

THE NUFA NEWS

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NUFA Communications
Committee

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Please note that the NUFA Annual General Meeting will be held on May 8th, 2014 at 2 pm in Room F210 and will be video-conferenced to the Lecture Hall of the Bracebridge campus and Room 207 of the Brantford campus. Although this is an extremely busy time of year for all of you, the NUFA Executive and the Communications Committee urge you to attend and take an active role in facing the challenges confronting all of us as faculty. Members may contact Angela Fera, nufaoffice@gmail.com, or at ext. 4499 for child-care reimbursement. The meeting will be followed by a reception in the new NUFA Offices in A244.

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Call for Nominations for NUFA Executive and Standing Committee

by Susan Srigley, Vice President, NUFA

Over the past month or so I've been talking to our members about service on NUFA Executive and Standing Committees for next year. Many good people have agreed to let their names stand on the nominations list, and we are grateful for their support. Below you will find the slate of nominations thus far. In addition to our indefatigable Angela Fera, these committees are the heart of our Faculty Association.

I know that right now, folks are weary. So much has been going on this past year and the effects are enough to crush morale among faculty and turn us all into cynics. Program Prioritization alone has taken up the energy and attention of many of our members who have been working tirelessly through Senate, Faculty Councils, Chair's meetings, and NUFA to resist a flawed process of measuring the quality and 'efficiency' of our University in an effort to cut costs. It is only by this vigilant attention of our membership that we can ensure that proper process is followed, especially according to Senate and the Collective Agreement. Add to this Strategic Mandate Agreements, Strategic Plans, budgets, deficits, major changes in Education and there is enough to keep all of us perpetually fighting what seems like an endless series of threats to the conditions of our academic labour.

Against the temptation to fall away from service to NUFA, sparked no doubt by the very real sense of overwhelm and frustration, I'd like to ask for your continued support and active participation now more than ever, particularly *because* of the climate we face. CASBU begins bargaining in May, FASBU will begin early next year. With Senate and the Collective Agreement as our only tools to resist the onslaught of cost cutting measures that will seriously undermine our ability to do the work we do, there is an even greater need on our part to keep our Association strong.

You know that service to NUFA counts as 'Service' to the Institution. Now is the time to serve what matters most for ensuring good working conditions for Nipissing Faculty, academic labour and the future of academic freedom.

Please consider the various ways in which you might help serve NUFA and our collective interests.

Please come to the AGM on May 8th and let us strengthen our faculty voice. We need YOU!

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Nominations for NUFA Executive and Standing Committees, and Representatives on Other Non-Association Committees 2014-2015

Executive

President	Rob Breton
Vice-President	Susan Srigley
Treasurer	Dan Walters
CASBU Officer	Corina Irwin
Grievance Officers (2)	Sal Renshaw (A&S) Jeff Scott (ED)
Member-at-Large (APS)	Manuel Litalien
Member-at-Large (AS)	David Borman
Member-at-Large (ED)	Todd Horton
Member-at-Large (CASBU)	Rhiannon Don

Standing Committees

Communications Committee	Richard Wenghofer, Uldis Kundrats, Wendy Peters, Dan Jarvis
Constitution Committee	Adam Adler, David Tabachnick, Larry Patriquin, Timothy Sibbald
Gender Equity and Diversity	Roger Bernardes, Rosemary Nagy, Kathy Mantas, VACANCY
Scholarship Committee	Adam Adler, Darren Campbell, Nancy Maynes, Sarah Winters
Social Committee	Liz Ashworth, Steven Arnocky, Natalya Brown, Douglas Gosse
Grievance Committee	President, Vice-President, Grievance Officers (2), CASBU Officer and Member-at-Large
Chief Negotiator (CASBU)	Mark Crane (Appointed)
Chief Negotiator (FASBU)	Hilary Earl (Appointed)

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Nominations for NUFA Executive and Standing Committees, and Representatives on Other Non-Association Committees 2014-2015

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Non-Association Committees (Appointments)

JHSC	Kelly Morris, Kristin Lucas (North Bay) Christine Cho (Brantford), VACANCY (Bracebridge)
CAUT Defense Fund	Nathan Colborne
CAUT Council	President
OCUFA Board	Vice-President
Pension and Benefits	Hilary Earl, Mike Parr
University HDC	Linda Piper
Research Achievement Awards	Tom Waldock
SCEAT	



Negotiating a New CASBU Collective Agreement

by Mark Crane, CASBU Chief Negotiator

The CASBU bargaining team held a preliminary meeting with the Employer at the beginning of April to make preparations for the next round of bargaining. The team is pleased to report that we have secured ten meeting dates at the end of May and beginning of June, which with any luck, will be enough time to secure an agreement. This compressed bargaining schedule is a new approach that allows both sides to work diligently and effectively for a deal. The team's hope is that this will make the protracted process we faced in our last round, which stretched over ten months, a thing of the past.

