➔ There were four students at the boardroom table in addition to the seven or eight administrators, and curiously, they were all the executive members of the student union. It was unclear as to who were the "two students elected by the students of the University", per the Nipissing University Act (Part II, 8(6) and Board By-laws (II.[f])). (Minutes from previous years, as there are no posted minutes for this year, suggest they are "Student Observers".) Why does the Board have official or unofficial "student observers" who seemingly have the full privileges of the Board?
- ➔ There were no reports given by any Chair of the Board Standing Committees or Board representatives on other committees. (I was unofficially informed later that all meetings had been cancelled.) The President stated in some early remarks that there were "no formal measures and no formal meetings" in the last month or so. Why would the Board of Governors ("The Employer") have had no meetings during one of the most challenging times in the university's history?
- ➔ There was a document circulated by the President which he referred to as "highlights of the 2015 agreement with FASBU". Wouldn't the Board Members have already seen the "highlights", since they had already voted on the ratification of the Agreement?
- ➔ There was another document circulated which represented the University's current financial position. Neither the President, the Provost, nor the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee presented this report. It was presented by a staff member. (To my recollection only one question was asked about the document and it had to do with how much money was saved during the time of the strike. The Provost responded that he had "no idea" and had "not considered it".
- ➔ Later the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee stated he had "nothing to report", "everyone knows what they're doing," and there may be "some problems".) Why would the Board Members not have received this critical report in advance in order to prepare questions and comments, and what are the problems?

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- ➔ There were several times during the meeting where students were congratulated for the “good work” they did during the December 2, 2015 Senate meeting and for the “tremendous student attendance at that meeting”. Why was there no comment on the attendance of concerned faculty and staff and the tremendous work of the Senate?
- ➔ There were many questions asked by faculty representatives about due process during the time of the strike (e.g. conflict of interest, faculty e-mails). With particular reference to conflict of interest, a student asked while directing Board Members to the Nipissing University Act, Section 14(3), “Who made the decision regarding conflict of interest? The two of you?” (speaking to the Chair and the President). No direct response was given to those questions. The Act states:

Where the Board is of the opinion that a conflict of interest exists but has not been declared as required by subsection (1), the Board may by resolution declare, as provided by the by-laws, that a conflict of interest exists and the member found to be in conflict shall withdraw from discussion and refrain from voting on the matter giving rise to the conflict.

- ➔ The Board Chair spoke very little during the meeting, but she did ask if anyone wanted to share any comments. With the exception of the faculty representatives who spoke to issues of concern, others made comments on how they felt about the past month, such as “difficult”, “finished so fast”, “emotional”, “things done to hurt the university”, “was bound to happen eventually”, “the past month has been an experience”, “lots of bitterness”, “didn’t happen overnight but has been evolving over a couple of years and last year’s \$11 M deficit”, and “need to move forward”. Why was there no discussion of a framework to examine what had happened and to discuss what “moving forward” might look like, or what they might have learned from the “experience”?
- ➔ The open session of the meeting then came to an abrupt end and moved into the closed session. Why was there no reference to the nature of the issues, as outlined in The Nipissing Act (section 26) and the Board by-laws XIII, so the Board itself could determine whether it required a closed session? A follow-up question for me, having served on the Board, is how could the Board have functioned for decades with rarely a closed board session while in the last few years it has become a matter of course?
- ➔ Prior to the end of the open session, a Board Member slapped his hand on the board table and stated that “this Board does good work”! Well sir, my question is, “how would anyone know?”



Interview with Mark Crane, CASBU (01/21/16)

by Sarah Winters

How long have you been a member of NUFA and what role have you played in the Union?

I started at Nipissing in 2004 and started working with NUFA around 2006. I was on the Scholarships Committee and I chaired that Committee for a year after that, I think. At that time we saw the movement of the awards that NUFA gives out of the awards office to NUFA actually doing them so that was a big change. I think it was about 2008 that I started getting involved in Collective Bargaining and I worked on my first round of FASBU bargaining in 2009 and . . . the rest is history.

Had you ever been on strike before this year?

This is my first strike but don't forget that officially I've still not been on strike. As a CASBU member, I was not on strike.

That's my next question! It says "As a member of CASBU, you weren't on strike. But you were also the only CASBU member on the Collective Bargaining Committee." (That's right, isn't it?)

Yes.

So if you can separate those two roles for a minute, can I ask you first what the strike was like for you as a member of CASBU?

