

THE NUFA NEWS

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NU 25: HISTORY FROM A FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

by Jane Barker, Associate Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice

NUFA News located a few faculty members who have known Nipissing for 25 years or longer to get a sense of what Nipissing was like in its early years and how things have changed. Here is a sample of some of the responses we got from our respondents: Roman Brozowski (Geography), Matti Saari (Psychology), and Chris Sarlo (Economics). Some of the replies were edited to avoid repetition, but we think the result represents some of the key ideas of a few of our founding members.

NN: What is the biggest change you've seen at NU in the last 25 years?

MS: Without doubt the most significant change was that of gaining our own charter. Prior to that we were a college of Laurentian University. The moment was electric. We were gathered in a room on the second floor of the A wing [NN:

in what is now the NUFA office!] that had a live connection to the Ontario Legislature. The room was full of faculty and staff and then the moment came and we became a free standing university. I still remember that moment.

CS: Well, there are the obvious changes - the increase numbers of students, faculty and staff; the increase in the physical size of Nipissing (more buildings, new Library; sports facilities, etc); and, as well, the increase in size and influence of administration. Things are more structured and there are more layers and processes in place now. There are more subtle changes, though. I think that, in general, students are less ready to do university level work in terms of literacy and numeracy skills coming in and, perhaps, less enthusiastic about reading, questioning, writing and critical thinking.

RB: Nipissing University has gone from a small University College affiliated with Laurentian and offering basic three and some four year degree programs in Arts and Science and a Faculty of Education to independence. Since independence it has developed a full range of four year programs and seven

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graduate programs in Arts, Science and Education including a PhD in Education. It has also developed a wide range of research areas and facilities. In my view it has become a complete small University which is even involved in a range of inter-collegiate sports. The other important change is the building of a proper University library and sports facility and complex.

NN: What is your vision for NU for the next 25 years? And what needs to get done?

RB: That Nipissing will be a University developing innovative degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. It will be research centred on Northern Ontario. This will require a proper Strategic Plan in which Faculty, Administration, Students, the Board and representatives from the Community and Region are involved. At present we do not have a strategic plan. It is just a series of unconnected suggestions.

MS: We need to recapture the culture and sense of "family" that marked our earlier years. I believe that this is still possible because we are all here for the same purpose, that of providing an excellent educational experience for our students. The culture of any organization is largely the responsibility of the leadership of the organization. Bicameral governance is at the heart of the university and we must embrace that

management model again with the recognition that our goals are shared. We can also help foster a collegial environment by small acts of appreciation of each other.

CS: It was about twenty-five years ago that then President Marshall articulated a vision of Nipissing and it was one that was widely shared at the time. We wanted to help build a high quality, undergraduate, liberal arts university that would become an attractive option for students both in Ontario and from elsewhere. I think most faculty at the time wanted to "cast a wide net" in terms of accessibility but also maintain high standards. The feeling at the time was that this combination would allow us to continue the "Nipissing advantage" of small class size, accessible faculty, and student research opportunities while strengthening our standing and reputation. That particular vision of what we could (and should) become has been set aside, in my view.



NN: What was your first impression on arriving at NU?

CS: I thought, OMG, what have I got myself into. No seriously, I was actually excited to come here to be part of building a

new university. Nipissing was very small when I arrived in 1984. In Arts and Science, we had not much more than a couple of dozen faculty members and a few hundred students. But it was nice. Things were more informal.

MS: Hardly anyone even knew that Nipissing College existed even in North Bay. For example, I took a taxi to the campus for the first time and I asked him to take me to Nipissing College. He seemed confused and said "You mean Canadore?". I said, "No, Nipissing" to which he retorted, "Yeah, Canadore".

RB: That it was extremely small but eventually learned that it was a closely knit group of professors who were committed to the institution.

NN: What is the best part about being a faculty member here?

RB: Getting to know the students and then see them graduate and being successful in their careers.

CS: Being well paid to teach and do research of your own choosing is a real privilege. Having academic freedom is important. We are really our own bosses within a fairly loose framework of oversight. We have an intellectual community that is more diverse than society in general. I think it is wonderful that we have scholars from all over the world gathered together here in North Bay for a broadly shared purpose. Because this is my home town, having a university here has special meaning.

