

THE NUFA NEWS

DECEMBER 2016

CONNOR – PETERS – PHILLIPS – WINTERS

ISSUE #28

ONE YEAR LATER

by Susan Srigley, *NUFA President*

November 2016 has felt rather surreal with our colleagues at the University of Manitoba Faculty Association going on strike exactly one year after us. I've watched them on the line fighting to protect themselves from arbitrary workload increases and mandatory performance indicators, as well as trying to bring their salaries into line with sector comparators, and ensure job security for all of their members. What we need to remember is that their issues are our issues. There may be differences in the details but the fight is the same. They are fighting for the integrity of their profession and the education of their students against an administration committed to managing the university like a corporation.

What has been especially encouraging to watch are the many student groups and unions showing their unequivocal support for the Faculty Association. On day 18 of their strike, the University of Manitoba Student Union and the University of Manitoba Student Action Network organized a rally and hundreds came out to walk the

picket line with their professors. They rallied to express their shared concern for their education and they thanked their professors for "**defending their education!**" How incredibly powerful is that?!?

While it is indeed a wonderful moment of solidarity to witness between students and faculty, this phenomenon of faculty defending their students' education signals an important shift in the landscape of collective bargaining. In addition to negotiating collective agreements that preserve fair and equitable working conditions for members, increasingly faculty bear the responsibility for defending the integrity and quality of their students' education. In the face of administrators who understand less and less what we do, and what universities are for, we are compelled to stand up and protect the core academic mission and values of the university. And as we witness university boards being populated with higher numbers from the corporate sector, the seriousness of this fight is intensifying.¹

¹ See the September 2016 issue of the CAUT Bulletin: "Do you know

who sits on your board?"
<http://www.caut.ca/bulletin/article>

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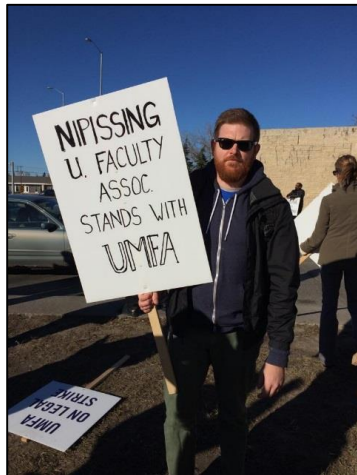
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This brings me to what I said at our General Membership Meeting on November 10th. We are in a period of vigilance. We've negotiated a new collective agreement but the language is still being tested in grievance. We are asking questions in Senate. We are attending Board meetings. We're working on JCAs and Special Joint Committees. We're meeting with Chairs/Directors and Program Coordinators to ensure Deans are following the CA and that there is consistency of process across Faculties. We've seen the report from the Special Governance Commission. NUFA and our members are working very hard. We need to continue to pay close attention.

As President I've been observing a few concerning trends. Grievance issues are more complicated, and by that I mean they are less focused on particular violations of the CA and revealing of larger, more systemic problems in the administration of the institution. The Price Waterhouse Cooper report indicated a number of poor practices by our Senior Admin/Finance and as we investigate various peculiar practices we uncover deeper problems and inconsistencies. The Administration is taking longer to respond to concerns when we express them. We spend more time than is necessary asking for responses and sending reminders. It is a frustrating process that serves

only to undermine the spirit and practice of collegial governance.

I've heard that some faculty have effectively been sidelined from meetings of crucial committees – including Board subcommittees and the Planning and Priorities Committee – because meetings are being scheduled when they are teaching. While it is obviously the case that scheduling meetings can be challenging at times, faculty members on those committees are our representatives and they have a right to be there. If this has happened to you please let us know. It is a form of silencing that we must resist. NUFA cannot monitor every instance of these kinds of occurrences and so I ask that all of you remain attentive and let us know when something similar is happening.



Connected to this, it has also come to my attention that a number of Board sub-committee meetings have been cancelled, including the October meeting of Plant and Property and both the November 2016 and March 2017 meetings of Audit and Finance. If

the Board holds fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and the chair of the board has said that all the Board work happens at the committee level, how is it even possible that Audit and Finance has no reason to meet? With the financial challenges that Nipissing has been facing and changes to the funding formula on the horizon this seems nothing short of incomprehensible.

