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'Our union makes us strong.'

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AN INTERVIEW WITH TODD HORTON, NUFA VICE-PRESIDENT

How did you first become interested in education as a vocation and a career?

Well, I can honestly say that teaching was not something that I knew I wanted to do from an early age. I had visions of teachers sort of labouring unceremoniously and without much acknowledgement, as many people do. So I never really gave it much thought. I actually wanted to join the Canadian Foreign Service and work overseas—that was where I really wanted to put my energies when I was younger. However, I found that in almost every job I had, I ended up in teaching about the processes they had to use, about the computer systems and equipment, and so on. And at some point I think it dawned on me that I might have a little bit of talent for teaching. And I started to look at the career a little bit more deeply and perhaps in a different light, and I found that I really enjoy helping people learn something new and discover something new about the world, themselves, and so on. I came to it a little later in life, but I embraced it very much as who I am and what I would like to do with my life.

Were there specific individuals who did inspire you or particular moments that you can remember that gave you a glimmer of light about your future?

Yes, absolutely. I had a number of people in my family who were teachers, which is, apparently, from the research, quite common. Teachers who have other family members who are teachers tend to go into the profession. And I always sort of admired them and the sort of skills that they demonstrated in their everyday lives. They were very organised, knowledgeable, competent and skilful.

I had a couple of teachers in high school who really opened my eyes to all sorts of things about the world and about myself, just with their skill in the classroom. School became a much more positive experience for me with teachers like them. I look back on them as role models when I think about the type of teacher I want to be.

Pivotal moments? I do know when I was in teacher's college at the University of New Brunswick, I had a professor who was absolutely spectacular in how he taught his social studies class. And I learned so much. . . great professor.

What do you think it takes to make a good teacher? You're now teaching students to become excellent teachers and there must be some sort of profile that you have in mind.

Essentials? Yes, you have to be open, and I mean in all ways. You have to be open to people as they travel their own journey. You have to be open to looking at the world—looking at the world differently. You have to be open to engaging with the world, whether that's participating, whether it's questioning, whether it's reforming or reshaping it in some way because you see a problem.

You have to be, if not an optimist . . . somebody who has a positive streak in them, in that they want to make some sort of a difference in the world, because . . . when we're at our best, it is somewhat of an

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altruistic profession. I know there's a lot of baggage with that type of word—it can be over-sentimentalised—but you have to care. You have to care, and if you don't have a caring aspect to yourself, then perhaps there's a more solitary, introverted, more self-oriented profession that you might be better at. If students come to the class with openness, I can work with your lack of knowledge. I can work with your lack of skill and help you increase and grow in those areas. But you really do have to have that caring streak . . . that openness to the world.

Has education changed as it's become more bureaucratised and formalised? Is it tougher these days for someone to be idealistic and to have that caring attitude and disposition that you mentioned?

At first blush, I'd say "Yes." We have become very bureaucratised. We have become very administratively heavy. There seems to be what I term a lot of "adminis-trivia." Before, one page would do—now we have five. When one paragraph would have done before, now we have ten. When one duplicate would have done before, now we have four. So, yes, in that sense it's become a little bit more difficult, because you spend an awful lot of time doing paper-work that you could be spending with students, or planning a quality class. I'm talking about the profession, more generally and broadly. And for all the talk about multi-tasking, the bureaucratic aspect of the system distracts from the core part of the job.

For the people who are in that stream of education—the administrative stream—what it is that has developed is, in my estimation, an excessive concern with accountability. For all sorts of reasons—some good, some not so good—in a lot of ways, I think the students in the classrooms have suffered. That being said, there are a lot of things that make our jobs better and more exciting today. There are more pieces of information that we can get hold of, more resources that we can get hold of, and resources that have, perhaps, more perspective than in the past. In that sense, the teacher who has that desire to still help students and still open up the world to students, can still create dynamic classrooms if they wish.. And they have a lot more tools at their disposal to do that. So I guess my second blush would be there's still a lot of potential out there. There's still a lot of hope out there. I have to believe that—otherwise, it would be very difficult. But, it's tough—there's no question about it.

How has technology changed education, in your view, from top to bottom?

Top to bottom—wow!

Or from bottom to top?

Boy, that could take hours! As I've said, it's opened up a lot of things. It's opened up a lot of things, for the good. However, it's made us realise that there are some challenges, because there's an awful lot of access to "garbage information, garbage knowledge." And we have to spend a lot of time teaching our teacher candidates, but also teaching our students about how to deal with a mass of really poorly constructed information out there—information that has no real credibility or real evidence behind it. There's a lot of awful, hateful stuff out there that we have to help teacher-candidates and students navigate through. In that sense, it's really, really difficult. At one time we could keep things monitored—and that had its bad points, too. But it had its good points. Now, it's all open and students can find anything on the Internet, particularly outside of class. And, of course, it filters back into the class at various points.

Technology has its wonderful aspects. It's a fantastic tool to create dynamic classrooms. You can go to different places in virtual ways. You can enliven history in all sorts of interesting ways. And then, on the other hand, there are all sorts of logistical and technical issues that just make it so difficult because this piece of software doesn't talk to this piece of equipment or this piece of hardware is now out of date, and now we only have access to the newer thing. There's that sort of constant treadmill of keeping on top of what's the newest and the latest thing . . . and that really can stymie all sorts of fantastic possibilities. There's that element to it too.

Certainly the expense and the maintenance costs . . .

Absolutely—the support that's necessary for us, who are trained to teach. We're not trained to be technical experts, though we all are starting to find in our job descriptions—whether explicitly or implicitly—we have to have a certain amount of capacity to work with the technology. And I am no tech expert, I can assure you. But you just cannot have a support person there every time, standing beside you, waiting for the next problem, to help you out. So that's added to the layer of burden that we handle and the layer of knowledge that we have to have. Some people really embrace that and see it as a fantastic possibility. For others, it seems somewhat oppressive and problematic.

Can emphasis on technological means and the use of modern hardware get in the way of the primary student-teacher relationship?

Absolutely, in some ways. If you sort of shift your focus to the technology and showing it off more than using it as a conduit or a tool through which you can teach something else that's far more important, then you've got a real problem. One of the things we talk about a lot in our program is . . . that it is a tool. It is a means to an end. And don't get too caught up in the fact that it's a fancier way to do a photocopy, or a fancier way to write on the board. Those bells and whistles are really not your point. It's the content and it's the skill development. It's the values discussion. It's the critical thinking that you have to pay more attention to. If you're doing an exercise and you find that you're spending half an hour figuring out how to do flying fonts and you're not spending nearly enough time orchestrating deep and thoughtful and engaging classes, then something has gone askew and you need to re-focus.

