

THE NUFA NEWS

NUFA Communications Committee

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SPECIAL FASBU MEMBERSHIP BARGAINING MEETING

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 @ 4:30

North Bay Campus: F213 (Theatre)
Bracebridge Campus: Classroom 3
Brantford Campus: Room 207

We are asking our Members to join us for a very important meeting to discuss the FASBU Bargaining Package on Wednesday, March 11 @ 4:30 pm. An email invitation will be sent out soon for Members to RSVP regarding their attendance.

Members will be asked to vote on a motion to approve the bargaining package.

We are at a critical juncture, and it is time for us to prepare the Membership for the upcoming round of negotiations. Donna Gray, Research Director at OCUFA, will be our guest at the meeting.

NUFA will be providing child services during the meeting with food and activities in the NUFA office (A244). If you are bringing your children, please let us know (nufaoffice@gmail.com) how many will be coming, and whether they have any food restrictions. Thank you.

collective.
bargaining



Nipissing is a University

by Rob Breton, NUFA President

In our press release following the news that 22 faculty members will not be returning to Nipissing in September, we called the cuts unprecedented. We were not exaggerating. With rumours now circulating that they are going after part-time instructors (cutting the part-time budget by 8 to 10%), we have a pressing and astonishing need to remind our administrators that Nipissing is a university and universities offer courses to students. Students like to have some choice, and likely base their decision on whether to attend one university or another on the kind of choices that are made available to them. This isn't rocket science. We don't offer that.

Though I am certainly no fan of the Program Prioritization Process, did we not spend tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars so as to make informed decisions about priorities? Did we not all spend hours upon hours filling in the little boxes that the university's consultants created for us? Why were we asked to do that? The PPP, we are told, isn't finished. But the university has gone ahead and has forced program cuts without the information they claimed they needed so as to make informed choices.

It is clear that the Employer is basing all its decisions on the budget and the projected deficit. If there isn't a single senior administrator who is going to defend the academic mission of the University, only Faculty and our students can do so. More than ever this is a time for solidarity. Going after our most vulnerable is to go after us all.



“Flexible” or “expendable”?: Why All Faculty Members Need to Be Concerned about Conditions for Contract Academic Staff

by Gyllian Phillips, Past-President, NUFA Executive, OCUFA Executive

As we are still reeling from the terrible loss of faculty positions for our friends and colleagues, we probably need no more reminders of just how profound the drawbacks are to precarious labour. At the same time, we also need to think about the full range of implications of the contingency of contract academic staff (CAS) in order to find ways to improve their conditions. I write this to focus on the second of three Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations’ (OCUFA) priorities for this year, that of faculty complement and contract academic staff. At this tragic moment in Nipissing’s history, we see the direct consequences of having two kinds of faculty: tenure-stream and disposable.

At the February 7/8 meeting of the OCUFA Board, one of the key events was a panel discussion on faculty complement with three presenters: Dr. Herbert Pimlott, Dr. Jim Gerlach, both from Wilfred Laurier, and Dr. Alison Hearn, from Western University. Drs. Pimlott and Gerlach outlined what is really a crisis at the heart of the academy: the increasing reliance on part-time or contracted rather than tenured faculty drives conditions down for everyone. The tenure-stream faculty shoulder larger and larger burdens of service, including committee work, union work and student supervision. Contract employees teach the same students, and offer the same curriculum. These faculty are integral to the running of every program, yet are not involved in curriculum development and collegial governance. Indeed, while they might have nominal protections, such as the right to academic freedom, the lived reality is something different: anyone who goes contract to contract often feels reluctant to voice unpopular points of view. Thus, academic freedom is under threat every day in our institutions, and we need to be as outraged and active against that as we are when a tenured faculty member is fired for speaking out.



**CASUALISATION OF
THE WORKFORCE**

(continued on p. 4)

“Flexible” or “expendable”?: Why All Faculty Members Need to Be Concerned about Conditions for Contract Academic Staff (continued)

by Gyllian Phillips, Past-President, NUFA Executive, OCUFA Executive

These are just a few of the many problems generated by administrative reliance on this “flexible” workforce, but how can we begin to engage in finding solutions? Dr. Hearn told the story of the last round of negotiations at Western University, where contract and tenure-stream faculty are in the same bargaining unit. There, the Faculty Association made contract faculty the focus of its bargaining campaign and, as a result, won better conditions for those faculty and in the process gained greater solidarity between the “haves” and the “have-nots” in their union.

Overall, one of the tasks we can all work on is refusing to continue the culture of silence around the sometimes massive gap in conditions between contract and part-time faculty and tenure stream. Those of us with the privilege of tenure need to support our contract colleagues, to fight for better conditions and for an equal place at the academic table.

**Faculty working
conditions are**

**Student learning
conditions**



FASBU Survey Summary

by Natalya Brown

In September 2014, the Collective Bargaining Committee surveyed the membership to learn their views on various issues related to the upcoming negotiations. Of FASBU’s current 194 members, 143 participated in the survey, with the proportions of gender and academic rank of survey participants mirroring the proportions in the membership.