Finally, the Special Governance Commission report has been received by the Senate and the Board. This report is the result of the hard negotiations in the last round of bargaining and our willingness to stand up and fight for collegial governance. The Commission has had its share of challenges throughout the process, and there was certainly some resistance to even receiving the report at both the Senate Exec and Board levels, voiced largely by the President of the University, but in the end all of the commissioners and members of the Board urged the reception of the report. What remains to be seen is how the recommendations of this report will be interpreted and, hopefully, implemented. Collegial governance is something that is shared and we all have a responsibility and a role to play in that. It is our university too. While our contract doesn't expire till 2019, know that NUFA's efforts to assert our values and goals for post-secondary education have already begun, indeed they've never really ended.

*Note: Since the writing of Dr. Srigley's article, the strike at UMFA has ended after reaching a settlement.

“IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES, IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES”: THE NUFA STRIKE ONE YEAR LATER

These times call for clichés, well known to be little intellectual lifeboats in times of trouble when we are often at a loss for our own words. Charles Dickens's famous opening words from *A Tale of Two Cities*, neatly encapsulate the ways in which revolutionary change brings the best and worst out of us, and always leaves ambivalence in its wake. This is certainly the message that we received from the few folks we were able to stop “on the street” (actually in the halls, their offices

and e-mail) to ask for a few reflections on the strike. There are some common themes of course, number one being the sociability of the picket-line and the way that broke down departmental or Faculty differences as no formal social event could ever do. There is also anger and frustration at the implacable refusal of dialogue and community building by the Nipissing administration. There is regret for the upset caused to students, for mistakes made—as they inevitably

are when we are charting a course into unknown territory. No definitive answer emerges from this collection of impressions, except one, that these voices—indeed all the voices—of our faculty colleagues make a variegated tapestry (perhaps more tightly woven and more beautiful now than before) of intellectual and emotional commitment to the ideals of fairness, collegiality and responsible governance, however imperfectly realized they may continue to be.

SOME THOUGHTS FROM OUR FRIENDS

“It was wonderful to have an opportunity to get to know colleagues who were outside of the Education faculty. I can now put names to faces in the hallways and I feel comfortable just stopping by for a chat with many people who I knew were part of faculty before the strike, but had no idea where they fit. I feel I have a better sense of the faculty as a whole since this event. Sometimes, good things come out of bad...”

Nancy Maynes, Education

“One of the unintended consequences of the strike was that it fostered collegiality among peers, generating community beyond disciplinary boundaries. This added to the mission of the university, just working together. I'm not sure the strike did much for people in precarious and tenuous positions even though that was trumpeted every day [on the picket line, by NUFA]. If anything [the strike] created more uncertainty than certainty. “

Steven Cook, Criminal Justice

“[...] It was good to get to know other faculty members better and to have that sense of bonding going on. I didn't appreciate the financial stress and I'm sure everyone felt the same way about that. [...] It could have been a lot worse but that doesn't mean I want to go back and relive those days. I still see signs every once and a while—“equal pay for equal work” and stuff like that—and it takes me back to those chants: “Good Jobs, Great Education,” “One Day Longer, One Day Stronger.” It was good to chant to get a little more active out there and cause a little more of a ruckus, I guess. The worst moment of the strike for me was that day when the wind was blowing and the rain was falling and it didn't matter what you wearing, you were soaked. And the best were the nice pleasant days walking and getting to know other people. A year later, I wish it could be that everything was perfect since then but it's not. We've still got a lot of work to do and there are signs that the administration still doesn't value our input nearly enough—but the zeitgeist, it's sector-wide. [...]”

Dana Murphy, Psychology

"My best memory from last year's strike was the membership meeting in the Summit lounge at the Voyager Inn. The energy in that room was palpable and the statements of support for all members of the association, especially those most vulnerable, are what encourage me to continue to work with the association. My favourite memories from picketing were from the conversations I had with people while walking in circles. Our busy schedules prevent us from normally exchanging much more than a friendly nod in the hallways. Conversations I got to have while walking back and forth created a sense of connection with my "south entrance" brothers and sisters that I probably would never have gotten otherwise. It seems solidarity is built one conversation at a time."