Well, on the one hand, our classes were cancelled so we didn't have to teach. But there was still an expectation that we would come to work. Because we were not officially on strike and our pay had not been suspended, we were still at work. So that meant that I had to cross the picket-line every day to come to work which was heartbreaking. But luckily all the members I encountered on the line understood what was going on and that I wasn't a scab going in but that this was the position that we were forced into. So that was troubling from the CASBU side: there was a lot of apprehension and worry from the other instructors about what was going on, and a lot of disappointment that we had to be in the building while our brothers and sisters were out on the line.

As someone on the picket-line, I enjoyed seeing members of CASBU crossing the line because they were supportive and it was nice to see friendly faces.

That was certainly what we were going for, to show our support.

And now, what the strike was like for you as a member of the CBC and Hilary's right-hand-man?

It was . . . wow. It was tense—lots of nerves going on but also determination to keep going. Our job on the bargaining team was to bargain. Our goal from long before the strike was to get a deal: that's where our heads were at. And you know it's difficult being the only person on a committee trying to get a deal who's not officially on strike. But perhaps that also helps with some perspective, with keeping your eyes on the prize. In this case the prize was getting a deal and getting us back to work and getting our classes going again. In some ways I think it was a positive thing to have that extra perspective. But it also made me a little bit nervous about some of the suggestions I was making because everyone else was on strike but I wasn't—not an enviable position.

(continued on p. 15)

That leads me to my next question, and you may have already answered this: did you ever feel disorientation or conflict between your two identities?

No, I don't think so. At the end of the day, we're all academic workers and we all have a stake in what's happening in our universities. That was front and centre for me—I never lost sight of that. It's hard to explain because a lot of the feelings of nervousness I had about crossing the line—maybe nobody else even noticed or took it to heart in the same way that I did. So any conflict I felt was just to do with myself rather than with my separate identities because every day we would meet and we'd have to run as a committee so I never really felt the difference there.

As CASBU's Chief Negotiator, how do you feel this experience with FASBU will affect your next round of bargaining with CASBU?

It'll certainly have an impact. It's pretty common, just generally, that any negotiations that happen in the immediate wake of a strike are going to be . . . tricky, because you can't just erase what happened in the past. Hopefully we'll be able to overcome that but I can't imagine that there wouldn't be on both sides a little bit of trepidation and a little bit of spillover from that experience onto this one. But it's our hope that we'll be able to move forward and not have to deal with a lot of baggage left over from the strike.

What is the thing in the new Collective Agreement that you are happiest about?

The Commission on Governance because I really think that was a central part of this round of bargaining and I think that is going to make a difference in the climate at Nipissing. Governance has been a problem: people come up to me and talk to me about it, so I can't just bury my head in the sand because the other side doesn't think there's a problem. And this isn't just on our campus: it's a problem across the province and across the country. I think that there are lots of ways NUFA members and faculty members can contribute to the running of these public institutions. It's legislated that they be involved in the governance of these institutions, but sometimes when you're not making any headway on that level you have to bring it out front and centre in a commission like this. I think it will be a real education, not just for members of NUFA but also for members of the Board of Governors. They have to take a long hard look at what their roles and their duties are and they have to live up to those duties. Maybe the problems with governance are difficult to see, difficult to reduce to a soundbite, and I think the commission gives that opportunity for the whole university community to think more carefully about what it means to be a public institution and what direction post-secondary education in this province is heading.

What do you feel most angry about regarding the strike?

What do I feel most angry about? [Long pause] Well, anger is an energy, some would argue . . . I didn't get angry at the people; the anger that I was able to translate into energy was anger that the system had become so broken. I've been teaching here for twelve years and I've seen things get worse. The dreams that I had about being an academic have not been realized: not just my personal situation but dreams about what the institution can do, how it can forward critical thinking, how the humanities can play a central role in a small institution like Nipissing. To see those things being constantly devalued, that's what made me angry, and the acceptance of mediocrity, the acceptance that the best we can do in post-secondary education is be glorified babysitters for young people.

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For the system to be so cynical that it comes down to a few dollars and cents taking priority over quality education—that does make me angry and I think it should get everybody angry who has an interest in developing these great public institutions and doesn't want to see them become wastelands of corporate mediocrity that don't do anything for our society, don't do anything for our communities and don't do anything for the students that we claim to serve.

What do you feel most happy about regarding the strike?