MS: In my experience, academic freedom is a valued component of the institution. Since I have lectured to undergraduates during my whole career I have developed a deep appreciation for undergraduate students. It is a special gift to be able to expose bright young people to new, even life altering ideas. It is humbling to realize the significance of our contribution to their future lives.

NN: What would you identify as your most important contributions to NU over the last 25 years?

RB: Moving from being an Academic Administrator when it was Nipissing University College to the Faculty Association when it became an independent university. This included serving on the first negotiating team and several more later. As well serving as the Grievance officer, President of the Faculty Association and helping the Part time Faculty to organize into a [bargaining unit within] NUFA.

CS: In the non-academic realm, I am particularly pleased with the role that I played in getting smoking out of the classroom. . . . It was a real human rights issue. As well, I was involved with NUFA (first as a Chief Negotiator and later as President) for about 10 years. The Association had just been unionized and there were a number of aspects of its operation that were relatively informal and ad hoc. We were able to establish some policies and protocols (many of which are still in place) which helped make us more responsive and more professional. We were also able to set up a structure for a better working relationship with administration after a rocky start.

MS: I believe that my most important contribution to the culture of the university was really, through accident. I arrived at Nipissing about 40 years ago determined to continue my research in neuroscience. Of course, research was not part of the mission of the university at that

time. The science labs were equivalent to high school science labs. . . . That led to the birth of the first Neuroscience Research Unit at Nipissing College. Furthermore, Neuroscience research can be very laborious and it soon became clear to me that there were no graduate students to help with my research at Nipissing. That led to recruitment of undergrads in place of the grad students that help with research in larger institutions. What a happy accident that proved to be! Now Nipissing undergrads were getting "hands on" research experience, authorship in conference presentations and publications. . . I believe that it was largely because of this that I was honoured by Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations with a citation for Outstanding Contribution to University Teaching in Ontario in 1991.

NU 25: THE FUTURE IS NOW

by Geoff Hartley, Assistant Professor of Physical and Health Education

Figuring that anniversaries are as much about looking ahead as looking to the past, we asked a few new faculty members to comment on NU so far. Our respondents were Aaron Kociolek (Physical and Health

Education), Christopher Greco (Criminology and Criminal Justice), and Alison Schinkel-Ivy (Physical and Health Education).

NN: What is the biggest change you've seen at NU in the last 25 years?

AK: While I am just starting into my 2nd year as an Assistant Professor, and I was enjoying my 7th birthday back in 1992, growth at NU is apparent everywhere! My

department, the School of Physical and Health Education, was only established 10 years ago, and now includes over 300 undergraduate and 15 graduate students.

NN: What is your vision for NU for the next 25 years? And what needs to happen to bring that about?

AK: My vision includes further strengthening of the research culture at NU. Expansion in graduate studies as well as continued growth in faculty research and success with tri-council funding will provide even more student opportunity, including increased use of technology in the classroom, greater student involvement in research, and enhanced ties with community partners.

AS-I: It is exciting to see Nipissing build on its research side. As an example, our researchers in the School of Physical & Health Education have been very successful in obtaining grants for new lab spaces and state-of-the-art equipment over the past few years. I look forward to seeing us sustain this growth in our research over the next 25 years and beyond, and to having the opportunity to contribute.



NN: What was your first impression on arriving at NU?

AS-I: My background has taken me through larger universities, so arriving at NU's campus was a bit of a culture shock. This has been a huge positive for me though, as it has given me the chance to get to know, and work with, a diverse group of faculty, administrative, and support staff on campus. Everyone has been extremely helpful and supportive, and it only took a short time before I felt completely at home here. Overall, I got the sense very quickly that we are all working towards the common goals of providing a personalized student experience, and excellence in research and teaching.

CG: The location is beautiful, people are friendly, and did I hear we have access to LexisNexis — I did!

AK: The campus atmosphere made a really strong first impression on me. In particular, the tight-knit community on campus, including the interaction between faculty and students, made for a great first experience as a new faculty member.

NN: What is the best part about being a faculty member here?

AK: NU's commitment to small class sizes allows me to provide more focus on each student, which also provides me with greater feedback as an instructor.