So educators need to be able to sift through the sales-talk and filter out the wildly optimistic prognostications of the advertisers?

Yeah—absolutely. One of the things that we talked about in my classes is helping young people develop the capacity for historical thinking. And one part of that is teaching young people what has been termed a healthy sense of caution. You don't want them to be cautious to the degree that they disbelieve everything and they argue about everything. But teaching young people to be cautious in your assessments of things. And then you bring a whole host of tools to that assessment to help you decide if something has merit or if it is lacking in some way.

Whatever you decide—it should always be tentative and open to revision later if there's new information. But that healthy notion of caution—a healthy notion of scepticism, even—is a very important thing for young people to learn. Because they want to buy, they want an answer really quickly. And they want to buy in and believe . . . anybody who is, in their world or their perception, an authoritative figure or in an authoritative position. They want to just take it and embrace it and run with it and regurgitate it back to you and get the affirmation that comes with that. And what we try to teach them is that you have to have a certain healthy amount of caution in there. That's tough—that's tough for young people.

Is there a degree of wisdom, then, that you hope to impart, to some of them? That's a high concept, but . . .

(Laughs) Wisdom—gosh, I never think of that word, in relation to myself! I suppose there's a certain amount of experience, a certain amount of things that I believe in, that I want to share. I'm well aware and am perfectly okay with the fact that each person will hear and engage with what I have to say in their own way. Some will integrate it into their thinking. Some will put it aside and remember it later and some will think I'm full of hogwash. That's their process and their journey, but I'm there to sort of help along the way. But once they go, they go and it's their journey that continues.

How did you first become aware of unions, and what did it mean to you, at the time?

My father was a labourer. He was a blue collar worker. I have an inordinate amount of respect for him, to the degree that he worked very hard for what most people would consider very little compensation. He got up and he went to a job that I don't think he loved. And he worked very hard to provide for our family. Rarely, if ever, complained. He became involved in his union . . . it was a labourer's type of union. And he was a shop steward. He participated in negotiations at various points in his life. He had a belief in a certain level of social justice, that he had defined for himself, that I think I saw and sort of absorbed it. That there are certain things that are worth fighting for, and certain things that are worth asking for, and there are certain things worth digging in your heels about and compromising on, and so on. So I saw that.

I also saw my mother work her whole life without a union—she earned a reasonable salary considering it was a time when women worked in the workplace less and were compensated inequitably relative to men – but she had no benefits, no pension. It was because my dad had those things. But I often thought how vulnerable she would have been without my father. It wasn't right.

I've, of course, encountered unions as well, looking at history and looking at the rise of the labour movement as a follow-up to the Industrial Revolution in Europe and then, the industrialisation of Canada and the United States. I've always been very interested in labour history and where labour history fits in the history that we teach in schools. It hasn't had a big place. . . . There is a real gap as far as looking at that. They'll get a very small paragraph in a chapter somewhere in the twentieth century of Canadian history. The Winnipeg General Strike will get in there and there will be one or two others, but there really is a sort of gap, an absence there, that I've noted. So I've always been interested, in that sense.

A lot of what we hear about, then, refers to public events that inconvenienced many people and drew the attention of the media.

Yes, that's a big part of it. As you go into upper levels of history, high school and into university, there's more that's looked at. There are courses on labour history, where unions play a big part in societal development. But you're right—in schools, it very much is presented as a confrontational thing with perhaps the implicit message that it should be avoided. It's not often presented as an effort at achieving some modicum of social justice. That's problematic, I think.

There are those who believe that teachers are following the imperative and the invitation of what constitutes a calling—that they are drawn to the work that they do in a way that is beyond the nuts and bolts of ordinary living in the material world, so to speak. How does that affect the view that exists about unions in educational institutions? To be called is something that happens on an individual basis, but to be part of a union is definitely part of a collective enterprise.

Yeah. You know, the notion of a calling is an interesting one. We tend to think of people like religious people. We tend to think of certain kinds of helping professions—nursing and doctors—and teachers tend to have that as well. The notion of a union is interesting, in that I don't know that many people would think of it as a calling, though I suppose you have to have a certain sense of social justice that draws you to invest your energies and time into it.

I firmly believe we have a finite amount of emotional and physical energy to devote to the things that we face in life. We make choices and some of those choices say a lot about who we are and what we believe, and so on—there's no question. I suppose there might be a sense of calling in participating in unions. I think on another level, it is, for many people, a more practical thing, in that they have either experienced some form of perceived injustice or they've witnessed it, or, they more generally, have seen a trend toward something that they find somehow unpalatable. This leads them to get involved as a means of empowering themselves, having a sense of control over their lives.

Generally speaking, it doesn't take much looking around at the power bases that are in operation in society to realize that "me alone" is not going to be able to confront some of the challenges we face. You start to look towards a collective, and pooling of resources. It may start in a very practical sense . . . "It happened to me, therefore I'm going to get involved." But for people to stick with it, once their little issue is resolved, might actually start to speak more towards a calling. I've never really thought of it in that same sense, but I suppose there is a thread of "calling" in there.

There was a time when teachers weren't paid very much because it was thought that they were doing an elevated kind of work they'd been drawn toward, and that was fulfilment and satisfaction enough. And that they had a special gift that they hadn't chosen to have.

Yes. . . . A lot of people believed that your love of the subject was sufficient, your love of children was sufficient, and because you had some sort of more existential level of satisfaction you didn't need more earthly rewards like a reasonable pay cheque, benefits or pension. But for the teaching profession, I think there's a gendered element to it as well. For much of the history of schooling in that most education of young children was done by women. Men sometimes took on older students or they went into administration—they didn't tend to stay in the classroom to the same degree, in the same numbers. For a long time, the perception was that teaching was just an elevated form of parenting. In effect, there's a thread of parenting that still goes through the Education Act today. This "mis"-perception lead many to downplay financial compensation and other benefits. It was almost an extension of the thinking that says "well we don't pay mothers to be mothers so why should we pay teachers". Thankfully, that type of thinking has largely disappeared...then again, you'd be surprised!

And, of course, there was a time when female teachers were asked to leave when they became pregnant.

Of course. And they would replace them with a young, unmarried woman again. And because students often dropped out of school by grade six, grade seven, grade eight. I mean the notion of secondary school is a very modern conception. Formal schooling itself is a modern conception, but secondary school is even more recent. And "Why pay them to any great degree?" Well, then there was a sort of a consciousness raising that said, "Wait a minute!" As the world gets more complex, and learning follows . . .