Over the last year, while preparing proposals for this round, the team has been keeping its eyes on the general feel of bargaining in our sector across the province, and monitoring the settlements that have been reached. Several contract academic staff bargaining units, most of them represented by CUPE, have recently negotiated new contracts. These include CAS at Brock, Carleton, Guelph, McMaster, and Trent. Likewise, CAS at Wilfrid Laurier (who, like us, are represented by a faculty association) have settled. We go into bargaining at the same time as the largest CAS bargaining units in the province represented by CUPE, those at Toronto, Ryerson, and York, do the same.

The message we have been getting from those who have been through bargaining is that the climate is still tough, and some employers are playing hardball. In some instances, employers have even come to the table claiming to have a mandate from the province for zero percent salary increases. You'll recall that we faced the same thing four years ago. Thankfully, this ridiculous ploy has been resisted successfully at all of the bargaining tables. Likewise, at some universities, such as Guelph, employers have argued that solvency issues in their pension plan leave them with no money for CAS. Thankfully again, Nipissing is not in that position. Despite these efforts, all of the agreements reached in our sector in the province have netted across-the-board scale increases, market adjustments, and improvements in working conditions.

Two lessons offered by those who have been through bargaining over the last year are that bargaining teams have to be creative in their proposals, and they need the solidarity of their membership. Creative solutions are always a boon in bargaining, now more than ever. Seasoned chief negotiators have advised us that we need to think beyond the base increases to wages as the be all and end all of an agreement – we need to find other ways to improve the overall conditions of work. Our proposals, passed unanimously by the membership, make clear that we intend to do that. Members can be certain that we will try all means at our disposal to reach a fair deal. But for the employer to take us seriously, they need to know that the membership is behind us and that they support our efforts. This includes not only the members in CASBU, but also the members of FASBU, who have just as much invested in seeing a fair deal for CAS.

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Negotiating a New CASBU Collective Agreement

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The majority of deals in the province have been made once bargaining units have held a successful strike vote, and most of the deals have been reached with the help of an outside conciliator appointed by the province. To some, these might seem like desperate and needlessly antagonistic measures, but increasingly they are becoming the norm in our sector. The more that members can show their support for the bargaining team's efforts, the more we can be assured of reaching a fair deal.

In the coming month the bargaining team will be communicating with members more regularly to keep you abreast of our efforts and progress at the table. We hope you'll listen and engage with the process, despite busy lives and summer commitments. The climate is good for reaching a fair deal for all CAS at Nipissing. It won't be a walk in the park, by any means, but with your support, we can get there.



Speaking Up and Speaking Often on Program Prioritization

By Kate Lawson, OCUFA President

Professors and academic librarians at Nipissing University now find themselves in the midst of a program prioritization process. It is a method for ranking academic and non-academic programs according to certain criteria, and using these rankings to make decisions about budgets and resources. In many cases, program prioritization can lead to program cuts and closures. These decisions are often made outside of normal academic governance process, undermining collegiality and the authority of university senates.

In short, program prioritization can be very bad news. The extent of its negative implications will depend on the methodology employed and the local campus context. Nevertheless, it is important for professors and academic librarians across Ontario to question and, if necessary, challenge these processes as they appear. When it comes to program prioritization, the only bad action is inaction.

After the program prioritization process at Nipissing was announced, NUFA immediately recognized it as a challenge to all of its members. It worked to gather and analyze information in order to protect your rights and interests, and it coordinated its actions with other faculty associations across Ontario.

For professors and academic librarians at Nipissing are not alone; faculty at 10 other universities are grappling with program prioritization as well. Through information and strategy sharing facilitated by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), NUFA has worked with other faculty associations to confront the implications of program prioritization.

Colleagues across Ontario worry that the methodology behind program prioritization is seriously flawed and that normal senate channels for academic decision-making might be by-passed.

As a NUFA member, you may encounter program prioritization in your department or in your program. You may be tasked with completing the data template that supports the prioritization process. In whatever form you encounter program prioritization, it is important that you understand the process and, if necessary, question its assumptions and challenge its more problematic conclusions.

