

Issue 8
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THE NUFA NEWS

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MESSAGE FROM TODD HORTON NUFA PRESIDENT

On November 18th the FASBU membership ratified the tentative settlement with 88.3% approval. This past week I received an e-mail for the President of the University informing NUFA that the Board of Governors had unanimously ratified the settlement, thus bringing to a conclusion a bargaining journey which began one afternoon in August, 2008.

While endings usually come with large meetings, votes, media releases and signing ceremonies, beginnings are less auspicious. Yet it is from small gatherings of interested individuals who have vague ideas of what needs to be “fixed”, that emerge large groups of people discovering their collective sense of community and power, which, in turn, bring about significant change.

That is what occurred over the past fifteen months. A few people with a couple of ideas turned into the wider NUFA membership talking, discussing, weighing in on and ultimately approving a new collective agreement. This is not to say that everyone agreed with each other along the way. Healthy debate is part of the process; however, I was privileged to see colleagues in departments, divisions and schools who do not talk to one another regularly begin chatting about “the Negotiations” or the latest tabled proposal. I saw Arts and Science, Education and APS faculty members—often for the first time—stopping to chat with each other in the hallway and ask the question of the day: “what have you heard about negotiations?” A common sense of purpose became the seed for an increased awareness of community. It was a remarkable thing to witness and I commend all who engaged along the way.

So what now? Do we revert our focus back to the concerns of our departments, disciplines, and careers or have we created a little space for a collective consciousness through which the Association can speak for issues and concerns related to our role as faculty within an institutional structure? For myself, I’d like to think that we are an irrevocably changed group that has added a new aspect to

our identities. We hopefully see ourselves differently than before. To borrow a phrase from a charitable organization I have worked with, we have moved from ‘Me to We’. This means that we are now better positioned to work together to create opportunities and initiate and shape change within the university. We can also work together to confront challenges which may undermine our conception of what it means to be a publicly funded institution of higher learning.

The Association is, of course, the vehicle to ensure the collective agreement is followed and respected but other spaces such as faculty councils and Senate must also be used to create opportunities and initiate or shape change within the university. Issues and concerns must be brought out into the open honestly and respectfully. Courses of action must be developed and they need to be pursued with due diligence. These are the fundamental premises of a collegial university and as a collective we must revisit them and re-enshrine them in our belief and action.

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the rights FASBU members enjoy. Yet they come to work every day to perform their duties in the most professional of manners. CASBU members ensure departments, divisions and schools can offer a full slate of course offerings; they conduct seminars and labs that support student learning; and they admirably serve on numerous university committees without the credit contractually accorded FASBU members.

So in the interest of increased collective consciousness take a CASBU member to lunch, find out what they actually do, what their issues are, and most of all ask how you/FASBU can help. In my role as President, I push the Administration to read, follow and respect the CASBU contract. Today I’m encouraging FASBU members, especially Chairs, to crack it open as well. Learn what rights CASBU members have and most importantly what rights they do not have. Consider how things could be improved for this important part of our membership.

NUFA is only as strong as our most vulnerable members. Indeed, at the heart of every Association philosophy is the motto “I am you – You are me”. Together we can create an Association where all our roles and abilities are respected and we all contribute to the university community.

From the Association’s perspective, we turn our attention from FASBU contract negotiations to preparing for CASBU talks. Set to begin in the Spring of 2010, these negotiations serve to improve the working environment for a very important constituency within the university community. It’s always a tough haul as they are our most vulnerable NUFA members and as such the most in need of our collective support. They do not enjoy most of

How FASBU Can Support CASBU

By Larry Patriquin and Mark Crane
Co-Chairs, Collective Bargaining Committee

Members of NUFA's Contract Academic Staff Bargaining Unit (CASBU) teach roughly 25 percent of all courses in the degree-granting programs at Nipissing. All academic units rely on the experience and, in many cases, practical knowledge of CASBU instructors to offer courses. In addition, CASBU includes all laboratory, seminar, and service course instructors; and all instructors for Additional Basic Qualifications (ABQ) courses and Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) courses.

In total, faculty in CASBU are responsible for roughly 50 percent of the in-class hours taught at Nipissing. Their work is essential to the education mission of the University. For Members of the Full-time Academic Staff Bargaining Unit (FASBU), these are your colleagues with whom you work side-by-side on a day-to-day basis. The solidarity that was built in the last round of collective bargaining for members of FASBU was impressive, but that solidarity must now expand from within one bargaining unit to *across* bargaining units.