So does the work . . .

And the work force is asking more and more and more of people that have schooling. . . . it starts to snowball. We have to raise our levels of complexity in the classroom and we want to be acknowledged for that.

And custodial responsibilities have become far more than they used to be.

Absolutely. Absolutely—oh, my goodness, it's a very, very different, and interesting world out there.

That requires preparation and the exercise of your judgement. What were the key issues when you began teaching, that would animate a discussion at a union meeting? . . . What did people care about and think about?

Some of the same things that we're concerned about today—the working conditions, about how much preparation time they had, about how many different classes they had to teach. Trying to deal with multiple curricula simultaneously . . . and, of course, compensation for that. Benefits, obviously—so some of the same things. Some other things that were, perhaps a little more specific were allocation of resources. I was in a bilingual province and it had different school boards. Regardless of what we think about the rightfulness of having that, when you have overlapping school boards with different mandates, you're competing for resources. And so some of that would animate the discussion, because there was often a feeling that we weren't getting our fair share, and so on.

Were there successes that you remember, that resulted from your sharing a commitment with your fellow teachers, to making positive changes?

. . . I was so concerned about teaching a good class, so concerned about satisfying what administration wanted, as far as their paperwork was concerned. I was “in the moment” in the classroom. And I have to say, I didn't have any problems that led me to the union, specifically. We didn't have any contract disruptions when I was teaching. So I can't say that it had a huge level of awareness for me, given the fact that I felt a general sense of security, knowing that they were there. But I was so new that it wasn't big in my awareness.

What was the path that led to post-secondary education for you?

You know, you always think that you plan your life out and you try to live it to your own design. That is such an erroneous thing, at least in my experience. I was laid off from teaching—it was during the 'nineties.

After being laid off I decided that . . . there's a message here that I need to find a new path for myself. And I had been feeling that there was more for me to learn, because I'd done my Master's and I thought, “I'm going to apply for my Ph.D. And so I did, and I applied to the University of Alberta and the University of British Columbia. I got accepted at both—I ended up going to Vancouver. And I never went back to teaching—something had changed for me. I found my place somewhere else. And it was a good thing. But I would never say that it was by design. I'm not sure if I hadn't been laid off that year, if I would have pursued this. I don't know

What about the idea of teaching others to be teachers? How did that enter your thought process?

It was a wonderful thing. Yeah, I thought about going on—I did my Master's in Political Science and I thought about staying in the discipline and doing that. But there were aspects of teaching I really, really liked, and I wanted to learn more about it, about teaching history and teaching politics, and teaching young people about the world. So I decided to pursue Education and do my Ph.D. that way. It's a real privilege—it really is. It's a real privilege to teach those young people and help take a lot of the stuff that they've learned in their B.A. . . . and sort of re-think it, re-shape it, re-package it, unpack it, in preparation to help somebody who is 12 or 14 or 16 or 22 or whatever LEARN.

[For me, it's an exciting thing, seeing some people in my classes, who are, even at this early stage, perhaps even better teachers than I was, when I was there. It's really exciting. Seeing somebody who is, perhaps not as strong in their content, but they have this most amazing ability to connect with human beings. They can offer so much to a class, to somebody who is a young person who is trying to survive school. It's really great to see . . .

Has having younger students since the double cohort transition took place, made a difference?

Yes. Yes, it has. We're very fortunate here in our Faculty. Our average age is 29, and it has been pretty consistent for the last few years. That being said, there's a lot of younger students . . . to have that average. And as I get older, they seem to be getting younger!.

It is difficult because many of them have so little life-experience to draw on. Some of them don't even have experiences with young people. And that's a little bit challenging, because they just have less raw material to work with. Some of them are not even necessarily academically very strong in the subject-area, which is really challenging. Because I have to make a certain amount of assumptions that you do know a few things from your undergraduate degree and we'll focus on helping you to prepare to teach it to somebody else. But, that being said, there are some mature students that have . . . all of the essential things that I talked about earlier.

And I even have a lot of young students, who come and they're so incredibly talented or so gifted in so many ways. Really, you work around the not-so-good aspects of it, but yeah—there's no question, when they're younger, it's challenging. For some of them, they're going into classes, and they're not that much older than the students that they're teaching. And that's tough.

Is it still the case that enthusiasm is a characteristic or a quality that stands out in people who are going to be successful in teaching?

Sure—absolutely. Yeah, I don't mean an enthusiasm as an unbridled sort of energy.

Sort of ricocheting around the classroom . . .

I don't mean that. But a sort of enthusiasm for learning, an enthusiasm for young people, an enthusiasm for questioning. An enthusiasm for looking at something they thought about only one way their whole lives, and then they look at it a totally different way. Even if they don't agree or buy into it, they kind of go, "Oh. All right. I think I see what you're talking about there. That's interesting." I think that that's fantastic—that's really great.

Having a spirit of enthusiasm that's externally expressed is a basic part of it.

It's marvellous—absolutely marvellous. I feel for some of the people who are terribly shy. I feel for some of the people who are terribly insecure, because we have the odd few that are debilitatingly so. I feel for the people who have so much potential, but something . . . life goes awry in their year here in the program. It makes it so difficult for them. A few simply can't continue. I feel for those students and hope they come back.

I feel for those people who are 22 or 42 and are just so jaded . . . and cynical. They've just lost any sort of hopefulness. I feel for them, because they're going to struggle in a classroom and it's going to be hell for students.

Are there some students who go to Education programs that don't know what they're getting into?

Sure. I think most . . .

And is the year long enough to find out and to adjust?

Yeah. If I had a perfect world, I would prefer a two-year program, like some provinces have. I think that we could slow down the pace. Right now, we're not even on a year program. We're on an eight-month program. That's not really a year, and they're on such a pace—a treadmill pace—that is so fast that they don't have a lot of time for reflection, to deeply internalise what it is that they're hearing, what they're talking about, what it is they're experiencing. Because as soon as they have moment to think about something, they have 14 other things and 14 other classes . . . and I think that that's really problematic in a lot of ways.

It's hard to believe that only 40 years ago, a two- month course after high school was sufficient . . . to get into it.

With market competition there's still an awful lot of forces out there that want it to be even faster.

What role do you think NUFA plays at our institution and what do you see as its strengths? And what do you think it will become?

I think it plays an important role in our institution, as far as giving the faculty their voice . . . I think that that's behind all of the other things that we do on a day-to-day basis. We know that we are there for each other. And is it perfect? No. But we know that it's there, and therefore we can go in and we can speak in the ways that we think we need to, without that sort of constant effacement that can go on when you're at the mercy of unbridled power. So in that sense, I think that it's really, really important.

