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President's Message

So the last dregs of final exam marking should be just about done now, and UMFA Members will be looking forward to somewhat of a change in their lives: more time for research, perhaps some summer teaching with a different kind of schedule, work on teaching and program development, and I hope a proper vacation before classes begin again in September. There's really not the same sort of sign of a change of term or change of season at UMFA. Work continues apace, with the same level of intensity as at any other time of the year. You will have heard about much of what is going on through our communications with you, and there will be more in this newsletter.

In a little over a month, my term as President will come to an end. I leave with some regret that I didn't run for another term as President, but I found the position very demanding. I also, however, leave with a sense of pride and a sense of accomplishment. We have revived some of our Standing Committees, and I have especially enjoyed working closely with the Constitution and Standing Rules Committee and the Communications Committee. The UMFA team—Professional Staff, Executive, the Board, and other volunteers—has been able to work together to deal with the many challenges presented to us by the administration and to meet the needs of our Members. We remain constantly vigilant in protecting our rights under the

Collective Agreement and defending our Members against actions taken by the administration.

These challenges have kept me in the UMFA offices this past year perhaps more than has been normal for previous Presidents, and I have developed a deep appreciation for the professionalism and dedication of our staff: Debbie Abraham, Administrative Assistant; Candace Weselowski, Communications Officer; Jason Gisser and Barb Yapps, Professional Officers; and Linda Guse, Executive Director. It has been a pleasure working with these people, even under the most trying of circumstances.

I am not leaving service to UMFA. I will continue as Past President, and in the future will serve in whatever roles future Executives and Boards may ask of me.

Let me conclude with an oft-repeated message: the success of our union depends heavily on Member involvement. I was happy to be able to help recruit new members to the Board this fall. If you see a vacancy in your area, considering standing in the upcoming elections. And please, make it a habit to talk to your Board Rep regularly.

Let's all wish for a happy and productive summer for everyone.

Successful Second Rally Against Budget Cuts

On April 1, the University of Manitoba Student Action Network (UMSAN) and the Stop the Cuts Coalition held a second public rally opposing the budget cuts announced by the administration. The event took place in the Engineering Atrium prior to the Senate meeting. Over 100 students, academics and staff attended with representatives from campus unions speaking.

AESES President Laurie Morris told the crowd that their members have already seen 26 job losses in 5 weeks with more expected, and the budget hasn't even been handed down yet.

UMFA President Tommy Kucera said, "Cut backs hurt us all. It's clear we all know that. How do we win a struggle like this? We win with brute solidarity. It's important that the public, senators and the administration know that these cuts must stop."

Following the rally, attendees marched through University Centre and on to the administration building.

The U of M budget is expected be released on May 19.



Tell Us What's Happening in Your Area

Job losses have already started at U of M. UMFA Members on term and contingent appointments are being told that they will not be renewed. Positions that have become vacant due to retirement or leaves are not being filled. Class sizes are increasing, while some courses are no longer being offered. UMFA wants to know: what is happening

in your area? Do you have a sense of what the impact of budget cuts will be in your academic unit? Are academics and support staff worried? What are students saying about their experience? Contact UMFA and let us know what is happening.

UMFA Annual General Meeting

The UMFA Annual General Meeting is on Thursday, May 14 at 2:00 p.m in Marshall McLuhan Hall. All Bargaining Unit, Retired and Associate members of UMFA are welcome to attend the meeting.

Please note that you must be a Regular Member of UMFA, i.e., you must be a Member of the Bargaining Unit and have signed an UMFA membership card, to participate in the governance of the Association (to move or second motions at the Annual General Meeting and to vote on these motions). There is no additional cost to become a Regular Member of UMFA and Membership is voluntary. If you are not currently a Regular Member of UMFA and would like to become one, membership cards will be available at the AGM. If you are not sure if you have signed a membership card, you can call the UMFA office at 204-474-8272 to confirm this. There will be an Order of the Day on university finances presented by Vice-President Elect Janet Morrill.

