

# FACULTY UNION NEWS

SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 2

April 2007

## **President's report**

by *Larry Haiven, President 2006-07*

By the time you receive this newsletter, my one-year term as SMUFU President will have drawn to a close and I will have handed the reins over to President Ron Houlihan and a new Executive. I have great confidence in Ron and the new Executive.

Looking back, I would like to touch upon a few active files as I leave the presidency.

### *The Future of SMU*

In the last newsletter, I made some remarks about SMU's place among Canadian and Nova Scotian universities. Repeating what I had said during negotiations, in my opinion SMU no longer stands squarely within the "mostly undergraduate" category (an albeit arbitrary Macleans university ratings category). To a certain extent, I argued, we also have a foot in the "comprehensive" camp (universities with serious Masters and PhD programs and serious research expectations).

David Heckerl, of our English Department, took issue with me in a letter. Beware, he warned, of what you wish for. I think he has a good point. I encouraged him to expand his letter and publish it in this newsletter, which he has done.

On where SMU might be headed, I have some further thoughts. Many of us, like me, teach in departments that have significant graduate programs and/or where research and publication is important. Such departments acutely reveal the problem of being in two camps. With our course load at 3 and 2, with colleagues busy doing research and supervising graduate students, with some of us receiving course releases for both, it becomes more difficult to staff our courses to keep our classes as small as we would wish, and to give students individual attention. Yet anything greater than a 3 and 2 course

load is anathema to effective researching and graduate supervision.

While being an excellent researcher and an excellent teacher are not incompatible (indeed often mutually reinforcing), time is finite. Every hour devoted to teaching is an hour less that can be spent on research and publication. SMU has good institutional support for teaching through the Office of Instructional Development and the Quality of Teaching Committee. I have been on the latter and seen many initiatives devoted to helping faculty become better teachers. But I'm concerned we do not have as strong institutional support when it comes to research. None of the three faculties has an extant faculty-wide research committee. There is a campus-wide research committee but it spends most of its time dealing with grant applications. There is an Industry Liaison Office that puts university researchers and the community, especially industry, in touch with each other. But there is very little formative support for the quantity and quality of research. Like teaching, when it comes to research, many of us "just do it." But, as in teaching, every ounce of institutional support is invaluable.

Talking about institutional support, what about students? Many of our students are as good as you would find anywhere and need little support other than what they receive from their instructors. But many of our students require greater support, especially remedial, to enhance their literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and basic scholarly skills. We have a good Writing Centre, but it has neither the resources for nor the orientation toward remediation, especially in the skills other than writing. As mentioned above, instructors have less and less time to offer remedial help. Too great a proportion of our students are not getting past first year. For some of them, it's because perhaps they should not be in university. But for many of them, it's because they are coming to university smart and eager but bereft of many of the basic skills. We can blame part of this on the high

*(President Report continues on Page 3)*

## Interview with SMUFU President

*Bob Cook, Faculty Union News Editor, interviewed Ron Houlihan, SMUFU's incoming President.*

Cook: Congratulations on becoming SMUFU's new President. What inspired you to stand for this position?

Houlihan: The usual reason. I felt it was time to stop relying on someone else to do it. Like everyone else, I have benefited greatly from being a member of this Union and the work that so many others have done in the past.

Cook: I know that you were active in union affairs before becoming a member of SMUFU. Could you tell us something about your work on behalf of other unions?

Houlihan: This is actually the 3rd labour union with which I have been involved as a member of the Executive. I served a number of years as chief shop steward of a provincial labour union and I was President of the staff association which represented the employees of the Halifax public library system. Because of those experiences, I have been involved in contract negotiations, formal and informal dispute resolution, harassment hearings, committee management, delegation of duties, and many other union activities.

Cook: What do you anticipate will be your biggest challenge as SMUFU President?

Houlihan: I don't see anything as a challenge per se. Even in a non-negotiating year, however, there are a vast array of issues which we have to address which have significant implications for members' careers and futures. Myself, and the other newcomers to the Executive, will be immersing ourselves in these matters in the coming weeks and months. I think we have an excellent Executive and we're going to try and accomplish a great deal.

Cook: What are some of the issues that you would like to address during the coming year?

Houlihan: Even at this early stage I can tell that issues related to retirement are going to require a lot of attention, both early retirement and the implications of the proposed provincial legislation abolishing mandatory retirement.

I would like to strengthen, if possible, the Union's representa-

tion of our members in their applications for promotion or tenure. This is a critical issue, of vital importance to the applicants.

I believe the Union and the University have more work to do to make our membership more reflective of Canadian society. So I believe equity issues are important especially, but not limited to, gender parity and racial diversity.

I'd also like to expand the roster of members who are actively involved in the local, whether on the Executive or as a member of one of the many union committees.

Cook: You have a reputation as an expert on movies. What are your favorite movies dealing with union and/or labour issues?