CG: The best part is being part of a small community of researchers and teachers who work collaboratively and invest in each



other's success and development.

AS-I: One of my favourite parts of being a faculty member here is the small, tight-knit nature of our program and the campus in general. I like the fact that by the end of the year, I know the names of all of my students. Having small classes and lab sections gives me an opportunity to engage with my students personally and work with them one-on-one or in small groups to maximize their chances of success, both in my classes and beyond. To me, this is one of the most rewarding parts of my job.

NN: What would you identify as your most important contributions to NU so far?

AK: While identifying contributions after my 1st year at NU might be a little presumptuous, I enjoy being part of a highly motivated faculty, both in the classroom and in the lab, within Physical and Health Education.

BILL 148 OFFERS HOPE TO CONTRACT FACULTY AT ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

by Gyllie Phillips and Frankie Cachon

The Ontario government is currently considering changes to the province's labour and employment laws that will improve working conditions for millions of Ontario workers, including those who work on university campuses.

The changes, detailed in Bill 148, are an important step forward, but need to be strengthened to address the true scope of precarious work faced by Ontario's contract faculty and students. If the government acts now, it has an opportunity to update the legislation to make it even better, and ensure Ontario's contract faculty are treated fairly and have decent jobs.

Ontarians expect universities to be good employers and role models in their communities. But for more than a decade, universities have been hiring more and more professors on short-term contracts, with low wages, no job security, and limited access to benefits. Estimates suggest that since 2000, the number of courses taught by sessional contract faculty has doubled at Ontario universities.

These sessional contract professors are paid significantly less than their full-time colleagues for teaching the same courses. Although Bill 148 provides a welcome commitment to the principle of equal pay for equal work, it also includes broad exceptions that will allow employers to avoid paying their contract and part-time employees equally. For Bill 148 to have a meaningful impact, these exceptions must be limited before the legislation is re-introduced in the fall.

Unequal pay isn't the only challenge contract faculty face. After years – sometimes even decades – of employment at the same university, most contract professors still lack basic job security and are required to re-apply for their jobs every four months. When they are given a contract, it is often at the last

minute and can be cancelled even after they have started teaching a class.

In addition, contract faculty are routinely denied access to their university's group health benefits and pension plans – even if they are willing to pay for these benefits themselves.

These are not labour practices and working conditions to be proud of. They disproportionately affect women (who make up a majority of contract faculty at Ontario's universities), undermine the ability of contract faculty to build secure and stable lives, and have real consequences for families and communities.

We believe Ontario's publicly funded universities can and must be better employers. With some small changes, Bill 148 can ensure contract faculty receive equal pay for equal work, better job security, and fairer scheduling. Since faculty teaching conditions are student learning conditions, improving the treatment of contract faculty will improve the student learning experience.

Moving forward with an improved version of Bill 148 could make a real difference in the lives of faculty, staff, and students at our universities. This is not just about providing good jobs and fairness. It is about investing in the future of our universities by ensuring all professors are supported in the classroom so our students can continue to receive a high quality education that equips them to succeed.

Bill 148 is a step in the right direction but, with further changes, the government has a unique opportunity to improve the lives of millions of workers in Ontario.

This article was originally published in the Windsor Star on September 11, 2017.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE NUFA NEWS

by Amanda Burk, *President of NUFA*

Well, as I forecasted in August, this is shaping up to be a busy year for your NUFA Executive. We have a number of big items on the go, which are tied to the priorities that NUFA will be focusing on this year. There are three key priorities, which are our CASBU/FASBU merger preparations, Academic Freedom and Intellectual Property, and working to continue strengthening our sense of community and connection with you, our membership.

Our Merger Committee has been hard at work for a number of months examining the structure of both CASBU and FASBU Collective Agreements and envisioning what a single Collective Agreement might look like with harmonized language. In practical terms, this means they have been working to map the structure of the document and have begun to knit the agreements together without disrupting the language of either agreement. All of this discussion about merger preparation come straight out of our last round of CASBU Bargaining where a Letter of Understanding was achieved to have both sides, NUFA and the Administration, look at the possibility of integrating the CASBU CA into the FASBU CA. Of course, NUFA had been speaking about the merger even before that point, and we have brought these discussions to the membership on a number of occasions – at our General Membership Meetings (GMM), Annual General Meetings (AGM) and in our NUFA Bulletins (February 2017 NUFA Bulletin – One Association, One Contract). The Administration has been supportive of the idea so far, one might even say keen, so we are working diligently and optimistically that as we continue down this path that there may indeed be the possibility of a merger in our future.

