

NEWS & VIEWS

APRIL 2010

UMFA MEMBER ALERT ON HIRING!

Section 18.B.2.1 of the Collective Agreement on hiring procedures for new faculty provides for faculty participation consistent with the following clause: *“The academic staff members with faculty rank of the department meeting in committee shall recommend to the dean/director the priorities and procedures whereby candidates shall be sought, assessed and recommended for appointment. A reasonable number of academic staff members with faculty rank of a department shall participate in an advisory role in the search process.”*

It has come to UMFA’s attention that the University’s Human Resources Department has been advising that it is not contrary to the Collective Agreement for departments to accept votes in absentia and/or proxy votes

from members who are not in attendance at the meeting. The words “meeting in committee” are central to this provision in the Collective Agreement. This wording ensures that those who are making recommendations are making an informed recommendation, one that has been reached after full opportunity for discussion and debate *“in committee”*.

Any procedure (e.g. electronic votes, proxy votes) that allows for members who are not present at such a meeting of to vote on these matters related to hiring is a violation of the Collective Agreement.

Please contact UMFA if you have any questions, information or concerns about procedures on the hiring of Members.

ICM and Sociology: An Offer You Can Refuse

Chris Powell

On Monday, November 9th, 2009 the Sociology Faculty Caucus met to discuss, amongst its usual business, a highly unusual question.

International College of Manitoba had offered our Department \$10,000 for our involvement in designing and implementing its own *Introduction to Sociology* course, along with an additional \$500 for each additional section of the course if more than one section was offered. As part of this work, Sociology was to find and approve an instructor for the course. ICM also informed the Head of Sociology that the course would proceed whether or not our Department accepted this offer.

At first glance, this seemed like an offer worth considering. Faced with substantial budget cutbacks and the prospect of more down the road, the members of our Department could imagine many worthwhile uses for those funds.

At the same time, many faculty members had serious concerns about the secrecy and the circumvention of collegial governance involved in establishing ICM’s presence at the University of Manitoba, and with what that presence represented in terms of the erosion of public education.

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UMFA AGM

2:00 pm

**Thursday,
May 13, 2010**

**Marshall
McLuhan Hall**

University of Manitoba
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ICM and Sociology (continued)

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ICM's parent corporation is *Navitas*, an Australian multinational worth well over half a billion dollars, with franchise operations in Australia, the UK, Kenya, Zambia, and Singapore as well as Canada. As a private corporation, *Navitas* is obligated to seek the highest possible profit for its shareholders. It does this by "leveraging partner universities' infrastructure and spare teaching capacity". In other words, *Navitas* keeps its costs low by operating in facilities constructed at taxpayer expense, and by employing only sessional instructors on a course by course basis who receive no benefits or protections under a collective agreement, rather than full time faculty members or some combination of full and part time faculty members. The company's limited investment, subsidized in one form or another by the taxpayers of Manitoba and Canada, helps to maximize profits for a publicly traded corporation on the Australian stock exchange that has seen its stock value increase by two and one-half times over the past 12 months.

Further investigation also raised other reservations about its local operations. It was not the case, as we had been led to understand, that most other academic units at the University had chosen to accept ICM's offer, leaving Sociology as one of the last holdouts. Although some academic units have accepted ICM's offer, most others have refused. Furthermore, it appears that ICM has offered varying sums of money to different Departments.

ICM's operations at the U of M involve the outsourcing of work that could be done by UMFA or CUPE members. Although at present all of ICM's students are recruited internationally by its parent corporation, *Navitas*, it may decide to expand its programs in the future – as it has done in some other universities. Indeed, as a for-profit corporation, *Navitas* is compelled to grow. It can do this by expanding the number of campuses on which it operates; it can also do this by expanding its range of offerings at its

existing universities. Currently, ICM is new in town and its operations are limited in scope. Over time this is likely to change as the imperatives of continuous expansion in order to generate more profits takes precedence. The sums of money being offered to Departments for their cooperation with ICM in providing courses are small compared to the long term costs associated with the erosion of a publicly funded system of post secondary education.