Priorities

For all members surveyed, job security was the highest priority, followed by increased compensation, retirement packages, and benefits. For the female members surveyed, job security was also the highest priority, followed by retirement packages, benefits, and pay equity. The ranking of priorities for male members surveyed followed that of the entire group. Table 1 shows the top priorities by academic rank.

Table 1: Top Priorities by Academic Rank

Several members commented on the need for better conditions for LTA and CASBU

Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor
Job security	Job security	Increased compensation
Increased compensation	Retirement packages and benefits	Retirement packages and benefits
Retirement packages and benefits	More time, money and other resources for research	Greater transparency in governance and a more collegial atmosphere between faculty and administration
Pay equity	Greater transparency in governance and a more collegial atmosphere between faculty and administration	More time, money and other resources for research

members, including earlier re-appointments, more positions converted to tenure-track and better compensation. Meanwhile, other members were concerned with the hiring process for senior administration and the responsiveness of administration.

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FASBU Survey Summary (continued)

by Natalya Brown

Important Issues

The majority of members surveyed (90.5%) felt that the custody, control and intellectual property of course content were important or very important issues. Other issues given great importance were gender pay equity, salary gains, a defined benefit pension plan, maintaining traditional modes of delivery, and faculty complement.

Senior Administration

Overall opinions of senior administration were mostly negative. According to the members surveyed, senior administration gets a failing grade when it comes to inspiring confidence, promoting a collegial atmosphere and facilitating research. Table 2 provides a summary of these views.

Table 2: Views on Senior Administration

Survey Question	Disagree or Strongly Disagree Percentage of Survey Participants
Senior administration inspires confidence	71.2%
Senior administration is doing the best job to create a collegial environment that supports a shared vision of the academic mission of the university	69.6%
Senior administration is doing the best job to facilitate research	67.6%
Senior administration is doing the best job to ensure their full and satisfying participation in academic governance through service	47.4%
Senior administration is doing the best job to facilitate successful teaching	46.8%

Day of Action for US Contract Faculty

by Mark Crane

From Louisville to Buffalo and Berkeley to Ohio State, Contract Academic Staff in the United States are answering a grassroots call to insist on fair wages and better working conditions. Adjuncts, as contract faculty are commonly labeled in the US, have been working on a campaign to bring attention their plight since the fall, which culminated in **National Adjunct Walkout Day** that was held on Wednesday February 25, 2015.

The position of contract faculty in the US is markedly worse than in Canada, though they share the same concerns about low pay, few or no benefits, and lack of job security. Beyond the fact that there are exponentially more adjuncts in the US, their median pay for a three-credit course is less than half of what one might expect to earn in Ontario. Nationwide, contract faculty teach well over fifty per cent of courses.

A distinctive feature of this campaign is its grassroots nature. The leadership in the movement is de-centralized, and relies on a vast network of local organizing committees for its planning and execution. This means that the day of action looked different at different campuses. In fact, many contract staff, especially those with union representation or in states with laws that do not allow public employees to strike, are prohibited from walking out, but that has not stopped plans for teach-ins, information pickets, and other events to support the national movement.

Many Canadian faculty associations, including NUFA, held events on 25 February both to support their contract colleagues south of the border, and to bring attention to the precarious position of contract academic staff at home. See photos below.

For more information on National Adjunct Walkout Day, check out their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Adjunct-Walkout-Day/340019999501000?fref=nf>



A Contract Out on Contract Academics?

by *Rhiannon Don*

In the few months since the projected deficit was first announced, the university's decision to reduce the deficit through cutbacks has weighed heavily on the contract academic staff who teach so many of the students here. When I was asked to write this article, I was asked to write about two things: first, the impact of the recent restructuring on contract faculty and second, what this would mean for full-time faculty given the vital part played by CASBU members at NU? I had a hard time starting this article because I don't have a good answer to either of those questions. I can tell you what the impact of the restructuring is on our CAS currently: like everyone else, we are scared and demoralized. We know that contract faculty exists to be expendable in times of financial contraction. We know that we won't formally be laid off or fired; we just won't receive our contracts.

But in the long term? At best, I can only make some educated guesses. CAS teach a significant portion of the student body here at Nipissing (to say nothing of our virtual student body in our online course offerings, which is almost entirely CAS). In 2014-2015, the administration has estimated that CASBU members teach 27% of the courses in Arts and Science, 37% in Applied and Professional Studies, and 31% in Education, for a total of 29.92% of courses across the university. (It should be noted that these numbers do not include AQ or ABQ courses, alternate delivery courses, or the work done by the full-time CASBU instructors.) If the university wants to eliminate its spending on CAS, it will have to choose, either to stop offering the courses taught by our CAS members, or to force FASBU members to teach those courses. While either of these situations might offer the university financial savings in the short term, neither of them would be beneficial to the university in the long run. The work done by our CAS members is too important.