Houlihan: Less an expert, more a devotee. Actually I'd have to say that, on the whole, organized labour has not been well treated by the motion picture industry. It's one of the reasons why, unlike many others, I have no use for On the Waterfront, which is a deliberately skewed, embittered portrayal of trade unionism, produced by supporters of the McCarthy hearings. Having said that, there are some good ones, such as Norma Rae, about an attempt to organize textile

workers, and Matewan, a sympathetic account of West Virginia coal miners in the 30's. My favorites, however, deal with labour issues more generally. Such as The Grapes of Wrath, Chaplin's Modern Times, and Bound for Glory, the biography of Woody Guthrie.

Cook: Thank you and good luck for the coming year.

Houlihan: Thanks. I'm really looking forward to it.



Ron Houlihan, SMUFU President 2007-08  
Photograph by Bob Cook



Canadian Association of Labour Media cartoon

*(President's Report continued from Page 1)*

schools. But that won't really help. We need, as an institution, to produce better students. Some of the top universities in North America, who have their pick of any student, devote a fair part of their resources to just such remedial and formative activity. Some might say they can afford it. But can we afford not to?

I hope that this is just the beginning of a much-needed debate among faculty members. What is the fate of small and medium-sized universities in Canada? Where does SMU fit? Where *should* SMU fit? What are our strengths and weaknesses? This is something that the SMU professoriate and SMUFU, not just the university administrators, should be thinking about seriously.

### ***The Abolition of Mandatory Retirement***

A few weeks ago, the provincial government introduced legislation to abolish mandatory retirement. Though pleased, I was somewhat surprised that the initiative came so quickly. I didn't think that the political coalition in favour was as strong here as in other provinces. It turns out that the scheme was put forward by the Liberals, and the government, fearing that it might rob them of potential votes, moved to pre-empt the challengers.

Clearly our province is headed, be it sooner or later, to join nearly all jurisdictions in Canada, North America, and Europe, in making age discrimination illegal. That means there would be no reason to discriminate against employees of any age *other than inability (beyond reasonable accommodation) to perform the functions of the job.*

The recent reappointment clause negotiated in our collective agreement was a modest attempt to open a window for faculty members over 65 to have limited choice about retirement. Our understanding was that this would be a way-station on the way to full provincial legislation.

But there is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip'. The original press release of the government indicated that collective agreements that contradicted the new legislation would be exempt. Later, the government corrected that and said that the legislation would apply to every employer but would not take effect for *one year*, so that employers could get their affairs in order.

The Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents lobbied against the legislation as proposed. On April 10, past CONSUP President Colin Dodds of SMU argued

that the cost would be high given the number of faculty members retiring over the next several years. The Herald reported him as saying that the extra costs would have to be covered by either higher tuition or more money from government. In an interview with CBC Radio, Dr. Dodds repeated the threat of tuition rising because of older professors staying on past 65.

I have no problem with the universities asking for more money from government. Our provincial government has under funded our universities long before the issue of scrapping mandatory retirement arose. The university presidents, our faculty unions, and our student associations need to be as aggressive as possible on this issue.

But I do take exception to what amounts to turning students against professors. The SMU administration wisely hesitated do so during our recent negotiations. But to frighten students and their associations with higher fees due to the retirement issue is simply bad politics. Student fees are already higher in Nova Scotia than any other province. Whenever students hear that they might be even higher, they are justifiably upset. This is an explosive issue that should be treated very carefully by the university presidents. It's no more fair to blame high tuitions on older professors than on faculty unions who fight for salaries comparable with other Canadian institutions.

The actions of the university presidents obviously had some impact. The next day the Law Amendments Committee of the Legislature agreed to change the one year delay in implementation to *two years*.

SMUFU will be following the progress of this legislation and will report to our members how it will impact on them. In an April 5 email to SMUFU members, I mentioned that the introduction of the legislation was "good news." Some faculty wrote to tell me they are not so sure. I think their concerns are as follows:

With the ability of older faculty members to stay past 65, there could be less opening up of new positions for new and younger faculty, especially in smaller departments which are not growing and where new positions come about only through attrition.

There will be few practical ways of getting "under-performing" faculty to move on, a job that mandatory retirement, in a very blunt and brutal manner, fills now.

These are important concerns. However, at the risk of repeating some of the arguments I made during negotiations, I would point out the following:

- Mandatory retirement has been or is being removed in the US, Europe, and most Canadian provinces. Universities have found or are finding ways of dealing with the above problems in all those jurisdictions. The sky has not fallen.
- Even where retirement at 65 has been removed, many professors want to and do voluntarily retire at 65. With an early retirement incentive, many retire earlier. During negotiations at SMU, the Union took an informal poll of the 18 professors due to retire during the term of the Collective Agreement ('06 to '08). Less than half expressed a desire to stay on. Subsequent events seem to be bearing that out.
- Contrary to mythic tales of professors stubbornly staying on into their dotage, the *evidence* in the jurisdictions where mandatory retirement has been abolished is that the median stay post-65 is about 3 years.
- Most predictions are for a shortage of academic staff in the future, as older professors, despite the abolition of mandatory retirement, retire voluntarily.
- More and more faculty, especially women, are coming to academe later in life and may not have the retirement savings to leave at 65.