What ICM would buy with the money it has offered to Departments is academic legitimacy, association with the University of Manitoba 'brand'. At present, the nonparticipation of University academic units means that ICM's presence on campus lacks some of the academic credibility it desires for the effective marketing of its programs.

At its Departmental Council meeting on December 10th, Sociology voted to reject ICM's cash offer. Faculty, sessional instructors, and students spoke out against the erosion of public education. Many other Departments, Programs, and Schools at the University have also, either actively or passively, declined similar offers made to them. By refusing to participate in ICM's operations, these Departments, Programs, and Schools are denying ICM the legitimacy it needs to continue its presence on the U of M campus.

The ICM contract is up for renewal in three years. In the last 12 months, *Navitas* has been rejected by the governing bodies at McMaster University and University of Windsor. The U of M Senate and Board of Governors can and should join these universities in keeping corporate, for-profit "educational" institutions off Canadian campuses.

CHRIS POWELL is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology.

¹Navitas, "UBS Emerging Companies Conference", 2 April 2009 (PowerPoint presentation), <http://www.navitasworld.com/corporate/process.php?file=225.pdf>. Accessed on 14 April 2010.

National Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff

Cathy Rocke and Frank Deer

In November 2009, CAUT hosted its 2nd Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff from across Canada in Saskatoon. The theme of the two and a half day conference was “Transforming the Academy” which built on the theme of “Navigating the Academy” from the inaugural forum held in Winnipeg in 2008.

The conference began with a presentation on how to establish Indigenous knowledge within the academy. Recent survey results indicate that many Aboriginal people have now moved beyond feeling shameful about their culture and heritage. However, many non-Aboriginal Canadians continue to view Aboriginal people as “noble savages” or “eco-savages” who are mired in poverty and social dysfunction. The challenge for Aboriginal people in changing these perceptions was identified as the “red man’s burden”. One of the ways the Aboriginal academics can work to change this reality is to educate university administrators on the value of Indigenous knowledge to the academy. It is important however in accomplishing this goal, that there be a distinction made between *teaching about* Indigenous knowledge (which is an academic endeavor) and *teaching* Indigenous knowledge (which requires experiential learning). Finally, it is also important to understand the difference between Indigenous thought and Indigenous knowledge. As part of integrating Indigenous knowledge within the academy the role of Elders within the academy was discussed. Determining who is considered an Elder within Aboriginal communities can be problematic. Knowing that there are spiritual and cultural Elders is part of the process of choosing Elders to work in post-secondary institutions. In the end, conference participants strongly supported the view that places of higher learning should adopt the Nike© motto of “just do it” in deciding to incorporate Elders within their institutions.

The specific experiences of Aboriginal academics in negotiating the multicultural classroom were identified. On one hand, Aboriginal academics are encountering an increasing number of students from countries with a history of colonization that results in many students being able to relate with

the experience of Aboriginal people within Canada. On the other hand, there continues to be instances where non-Aboriginal students feel justified in challenging Aboriginal academics on their credentials within the academy. These challenges appear to be more prevalent in “mandatory” courses. Another issue that was raised was the expectation by some Aboriginal students that Aboriginal academics not hold these students to the same standards as other post secondary students. Conference participants agreed that this was an unacceptable expectation by Aboriginal students. There are also unique workplace expectations that many Aboriginal academics face. These include the expectation to be “academics plus” once joining the institution. For example, many new Aboriginal academics find that they are expected to serve on all committees that have anything to do with Aboriginal issues, speak at all events or present in classes other than their own on Aboriginal topics, and support and mentor all Aboriginal students within their units. All of these expectations occur within an atmosphere of isolation within the academy and with additional external pressures from the Aboriginal community. To address these myriad of demands, Aboriginal academics were encouraged to know that “no” is a full sentence!