At our upcoming GMM, on Tuesday October 24 from 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm, in F210, we have scheduled a special presentation on the merger. We will take a look

at the proposed structure of a merged CA and we will speak about what it means to be considering a merger in more detail. We have also invited guest speakers - James Compton, President of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and our own Gyllie Phillips, President of Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) to speak about the unification of bargaining units and bring national and provincial context and viewpoints to the forefront of our discussion. I encourage you to join us for this important meeting.

As you know, in August we sent out a statement about intellectual property that faculty could use, if they chose, in their course syllabi. We will be sending a revised statement out to you in the near future, which better acknowledges accessibility and makes space for student accommodations. Stay tuned. Through this and other discussions, it has become very clear to us that we are in a moment in time where we need to re-examine and clarify academic freedom and intellectual property for all work related to teaching. There is a slow but visible creep of threats to academic freedom and intellectual property given the following: the rise and accessibility of digital technologies in our classrooms, the increase of courses delivered online, the increase of delivery

through pre-packaged courses, shifts in the pressure students put on administrators to standardize course offerings, and the way in which administrators understand accountability to outside bodies with regard to ensuring learning outcomes, and how in turn, this may impact the academic freedom of faculty. There are many factors at play, and NUFA will continue to discuss, research and seek out opportunities that will help us all clarify our rights around academic freedom and intellectual property. That said, this should not just rest with NUFA to pursue. I would like to encourage all of you to turn your attention to these



matters and to consider where policies and practices on campus need to be revised to support academic freedom and protect the intellectual property rights of faculty.

To strengthen our ability to effectively communicate with you and help us to stay connected, our Website Team has been actively working with Sofa Communications to create a new NUFA website. This website will be more attractive, more comprehensive and more user friendly. It has been an enormous undertaking and I am so grateful for the work that Angela Fera and Rhiannon Don have put into it. We have our fingers crossed that we will be able to unveil it at our GMM, as we are in the final phase of development. As we have been focused on the new website, we have not been performing regular updates to our old website. Please bear with us. We will be excited to share the new website with you very soon.

Another way to connect with us will be during Fair Employment Week, October 23 – 27. Fair

Employment week is an annual campaign that promotes employment fairness for sessional lecturers and other contract faculty working in Canadian universities and colleges. NUFA will have a variety of events and activities planned and I encourage you to attend and to lend your support and your voice for fair employment on campus. One of the things we will be doing is hosting an Open House on Wednesday, October 25 in the NUFA office with tea, coffee, and snacks. Keep your eyes peeled for the posters advertising this activity and more!

We are looking forward to welcoming our new Provost and Vice-President Academic and Research, Arja Vainio-Mattilla, and to working with her in the coming days, months and years to make Nipissing a great place to be for faculty, students and staff.

Looking forward to seeing you at our GMM on October 24!

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROPOSED CASBU/FASBU MERGER

by Gyllie Phillips, Associate Professor of English Studies

NUFA News talks to Joe Boivin, long-time member of CASBU, the NUFA Executive and many bargaining teams.

NN: It's NU's 25th Anniversary. How does the potential merger of CASBU and FASBU fit into the changing history of the Association over the last 25 years?

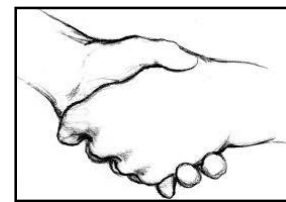
JB: Although I can't speak to the earliest history of either the university or the faculty association, I have been a member of bargaining teams and NUFA's Executive since about 2006. In all that time, I can confidently say that there has been a constant effort to equitably represent both of the bargaining units in NUFA. In fact,

much of the ground work for a potential merger of the bargaining units started years ago. Efforts to harmonize language in both collective agreements during the last few rounds of bargaining have resulted in several articles that are virtually identical. One could argue that merging the two bargaining units in NUFA could be considered the final step in a process that began several collective agreements ago.