Joe Boivin, Biology

"I would say the best memories from the strike involve the time spent with my colleagues outside the formal meeting environment. [...] In terms of the collegiality and cohesiveness of the faculty it was worth every step. The worst memories involve the frustration in dealing with the approach of the administration. The feeling that there was little attempt being made to come to a timely and fair resolution. [...] I gained a much better appreciation of what it is like to be out on a strike line fighting for your rights. I will never pass a picket line again without signaling my support because now I know how good it feels to get a simple "bop" of a horn. In terms of the Association, I think it was an exercise that showed our strength and commitment when we stand together. I am not certain, to be very honest, that we gained what most of us hoped that we would in terms of governance or financially but it is not always about the simple gains. [...]"

Deborah Flynn, Psychology

The best thing about the strike was that I met a lot of people on the picket line, and the worst thing was seeing students stressed out—the uncertainty for the students was difficult."

Justin Carré, Psychology

"The first thing that occurs to me is the relationship-building that happened on the picket line. For example, talking to Sarah [Winters] about that storytelling moment in *The Magician's Nephew*, the importance of telling stories. Those were our positive aspects of community."

Katrina Srigley, History

IN MEMORIAM OF ILSE MUELLER (SEPTEMBER 27TH, 1949 – OCTOBER 29TH, 2016)

By Richard Wenghofer, *Assistant Professor of Classical Studies*

As most of you are no doubt already aware, the Nipissing community lost Dr. Ilse Mueller to cancer on October 29th. Ilse's passing has come as a terrible blow to the Classical Studies program and students and to our membership as well. I will always remember Ilse as a friend and as fighter whose no nonsense attitude belied a kind and giving soul.

Ilse's life was often fraught with struggle. As a young girl growing up in Hamburg, Germany after WW II, she endured the privation and uncertainty of the post-war years in Europe. Born into a working class family, her prospects for a higher education were slim in a society that was still very class conscious and although she was a good student, she was as a matter of course, sent to a trade school rather than gymnasium (the academic stream in Germany). When she immigrated to Canada in 1969 she had just turned twenty and had just married. After working for another twenty years and putting her husband through school, Ilse divorced and went to university for the first time in her forties. After

earning a BA in Classics at York University, and with no support network, she attended the very prestigious University of Chicago where she took her doctorate in ancient history.

After a brief stop at Laurentian University, Ilse was hired as an LTA in Classics at Nipissing in 2004, where she faced further struggle. Shortly after Ilse's arrival at NU, the program coordinator, Diana Walton, retired and Ilse had to fight to keep the Classical Studies program from collapse. She fought very hard and not only succeeded in preserving Classics, she even managed to expand the program into a full Honours Specialization. It is now a healthy and vibrant program as a result of her efforts.

During the recent strike Ilse was an ardent supporter of NUFA's cause and showed up on the line, rain or shine, to brave the elements with her brothers and sisters, although at this time she was already feeling unwell. After the strike ended, Ilse's health deteriorated and at the end of June she received her diagnosis. But in spite of the devastating news, Ilse was determined to fight, and fight she did. Right to the end, Ilse was always making plans about what she would do when she left the hospital.

Ilse thus had to be a fighter right from childhood and this fact shaped her character. But it is my belief that her resolve and willingness to fight for what she believed in ought to be an exemplum for the rest of us. If any good came from this last fight, the one she could not win, it is that she came to know how profoundly caring and decent her colleagues are. She expressed to me on multiple occasions how touched she was by all the kindness and support shown to her these last few months. She would be glad to hear me tell her, if I only could, that her last stand gave us the gift of greater compassion for one another and greater solidarity as well.

Finally, on a personal note, I have to say that Ilse had become part of our family. As she had no family in Canada, she routinely spent holidays with us, and my wife, Elizabeth, and children, Grace and Jacob, became very close with Ilse. She took an active interest in their lives and shared our joys and disappointments. We will miss her terribly in the days to come as will all of her friends and colleagues.



JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT – BILL 132 CONFERENCE

by Laura Rossi, Lab Instructor Biology/Chemistry

As a member of the Joint Health and Safety Committee, I recently attended a conference presented by the Ontario Federation of Labour in Toronto that was aimed at informing union representatives about how Bill 132 affects the workplace. Briefly, Bill 132 added the definition of sexual harassment to the Ontario Health and Safety Act, which has a powerful meaning for workers.