It's strength is . . . I have to say that because it's a relatively small organisation, anybody who chooses to can participate in it, can feel part of it. The distance that sometimes can come with size is not yet there for us. So you

can feel that you're part of it. . . . Now, there are down-sides to that, too. A smaller organisation has its own challenges. But I think that that's one of its real strengths. We have some good people that are working with it right now, that seem quite committed to it, that have good ideas, that are open to hearing new ways of thinking about things. And I think that that's a wonderful thing. So what will it become? Hopefully, a more professional organisation, in the best sense of that word. I think we're at a stage where we're moving to that next level of maturity.

One of the big changes that's happened is that our part-time workers—instructors and professors—have achieved recognition within the union. . . . What has that done to NUFA, as a whole, having CASBU there?

Well, it's certainly strengthened us, in that . . . our collective size is larger. And with numbers comes a certain amount of strength—there's no question. There are challenges, in that with part-time workers, you can become sort of fractured, too, you don't have that same sort of centre—that cohesion that is there as well. We've got other satellite campuses. We've got off-hours. I know you can go several weeks and not pass a colleague these days. That's exacerbated for part-time people.

There's a challenge for them in feeling that they're a part of this organization. It can be challenge as far as their commitment to the organization too. That being said, I think that they've contributed a lot as far as their strength, their voice, some really great people that are now participating on NUFA with their discussions. And they're bringing some really interesting life-experience that some of the rest of us don't have.

Many industries and some educational institutions are depending more and more on what might be called contingency workers and using a “just in time” sort of pattern of hiring. So do you think that part-time employees will become a bigger and bigger proportion of our membership?

It certainly seems to be the trend. It's a disturbing trend for us full-time faculty wanting to get more full-time faculty, wanting to have people who have longer term contracts—tenure-track contracts—so they can have a lot of the protections and a lot of the benefits that come with that.

Just having a level of certainty about next year allows you to live your life in a very different way than I think many people who are on nine, ten, and twelve month contracts. I am concerned about the impact that that has on the quality of what the university offers. I don't know—from a business point of view—as finance—there may be all sorts of arguments to do the just-in-time type of hiring. From a quality perspective, and the long-term development of an institution-- a vision and an identity that it's trying to build and continue-- I think there are some challenges that are there.

One of the things that's a little bit challenging is that I've never thought of us being an industry but sometimes I think universities are thought of in that manner. And that's problematic for me.

I think we're . . . different. I think that there is a public trust. There is a common good. There is a pursuit of knowledge that transcends what industry often speaks about, and I see universities as qualitatively different. I am concerned, though, that my vision of what we, as a university, are is clashing with some other very, very different visions

I remember reading a book when working on an undergraduate essay—it was called *Education and the Cult of Efficiency*.

Janice Gross Stein wrote a book called *The Cult of Efficiency*. It talks a lot about this.

Yeah. And that viewpoint that education is like a business is certainly in the air and it has some appeal to those who work in administrative roles.

And you know what I find really disturbing is—and I think my “historian eye” is part of this—is the longer this goes on and this trend continues, we're going to get newer and newer people join in—younger and younger people—and there will come a time when that will be all they'll know. They won't remember when there was something qualitatively different about a university. And I don't mean to suggest that newer and younger people don't bring in other very, very beneficial things. But it does change the conversation about who we are, about what we're doing, why we're doing it, as far as an Association is concerned. And that's concerning. That being said maybe they'll be just as uneasy about the new “normal”.

There are concrete, quantifiable output measures that are sometimes put forward as markers for the success of educational programs, yet many of the things that educators value most highly are intangibles that don't yield to that kind of exact assessment.

Students are very savvy, in that they can tell what you value most by what you choose to evaluate. And if you say that you want them to think critically, but all you give them are fact-based questions for the test, they'll quickly stop paying one bit of attention to you about your discussions about critical thinking. They will want to hear exactly what it is that they have to learn for the test. Eventually people will only focus on that. Still, you can assess and evaluate quality thinking. It's more difficult than marking a fact based test but it is possible.

The organisation and alignment of Faculties at our university has undergone some discussion. And another big issue that's come to the forefront is what will happen to Senate, in terms of reform and change or keeping it as it is. I wonder if you could share your thoughts on where those two large subject-areas are heading, so to speak, in relation to our union's priorities and interests.

Well, you know, it's interesting. Senate is supposed to be—or at least in my understanding—is a body which deals with the academic questions of the university. They look at designing programs, courses, and they look at how . . . who we're going to graduate and who's getting an honorary doctorate—all those things that are part of the academic discussion. And Senate's taken on a few other roles that are important but perhaps not officially part of their mandate. You know, the town-hall aspect of talking to each other. And in some cases, I think that that's where most of the attention has started to fall—on the town-hall aspect of things, rather than on . . . academic questions of programs and departments and what it is that they're trying to do. That may be a good or bad thing, but it seems to be what has happened.

Do you think that sometimes people get confused between the town-hall model which tends to be American—of people getting together and expressing their viewpoints—and the Parliamentary model of Question Period, allowing individuals to ask others for answers to pertinent questions they have about matters of collective concern.

Maybe. There could be something to what you say there. As far as the Senate reform is concerned, there's a lot of really interesting viewpoints on it. I think, for some people, they've seen so much emphasis placed on the town-hall aspect of things, that there's a concern that perhaps the main business of Senate is marginalised and not as scrutinised as closely as perhaps it ought to be. These people have a desire to sort of re-find Senate's focus. Okay. All right—I can see that. I can see that there might be some merits in that.

I would say, though, that the discussion and that opportunity to interact with Administration, shouldn't be ignored. It's important and some form of face to face engagement needs to be present, I think, for the institution to be able to continue to function under that sort of collegial way that it has up until now.

Do you feel that Senate as it exists now can be improved and fixed?

I think there are changes that can be made . . .

Without having to go through an election process of the type that's been proposed?

I have my views on that. . . I'd rather talk about it more generally. I think that there are things that can be improved. Whether the way it's being done is the best way is for each of us to decide for ourselves.

I don't like the idea or the suggestion that we have to change things because we can't find a room that's big enough... We can work around that. There has to be more. And I think that, for some people, this idea that we need to get a . . . we need to refocus our attention on what exactly it is that Senate does. Now, the question is, "What does that mean for NUFA?" I've always seen NUFA as having a very different role NUFA focuses on negotiating a contract with the university, advocating for our rights and helping to ensure that we all live up to our responsibilities. And benefits and our salaries, and so on. There's only certain parts where we engage around issues of academia. And they're very, very specific . . . academic freedom and intellectual property and so on and so forth.