Since May 2008, the Chair of the Collective Bargaining Committee's (CBC) FASBU Subcommittee has sat as a member on the CASBU Subcommittee – and vice-versa. The results so far have been positive. We have been able to exchange ideas, strategies, and proposals. The CBC is currently planning for the upcoming CASBU round, and these negotiations will be a major test of whether or not we are capable of developing solidarity across the entire Association. If we are to remain unified, FASBU members need to do at least three things:

Attend NUFA general membership meetings. CASBU issues will rise to the top of NUFA's agenda in the coming year, and FASBU members must be fully apprised of these issues. They need to understand what proposals CASBU has put on the table and why these proposals are important. Please do not skip meetings on the pretext that "this has nothing to do with me." We need to know that more than 15 or 20 FASBU faculty (the usual suspects) are interested in what's going on. Throughout FASBU negotiations, we typically had 125 members in attendance and that high level of participation must continue. In addition, FASBU members should bookmark the NUFA web page where the CASBU collective bargaining updates will be posted. Please check these updates at least once a week after bargaining begins. Stay informed!

Assist the Strike Committee. This Committee was formed for the FASBU negotiations and it gained much valuable experience and knowledge which is difficult to replicate. We hope that many of the members of this Committee will offer to return and work with their CASBU colleagues. For sure, the Committee will need to be fortified with CASBU members. However, only about a dozen and a half of CASBU's members are "full timers" (for instance, the lab and seminar instructors), so

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should CASBU be in the unfortunate position where it has to strike, it will require significant logistical support from FASBU members, who account for the vast majority of NUFA's "full timers." Stay involved!

Get to know the CASBU members in your academic unit, if you do not already. Learn about the contribution they make to the delivery of your curriculum. Ask them how negotiations are going and offer to help out where you can. Stay in touch!

Quick Stats

CASBU's Full time Appointments:

Lab Instructors: 9
Seminar Leaders: 4
Service Course Instructors: 3
Total: 16

CASBU's Part-time Appointments:

Instructors: 138

Total CASBU Members: 154

The Nipissing Difference: Seminar Instructor edition

By Catherine Murton Stoehr

Being at a small, primarily undergraduate university, Nipissing humanities departments have had to be creative to offer some of the benefits students expect in a liberal arts education. One of these is small seminar groups where the grand ideas of broad introductory courses can be taken apart and digested as particular, complex but knowable,

phenomena. But how could we offer seminars without cigarette smoking, idealistic graduate students to do the work? Nipissing response: full time seminar instructors! What began as a necessity has become a huge benefit to the history and English departments. First year students receive highly personalized technical and theoretical instruction from people who have unusually high qualifications for such work (Master's degrees or higher.) These seminar instructors have become additional faculty members for the departments that they work in, volunteering their time to serve on committees and in some cases deepening their departments' teaching capacity by offering courses in their own specialties. Students quickly realize that the seminar instructors are particularly focused on introductory level teaching and often feel comfortable going to visit their seminar instructors in their first year when the idea of attending other professors' office hours is still intimidating.

A Unique Role in CASBU

By Joanne Kmiec

The iTeach Laptop Learning Program has two unique CASBU employees, Joanne Kmiec (North Bay) and Stephen Tedesco (Brantford). Currently classified as Lab Instructors, Joanne and Stephen are non-course based instructors. They provide instruction, instructional design, and support for faculty, staff and students in regard to technology integration. Joanne and Stephen also work with faculty on research and service initiatives. They supervise many student employees and organize academic events, such as conferences, workshops and symposiums.

SSHRC Applications by LTA Members

By Lindsey McMaster

Nipissing's policy is not to support SSHRC applications by LTAs who hold a contract lasting less than three years. SSHRC is the major source of funding for the Social Sciences and Humanities, and each application made by an individual scholar requires a university signature, which obliges the university to administer the funds if the applicant is indeed awarded funding. No other commitment to the scholar (such as employment or even a library card) is required from the institution – only the administration of the funds.

SSHRC itself does not discriminate on the basis of a scholar's contract. On the contrary, in a SSHRC application, there are categories in place for the "New Scholar" and for those who have "never held a tenure-track position." When I wrote to SSHRC's president, Chad Gaffield, he confirmed that SSHRC awards funding based on a peer-review system which assesses the scholar's proposed program of research and record of research achievement. When it comes to the institutional signature, however, SSHRC rather sedulously keeps out of it, refusing to interfere in internal policy matters.

Do other universities use the institutional signature to deny LTA applications to SSHRC? Some do and some don't; it is the institution's prerogative. Indeed, it is the institution's prerogative to withhold the signature from any application, whether by an LTA or a tenured or tenure-track applicant. It is in the case of LTAs, though, where the policy is implemented, and it is perhaps doubly hard in their case, for the impact that SSHRC funding can have on a scholar's career is doubly meaningful to those still seeking tenure-track employment.

Historically, this policy against LTAs has not always been in place at Nipissing, and in fact, LTAs who applied before the policy was enacted met with significant success. Some of them are now tenured and tenure-track professors here. The policy was first implemented a few days before the internal deadline for applications in 2007. In light of the newly negotiated collective agreement, though, and its changes to the lengths and character of LTA contracts, there is, perhaps, opportunity for changing the policy, if the university decides to pursue it.

LTA employment is a reality in institutions across Canada, and the fact is that there are large numbers of highly qualified and motivated scholars without tenure-track positions. SSHRC provides the means for the research of these scholars to be funded and recognized based on its merits. Nipissing need not compound the disadvantages these scholars face by denying them this chance.