How this impacts the workplace:

- Claims of sexual harassment in the workplace are now "recognized" by the provincial government through the Ontario Health and Safety Act.
- The new amendment covers all stakeholders at the university, staff, students, faculty, administration and all contractors affiliated with the university.
- The employer must develop and maintain a written program to implement their harassment policy, and must consult with the Joint Health and Safety Committee. This written program is obligated to set out procedures for the following:
 - The employer has obligations for the employer to provide training for workers on their workplace harassment and policy program.
 - The Ministry of Labour now has the power to order an employer to hire an impartial third party investigator to conduct a workplace harassment investigation, performed at the expense of the employer (there are not clear guidelines as to when this should or can be imposed during an investigation).
 - Of particular interest are new protections for employees suffering as a result of domestic

violence in the home under collective bargaining agreements.

BLOG ON THE BoG: THE PLACE OF DISSENT IN COLLEGIAL GOVERNANCE

By Toivo Koivukoski, Associate Professor of Political Science

Public deliberations are messy and at times prolonged affairs. With many perspectives brought to bear, with the “on the one hand”, “on the other hand” nature of deliberative reason, significant decisions take some time to be worked through.

Understood in this way, collegiality is the furthest thing from mere congeniality, surmised as some kind of singular unity, or a, “Go along to get along” compartment towards difference. Rather, the possibility of raising dissenting views is at the core of the principle of collegiality, for that cherished potential is precisely what forces transparency and accountability onto a decision-making process.

It should thus be taken as a sign of the health of our institution whenever dissenting views are raised, and whenever respect and acknowledgement are given to those investments of critical capacity. It ought to be a joy to a professor if a student raises her hand in class to challenge an interpretation offered; similarly, it ought to give confidence to senior academic leadership when positions are openly and frankly discussed and

voted upon; for whether the critique is answered or the position modified thusly, there will be a shared willingness to recognize the decision taken on the basis of reason. As the philosopher Socrates asks of his interlocutors, if I am wrong in what I say, please tell me, so that in this turning around I can be educated and so moved closer to the truth.²

To reflect upon a recent example, chosen from a multitude of those constitutive deliberations that make our University what it is, a report on the state of governance at Nipissing University was recently presented to our Board of Governors at an open session, with debate ensuing on how it should be received and disseminated. Although the report was delivered to the Board as a unanimous position of the Commission that crafted it, there was active deliberation on what

“It ought to be a joy to a professor if a student raises her hand in class to challenge an interpretation”

ought to be done with it, and thus a number of questions arose. Would the report be shared immediately with the Academic Senate, the Faculty Association, the Student Union, the University community, and/or the community at large? Would the Board read and discuss the report first, and then disseminate it? Would the Board receive the report and refer it to its Governance Committee, and then hear back from an extended and focused discussion there prior to further deliberation amongst the Board members as a whole, with a vote then following on its implementation?

Various reasons were given for each of these courses of action, and there seemed to be varying merits to each. After opinions were aired, discussion converged upon the position that since the report had been disseminated at an open session of the Board, with representatives of all University stakeholders present (and in keeping with the principle of transparency that was shot through the report) it would make sense if the report were distributed widely and

² In considering the question of what is to be done, Socrates tells his friend Crito, “I, not only now

but always, am such as to obey nothing else of mine than that argument which appears best to

me upon reasoning.” (Plato, *Crito*, West translation, 46b)

immediately, so as to inform further discussions around the recommendations of the Commission and their implementation. Though not all were in agreement at the outset, that healthy airing of differences contributed to the quality of consensus arrived at. Even if the outcome had been the same, the dignity of reason was upheld through that discussion in such a way that silent concessions could not have produced.

To extend that affirmation of the necessity of dissent as core to the healthy function of our University, I would close by offering some professorial advice to the leaders of our University's Student Union. These leaders are the advocates for their Union's constituents and our students, responsible for securing their interests at a time when our students are embattled by mounting debt and an uncertain job market, and where what job growth can be seen in Canada takes on increasingly precarious forms.³

After hearing the hopeful news of the direction of student fees collected towards the construction of a new student center, it was at first heartening then to hear the Student Union note its involvement in a nationwide campaign to press for

universal access to higher education, with the impressive proposition put forward that not only should tuition be frozen, but that university tuition should be free to students.

