



President's Message

It has been a very busy time for all of us at UMFA since the last newsletter. There was a great turnout for the first "Stop the Cuts" rally, prior to the Board of Governors meeting on January 27. I would like especially to thank our Vice President Mark Hudson, who has been UMFA's representative on the Coalition Committee, for his work coordinating this event. There was also active participation by many UMFA members at President Barnard's Town Hall meeting on January 21. There were many quite pointed questions and comments on the University's budget plans and the planning process itself, from students and from members of many of the unions on campus.

I attended the CAUT Presidents' Forum in Ottawa in the middle of January. The topics of the sessions were on the climate of austerity, the struggle over governance, membership mobilization, and commercialization and corporatization. I will be making a full report on these topics to the Executive and Board of Representatives.

We had a meeting with our brothers and sisters in the other unions on campus in January as well. Concerns about the budget were at the forefront, but as always there was a wide ranging discussion on all the problems that we face together. We all keep in regular contact by e-mail and phone, but these face-to-face meetings are an important part of maintaining solidarity amongst our organizations.

Progress towards reviving the Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations (MOFA) is well under way. With budget austerity being the watchword, concentration of authority over the universities in the hands of the Minister of Higher Education, and an upcoming provincial election, coordinating our activities on the provincial front is becoming more and more vital.

Many of our Standing Committees are now beginning their work, but we are still interested in finding more people for the Equity and Diversity Committee and the Communications Committee. If you are interested in joining or would like more information on what these committees do and what some of the responsibilities would be, please feel free to email me at tkucera-umfapres@mymts.net.

We've also been hard at work considering candidates for the position of Executive Director, and we hope to have an announcement soon. Meanwhile, we've had a change in the office as Debbie Abraham has moved from the front desk position to become our new Administrative Assistant (Financial). Rose Panzo is temporarily filling in at the front desk until the position is filled.

As always, please feel free to contact the UMFA office if you have any comments on this newsletter, or if you have questions about your rights.

President Barnard's Town Hall Meeting

President David Barnard held a town hall meeting on January 21 to discuss some of the plans and changes that the faculty, staff and students at the University of Manitoba can expect to see over the next few years.

What began as a presentation about the changes the university has seen over the past 140 years, the highlights of 2014, and the strategic priorities for the next five years quickly became a defence as to why the university is asking academic units to prepare for budget cuts for the next two years.

President Barnard said that there are lessons to be learned from the university's history – some issues being unique and some recurring. Financial pressures were on the top of that recurring issues list, followed by classes with low enrolment. The big issue, he said, is that costs are growing faster than revenue. What costs? Primarily, these costs are driven by rising salaries, which, he said was not a bad thing, but simply a reality. In order to attract and retain the best, salaries have to be competitive and it's the right thing for the UM to be competitive within the U15. He went on to state that the university's revenues are effectively determined by the government and that UM has the third lowest tuition in the country.

To get costs lower, he said they have to manage things differently. This is a long term approach to achieving sustainability. He then began presenting "theoretical" charts, with no dollar amounts fixed to them, to demonstrate how the university spends some of its money. One chart, "Academic support costs as a percentage of total operating expenses ranked by U15" was supposed to demonstrate that the UM is in the top 5 when it comes to spending on academic support.

He presented another chart that showed how faculty budgets have not decreased, but have actually increased by a fair amount between 2010/11 and 2014/15. How much they've supposedly increased by is anybody's guess, because there were no amounts

attached to these representations. His conclusion: the need for fiscal restraint is real. We cannot continue on this trajectory. We operate within a government policy framework that limits our capability to deliver our mandate and we have to find a way to ensure university activities remain sustainable.

While Barnard says that administrative and support staff "work diligently to secure funding," whether that be through meeting with the government or through fundraising efforts, it is unrealistic that this will be the solution to the UM's financial woes. Therefore, we have to manage costs and so every unit is being asked to find reductions to their baseline budgets to the tune of 4% for each of the next two years. On May 19, 2015, the Board of Governors will meet to decide on the budget. The university's key priorities, as set out in the [strategic planning document](#), will guide this process.

Questions were asked about the current classroom experience – larger sizes, students sitting on the floor, not enough plugs for laptops, limited offerings of certain courses which delays graduation and further increases student debt. President Barnard said that the university has numbers on enrolments and success rates (i.e. how many students complete courses and programs successfully), and that we can do better. He questioned whether the current configuration of classes and sizes is sustainable. He said that the administration isn't targeting any particular area, but that areas with declining enrolment and success rates are a place to look to for budget cuts. He said that the administration won't be solely looking at what area has the largest amount of money to free up and they aren't setting a target to extract from everyone.