The CAUT Dedicated Service Award and Roy Vogt Memorial Award for Exceptionally Meritorious Service will be presented to Sharon Alward, and the Paul Fortier Prize for Student Activism will be presented to Rocco Scarcella. Attendees are invited to attend the reception following presentation of the awards.

Please respond regarding your attendance by calling the UMFA Office at 204-474-8272 or by emailing faum@umfa.ca.

Sustainability and Education Policy Network's National Survey

The Sustainability in Education Policy Network (SEPN), based at the University of Saskatchewan, is currently conducting a national survey on sustainability practice and policy in the Canadian education system. SEPN is a research-based partnership between Canadian and international policy and educational institutions, whose research examines the relationship between sustainability education policy and practices in early childhood to grade 12 and post-secondary education across Canada. The goal of the project is to enable educational change for a more sustainable future.

This survey is, according to SEPN, “the first large-scale, national-level research collaboration to collect and analyze comparable data at all levels of education. This survey asks about the degree to which a sustainability focus is included in practices and policies in your work or study setting and about the drivers and barriers to sustainability uptake.”

For more information and to take the survey, please visit: https://usaskssrl.eu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_50BaaK6uwpz7y8B.

Zero Tuition Petition

In March, the Cape Breton University student union, faculty association and administration launched a petition seeking free post-secondary education in Canada. The petition calls for “the leaders of Canada’s federal political parties to seek a new strategic relationship with the country’s vital but currently underfunded and undervalued Universities.” The petition suggests that it could happen in phases and be backed by “a progressive system of taxation at the Federal level and targeted living expense grants at the provincial level.” Citing Finland, Norway and Germany as examples of where tuition-free higher education is already available, and US President Obama’s call for

free college tuition, the petition states “that such a system would prove cheaper, simpler and fairer than the current debt-inducing model.”

For more information on this campaign, please visit: <http://www.zerotuitioncanada.org/>.

To sign the petition, please go to:

<https://www.change.org/p/the-leaders-of-canada-s-main-federal-parties-support-the-appeal-for-a-new-policy-dialogue-on-student-access-and-affordability-and-sustainable-funding-for-universities-2>.

Winnipeg Labour Council’s “May Day 2015”

On May 1, the Winnipeg Labour Council is holding a “May Day” march for a future free of austerity. “Hope is coming” is the theme for this year. The event will begin at **5:30 p.m at City Hall (510 Main St.)**. For more information, visit the Winnipeg Labour Council’s event page on their [website](#).

Manitoba's Top Employer Competition

It was announced recently that the University of Manitoba has been chosen as one of Manitoba's top employers for 2015 and the 2016 selection process is getting underway.

In order to be considered, applicants simply fill out a single application form, which places the applicant in the national competition, plus 19 regional and special-interest "top employer" competitions managed.

Reviewers then "determine how your organization compares to others in your industry and region. We look for interesting employers, both large and small, with innovative programs to attract and retain talented employees."

The application gathers information on the physical work environment including nearby amenities, employee workstations, lunch options, work atmosphere, benefits, financial compensation,

family-friendly policies, programs, employee engagement, training and development, vacation time, and more. Items such as health benefits, compensation time and vacation have been negotiated by UMFA and other campus unions. The administration did not simply give employees these provisions out of good will. It is also interesting to note that the selection process does not involve surveying employees or students for feedback. UMFA questions how an employer can be considered a top employer when no feedback from staff is considered in making the selection, and when the benefits in place were contested by the employer at the bargaining table.

The following is a copy of the 2014 application form that is used in all competitions: http://www.canadastop100.com/2014/2014_application.pdf.

UM Faculty, Staff and Retirees Campaign Falls Short of Goal

On March 9, the U of M launched the Faculty, Staff and Retirees Campaign with the goal of raising \$600,000 to support five key areas including:

- Indigenous achievement
- Graduate student support
- Research excellence
- Outstanding student experience
- Places and spaces

The campaign ran until from March 9-31 and raised just over \$476,000. This is one of many campaigns UM Donor Relations will run in order to reach the bigger goal of raising \$500 million over seven years in support of those five pillars, despite making cuts to

academic budgets for at least the next two years.

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