And yet, although the Student Union received the buttons, stickers and posters from the Canadian Federation of Students, they seemed unwilling to lead their members in a cause

"If we cannot expect our students to speak up for themselves in an accommodating environment, then how can we expect them to carry a vigorous desire for a better world?"

that quite clearly matched their collective interests. The Union leadership reported to the Board that they had chosen not to organize a march or some other demonstration, out of concern for presenting themselves as being too "radical". One can imagine that there may have been some personal concerns over the expression of what would likely be dissenting positions in relation to the Board of Governors, influential members of the community, and Senior Academic Administrators, but, with respect to their future, one would hope for a more

courageous stand on the behalf of students.

If we cannot expect our students to speak up for themselves in an accommodating environment as our University, then how can we expect them to carry a vigorous desire for a better world with them after their graduation, imagining a world in which students are not indentured by debt into a market that is arranged so as to commodify both them and their education?

If our students go quietly in accepting burdensome debt as a supposed necessity of their learning, then their education has failed them somehow, and our complicity and quietude as educators is partly responsible for whatever apathy and inaction result on their part. For if a measure of efficiency is the only logic left standing inside of our University's walls and out, then a

"...not only should tuition be frozen but that university tuition should be free to students"

fated subservience to that logic is our students' predictable future, while a lack of active dissent on the part of their professors would have contributed to that unfolding.

³See "Job churn' and 'precarious work' don't have to be the new normal"

Fiona McQuarrie, *The Globe and Mail*, Tuesday, Nov. 08, 2016

5:00AM EST

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/job-churn-and->

[precarious-work-dont-have-to-be-the-new-normal/article32704805/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/job-churn-and-)

This is part of a longer blog post by Toivo that you can read [on https://ouruniversitygovernance.wordpress.com/](https://ouruniversitygovernance.wordpress.com/)

AN INTERVIEW WITH SAL RENSHAW

By Sarah Winters, Associate Professor of English Studies

How long have you been Grievance Officer?

Five or six years.

What does the job of Grievance Officer involve?

The job is to work with the language that's in the Collective Agreement. What Grievance ends up doing is testing the *robustness* of that language, ultimately. The language is, obviously, crafted in Bargaining but seeing how the language actually works and how effective it is—*that's* what actually happens in Grievance.

Primarily we have Grievances initiated by individual members who are concerned about something to do with their employment conditions in the workplace. We also have Association Grievances that affect all members.

And the Association Grievances—do you come up with them or does someone else on the Exec do that?

Sometimes they're initiated by members as well, and sometimes the member won't realize the extent to which their individual issue actually affects everybody so then the individual grievance gets forwarded as an Association grievance.

Sometimes it can be that the Administration make arbitrary decisions and enact policies that fundamentally contravene the Collective Agreement. Deans make decisions that are outside what we consider to be the parameters of the Collective Agreement so we will reject those decisions and then enter a process of negotiation.

That's why it would be important for people from all three faculties to be on the Exec?

It's very helpful, both on the Executive and also on Grievance. The Grievance committee really does work collectively. Grievance is not always easy—these are really quite knotty problems, often problems about interpretation—and we've come over the years to find that the more heads you have on any problem, even if it is an individual member problem, the better: the better for the member, the better for the Association.

So it's not a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth?

It hasn't been in my experience, by any stretch of the imagination. The stakes are often quite high, often to do with matters like tenure and promotion—you can't get much more serious than that for our individual members, nor for all of us collectively, so it's good to have more heads.

What's a typical week like for a Grievance Officer?

It depends on the kind of cases we have. I don't think Grievance could do its work without the administrative assistance we have. Angela is worth her weight in gold—she fields tons and tons of everyday information questions that people have. And she's been doing it long enough that she knows when to think “Uh oh” and will go straight to us when that's the case. Some things she can deal with really easily, some things she wants to bring to the committee.

And sometimes people come directly to the Grievance Officers—and often, they go to the NUFA President because the President has the highest public profile (and the President is on the Grievance committee, along with the Vice President). So that's great but I would encourage people to go to the Grievance Officers: the poor President's got a workload that is really unimaginable so if they can come to us when they have questions that would be great.

Grievance meets every week. A lot of the time Grievances are slow to resolve. It depends on how systemic the issue is: some things can get resolved really quickly, some things can take months—many months, actually. So it depends on the week.