Preserving a critical and active stance towards program prioritization – whether engaged in the process or not – has important benefits. It allows you to understand the current process and identify potential problems. It will also help highlight where the best opportunities to make positive change might lie. It provides you with the insight and knowledge to anticipate and push back against negative outcomes. A critical and active stance allows you to provide leadership in the movement against cuts or inappropriate academic decision-making.

Please speak out and speak often on program prioritization. Let your administration know what you think. Explain to your students what program prioritization might mean for them. Talk to your colleagues about their own experiences with the process. Get in touch with the NUFA executive for information and resources on how to get involved. And remember, professors and academic librarians across Ontario will be speaking out together on this important issue that cuts to the heart of our universities. When you speak up, you won't be speaking alone.

The P - Word

BY ULDIS KUNDRATS

A long time ago, English professor, media guru and pop culture soothsayer Marshall McLuhan uttered the words, “The future isn’t what it used to be.” This pithy aphorism applies quite well to these financially troubling and worrisome times in the academic world, when uncertainty about what is to come has become a chronic, dispiriting presence.

For several years now, traditional universities and colleges have been struggling with the combined effects of government cutbacks and changes in funding policies, declining enrollments in some programs, poor employment prospects for many graduates and the consequences of the sort of widespread economic decline that stems from de-industrialization and the export of jobs to faraway places.

It’s no accident that government officials and administrators at post-secondary institutions are looking for answers to difficult questions and sometimes welcome what seems to be a ready-made package of solutions and steps toward addressing the problems they face. In the second edition of Robert Dickeson’s *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance*, some might see a source of information and ideas that could be applied to the process of addressing the commonly experienced concerns of contemporary academic institutions. In its emphasis on “prioritization,” Dickeson’s book puts differentiation, exclusionary judgement, and selective reorganization up front.

When I first heard about *Prioritizing* . . . , I decided to order a copy to see for myself what the fuss was about and whether there might be merit to any of its content. Late one night, I put in my order to Amazon.ca and a few days later, a smallish volume with a glossy orange, black, and blue cover arrived at my door.

As I started reading *Prioritizing* . . . I planned to put question marks beside passages or statements that didn’t make sense to me and a check-mark alongside those that seemed to offer some insight or value. By the time I had slogged through the pedestrian prose of Dickeson’s book, the number of sections that caused me to pause and wonder about unsubstantiated pronouncements, vague claims, and often arbitrary recommendations for change by far outnumbered the portions that might be seen to have some merit.

One of the most controversial of Dickeson’s suggestions is that—after a top-to-bottom ranking process of academic programs—resources should be taken from those at the bottom of the list and put into the hands of the ones at the top. Dickeson argues that, although universities may survive by continuing to function as they have, if they want to “flourish,” they need to go through a prioritization exercise that will allow for the reallocation of money and other resources to highly rated programs. Dickeson’s analysis seems very one-sided and at many critical junctures in *Prioritizing* . . . he seems to forget that faculty members and the work that they do are essential to the functioning (and the profitability) of the complicated people-changing organizations that are universities.

I found much of *Prioritizing* . . . a disheartening exercise in exhortation that, for the most part, does not deliver what it promises. Given that it is written about post-secondary institutions in the USA and its contents are couched in the assumptions of business-oriented, for-profit provision of educational services, it is hard to see how the ideas in it could be applied to Canadian universities and the environments in which they function.

The only part of *Prioritizing* . . . that seems to offer some significant food for thought is Dickeson’s discussion of what he describes as the “proliferation” of new programs at some institutions of higher learning. Some of these, Dickeson says, came into existence when times were good and persuasive arguments for narrowly-focused, but expensive-to-run initiatives were more likely to be accepted than they might be now. In essence, he reminds us about what Jack Ries and Jack Trout described as “the over-extension trap” in their book, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*.

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THE P - WORD

By Uldis Kundrats

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Dickeson appears to be an uncritical advocate of online education, a stance that calls into question much of what he might have to say about the functions of traditional universities that employ instructors in classrooms, laboratories and lecture halls to provide learning experiences for their students.

Major inconsistencies in the style of writing in *Prioritizing . . .* made me wonder how many writers were involved in the production of the book. The contracts that some authors sign allow for publishers to complete books at their own discretion by using hired hands and ghost writers. I asked myself whether this might be one of them.