I was heartened all the way along to see the solidarity that people had: the solidarity within the membership of FASBU, the solidarity between FASBU and CASBU, the solidarity with other unions on campus and in the community, and the solidarity that we had with universities across the province and across the country. I was happy to see that people noticed, people in our community and from coast to coast really cared about what was going on and supported what we were trying to achieve. Those evenings when the flying pickets would come to the NUFA headquarters and have a beer or whatever—I think those were the happiest moments because they made all the other stuff worth it, to know that we were part of something bigger than just what was going on here.

I think you might have answered my last question already, but here it is: the work of Chief Negotiator is extremely intense and time-consuming. FASBU's Chief Negotiator worked extremely hard for all of us and she also shares in the benefits she won for us. But you fought for benefits that you don't get to share. What motivates you to do that?

We all benefit from efforts to make this university a better place. We all work here so any benefit that accrues to one group essentially accrues to us all. As academic workers, members of CASBU—and all members of the university community—do get some benefits from the benefits that FASBU members gain at the table: those benefits help to establish the basic groundwork at Nipissing. It helps us all and it's worth it to fight for that. And the other benefit, of course, that accrues to us from CASBU's support of FASBU is that when CASBU goes to the table we're going to need some support as well, and we hope that FASBU members will take the same attitude as CASBU did: that what is good for that group of academics is good for everybody.

When is your next round of bargaining?

Our contract expires on April 30th, 2016, so it's back to the table. No rest for the wicked.

Or the good. Do you have anything you want to add that we didn't cover?

Well one of the issues that I think ties to that last question about motivation is the issue of contract academic staff. I just wanted to note that over the last five years there's been a real sea change in the attitudes of a lot of tenured and tenure-stream people towards contract academic staff. I'm sure you know that there was once a prevalent attitude that contract academic staff were contract academic staff because they weren't good enough—you're in that category because you're no good. And a lot of tenure-stream people just took that attitude and saw these people as disposable people whose lives didn't matter because they probably were not going to get very far in academics anyway. And that was a horrible attitude to suffer, being a contract academic staff person for so long, but as I say in the last five years or so it's changed so much.

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People have really opened their eyes and started to see that the issue of casualization of academic labour hurts everyone and it hurts the institutions that we work at. People are a lot more open to what's really going on in this situation and that's dispelled a lot of those ignorant attitudes that contract academic staff used to face. I mean, there's still a few—you can't change everybody—but by and large people have become much more aware of the structures that are causing this casualization of labour and are much more supportive of finding ways to stop it—because it hurts our ability to have a university the way we think of it and not just as a corporate learning centre.

After the Sit-In: A Student Perspective

by Lauren Edwards

After seventeen trying days, I think it is safe to say that everyone involved in the sit-in is happy to never see the Nipissing boardroom again. For those involved, this was an experience that we will never forget, and one that has changed how we view our education and behave in our everyday lives. Though it was a memorable time, we are all happy to say that it is over. When the strike was in its initial stages and the students were feeling an increased sense of helplessness, we found encouragement in the idea that we could do something. We would like to thank Dr. Toivo Koivukoski for his support and encouragement in our endeavour. We are sure that many can appreciate that beginning the sit-in was an intimidating step to take. Dr. Koivukoski reassured us that we could stand up for ourselves and have our voice heard.

Throughout the entire experience, and continuing through to present day, we have felt overwhelming support from our professors, our friends, and the North Bay community as a whole. We would like to take this time to thank everyone who supported us, both through words of encouragement and providing delicious home cooked meals! Specifically, we would like to extend lots of gratitude to Dr. Kirsten Greer, who devoted lots of her personal time to organizing the meals for us. We might have gotten scurvy without you! We have an amazing community here at Nipissing and we are honoured to say that we are a part of it.

From the beginning of this experience we sought aid and advice from multiple professors. We would like to specifically acknowledge Dr. Susan Srigley, Dr. Nathan Kozuskanich, Dr. Hilary Earl, Dr. Catherine Murton-Stoehr, and Dr. Katrina Srigley. You all provided insightful and enlightening comments when we were trying to figure out our next moves as a group. Thank you for listening to our concerns and reminding us of why we were continuing the sit-in. This was a difficult endeavour and there were some days that we left the President's office feeling discouraged and aimless, but your support helped us regain our stride and continue to put pressure where pressure was needed.