NN: What is the recent history of discussions about merged bargaining units that has led to where we are now?

JB: A letter of understanding (LOU), agreed to by both parties in the last round of collective bargaining, described a timeline

during which NUFA and the Employer would discuss the possibility of a merger of the two



bargaining units. NUFA's Executive struck a committee to focus on the mandate of the LOU. Earlier this year, the committee examined the collective agreements of several universities across Canada with merged bargaining units seeking a model that NUFA could potentially emulate. The committee quickly realized,

however, that there is no common way of structuring a collective agreement containing both contract academic staff and full-time academic staff. The committee has since focused its attention on what a merged NUFA collective agreement could look like.

NN: So where are we at now with the proposed merger?

JB: So far, there has been one meeting with the Employer – as part of the Joint Committee for the Administration of the Agreement (or JCAA) process as outlined (identically) in both collective agreements – to discuss a possible structure for a merged document. NUFA's committee continues to meet,

discuss, and debate how both of NUFA's collective agreements could potentially become one. Future meetings with the Employer will need to occur as part of this process to identify a way that both parties could potentially agree that the collective agreements could merge.

NN: Why is this discussion important to you, personally?

JB: Solidarity is the word that comes to mind. But that word can mean different things to different people. In the case of a potential merger, to me the simple act of referring to a single document – rather than two separate collective agreements – may be a surprisingly powerful way that NUFA could enhance its solidarity.

In my experience working on NUFA committees, I've come to realize that at times certain committee members from one bargaining unit would be unaware of specific terms and conditions of members in the other bargaining unit, for the simple reason that those terms and conditions are spelled out in a separate document. I must plead guilty to this myself on occasion. If the terms and conditions of all Nipissing faculty and academic librarians were in a single collective agreement, we would all be forced to confront the differences and similarities that exist among the various types of positions within NUFA. Having better knowledge of who we are would make us stronger: one association, one collective agreement.

CASBU CORNER: IN DEFENSE OF THE RRSP

by Rhiannon Don, CASBU Officer

All CASBU Members who have achieved the Right of First Refusal on a course (by having taught a course three times in the last six years and having served at the university for 3 years since their initial appointment) are eligible to contribute 2% of their pay on those courses into a group Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) run by the university. That 2% contribution is then matched by the university.

How Does It Work?

When you are offered a contract for a course for which you have earned RFR, there will be a box on the contract for you to check, indicating whether you want to contribute to the group RRSP. Once you have decided to start making those contributions, you will continue to do so on all future RFR contracts for that course—you cannot choose to stop your contributions. The university deducts that 2%

from your paycheque and then places a matched amount in the RRSP. When tax time rolls around, the deduction will be noted on your T4 as an RRSP contribution because they are pre-tax dollars.

You are also welcome to contribute additional funds up to your RRSP contribution limit, but those funds will not be matched by the university.

With this group RRSP, you are able to choose how the funds are invested. Manulife has developed a group of investment holdings that you can choose based on your anticipated retirement date (i.e., Manulife Life Path Index 2045) that are automatically adjusted to become more conservative as you near retirement. If you feel confident in choosing your own investments, that option exists too.

The service provider does charge an Investment Maintenance Fee annually, and it is your responsibility to pay that fee.

But What If I Get A Job Somewhere Else?

With an RRSP like this, both your contribution and the Employer's are vested from the beginning, which means that money always belongs to you. If you leave Nipissing, you will have the option of transferring the money to a personal RRSP or of withdrawing it. Be warned, however, that if you withdraw your contributions, the RRSP provider will deduct income taxes from them, and there may be fees involved with the withdrawal. If you transfer the money instead of withdrawing it, the money retains its tax-deferred status.

Is It Really Worth It?