Questions were also raised about the new buildings on campus, and instead of building, why could the administration not just focus on the existing programs

President Barnard's Town Hall Meeting (continued)

and systems? The reply is that the new buildings are to support existing programs, not new ones. Many of the buildings on campus are 100 years old and need major work. Science laboratories, for example, have a serious backlog of necessary upgrades to meet current standards. He added that in his time as President, there have been proposals for about 60 new programs, which obviously have not all been implemented. There were then discussions about deferred maintenance to buildings. The university has accumulated \$300 million in deferred maintenance costs, which they are trying to chip away at. Barnard said it has become an issue that can no longer continue to be pushed back. He said some of the transfers of money from operations to capital are used for this purpose.

As Members know, UMFA has prepared multiple analyses of the university's financial statements going back to the early 2000's. When questioned on the discretionary funds the university has, and the fact that salaries are a decreasing share of university

expenses, Barnard replied that he has seen two of UMFA's documents on university finances and that our information is incorrect. Barnard was then invited to hold a public debate on the university's finances, to have a real open dialog on spending, and he said he agreed that there should be such a discussion.

Some of the questions posed to Barnard left him in an awkward pause, while he thought of a way to reply. One thing is certainly clear: the administration is trying to convince the university community that there is not enough money – from government funding and tuition fees, or in their reserve accounts – to continue to support the current operations and programs at the university while pursuing new initiatives and dealing with the infrastructure. President Barnard says that making decisions today will help to ensure the success of the University for decades to come. UMFA believes that that the university's core functions of teaching and research must be given the highest priority and that cutting courses and increasing class sizes is not a solution.

Status of the 2013-2016 Collective Agreement

The University of Manitoba has the responsibility of putting together an initial draft of the new Collective Agreement which includes matters agreed to during bargaining and mediation and those determined by an arbitrator where agreement could not be reached. The draft could not be completed until the arbitration decision was received, which happened on June 17th, 2014. In the fall, UMFA received a draft of the agreement, but upon review, found a number of errors. UMFA met with Human Resources to discuss the errors, which are being corrected. There still remains an issue where there is a difference of opinion on language in the academic freedom clause. Once there is a final agreement on the revisions and UMFA and

administration representatives have signed the document, the agreement can go to print.

UMFA is working to assure the accuracy of the agreement. If you have a question regarding your rights under the agreement, and are unsure if the section that pertains to your matter has changed, please contact the UMFA office.

Hundreds come out for “Stop the Cuts” rally

On January 27, hundreds of students, staff, faculty and supporters from outside the university gathered outside the Board of Governors meeting room to send a message to the administration that the plan to cut budgets must not proceed. Gathered in the atrium at the Engineering building, attendees waved banners and signs with slogans such as “education, not corporation” and others displayed statistics that contradict the university’s claims that there is a financial crisis requiring cuts to academic programs.

Individual representatives from various campus unions spoke briefly about the impacts of potential cuts, and the importance of continuing to fight this matter. While chanting “stop the cuts,” the crowd then turned and walked toward the meeting room where the Board of Governors were convening. While a few made it into the meeting room, they were soon removed from the space.

The crowd then marched to University Centre and on to the Administration building while continuing to vocalize their concerns.

UM President David Barnard has still not said what faculty and staff can expect, specifically, in terms of cuts.

This rally is the first in a series of anticipated events that will take place throughout the winter and spring to demand more transparency in terms of the budgeting process and in how the university chooses to spend its money. UMFA will share information as it becomes available.

Thank you to everyone who helped spread the word about this event, and to those who were able to attend.



From Talk to Action: Building Successful Campaigns for Librarians

By: Shelley Sweeney, Head, University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections

How do association members turn talk about issues affecting their jobs into action? This was the theme of the CAUT Librarians' and Archivists' conference held at the Fairmont Château Laurier in Ottawa this past fall. One might ask why these groups would not rely on their larger associations to help them turn their concerns into the types of activities that would help promote their causes. For instance, here at the University of Manitoba, librarians and archivists are part of UMFA. This perhaps leads one to assume that this is a similar situation across Canada, when in fact there are still pockets of librarians and archivists who either are not unionized at all or have been prevented from joining larger faculty associations, as has been the case in Ontario. However, there is a larger role for librarians and archivists to advocate beyond the confines of their individual institutions, such as protesting the damaging cutbacks to Library and Archives Canada, the total annihilation of the Fisheries libraries and the downsizing of the Agriculture Canada libraries. This conference was an important primer for taking action wherever it might be needed.

CAUT hung the conference mainly on analyzing three scenarios, extracting salient points from them and using those points to devise a successful campaign based on the following:

- goals, or what you want to accomplish;
- objectives - how you are going to reach your larger goals;
- strategies, including developing the core message, choosing your audience, identifying your allies and making a long-term plan; and
- tactics, including setting timelines, assigning tasks and responsibilities, organizing events, and developing materials.

The first scenario saw the administration suspending a librarian who was writing a private blog that was critical of the university. The second scenario looked at a librarian who was working in a building that was falling apart and who is considering lodging a Duty of

Fair Representation complaint because the Association failed to address previous complaints about the situation. The third scenario concerned a non-librarian hired to do work previously done by an academic librarian.