Though we had copious amounts of support throughout the sit-in, we were all worried about how our political action would affect our place at Nipissing. This was a drastic measure, one which we felt was necessary, but we knew that others did not feel the same way. Throughout the sit-in many members of our group received smirks, back-handed remarks, and flat out disapproval from various individuals. Luckily those involved in the sit-in are a group of friends, and throughout thick and thin we supported each other and continued on. But we knew the strike would eventually end, and we were unsure of how we would be received by our community in its aftermath.

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I am thankful that since the strike has been over none of our group members have experienced negativity due to our actions. We have all received the common question: “Why did you do that?” Should any of us receive negative remarks, I only hope we can all remember that we can answer this question with respect. I was a part of the sit-in because I was willing to stand up for myself, I wanted to be able to do something tangible and help the strike come to a fair end. It is intimidating to know that some people may still judge us negatively, and I would have to say that is likely the hardest thing post-strike.

In trying to predict how the administration would treat us and what exactly we should do during the sit-in, I sought the aid of Dr. Kozuskanich. I said to him: “If you have any suggestions please pass them on. This is the first time I’ve organized something like this.” In reply he said: “I’ve never been on strike before so it’s all new to me as well.” This was surely a learning experience for everyone involved, and I would like to applaud everyone for their perseverance in the face of adversity. The duration of the strike was difficult for all involved; however, from the connections that were made and maintained it is clear that we were able to make the best of a bad situation. Academically, some of us have ventured into the interdisciplinary field. After the bonds made throughout the strike, I believe that those interdisciplinary connections are stronger than ever and will only continue to become stronger. Going forward at Nipissing I am thankful to have developed stronger bonds with my professors as well as with my fellow students. Nipissing as a community was challenged and we have emerged as a strong unit.

What Nipissing needs to do now is continue to build strong community relationships, between students, faculty, and administration. Respectful relationships are essential in helping us all move forward from what was a very stressful and tense time at our school. More discussion is needed between everyone in our Nipissing community in order to help repair some of the divisions within it. We may be a small university but this community is filled with talented and admirable individuals, we can work together and continue on our upward stride. Our fear of displacement and judgement after the sit-in was intimidating and stressful, enough so that I personally wasn’t sure if I should just ignore that it happened and put my head down. But the strike happened, we stood up, and now I will stand with the Nipissing community in hopes for further development and strong respectful relationships.



Muskoka Perspective

by Anne Wagner

The recent strike at Nipissing University presented some unique challenges in Muskoka, given the recent announcement of the pending closure of the campus. Faculty were in the position of organizing a picket line in a town that was still reeling from the decision to pull out of the community that had invested so heavily in making the campus a reality. People remember the Ontario Municipal Board hearings where the Town of Bracebridge and local residents rallied behind Nipissing, ensuring the campus could be built in the face of some resistance from those who opposed the construction.

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The \$6 million FedNor grant that helped to fund the new residence is also on people's minds. Finally, the fact that the university announced the decision to close the campus without any consultation with the very stakeholders who supported its development in the first place still raises people's ire.

Hence, it was with a degree of trepidation that our mighty contingent of eight people set out to walk the picket line. The first week, bolstered by exceptional sunny and warm weather, was a jubilant time, as we re-connected with colleagues with whom we often only interact in passing. Many people stopped by our picket line to learn more about the reasons for our strike and many conversations were had regarding our concerns related to collegial governance. It also gave us the opportunity to provide information about what had been happening on our campus. Many were aware, for instance, that there had once been an announcement that Nursing was coming to Muskoka and wondered what had happened. There were also many questions about how it was that they had not been aware that Nipissing was considering closing the campus.

All of these questions offered us the opportunity to explain the dearth of consultation about the future of the campus and the fact that the decision had been reached by the Board of Governors, in consultation with senior administration. This often led to discussions about one of the underlying reasons for our decision to strike – concerns related to the lack of collegial governance within the institution.

Ultimately, a fundamental common concern of all related to the well-being of those Muskoka students, whose future remains uncertain as the program for which they enrolled at Nipissing is currently only offered in Muskoka.

These realities definitely resonated with community members who stopped by our picket line. As picketers, we were warmed by the outpouring of support from our community. These conversations strengthened our resolve as the strike dragged on for three more weeks. We were also heartened by the ongoing support of our students, CASBU members, and those enrolled in our life long learning courses, who regularly joined us on the line. Knowing that we had their support kept our spirits buoyed in those times when a return to the bargaining table seemed a distant possibility.