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Protecting Our Rights

By Roman Brozowski
Vice President NUFA

- a) CAUT urges all Faculty Associations where deficits and various cutbacks are being announced by University administrations to ask the following questions.

Is there a crisis? Demand to look at the books
If there is a crisis. What are the causes?
What are appropriate solutions?

It was pointed out at the CAUT meeting that perhaps audits should be carried out on the part of the Faculty Associations to see where the crisis is really occurring. It seems that in many cases the problem stems from money that has been allocated to new buildings. Even though Administrations claim that bricks and mortar budgets are completely separate items, it does not prevent the shuffling of monies from one area to another, thus creating larger deficits than might normally be the case

- b) Another interesting development revolves around who controls files, e-mails and documents that are confidential. In the arbitration case at the University of Ottawa, in which Administration demanded that a faculty member hand over all their materials to the University, the arbitrator ruled in favour of the faculty member. In other words, only files, e-mails or documents that were directly related to University business could be acquired by the University. For instance, materials in which you were dealing with the Dean's office or with the Chair or with committee work would be considered University business. Personal materials which the University demanded were outside their rights to acquire. Despite this ruling this battle is still continuing at other Universities.
- c) An interesting case is occurring at Simon Fraser in which an arbitration hearing is taking place regarding Senate powers vs the Collective Agreement. Evidently, Administration seems to think that matters regarding Senate trump the Collective Agreement. If they win this case you can well imagine all the different consequences of Senate overriding our Collective Agreement
- d) At the last OCUFA meeting a lengthy motion was passed by all the University representatives asking for accountability regarding satellite campuses. It included such principles as a careful examination of whether such campuses were needed, asking the Ministry to establish an ad hoc committee with faculty representation to examine all aspects of satellite development both present and future. Faculty associations also wish to ensure that standards and practices codified in collective agreements are fully respected at satellite campuses. This applies especially to junior and part time faculty who are often not familiar with their rights and responsibilities.
- e) You will be pleased to know that according to a recent Harris poll the public in general do not believe that university Professors make too much money. The response on this question was that 48% of the public said 'no,' they do not make too much money, while 26% said they do.

IN BRIEF

The 2009-10 members of the Women's Committee:

Jennifer Barnett, Hilary Earl, Joanne Kmiec, Gillian McCann, and Susan Srigley

In 2008-9 the NUFA Women's Caucus met and agreed to 1) rename itself the Women's Committee and 2) expand its mandate beyond NUFA to include women and men from all areas of the University interested in women's issues at Nipissing. Our new group has met again this year and we are planning to call a general meeting some time in late January for an open discussion of women's issues, including but not limited to: women's safety on campus, equity, and women in the curriculum. We hope to coordinate some panel discussions to coincide with International Women's Week 2010. If anyone is interested in joining us, please contact one of our members. We look forward to your participation and input.

The Constitution Committee

The NUFA constitution committee would like to thank the membership for their ongoing support. Committee Members include

Jonathan Pitt—Chair (FASBU, Education), Dr. Derek Neal (FASBU, Arts & Science), Rhiannon Don (CASBU, Arts & Science), Dr. Adam Adler (FASBU, Education). To achieve the goals of the membership we employ a collaborative approach to solving constitutional issues. Our framework during our meetings is always to improve the overall quality of the constitution for our membership. In May 2009, at the AGM, the updated NUFA Constitution was approved: <http://www.cauf.ca/nufa/nufadocs.htm>

NUFA Donates \$500.00 to the Student Food Bank

Christmas at Lakehead

After Charles Dickens had become one of Victorian England's favourite writers he would write an annual Christmas story. Of these stories "A Christmas Carol" is the most famous, but others such as "The Chimes" is still very popular and very much admired. Today, critics and readers continue to be impressed by the way in which Dickens could simultaneously politicize and sentimentalize. Most of the stories include a Scrooge figure and a conversion narrative, and most if not all the

stories make explicit the need to think beyond political economy, not only at Christmas time but indeed throughout the year. If Dickens were alive today he would no doubt set this year's story in Thunder Bay, where Lakehead's Administration is celebrating Christmas by closing the University for four days and not paying anyone but, I imagine, themselves and a few security guards.

The university has argued that closing the University is necessary so as to "generate bottom-line savings."

Lakehead University Faculty Association executive committee member Jerry Phillips, in a letter issued to faculty, has responded by saying, "The unilateral directive issued by the administration is completely unnecessary and shows an unfortunate willingness to squander goodwill and opt for divisive and confrontational methods to deal with financial issues."

Lakehead's Faculty have arranged for December 21 a one-day public protest. Members of other Faculty Associations from coast-to-coast are going to support LUFA. NUFA is still looking for one of our members who might be headed in that direction over the holiday to attend the protest.

NUFA GENERAL MEETING

**January 19th at 5pm
Room TBA**

**Social to follow
~details TBA~**