What can NUFA members make of a book like *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*? There can be little doubt that its content—if accepted as a set of simple truths and guidelines—could serve as an instrument of involuntary transformation, resulting in job cuts for professors in certain disciplines. These highly educated individuals would have reason to worry if the programs in which they teach, do research and writing, and fulfill service commitments don't "make the cut" when the "P- Word" is put to work.





Spotlight on Research

Dr. Laurie Kruk, English

Dr. Laurie Kruk is awaiting the publication of her short story, “The Cradle of Civilization”, which will appear in the Mother’s Day issue of the award-winning e-journal *Literary Mama* (May 2014). The May issue of *Literary Mama* is expected to be available in the second week of May.

Dr. Heather Rintoul, Faculty of Education

Dr. Rintoul, together with Richard Kenelly, a Principal with the Durham Board of Education, is working on a project with a working title of “The Vice Principalship: The Forgotten Realm.” Until recently, the vice principal, the interim position or second in command, has been somewhat forgotten by scholars, with research more commonly focusing on the principalship itself (Armstrong, 2005; Kennelly, 2011; Rintoul, 2006; Rintoul & Goulais, 2010). In Ontario, Canada, the vice principalship is not considered a career goal, rather it is an interim but necessary position for aspiring principals. Dr. Rintoul and Principal Kenelly are conducting research through individual interviews and an examination of current available documents to determine not only what training vice principal candidates specifically receive for their forth-coming vice principal roles, but also whether vice principals feel they are being adequately prepared for their administrative role.

Special Announcements

Learning Opportunity Awards 2013-2014

We are pleased to announce that in this academic year, NUFA has provided over \$13,000 in Learning Opportunity Awards to students. These awards are designed to encourage the continuation of learning experiences and projects outside of the classroom. Thirty students received awards this year. Of the thirty students, more than half presented or will be presenting at conferences. They are:

Sarah Jayne Connick – *2014 Qualitative Analysis Conference*, London
Lindsay Dolmage, Madisen Johnston, Kirsten Solymár, Megan Wills – *Canadian Society for the Study of Education*, St. Catharines
Nathan Gravelle, Ian Hall, Gavan Ouellette, Neil Siviter – *Queen's University Model United Nations Invitational*, Kingston
Nathan Gravelle, Ian Hall, Neil Siviter – *McGill University Model United Nations Assembly*, Montreal
Lyndsey Hagan – *42nd Southern Ontario Undergraduate Student Chemistry Conference*, Windsor
Randall Keefer – Carleton University Model NATO Conference, Ottawa
Matt McGuckin and Kelsea Stewart – *Eastern Canada Sport and Exercise Physiology Symposium*, Toronto, and *Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology Conference*, London
Imane Meddah – Ontario Ecology, Ethology, and Evolution Colloquium, Guelph
Nathan Mountain - *Canadian Geophysical Union Congress*, Saskatoon
Kaitlyn Norris – *Society for Neuroscience*, San Diego
Marlena Pearson – *Cognitive Aging Conference*, Atlanta, Georgia
Tina Piché – *Canadian Psychological Association Conference*, Vancouver

The following students received NUFA Learning Opportunity Awards for a range of learning experiences. They are:

Lynlee Armstrong – *Canadian Student Outdoor Education Conference*, Kingston
Linda Coffey – *Aboriginal Support Services Council Symposium*, Toronto
Michelle Dart – *Annual Canadian Bioethics Society Conference*, Vancouver

Chelsie Legree – *Huntington's Disease Youth Organization International Conference*, Bloomington, Minnesota
Hannah McDonald – *Mental Health First Aid Course, Tribes*, North Bay
Kylie Needler - *Canadian Association of Gerontology*, Halifax
Anna Pearson – *War and the Canadian Experience Professional Development Program*, Belgium and France
Theresa Dawn Russell-Smith – *Yoga Conference*, Toronto
Danielle Scott – *Autism Intervention Clinic*, Guelph
Eric Shalom – *Canadian Association for the Practical Study of Law in Education*, Charlottetown
Davy Wong – *Ontario Music Educators Annual Conference*, Niagara Falls

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Special Announcements

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CONGRATULATIONS to our award winners and best wishes on their many and varied learning experiences and projects!

Details and applications for the **NUFA Learning Opportunity Awards** may be found on the **NUFA website** at www.nufa.ca

There are four application cycles per year, with deadlines on: October 15, December 15, February 15 and April 15.