One of the memorable events on our line was the day that the flying pickets joined us, along with representatives from NUFA. On this day our numbers swelled and we became mightily visible. Their support at this point was invaluable, as the strike was in its third week and all of us were feeling the effects of the prolonged labour action.

Hearing the stories of others who had been in a similar position again strengthened our resolve, reminding us that we are part of a much larger group. This perspective helped to remind us why we were standing united and the need to remain staunch in our position.

Overall, the strike is happily behind us. On the Muskoka campus, however, we will always remember those unprecedented moments when we discovered that one of our colleagues can “bust a move”, write a hilarious song while picketing or develop a brilliant satirical marketing campaign for Nipissing while pounding the pavement. These are memories to be cherished...



General Perspectives

Submitted by the Membership

- ◆ Surely an abiding visual memory for everyone on the picket line would be our own Finnish pixie, Toivo Koivukoski gliding in on his strangely magic bike, his face lighting up with apparent pleasure at seeing all our glum faces, just in time to restock a trailer, bang together a barricade, wizard up a camera, or hammer in some sort of restraints to keep the port-a-potty from flying away in gale-force winds. Is there anything this man can't do? What fuels him: solar power?
- ◆ Gentle weaver Dana Murphy surprised us all by becoming Chanter-in-Chief on the Northern line, ably assisted by his loyal lieutenant Darren Campbell. Dana somehow manages to come across as sheepish and fierce all at the same time, a somewhat unusual feat.
- ◆ Faculty who apparently missed their calling in life and should have become traffic controllers, so smooth were they at the job, include Graydon Raymer, Mike Parr, Peter Nosko, and Trevor Smith, the last two of whom could guide a car with ease but occasionally seemed to have trouble recognizing their own bus.
- ◆ Peter Nosko was a notable presence on the line for his unforgettable hands-clasped-behind-the-back posture, coming across as a slightly stockier and much twinklier Prince Charles. In the virtual world, he also introduced us to the fierce support we can count on in the world of ecological plants.
- ◆ Three cheers for indefatigable tweeter Kirsten Greer whose selfies brought glamour to the concept of solidarity, music video director Nathan Kozuskanich who we will forgive for only making two because he had to work on the collective bargaining committee, and sabbaticants Jeff Dech who not only showed up to shifts, but became picket-captain and talked to drivers galore, and David Tabachnick who fearlessly carried our torch into spats on the Nugget's Facebook page, arguing our case with impeccable logic and knowledge while somehow managing to keep his temper.
- ◆ Wendy Peters brought food for the body in the shape of gooey cookies and food for the soul in the form of her playlist which had southern-liners dancing dorkily to Taylor Swift and Justin Bieber. What we lost in dignity we gained in laughter.
- ◆ Who would Hermione Granger become when she grew up? Jane Barker, of course! The organized, unflappable, practical Strike Preparedness Committee Chair held all our works and days in her hands and showed some of us that it is actually perfectly possible in this ruined world to be efficient without being evil.
- ◆ Dear Colleagues, the strike and the entire atmosphere around it gave me the opportunity to realize how much more highly I think of each one of you, who you are and what you do. More importantly, of who we are and what we do. I am grateful for this experience.



North-liner or South-liner?! Quiz

Are you a *North-liner* or a *South-liner*? Take our handy quiz to find out.

1. You run into someone from your picket-line in the corridor. You say:
 - a) "One day longer? ONE DAY STRONGER!"
 - b) "Wow, you look great in your fancy teaching outfit."
2. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." When you raised your eyes up, from whence did your help come?
 - a) Supportive messages in the windows of Governor's House
 - b) The expansive skylscapes of North Bay
3. What would your idea of a fun evening be?
 - a) A rock concert with lots of foot-stomping and head-banging
 - b) A few good friends playing chess on a beach with wine (chess optional)
4. Choose a song.
 - a) "We Will Rock You" by Queen
 - b) "Watching the Wheels" by John Lennon
5. What would embarrass you more?
 - a) Joining a communal dance to Justin Bieber's "What Do You Mean?" in front of students
 - b) Joining in with Henri Giroux's chant of "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, NU Admin's got to go!"
6. After a hard day on the picket line, what would you love to drink?
 - a) Beer, red wine, or whiskey
 - b) Anything with a paper umbrella in it
7. Pick a painter:
 - a) Turner
 - b) Botticelli
8. What did being on the strike bus make you feel like?
 - a) A miner going to t' shift
 - b) An extra in *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*
9. Which lines speak to you?
 - a) Thought shall be the harder / Heart the keener / Courage the greater / As our might lessens.
 - b) Western wind, when wilt thou blow / The small rain down can rain / Christ! That my love were in my arms / And I in my bed again!
10. You are
 - a) True, strong, and free
 - b) True blushful Hippocrene