I think NUFA could take on some of the discussion aspect that has been in Senate in the past. But Administration is not part of that discussion—we'd be talking amongst ourselves and then talking with Administration. But perhaps we need to talk a little bit more amongst ourselves before we get them involved.

Do you think we need to meet more frequently, as a union? Should there be changes in the way that Senate is structured and organised, would there be an imperative for NUFA to try to represent the interests of those who are not included in an elected Senate?

Well, as the process hasn't finished as yet, I'd like to think that as much opportunity to fully participate or at least know exactly what Senate is doing, will be there. It's something that I've advocated for as much as I possibly can. Yes, the people who are at the Senate table get to participate, but I want to make sure that everybody who may ultimately not participate at Senate directly—have an opportunity to have their voice heard in some fashion, or at least have a connection to the people who are supposed to be speaking on their behalf. That's something that I've always advocated.

Last year, one of the interesting things that happened was that NUFA conducted its own vote on candidates for the deanship in Arts and Science. Do you see polling of the membership as something that might be more important in the future than in the past? And can that serve a useful purpose in alerting administrators to the viewpoints of our members?

It's sort of an insight into the views of the faculty. I suppose that it's something that could be done. . . . There's a lot of work to be done. I think that NUFA's got a lot of work to do of its own, as far as engaging its membership, making them feel like we have something to offer, beyond just that you have a problem today and now you need some assistance.

I think that we have to make the case that we're all here to help each other out. And that comes with certain kinds of responsibilities on all our part. As for doing polling? I don't know—I'd have to think on that one before answering further.

What do you think the keys are to building solidarity and maintaining it in NUFA?

I think we have to do a little bit more outreach, from the very beginning.

What form might that take?

Well, we have to do a really solid introduction to the Association when you're hired. I think that there perhaps could be—these are just suggestions that need to be discussed, vetted, and so on, by NUFA—but, I think that there does need to be some more encouragement to come to meetings and engage with the issues. Coming from Education . . . talking to people after a faculty meeting and really encouraging them to come and participate, if at all possible. Oftentimes, we're teaching, but nonetheless we'll try and find a time when people can come and have their say. To run for office—I think we need to sort of mentor people better. And we do do that. But increasingly mentor some younger people, bring newer people into positions. That, I think, is important.

A physical presence would help enormously—a permanent office. I know that there has been discussion about the possibility of hiring a person who would be . . . the point person, or face of the association for people, should they come around the office. That's down the road a little bit. It takes financing. But that, I think, would help enormously. Just as with the faculty club, a physical space goes a long way to solidifying identity. A concept alone may not be strong enough to engage people. So those are a few things that I think would help enormously.

In a larger context of union activity, there are some who believe that unions and the collective bargaining process are under fire. There are members of the public who have bought into the idea that unions are responsible for disruption, high prices for the products and services they get, and so forth. Do you have any views on that trend?

Well, I agree. I agree that collective bargaining and all of the labour rights that accrued over the last hundred years are threatened in a rush to, and, in my estimation, a sort of a superficial buy-in to a notion of globalisation and global competition. And the mantra has become so pronounced that a great deal of the public now view us, view organisations like ours as obstructive, as an impediment to cheaper prices, a more “quality” product or more choice in their purchases.. Others say unions have overstepped their bounds and we're trying to do what management is supposed to do.

So there's a lot of people that have bought into that mindset. And you can see different examples over the last ten years, particularly, but it may even be longer than that, where unions are starting to become undermined in all sorts of big and small ways. I think what's really disturbing is you're getting an awful lot of people who are part of unions

themselves, who have checked out because they no longer believe in what it is unions are doing. And that's disturbing. Do I have an answer for exactly how you counter it? No—not off the top of my head!

You continue to stand up for the rights that you have built for yourself and try to support those who are under fire as much as you possibly can. You talk and discuss, help people see that there's another way of thinking about these things.

I come from a profession where, the moment that you even discuss that you might stand up for yourself in some fashion against the Ministry, I mean it's probably 2.5 seconds before you become the "villain of the day"

The concept of someone who does that as a "trouble-maker" . . .

Absolutely . . . What's even worse for my profession is that unlike a labour disruption that shuts down a factory where a product doesn't get to a shelf—and I don't want to minimise the disruptions that may cause for some people—but, for us, it impacts a fair segment of the population. And, of course, the responsibility we have is to do everything we can to avoid that, right? Because, I don't think there's a teacher yet I've ever heard wanted to do these types of things. But, boy, oh boy, it doesn't take long for the spin-mill to start, if it happens. Suddenly, you become something left of the devil. But that's just part of difficult and challenging labour negotiations.

Has being Vice-President reflected what your expectations were about playing that role?

In some ways, yes, and in some ways, no. In some ways, yes—I've been privileged to be part of a lot of discussions about what we're doing and where we're going. And I think I kind of expected that and I enjoy it. I enjoy dialoguing with other people on the executive, the sub-committees and the general membership.

Some other things, though, are a bit more surprising. I think I'm a bit surprised at how isolated we are from the larger labour movement. Maybe "surprised" isn't the right word—But it really was hit home to me. We really are sort of an island, kind of working off unto ourselves in a lot of ways. And we do have organizations we reach out to—OCUFA and CAUT and so on. And we do participate in workshops and all of those things but I somehow thought that there would be more.

And I have this feeling that maybe there could be more. I'm not sure what it would look like, given the many things we have to do—we've all got so much work to do. The union is only one part of what it is that we have to do every day. But yeah...we're kind of out there, operating as best we can, with the connections we do have.

Do you have anything else that you'd like to add?

I certainly hope that everybody at the university feels invited to participate with us, to offer what they can, contribute what they can. We're only as strong as the people who participate and engage with the union. We, as in the Executive, etc. don't exist without all the members behind us . . . I hope that message is out there that "We need you!"

Todd Horton was interviewed by Uldis Kundrats on February 12, 2008.



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Benefits for Retirees and Benefits for Active Faculty Past Age 65: Why is Nipissing Alone in the Dark?

By Larry Patriquin
FASBU Chief Negotiator

If faculty members were asked to list a number of concerns about their work, I suspect that the benefits they might receive should they continue on as full-time faculty members past age 65, or the benefits they might receive when they retire, would be at or near the bottom of their lists.