Conference participants agreed that it was now time for Aboriginal academics to nurture alliances for research that will benefit Aboriginal peoples. In the past, the focus has been on helping Aboriginal students and staffs “survive” the academy. As a result support services that may tend to pathologize Aboriginal students have been prioritized. Although these supports have been instrumental in increasing the number of Aboriginal students and academics within post secondary institutions, conference participants were encouraged to shift gears and adopt a “trans-systemic approach”. Part of this approach requires at least some Aboriginal academics to ground their research in Indigenous approaches and worldviews. An emerging and much needed research area includes the evaluation of Indigenous knowledge. Participants also

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National Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff (continued)

discussed how Aboriginal academics can get published, acquire tenure and obtain research grants. Peer support is one of the strategies that can help in this process. Although “making relations” can be a high risk activity within the academy, it can also result in “high rewards”. Participants were reminded that Aboriginal people are experts in dealing with rapid change, experts in small group process and experts in support systems. Often, the internal “fussing and fighting” that occurs within Aboriginal communities is a result of the “residential school hangover” and needs to be transcended.

The topics of the work/life balance and mentoring up-and-coming Aboriginal scholars were covered in the last plenary session. Again, Aboriginal academics must give themselves permission to say “no” in order to maintain the balance in their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual lives. If one’s world begins to wobble – it is sure sign that one is out of balance and needs to slow down. Supporting graduate students who move into academic positions requires that more established Aboriginal academics advocate for additional supports, such as lighter workloads during the initial stage of this transition.

On the final day, participants identified a number of recommendations for CAUT. Although a comprehensive list will be included in the final report on the conference, some of the recommendations were:

- That CAUT lobby for additional resources for Aboriginal education;
- That a book or journal be published that addresses the experiences of Aboriginal academics in universities and colleges;
- That CAUT develop criteria and rate universities and colleges on the question of how supportive their environments are for Aboriginal staff and students;
- That the need for cultural competence among non-Aboriginal academics be promoted; and
- That CAUT develop alternate dispute resolution methods based on Indigenous worldviews for use in the academy.

CATHY ROCKE is the Program Director of the Aboriginal Focus Programs, Extended Education

FRANK DEER is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education

2009-2010 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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Health Care Spending: Use It or Lose It

If you have not already done so, we remind you to submit your receipts for reimbursement from your Health Care Spending Account (HCSA) for the 12 months ending March 31, 2010. The maximum amount of payment from this account for 2009-10 is \$500 if you are a full-time UMFA Member. The account can be used to recover costs that were not covered by another benefit plan (e.g., amount not reimbursed from the Blue Cross Dental Plan), for prescription drugs not recognized by the Manitoba Pharmacare formulary, for vision care or any other expenses that qualify as medical expenses for tax credit purposes under the Income Tax Act.

In the past, some UMFA Members have not fully utilized the maximum benefits available to them in their HCSA. If this is because you have not had eligible expenses to claim, it is important to note that you have been required to pay supplementary health care premiums since April 1, 2009. These premiums can be claimed as an expense from your HCSA, and you should have already received a statement for the amount paid between April and December 2009, and a more recent one for the January to March 2010 period. All premiums

paid between April 2009 and March 2010 can be claimed against eligible room in your HCSA for this past year. Expenses that were claimed but not paid out from the 2008-2009 year because your claim exceeded the amount available for that year may also be eligible for reimbursement in 2009-2010 up to the maximum claim of \$500. Specific questions regarding your HCSA can be directed to Great-West Life at 1-800-957-9777.

Remember: All claims for the 2009-2010 year must be submitted and processed by Great-West Life before June 30, 2010 (i.e., make sure your claim is sent in by mid-June to ensure processing by the end of the month). The June 30th deadline relates to Canada Revenue Agency regulations, and if you fail to file your claim in time you will not be reimbursed for expenses that occurred in 2009-2010. Please also note that unused amounts from your HCSA cannot be carried forward to the following year; however, expenditures submitted but not fully covered from the amount available to you for 2009-2010 because the \$500 limit was reached can be reimbursed from the 2010-2011 allocation.

University of Manitoba Employees Scholarship (UMES)

The University of Manitoba Employees Scholarship (UMES) is open to spouses or dependent children of University of Manitoba employees or retired former employees. For a list of the eligibility criteria and the restrictions, and to access the links to the application form and other information on the scholarship, click on the following link:

http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/fin_awards/scholarships/1720.htm

Please note that applications are due by May 31, 2010. Applicants will receive notice of results in August 2010.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2:00 pm

Thursday, May 13, 2010

Marshall McLuhan Hall