The best indicator of what the fall holds for our CAS will be the course loading sheets: it is my suspicion that many of our CAS members may be told that there won't be work for them in the fall, only to receive frantic phone calls at the eleventh hour asking them to teach a course. It is more challenging to speak about what this means for full-time faculty. It might mean that they will be asked to teach courses previously taught by their colleagues. It might mean that they will be asked to accommodate additional students in their courses because there are simply fewer courses for students to take. It will certainly mean less service work being done by CAS on a volunteer basis. The most important thing that it means for full-time faculty is that the contract academic staff here at Nipissing need your support. We need you to recognize that these are our jobs, and that the risk of losing them is very real to us right now. The administration has been very clear that tenured faculty are safe: the implication is that the contingent faculty (including LTAs) are not.

Collective Bargaining Workshop

by Nathan Kozuskanich

On November 21 and 22, 2014, Chantal Sundaram (CAUT Assistant Executive Director of Collective Bargaining Services) held a Collective Bargaining Workshop for members of this year's bargaining committee. The purpose of the workshop was twofold: 1. to familiarize the members with how collective bargaining works and what strategies and skills members need to bargain effectively; 2. to put that knowledge to work in a collective bargaining simulation. Seasoned members of the committee played a support role and thrust newcomers Dean Hay and Nathan Kozuskanich into the roles of chief negotiator for the administration and the union respectively. Mark Crane drew from his years of experience at the bargaining table to play his role as part of the administration team to perfection. Participants were left with a binder of resources to reference when preparing for actual negotiations. Many thanks to Angela for coordinating such an informative and valuable workshop.



Spotlight on Research: Dr. Carly Dokis (A&S)

Dr. Dokis's research investigates the political ecology of resource decision-making in the Canadian North, and critically examines the ways in which Indigenous people's views about environmental impacts are considered within the framework of managerial ecology and in regulatory decisions. Dr. Dokis has worked with Dene communities in the Northwest Territories on issues surrounding intensified oil and gas activities on their lands. Her ethnographic account of the consultation and regulatory processes associated with the Mackenzie Gas Project forms the basis of her book, *Where the Rivers Meet: Pipelines: Participatory Resource Management and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Northwest Territories*, forthcoming (July 2015) from UBC Press. Together with Dr. Benjamin Kelly (Sociology), Dr. Dokis is a co-investigator on a Canadian Water Network (NSERC-funded) project that examines the use of local knowledge in the management of drinking water systems with Dokis First Nation. A key part of this project has been the development of an exploratory methodology in the form of *storycircles*. Grounded in story-based sharing, storycircles are closely tied to decolonizing methodologies and attend to conceptions of identity, relationality, community, and renewal in documenting Dokis First Nation members' experiences and knowledge of water. These stories are being made into digital stories that will be housed on the Dokis First Nation website. This research has identified incongruence between state designations of drinking water risk levels for Dokis First Nation, and how local residents perceive the quality of their water and the nature of water risks. Dr. Dokis is now working with Dr. Benjamin Kelly (Sociology) and Dr. Dan Walters (Geography) to better understand how risk designations surrounding water quality are constructed by the state, and how water is known and experienced by members of Dokis First Nation.

Special Announcements

Births

On January 5th, 2015, **Kate Anna Raymer** joined the family of Graydon (BPHE) and Becky Raymer.

On January 22nd, 2015, **Layna Grace Daly** joined the family of Kristina (BPHE) and Sean Karvinen.

Note: The Communications Committee thanks all who provided birth announcements. Submissions are invited for all future issues.



Retirements



Dr. Steve Muhlberger: Steve started in the Department of History at Nipissing University in 1993, after holding positions at Trent University, Brock University, and the University of Toronto. Though a Medievalist, Steve is a polymath who has published on a wide variety of topics from early democratic institutions in medieval India to events in the Later Roman Empire. But the primary focus of Steve's work is in the area of ancient chivalry and tournaments, on which he published two books and a number of papers in peer reviewed journals. Steve was a well-regarded lecturer who was very popular with students. There are many things that the History Department already misses about Steve, but perhaps the most notable is his deep commitment to and belief in what we do as academics at Nipissing University. Steve's passion for history, enlivened his classrooms and continues to inspire his colleagues. Whether we were trying to build something new or defend what we already did really well, Steve never let us lose sight of our strengths.



Dr. Ron Wideman: Ron came to the Faculty of Education in 1996 and has served as an instructor, Chair, Associate Dean, Dean (Interim), and as the Director of the Centre for Study of Leadership in Education. His research interests have included action research, adult education, educational leadership, knowledge creation approaches to professional learning, program review, differentiated programming, and school community partnerships.

NUFA & NUSU Food Bank Donation

On December 17, 2014, the Faculty Association presented a \$300.00 cheque on the Membership's behalf to the NUSU Food Bank. This cheque represents 20% from the sale of each NUFA t-shirt. NUFA t-shirts were introduced at last May's Annual General Membership meeting and are still available in a range of sizes in both women's and men's styles, for \$15.00 each. Consider purchasing your t-shirt today in the NUFA Office, A244. Arrangements can be made for faculty on the satellite campuses.