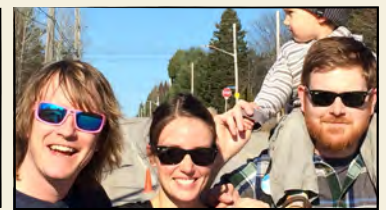
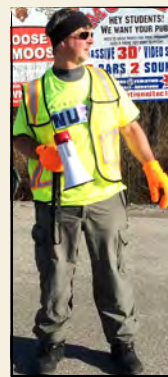
Analysis of Quiz Results

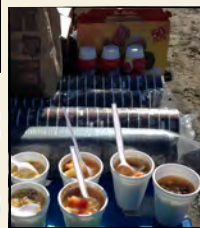
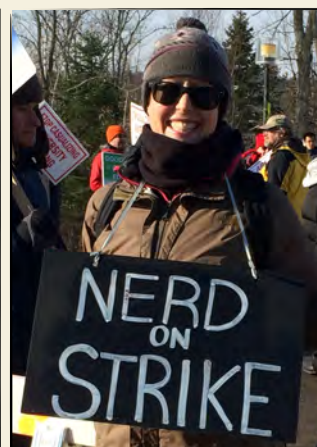
You picked mostly a: You're a *North-liner*, mate

You picked mostly b: You might just be a *South-liner*, old bean

You picked five a) and five b) or thereabouts: You're a *Switch-liner*

Strike Photo Gallery







Spotlight on Research:

Dr. Glenda Black (SSoE) & Dr. Mark Bruner (BPHE)

Dr. Glenda Black (Schulich School of Education)



Whether it focuses on the international or local landscape, Dr. Glenda Black's perspective is always centered through the lens of educational research. Currently, Glenda and Roger Bernardes (Adjunct Professor) are engaged in a SSHRC-funded project that investigates the complex interactions between an international teacher education practicum from Canada, a Kenyan community, and the Canadian non-governmental organization (NGO), Me to We/Free the Children, that facilitates the international practicum. Here, they hope to explore the expected and unexpected effects of these development initiatives in Canada and abroad. At the same time, Glenda and Mair Greenfield (Community Service-Learning Officer, OAI) are working on a Ministry of Education funded project that supports Aboriginal adult learners and their families as they transition into the Nipissing First Nation and North Bay area. This project is an extension of her research with Mair related to community-service learning. Finally, as part of an internally funded project, Glenda and Barbara Olmsted (Associate Dean) are in the process of exploring the types of support and delivery deemed most useful for successful mentorship during teacher candidate practicums and how the program can strengthen the connection between the university and field placements. Glenda uses research from all these projects to help in the preparation of her courses as she endeavours to instruct educators to meet the complex needs of students in Canada's diverse classrooms.

Dr. Mark Bruner (School of Bachelor of Physical and Health Education)

Mark Bruner is an Associate Professor in the School of Physical and Health Education and a Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Youth Development through Sport and Physical Activity. Mark's research investigates adolescent development through sport and physical activity groups (e.g., sport teams, exercise groups). More specifically, his research examines how social processes in group activity settings shape adolescents' development and participation. A key aspect of Mark's SSHRC-funded research with colleagues at Queen's University and the University of Birmingham in the UK has focused on understanding how the identities youth form through their membership on sport teams—their social identities—shape the treatment of teammates and influence sport participation. In another current project working with Dr. Brenda Bruner and colleagues at Queen's, Ryerson, and Motivate Canada, Mark is leading the development of a measure of Aboriginal youth development through sport and physical activity. A goal of Mark's research is to inform future strategies used by coaches and instructors to foster youth development and promote participation. He also hopes to provide valuable information for policy makers and sport programmers about the optimal conditions for youth development in sport. In working toward this goal, Mark serves as a Coach Facilitator for the National Coaching Certification program, and volunteers as a board member for Sport North Bay and as a coach for his two young daughters in soccer.



◆ Mark's CRC research has been video-documented here in: <https://vimeo.com/151900647>