What would you like members to know about Grievance?

Members should come to the Union more—don't try to handle things by yourself; don't assume that going to the Grievance committee means you are initiating a grievance. Because that feels like such a heavy burden. Come to the Union—we're really happy to answer questions. We'll collectively work out whether or not it's an issue that needs to go forward.

By and large we've got a really good working relationship with the Administration. I think people imagine that it's really hostile and antagonistic: it's actually not. It really is a *Collective Agreement*. Some things get knotty and thorny and we can wrestle over some issues but it's generally really good-natured.

So members shouldn't be afraid to come the Union, and I worry that they are. But the people who work on Grievance and the Executive are a really good resource—and also we love hearing what the issues are, it's really helpful when people come to us, and early in the process rather than late in the process. So if someone has questions of anxieties about tenure and promotion, come sooner rather than later: don't feel like you have to wait till the end of the process.

Does your area of research help you with the work you do at all?

That's a hilarious question! Hmm, well, it would be kind of bizarre . . . my historical area of research was on the philosophy of love—does it help me in my work as a Grievance Officer? I don't know . . . some days I don't feel that loving towards the Administration! Maybe it does . . . I think all the research work I do is informed by a fairly solid commitment to ethics and so *that* fits very well with Grievance.

And do you have anything to add that I didn't ask you?

Grievance meetings are fun—which I'm sure people don't imagine, but they actually are. And having to wrangle with the formal structure of the language of the *Collective Agreement* and then the way that structure gets interpreted and worked out with human beings is very interesting work. And my colleagues are definitely fun!

WHAT KIND OF PENSIONER ARE YOU?

TAKE OUR QUIZ TO FIND OUT! (N.B. THIS IS NOT A SCIENTIFIC QUIZ)

- What is your theme song?
 - "Die Young, Stay Pretty" by Blondie
 - "Me and Bobby McGee" by Janis Joplin
 - "When I'm 64" by The Beatles
 - "Forever Young" by Alphaville
 - "Bad to the Bone" by George Thorogood and the Destroyers
- What's your Friday night dinner at home?
 - Purely liquid
 - Microwaved mac'n'cheese
 - Roasted Brussel sprouts from your own garden washed down with some home-made dandelion wine
 - Filet mignon on the barbeque
 - Fast food and champagne
- You are given \$1000 to spend on whatever you want. What do you do with it?
 - Throw a party for all your friends
 - Pay down your credit card
 - Put \$500 in your savings account; pay \$500 towards a really long gym membership
 - Pull an all-nighter with the Shopping Channel
 - Add to your collection of antique spindles
- Which title from literature will tell the story of your retirement?
 - Great Expectations*
 - Hard Times*
 - All's Well That Ends Well*
 - Waiting for Godot*
 - The Wasteland*
- Which kind of plant are you?
 - Daylily (blossoms for one day before fading)
 - Ivy
 - Cactus
 - Mighty Oak
 - Orchid
- Who is your favourite celebrity?
 - Amy Winehouse
 - Pope Francis
 - Jimmy Carter
 - Ian McKellan
 - Bob Dylan
- Who is your favourite sportsperson?
 - Steve Prefontaine
 - Dorothy Hamel
 - Ken Dryden
 - Arnold Palmer
 - Muhammad Ali
- If you were a drink, what kind would you be?
 - Double-shot espresso

- b. Tap water
- c. Cup of tea
- d. 18-year-old single malt
- e. Absinthe

- d. Scientists say the first person to live to a thousand might have already been born—it could be me.
- e. I *can* take it with me.

9. What is your favourite way to relax?

- a. Swiping right on Tinder
- b. Commenting on news stories on the web
- c. Yoga
- d. Going for a 20k run in the snow
- e. Vacationing in a yurt

10. What's your excuse for why you haven't made a will yet?

- a. Why bother? I could get hit by a bus tomorrow.
- b. I've got nothing to leave.
- c. I've made a will already—what, are you crazy?

Results

Mostly a: Don't worry about retirement—you'll die young.

Mostly b: You're resigned to retirement poverty.

Mostly c: You are boringly cautious about retirement.

Mostly d: You're going to be working forever.

Mostly e: You're a classic eccentric professor, so who knows?

All over the place: You're all over the place.

If you're anything other than "boringly cautious," then pay attention to your pension!