

NEWS & VIEWS

July 2013

From the President's Desk

Sharon Alward



I attended the CAUT Council Meeting in Ottawa in April. One of the highlights of the meeting was the launch of the “Get Science Right Campaign”

which will address the shift in funding away from basic research in universities, the trend towards defunding “politically inconvenient” research, the shift in the membership of granting councils and the change in granting councils’ priorities. For example, research funding which requires industrial partners has significantly increased and untargeted research funding from the granting councils has been shrinking. For further information and the link to the newly created CAUT website, please refer to the “Get Science Right” article. Other issues addressed at CAUT Council included the continued challenges facing academics through permissive contract language and the transformation of annual activity reports from primarily formative to summative evaluations which can over time lead to termination and the undermining of tenure.

UMFA held its Annual General meeting on May 13th. In addition to giving my president’s report (see highlights in this newsletter), I was pleased to announce a new Sex and Salary study had just been approved by the UMFA Executive and that UMFA will be undertaking this study in the near future to determine if there are still gaps in the salaries of male and female faculty members at the U of M.

UMFA, along with AESES, CAW, CUPE #3909, CUPE #1482, UMSU and GSA, attended an all-unions meeting on Friday, June 14th with President Barnard and members of his administration, including Vice-President (Administration) Paul Kochan, Vice-President (Research) Joanne Kesselman, Vice-President (External) John Kearsey and Acting Associate Vice-President (Human Resources) Greg Juliano to discuss our respective concerns. To our knowledge, this was the first all-unions meeting with a president at the University of Manitoba. We see it as a positive first step towards a willingness on the Administration’s part to listen to our concerns. UMFA brought forward a number of issues including investigatory procedures regarding our Members, the right of our Members to information in a timely manner, the use of anonymous material and access to evidence. The decline in working conditions given all of the ROSE and OARS implementations, the lack of administrative support, and concern about faculty amalgamation and the lack of concrete information on proposed governance structures were also presented as issues of concern to our Members. Other unions raised issues on the contracting out of supervisor positions in the physical plant, the secrecy around the activities of the Pension Committee, the impact on sessional instructor positions when faculty budgets are cut back and some of the difficulties in ordering appropriate equipment from single suppliers.

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There seemed to be an interest on the part of all parties to continue on-going open and frank discussions with the goal of resolving some of the challenging issues facing each of our respective unions. The meeting was a positive first step and we remain hopeful that future meetings will lead to a better relationship between the administration and the front line workers in the university community.

There have been several meetings of the Bargaining Team, the Communications Committee and the Collective Agreement Committee, including its subcommittees, since my last report. The administration and the UMFA bargaining team met on June 21st to exchange proposals for

revisions to the UMFA Collective Agreement. There will be a similar meeting scheduled around the middle of July regarding proposed revisions to the UMDCSA Collective Agreement.

Look for more bargaining newsletters and other updates as negotiations continue throughout the summer. UMFA remains steadfastly committed to a successful conclusion to this round of bargaining for both of our units.

As classes and research wind down (and parking issues hopefully get sorted out on the Fort Garry campus), I wish you all a great summer.

AGM Highlights 2013

UMFA held its Annual General Meeting on Monday, May 13, 2013. Quorum not being present, motions could not be passed and reports could be presented as information only. Reports including the President's report, the auditor's report, the 2013-2014 budget, and various committee reports were presented. There was great participation and several questions from the Members in attendance.



Linda Guse announced that President Sharon Alward and Vice-President Tommy Kucera had been acclaimed for 2013-2014.

President's Report

While observing that universities are operating in a "climate of austerity and public sector compression," President Sharon Alward said our problems were being exacerbated by a "new managerialism" that is "moving us from a university to a corporation."

For Alward, actions taken by the administration over the

past year have eroded the formerly "collegial governance model that ensures academic staff can participate in educational decisions and setting educational policy." She observed that administrative decisions concerning travel, printing, room scheduling and administrative support have increased the administrative burden on our Members as well as the frustration Members have expressed at the lack of consultation.

She concluded with these words: "It is clear from CAUT surveys that the public perceives us, not the university administration, as the voice and defender of the academy. Academics are seen as committed to preserving the integrity of campus life and ensuring that quality education will be available to future generations. We must continue to remind ourselves in these challenging times that there is value in the work we do. We must be mindful that the institutional values of academy and the collective bargaining process are closely linked. The rights and working conditions of academics and the quality of educational programs are intertwined. So as we prepare for the upcoming round of bargaining, we must think about what is at stake. Not only are we bargaining for better working conditions and for fair compensation for our work, we are also defending academic freedom, insisting on natural justice for all academics and the right to full participation in collegial decisions about the future of our University."