This would not be surprising. With many new hires in the last few years, and with about 75 percent of our members in the rank of Assistant Professor, there is little doubt that, as university faculties go, we are a relatively young lot.

Our members tend to be concerned with more pressing issues. For those on limited-term appointments, securing a tenure-track position is paramount. For those on the tenure track, much time and effort is spent publishing and improving teaching so a solid file for tenure can be put forward. And just about everyone is preoccupied with finding a healthy balance between work and home life. For many of us, a number of whom are still paying mortgages and even student loans, retirement and the option to work past age 65 seem light years away. We'll cross those bridges when we come to them.

But how often, in casual conversation, have you been reminded just how quickly the years pass? Someone will point to an event, be it the birth of a child, the completion of a degree, or a cultural happening (such as the recent 25th anniversary of the release of Michael Jackson's *Thriller, de rigueur* in every milk carton record box when I was an undergrad), and your incredulous response is: "Has it *really* been X years since?!" "Time flies" is perhaps the truest cliché ever spoken.

If we are lucky, we will be able to retire sometime between ages 55 and 65 or we will continue to work past age 65 and postpone retirement to a later date (something we have been able to do since mandatory retirement was legislated out of existence on December 12, 2006). If we work past age 65, we will do so without receiving any benefits from the University. We also receive no retirement benefits once we are age 65 and over. And Nipissing is the only university in the province where this is the case.

Let's begin by examining the four standard benefits for faculty and determine whether or not full-time faculty who choose to work past age 65 in Ontario receive these benefits.

First, at Ontario universities, access to long-term disability ends at age 65, with few exceptions (it's age 70 at York). At McMaster, short-term disability continues while at a couple of universities, "senior" faculty have access to a specified number of sick days (up to 120 at Waterloo). In general, it seems to be the assumption that active faculty members who becomes disabled after age 65 will retire and draw their pensions.

Second, for members working past age 65, access to life insurance is treated in a variety of ways. The benefit remains the same compared to those under age 65 at Brock, Carleton, Queen's and Windsor. Basic life insurance ends at age 69 at Lakehead and Toronto. At some places, coverage is reduced past age 65. For example, at York the coverage falls from three times your annual income to an amount equivalent to your annual income. Guelph and Nipissing are the only two universities in the province that provide no coverage.

Third and fourth, across the province, almost all faculty over age 65 receive full Extended Health and Dental benefits. One exception is Western, where coverage continues until age 69; at that point members convert to the plan for retirees. Nipissing is the only university in the province that provides no coverage.

In the next round of collective bargaining, it is important that we obtain the province-wide standard for our Members who fall into this group, which means at the very least securing Extended Health and Dental coverage. We currently have no Members over age 65, but there undoubtedly will be some Members in the future who will choose to work beyond the "normal" retirement age. Furthermore, we need to accomplish this task for a reason that is even more important than meeting the provincial standard. Denying benefits to those who work past age 65 is blatant age discrimination. These Members are performing the exact same work as those under age 65, yet they are denied benefits that are awarded to their "junior" colleagues. How can we justify giving the benefits to a Member who is 64 but denying the same benefits to a Member who is 66? This is a human rights issue. This violation of our Members' rights needs to be addressed.

Let's now look at benefits for those who are retired and over age 65 (Note: Nipissing has retirement benefits for those who retire at or after age 55 but these benefits end at age 65). First, Long-Term Disability (LTD) coverage is no longer an issue as retirees don't work; they are collecting their pensions.

Second, about half the universities provide no life insurance for retirees after age 65; others provide fairly limited coverage; a handful of places have "okay" coverage. In general, this seems to be an atypical benefit for retirees.

Third and fourth, let's examine Extended Health and Dental benefits. Here, we encounter a different story. At universities like Carleton, Guelph, Lakehead, McMaster and Toronto, the benefits provided to retirees age 65 and over are fairly similar to those provided to full-time employees. Most other universities have benefits that, while not

the same as pre-retirement benefits, are nevertheless significant (usually with annual and lifetime caps). For example, at York the lifetime maximum for Extended Health is \$50,000 (excluding nursing and out-of-country services) while their Dental maximum is \$1250 per year per insured person, with a lifetime maximum of \$75,000. At the near-to-the-bottom end when it comes to Extended Health and Dental benefits for retirees ages 65 and over are universities like Brock, where they have an annual Health Spending Account of \$2000; it can be used to purchase health services. At the very bottom in this category, once again, is – guess who? *Nipissing is the only university in the province that provides no health or dental coverage for retired faculty ages 65 and over.*

It is important for faculty recruitment and retention that we obtain benefits for retirees ages 65 and over and for post-65 active members that are at least equivalent to the provincial standard. With Ontario universities facing substantial retirements over the next five to ten years, Nipissing will face – and in some disciplines is already facing – intense competition for faculty. Even if we can attract new faculty (the recruitment side of the equation), will we be able to retain them, especially given such a notable gap in benefits? As seen from the example above, retiring at any other university in Ontario means having access to benefits that could save an individual tens of thousands of dollars, *perhaps even \$100,000*, over the course of his/her retirement. Nipissing looks rather shabby in comparison. Something to think about.



“Quality Matters to Faculty” from OCUFA

Your participation is critical if we are to move the government to provide the level of operating funding that is required to give Ontario students the quality education they deserve.

Governments sometimes move on the basis of doing what is right, and what is good for the long term benefit of the province. However, in most instances, governments respond to what they see as public demand. It is time to let the government and opposition know that providing universities with the operating and capital funding that they require, is not only the right thing to do but also the politically wise course of action.

One thing that you can do today is visit the **Quality Matters** website: www.quality-matters.ca

This web site includes background information and research. But perhaps most importantly, it has an action centre which will automatically put you in contact with your local MPP. You will find a draft letter, asking your MPP to support post secondary education. You are encouraged to amend this letter to reflect your own experience.

The success of the Quality Matters campaign depends on your involvement. Certainly there is strength in numbers, and with faculty across the province voicing their concerns together, we can use the strength we have as a collective to advocate for improved higher education funding and improved faculty benefits.



OCUFA VISITS NUFA

Last month, OCUFA President **Brian Brown**, Executive Director **Henry Mandelbaum**, and Policy Analyst **Lauren Starr** visited Nipissing University and addressed a gathering of NUFA members. They also participated in an interview with **THE NUFA NEWS**

NUFA President **Roman Brozowski** introduced OCUFA President Brian Brown, saying, "This is our organization. It's an important organization that, in fact, lobbies on our behalf with the government. It has been doing that for quite a number of years. It brings us to the forefront, both in terms of the government and, as well, in terms of the public. So it serves a very important purpose. . . . It also provides support for negotiations.