All of these situations seemed very uncomfortably true to life. It was good then to analyze them in a systematic way to determine what indeed would be the basis of our advocacy efforts. Like real life, the descriptions of the situations and the supporting materials contained extraneous details and red herrings that we needed to weed out to get to the substance of the complaints. We then spent the rest of our conference time devising communication strategies, preparing our statements to the media, and reviewing interviewing techniques that might trip up the unwary member. The entire conference was an interesting lesson in advocacy for not only archivists' and librarians' rights, but labour rights in general.

YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the annual YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards. In previous years the Awards have recognized the outstanding efforts of University of Manitoba women faculty members and staff in many areas, including the Young Woman of Distinction.

The nomination process, including how to complete the nomination package, can be found on line at:

<http://www.ywinnipeg.ca/programs/community-initiatives/women-of-distinction/award-categories/>

There are 9 categories for nominations: Arts, Culture & Heritage; Business, Professions & Trades; Community Activism & Social Enterprise; Education, Training & Mentorship; Health, Wellness & Fitness; Public Awareness & Communications; Science, Technology & Research; Volunteerism; and Young Woman of Distinction.

Recognize one of your colleagues for her outstanding contributions in one of the award categories by nominating her today. Nominations will close Friday, February 27, 2015.

Meet the Executive

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Tommy Kucera is President of UMFA. He first became involved with the Association over 20 years ago as an alternate on the Board of Representatives. Since then, he has been a member of the Board of Representatives

and the Executive Council serving as Treasurer, Secretary, and Vice-President before becoming President last June.

Tommy is from Winnipeg, raised in the West End, and thinks of himself as being pan-ethnic and pan cultural. He obtained his B.Sc. (Hons) in Mathematics and M.Sc. from the University of Manitoba, before moving on to McGill to complete his Ph.D. Tommy taught at the University of Saskatchewan and Lakehead University before his appointment at the University of Manitoba. He has strong roots in the community and was very happy to return home.

Tommy calls himself somewhat of an intellectual magpie, with far too many hobbies. Music is a central part of his life, and he is a strong supporter of the Winnipeg Symphony and its New Music Festival, as well as the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and many other organizations. He is a passionate gardener, with an ambitious flower and vegetable garden in the summer, at home and at the family cottage in Northwestern Ontario, and also has about 70 house plants. He also takes cooking quite seriously, and remodelled his kitchen a few years ago around a semi-professional gas range. His father was a professional photographer, and a teacher of photography, and so Tommy has always liked looking at the world through a camera. As well as professional and general science reading, Tommy has been devoted to science fiction and fantasy since early childhood, and occasionally attends the World Science Fiction Convention. He has maintained a fascination with railways, and a few years ago had the opportunity to drive a steam locomotive in England---an experience he says was considerably less challenging than trying to lead a Union!



UMFA Grievance Officer Jim Hare is Professor and Associate Head in the Department of Biological Sciences. Jim's NSERC Discovery Grant-funded research program explores the

factors that promote and maintain animal sociality, and in particular the roles that communication and animal cognitive abilities play in adapting animals to challenges posed by predators.

Jim's research interests in cooperative social behaviour led naturally to Faculty Association involvement, with initial service on the Board of Representatives translating into service as UMFA Grievance Officer from 2005-2008. During that period, Jim also served twice on the Collective Agreement Committee and as UMFA Strike Coordinator, preparing for potential job action. Following a hiatus from the Executive owing to Research Study leave and additional duties imposed by the Duff Roblin fire, Jim returned to serve as UMFA Grievance Officer this last June.

Jim holds a B.Sc. Specialist degree in Animal Behaviour and a M.Sc. in Zoology from the University of Toronto, a Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Alberta, and was an NSERC Post-Doctoral Fellow in Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell University prior to becoming an Assistant Professor of Zoology at Brandon University in 1993. After achieving tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at Brandon, Jim resigned his appointment in 1999 to accept a tenure-track Assistant Professorship in Zoology at the University of Manitoba in the hope of finding additional time to devote to his research.

Outside of the professional realm, Jim enjoys spending time with his wife Liz who gave up her career as a Registered Nurse to become a public school Teaching Assistant so as to achieve a better work-life balance. Jim and Liz have a 23 year-old son named Alex who is a UofM Biology Honours graduate and soon to be

Meet the Executive (continued)

Master's student at the University of Ottawa and a 19 year-old daughter Colleen who is a UofM Psychology undergraduate student. The family also has a dog (Bodie) and a cat (Scooter). Hobbies include travel, wine making, and the restoration and enjoyment of vintage audio equipment.

Jim is resolved to ensuring equity and fairness within the campus community as a whole by working with both UMFA members and Professional Staff, and dealing with University Administrators and Human Resources personnel to resolve grievances, and to support UMFA initiatives to improve language within the Collective Agreement so as to protect academic freedom and the rights of UMFA members. He looks forward to lending an ear and support to members who in any way feel aggrieved in the context of their employment at the University of Manitoba.

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