Paul Fortier Prize for Student Activism

The Paul Fortier Prize for Student Activism was presented to Karina Cardona Claros, a Master's of Arts student. She is a cultural/artistic ambassador, youth advocate and environmentalist, having worked within numerous organizational contexts on issues of health, sustainability and social justice. She has served on the Board of Directors of Art City Inc. and the Steering Committee of the Children's Health and Environment Partnership of Manitoba. On campus, she has been a featured speaker in the Faculty of Education/Disability speaker series and a contributing artist to *Celebrating Abilities Art Show*, an event sponsored by Student Accessibility Services. Karina thanked UMFA Members for their support in granting her this award. "Every day is a day to be thankful for and every new day is a new opportunity to make a difference," she stated.



UMFA President Sharon Alward presented Karina Cardona Claros with the Paul Fortier Prize for Student Activism

Following the presentation of the Paul Fortier Prize, UMFA Members and guests stayed for a reception to honour the award recipient and mingle with colleagues.

UMFA Board of Representatives Decisions

Regarding the official business of the Annual General Meeting, as per the UMFA Constitution, when quorum is not present the business of the annual meeting is disposed of at a Board of Representatives meeting. On May 16, 2013, the Board of Representatives met and passed the following motions:

2012-2013 Auditor's Report

MOTION: Board of Representatives /

THAT the Auditor's Report for the 2012-2013 financial period be approved. – CARRIED

Appointment of the Auditor

MOTION: Board of Representatives /

THAT Ramona Tkachuk be appointed as auditor for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. – CARRIED

2013-2014 Proposed Budget

MOTION: Board of Representatives /

THAT the Proposed Budget for 2013-2014 be approved. – CARRIED

Amendments to the Reserve Fund Policy

MOTION: Board of Representatives /

THAT the Reserve Fund Policy be amended by adopting a policy to review the financial advisors every 5 to 7 years, and,

THAT the process for review of financial advisors begin in 2012-2013. – CARRIED

MOTION: Board of Representatives /

THAT the membership of the Reserve Fund Committee be made more permissive, and, therefore, THAT the Reserve Fund Policy statement regarding membership be mended to read as follows:

Membership:

The Reserve Fund Committee shall be made up of the Treasurer and four to six Regular Members and may also include up to two Retired Members. The Regular Members will be approved by the Board of Representatives and will be appointed for a two-year term. The Retired Members will be appointed for a two-year term in a non-voting capacity by

the Board of Representatives. The Regular Members will include the Past-Treasurer unless he/she is unable or unwilling to serve or is a Retired Member, and where possible, should include an UMFA representative to the CAUT Defence Fund. Regular Members and Retired Members may be re-appointed at the end of their term. The Treasurer shall chair the Reserve Fund Committee and ensure that its membership is at full complement. – CARRIED

Affiliation to the Winnipeg Labour Council

MOTION: Board of Representatives / THAT UMFA become a member of the Winnipeg Labour Council. – CARRIED

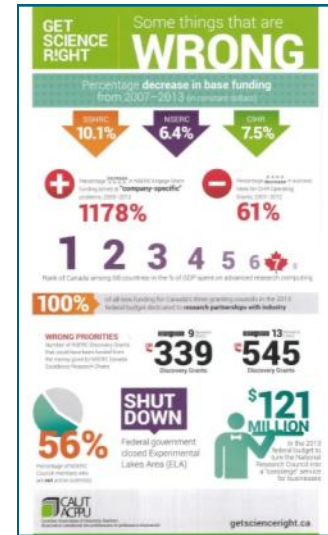
Get Science Right

In the words of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, “Federal government policy and funding decisions are threatening Canada’s future in science and research.”

In a recent CAUT Bulletin, CAUT’s Executive Director, James Turk, said: “Science in Canada is at a tipping point. From the muzzling of government scientists to the serious underfunding of basic research at our universities and colleges, the federal government is making dumb choices that will have serious consequences for all Canadians.”

Accordingly, CAUT has established a web site where Canadians can get information, share stories and take action.

UMFA has Get Science Right posters available for our Members. They can be picked up at the UMFA office.



“Corporatization” of the University not unique to Manitoba

In her remarks to the Annual General Meeting, UMFA President Sharon Alward spoke of the changes here that are “moving us from a university to a corporation.” This “new managerialism” that Sharon Alward described has the academic world in its grip worldwide, as Tarak Barkawi illustrates, in his April 25, 2013 article in *Al Jazeera* entitled “The neoliberal assault on academia”.

Your comments, feedback and suggestions on the newsletter are welcome. Please send any comments to faum@umfa.ca.

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