Brian Brown

We've dealt with the provincial election--we have new ministers who have taken over in the ministries. We're trying to keep close contact with them, in terms of trying to get our message out to those politicians. And also

in terms of faculty association collective bargaining, it's the end of the year, as far as that goes. I think there were 12 universities in . . . bargaining or who are going into bargaining in the next little while

There are many reasons why faculty are overworked. One of them, in terms of the problems we're facing, is under-funding. The current public funding is substantially lower than it was in the 1970's and in inflation-adjusted terms.

OCUFA represents 23 member organizations and it's through our contacts with these organizations that we try and hear what is going on, on your campus. We try and work with the problems that you're having--putting them all together with the problems that other people are having, and then presenting that, as best we can, to the government. And one of the problems, in terms of what's happening is the growing enrolments across the whole sector. The workloads of all faculty are increasing. We have no control, it seems, over class sizes. We have administrators who are going out and becoming not only fundraisers, but also trying to recruit from various places, not only in Ontario and Canada. You'll find them going to China and everywhere else, and trying to increase our enrolment. However, not giving us enough full-time faculty . . .

We've heard from the member associations that we've visited, in terms of the problems that you're facing. . . The other thing, in terms of hiring full-time faculty . . . those who retire are not being replaced by full-time tenure-track appointments. What's happening is they will hire a contract academic staff or a sessional instructor, depending upon what university you're at--it depends upon what terms is used. "Contract academic staff" is kind of is an umbrella of the whole thing.

Enrolments are increasing. . . . We have supported the government's plan to increase undergraduate and graduate enrolment. However, the plans that have been implemented without thought or any real planning--require more funding. That's all there is to it. That's support that needs to be provided by the government. It has to be financial support. So what are the consequences?

The current government seems to have a fascination with quality indicators . . . student-faculty ratios, class sizes and surveys measuring student engagement. That being the case, we thought that we would put together some of these other indicators to measure the quality of the government's support of universities.

Student-faculty ratios are growing. Today, even after the Liberal government increase in the funding through the Reaching Higher program, it still remains the case. Ontario has 26 students for every full-time faculty member. Ontario used to have 18. The rest of Canada currently has 22 students per faculty member. . . . The per capita funding is the lowest in Canada. In 2003, Ontario was tenth out of ten and the same situation applies today.

In all three of the university groupings used by Maclean's, Ontario universities displayed a greater use of large classes than did their counterparts in the rest of Canada--and usually by a fairly wide margin.

The quality of education is being threatened. . . . So students are receiving less interaction and less face-time with their professors. So think about our students. . . . How do we deal with 60 students in a seminar class? How do you treat them? How do you teach when you've used to dealing with five, ten, fifteen, maximum? And now suddenly you're faced with 60 students. It changes your whole idea about how you should be going about teaching.

OCUFA does support the government's most recent initiatives, in terms of the throne speech, the building of a strong economy, eliminating poverty, protecting the environment, improving our health care system. But all of these areas are important in their own right. However, they all depend on a quality university system to give them the skills that they're going to need to maintain and sustain the work in those important areas. So the universities are extremely important in terms of how these other goals that the government has set out for themselves are going to be achieved. They need to realize they have to fund the provincial universities.

If you look back as to why contract academic staff were created in the beginning to fill a gap when full-time faculty were on sabbatical or possibly, being off sick. At most institutions 20 to 25 per cent of full-time faculty would be gone within a certain time-frame.

What's happened is that because they're paid on the cheap, you have them continuing on--contract academic staff that have been around for eight, ten, twelve, twenty, twenty-five years.

If someone's qualified to teach year after year, surely they must be qualified to move in, if they have their terminal degree. . . . At some point, we have to say, "Enough is enough." How are we going to deliver this quality education if we don't have enough people to teach. We need more tenure-track positions at each university in Ontario if we're to succeed in terms of what it is that we're supposed to be doing.



NUFA NEWS Issue Editor Uldis Kundrats conducted the following interview with Brian Brown, Henry Mandelbaum, and Policy Analyst Lauren Starr on March 14, 2008

WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF CONVEYING TO GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS WANT AND NEED?

Brian Brown:

I think, in terms of the general public, they see university professors as more of an elite group of individuals, and a lot of is lost, in terms of why we're asking for the money. It's for operating money, so we can hire new faculty--to get those student-faculty ratios down, so the quality of education can be delivered much more effectively than it is now, with the student-faculty ratios up as high as they are.

ARE THERE SOME WHO FEEL THAT FACULTY ARE OVER-PAID AND HAVE TOO EASY A TIME?

Brian Brown:

Outside the university setting, you have individuals who think that profs have it easy, that they don't work during the summer . . . They just don't understand that when individuals are off, they're not just off. They're doing research, plus all of the grading--everything else. They have to do grading. They have to prepare. So it's more than just teaching the class and leaving.

FROM TIME TO TIME, THERE SEEM TO BE INITIATIVES THAT EMPHASIZE JOINING TOGETHER COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND HAVING A POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT HAS A DIFFERENT SHAPE AND STRUCTURE FROM WHAT WE HAVE NOW. HOW DOES OCUFA DEAL WITH THOSE SORTS OF CONCERNS? ARE THERE DISCUSSIONS THAT TAKE PLACE WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

Brian Brown:

I think the main thing is, in terms of any agreements that occur between a university and a college--the articulation agreement--it's very important in terms of what the quality of education that is being given at the college and what equivalencies can be used, in terms of giving credits to those who are moving on to university. Colleges . . . were created for a specific purpose. It's not like you can put them together and it's one happy body. They're still separate, in terms of how programs are delivered. . .

Lauren Starr:

I would add that OCUFA is currently working on a paper looking at the accreditation process and looking at college degree granting, and examining that in Ontario.

YOU HAVE A CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY TO BRING AWARENESS AND ATTENTION, TO EXERT INFLUENCE OVER GOVERNMENT. ARE THERE OTHER ALTERNATIVES THAT YOU'VE CONTEMPLATED. WE HAVE SO MANY RIBBON CAMPAIGNS, FOR EXAMPLE. IF THERE WERE A BLUE RIBBON CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER EDUCATION, DO YOU THINK THAT WOULD WORK?

Lauren Starr:

We're actually creating a blue ribbon panel right now. And we're going to have a panel of experts examine some of the issues we've been looking at. So that's one way that we're approaching it. And the other thing that we're doing next month is a reception at Queen's Park. So, as much as we're trying to take a hard line, we've also coming at it from a softer perspective and trying to build some relationships between the faculty and the MPP's so that really can understand the perspective and the experience of individuals, and what they're really going through--and put a face on some of the issues.