A 2% contribution might not seem like a lot of money on the surface. For example, on a 3-credit course, you would only be contributing \$134 into your RRSP. On the other hand, though, the university is also contributing \$134 into your RRSP, which means the total contribution is \$268. Over time, that amount has the potential to become much larger, especially if you earn that amount every time you teach the course. If the Employer offered you a 2% raise, you would take it, so take advantage of this opportunity.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT OCUFA?

by: Gyllie Phillips, Associate Professor of English Studies

At the moment, I happen to have a close connection with our provincial labour umbrella organization (the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations), but I have been impressed with the work of OCUFA since my first active connection with it in 2009. I wanted to let you know about the great work that OCUFA does on our behalf and on behalf of everyone in our sector. For anyone not familiar, OCUFA is an advocate with government, is engaged in public education around the importance of universities in Ontario, and is directly supportive of member associations in bargaining, grievance and equity concerns (with its newly reconstituted Status of Women and Equity Committee). This past year, one of the priorities was

to focus attention on the proliferation of precarious academic work at Ontario's universities. This concern led OCUFA to partner with other labour groups in bringing awareness to conditions for precariously employed workers generally, and also for contract academic staff in particular. With contributions to the Changing Workplaces Review and the subsequent legislation under the proposed Bill 148, groups across the province have been putting labour and employment reforms on the government's and employers' radar. Look for more information on this—and for ways that you can get involved in making change happen—during Fair Employment Week, starting Oct 23.

NU 25 TRIVIA QUIZ

1. What year did the School of Physical and Health Education start offering a degree programme?
2. What was the monastery building before it was acquired by the university?
3. Under what treaty are parts of the Dokis and Nipissing First Nations included?
4. What year did NUFA become a union?
5. Of what university was Nipissing a satellite campus before it got its charter?
6. Which area of campus is most likely to have a bear sighting?

7. Which Department was Robert Surtees, of the Surtees athletic centre, a member of?
8. In which syndicated newspaper comic strip does a character attend Nipissing?
9. In which wing is the time capsule stored?
10. Identify three items you think might be in the time capsule?
11. What was the original design concept for the Education Centre when it was built?
12. What was the controversy over the naming of the library?
13. Who was President of Nipissing in 1992?
14. What was the first graduate programme established at Nipissing?
15. Name three winners of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Research since 200

UPCOMING EVENTS

General Membership Meeting

October 24, 2017, 3:30 - 5:30 in F210, video-conferenced to Brantford R207

Discussion on Potential Merger with Guests: James Compton, President CAUT, Gyllie Phillips, President OCUFA

NU2042: Faculty Speaker Series

October 18, 2017 at 7:00 pm Grande Event Centre

Speakers: Steven Arnocky (Psychology)
Dianne Davis (Business)
Carolyn DeLoyde (Geography)
Karey McCullough (Nursing)
Graydon Raymer (Physical and Health Education)

(Future NU2042 events scheduled for November 9 and December 10)

Fair Employment Week: October 23-27, 2017

Schedule of events for FEW

Tuesday, October 24: General Membership Meeting 3:30 – 5:30 pm (F210)

Wednesday, October 25: NUFA Open House for all CASBU and FASBU Members 11:30 am - 1:30 pm (A244)

Thursday, October 26: \$15 and Fairness/ Bill 148 Postcard Campaign 10 am – 2 pm (Campus Shop)

Friday, October 27: Meeting of Full-time CASBU Members 11:30 am (A244)

NUFA Seasonal Social: Late November (exact date and location TBA soon)

NU 25 TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 2007-8
2. *It belonged to The Sisters of the Precious Blood who are a contemplative, cloistered religious community of the Catholic Church. The Sisters currently have four active monasteries across Canada. They had a monastery in North Bay, Ontario from 1936 to 2007, when the building was sold to Nipissing University (source: archive records at NU library)*
3. *Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850*
4. 1994
5. *Laurentian*
6. *Judging by a brief survey of Everybody e-mails, the Monastery Trail wins this honour, hands down.*
7. *History*
8. *For Better or Worse*
9. *The A-Wing*
10. *The Answers will be available in the first issue of 2018!*
11. *A colonial fort*
12. *Many were not convinced that Mike Harris had been a great advocate for education during his time as Premier of Ontario.*
13. *Dave Marshall*
14. *M.Ed*
15. *Ann-Barbara Graff (2008), Vesko Valof (2009/10), Haibin Zhu (2010/11), Callie Mady (2011/12), David Tabachnik (2012/13), David Hemsworth (2013/14), Justin Carré (2015/16).*

There were no recipients in 2007 or 2014/2015.