Brian Brown:

So we're bringing in directors of the board from OCUFA. So they will be there, and we're not sure exactly how many MPP's

Lauren Starr:

The response has been good so far.

DO THOSE MPP'S GET A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION FROM THEIR CONSTITUENTS?

Lauren Starr:

It's hard to know and it depends on the Member and whether or not they have a university in the riding and whether or not there are problems at that university.

Henry Mandelbaum:

I should mention that the blue-ribbon panel, while not confidential, is tentative. We had a discussion and there are a number of different organizations that are taking a look at the same issue. And so what we want to do is make certain that what we don't do is replicate the efforts of other people. So we're doing an assessment right now, as to exactly what is going on and what are the kinds of questions that the panel could address.

AND HOW EXTENSIVE WOULD THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL BE?

Henry Mandelbaum:

It's not seen as being a large panel--it's seen as being an advisory group. So we're looking at five or six people. . . They are all very well known researchers. It really is intended as a blue-ribbon panel.

SO THERE'S A LOT OF EMPHASIS ON GETTING RELIABLE INFORMATION TO INFORM YOUR ARGUMENTS AND YOUR PROJECTIONS . . . IS THAT UNUSUAL FOR A COLLECTIVE, LABOUR-SPONSORED ORGANIZATION?

Henry Mandelbaum:

First of all, Canada is notoriously bad in the data that are collected here. The OECD has been complaining about the Canadian data. And so there may be some improvement, compared to the United States--the quality of our data is really very, very poor. But the idea of the panel is to collect better data. By and large, the data come from institutions themselves. And one of the difficulties is that the institutions don't always collect pertinent data. They'll argue sometimes that they can't. A classic example would be on part-timers. STATSCAN and we have, for at least a decade, talked about doing a meaningful study on part-timers. There doesn't seem to be an agreement on a definition of what constitutes less than full-time faculty. And there haven't been the resources applied. But when you have the kind of increase of part-time faculty that we're experiencing, not to have meaningful research on them, and not to be able to extract those data from universities is really highly problematic.

DO YOU FIND THAT AMONG THE MEMBERSHIP OF FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT OTHER INSTITUTIONS HAVE, IN TERMS OF THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS AND WHAT THEY GO THROUGH? OR IS IT CRITICALLY IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BRIDGE THAT GAP?

Brian Brown:

That's exactly what all this is about, in terms of our visits to the various universities around the province--to try to raise those concerns that are raised at other universities. We listen and we hear and nine out of ten times, the issues that are raised are similar, throughout almost every university we have visited so far. . . . One of the services that we do provide is to bring together the people who can talk about the terms and conditions of employment, so there is an opportunity

THERE ARE SOME WHO BELIEVE THAT UNIONS ARE UNDER FIRE IN MANY PLACES AT THIS TIME. DO YOU THINK THAT'S TRUE OF OUR FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS AND OUR UNION REPRESENTATION AT A UNIVERSITY LEVEL--THAT THERE'S A DEGREE OF HOSTILITY TOWARD THEM?

Brian Brown: I

I don't think there's any hostility. Again, I think it depends upon which part of the province you're in, at a particular moment. And if you look at Windsor right at the moment, the auto-workers--they're in trouble. For every auto-worker who works, there are seven spin-off jobs. Every day in the newspaper, you're reading about the auto industry and everything else. As we spoke about earlier, in terms of the perception of the public and what a professor does ... it could be very tricky in terms of how at Windsor we would present our positions to the public, if it got to the point of having to possibly take a strike vote or possibly going on strike. We would have to make sure that we would make the public aware of our concerns much before we would even consider doing any kind of job action at all. . . . You get the general public behind you before you take any kind of job action. So you have that support--they understand the issues that are there. And then you can go forward with it. And you won't have that backlash, hopefully.

Henry Mandelbaum:

There are three things. One, we know from polling that university professors are highly regarded by the public. And that's why you see when an expert is required that they bring in an academic. So that reinforces that impression. There's that residual goodwill to academics. The other thing is that there has, in the last decade in

Ontario, there's actually been a surge in unionization. At one time, we used to talk about that hell would freeze over before either Queen's or Western or Toronto would certify. Two of them have now certified. Brock has recently certified. Within academia itself, there is tremendous support for unionization. It's my feeling that the best union organizers that we have are the university presidents.

People organize so that they can bargain collectively when there are issues that arise within their working environment, which make them feel they have no choice but to do so. We're not here talking about a hypothetical situation. In the last while, there have been three instances of faculty strikes in Ontario. And so we know the response there. Typically, the students have been very supportive of faculty in those situations.

DO YOU THINK THE SO-CALLED DOUBLE COHORT PHENOMENON HID SOME OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN THE PROVINCE--THAT HAVING THAT GLUT OF STUDENTS MADE A DIFFERENCE BY HIDING SOME THINGS?

Henry Mandelbaum:

It may have hid, but it also emphasized as well. When you had students, in the case of Ryerson, being taught in movie theatres, it really made it clear that there was a space shortage and a quality of education issue. But it did bring additional money. And whenever there's a surge of money, it provides temporary relief. And it's our job to make it clear that whatever relief there was, was temporary.

CAN YOU EVER SEE A RATIONALIZATION OF THE SYSTEM TAKING PLACE, THAT WOULD BE GOVERNMENT IMPOSED? IN OTHER WORDS, THAT WE WOULD HAVE SOME EQUIVALENT OF A UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO, INCORPORATING SOME OF OUR SMALLER INSTITUTIONS--IT WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE *OMNIBUS* UNIVERSITIES EVERYWHERE.

Henry Mandelbaum:

Various governments at various times have tried that. The greater concern there isn't on the university side. It's on what they're going to do with colleges.

SOME OF WHICH ARE LOSING MONEY, RIGHT?

Colleges are caught up in a bind, where all the polls indicate that the overwhelming majority--huge majority of parents that see their kids going on to post-secondary education, want them to go to universities. . . . The colleges feel they're being squeezed and so they're putting on tremendous pressure on government to allow them to give either university-type or university level courses. And so that's where you might see a greater involvement, and since colleges already work under the thumb of government.

KIND OF A PSEUDO-U SITUATION?

Brian Brown:

Yeah. That's why, in terms of those articulation agreements we have with colleges, we have to be very careful . . . They are two different things, altogether. And as I said, they were created not to be equal and there was a particular role a college was supposed to fulfil.