SMUFU's Collective Agreement already has several methods for dealing with under-performing faculty, some of which management uses, some of which they do not. Naturally, the Union is vigilant to maintain fairness, but Union vigilance has never stopped management from doing its job.

### ***Final words***

So, as the academic year comes to a close, I wish everyone a good summer. Remember that the Union is only as strong as its members. We had wonderful support during negotiations. Let's try to maintain that support in the intervening years. Don't hesitate to approach the Union with your concerns and questions.

## **The Dorothy Syndrome: An Open Letter to My University**

by David Heckerl, Department of English

This opinion piece emerged from a recent e-mail exchange with SMUFU President, Larry Haiven. I had responded to some wayward phrasing in Larry's President's Report for February, specifically the fanciful description of Saint Mary's as "no longer in the 'mostly undergraduate' category," and as having "in many respects moved ... well into the 'comprehensive'

category." The description is fanciful because the "many respects" contributing to this putative sea-change in our institutional identity are nowhere specified or enumerated. Apparently, the blank assertion that Saint Mary's has "graduate programs and [a] research focus" is sufficient to raise our university from a somehow deficient condition of 'mostly undergraduate' to a superior condition of 'comprehensive.' I pointed out to Larry that his characterization of Saint Mary's seemed complicit in precisely the "attitudinal structuring" practiced by the administration, and that his concluding parenthetical comment ("Of course, the above argument by the Union is not attitudinal structuring, just good sense") belied his awareness of this. Larry replied that I had missed the ironic humor of this last comment (which is true), but which also concedes my point: the Union's 'spin' of Saint Mary's as a comprehensive research institution is indeed more shadow than substance, a deliberate sacrifice of sober argument to rhetorical exaggeration. Colleagues beware – it would seem that attitudinal structuring is all around us!

Although finding oneself the target of attitudinal conditioning is alarming in itself, what most disturbs me is the sentiment (current among administration and faculty alike) that recognizing Saint Mary's for what it is – a reputable mostly undergraduate teaching university—is somehow demeaning, an admission of inferiority and lack of progress rather than a point of pride. Perhaps this label 'mostly undergraduate' is simply too impotent with respect to effective 'branding', an insufficiently glossy competitor in the current 'image is everything' marketing wars. Or perhaps this distaste reflects a deeper personal and collective sense of injured esteem – a sense that 'mostly undergraduate' just isn't as prestigious or professional as I/we wish to appear. I suspect that the pervasive rhetoric of 'professionalism' has much to do with the growing Dorothy Syndrome here at Saint Mary's. This syndrome, which depends on frequent large doses of attitudinal structuring, assumes that institutions (like individuals) have no inherent reality, and that if enough thought-power can be mobilized to construct a desired image then –voilà!—we are as we wish to be. As there is no difference for this view between appearance and fact, how we fashion or market ourselves is all the 'reality' that really matters. There can be no question here of self-delusion or falsity since there is no independent reality that could expose an image or appearance as delusive or false. In other words, if all of us (suitably conditioned) close our eyes and click our heels in unison, we can leave behind the dull Kansas of a 'mostly undergraduate' university and wake up in the splendid Oz of the 'comprehensive' category. Of course, Dorothy herself preferred Kansas to Oz, the

human solidity and warmth of a sincere, unpretentious community to the glittering coldness and fakery of the wizard's Emerald City.

I confess to being a devoted partisan of Dorothy and Kansas, and an equally devoted antagonist of the dubious wizardry called 'professionalism.' I prefer in my teaching to cherish and cultivate the 'mostly undergraduate' liberal arts identity of Saint Mary's over against the quantifying austerity that seems so irresistible to increasing numbers of administrators and faculty. The problem with 'professionalism' is that it destroys the pluralistic voice of liberal learning, reducing academic conversation to an impoverished preoccupation with technique, outcomes, utility, practice, application, careerism. The voice of professionalism has little tolerance for beautiful uselessness, with the experience of an idea or vision that has no purpose beyond the delighting, dreaming, or rhapsodizing that it inspires. The voice of professionalism, ill at ease with sentiment and humility, can neither see nor feel the impractical exultation of art, of worlds "disfigured by holiness" and "dream[s] of delicate fables" (Thomas Mann). Liberal learning has always opposed the sterile monotony of professionalism; it remains the only voice radical enough to say, as David Shaw (Emeritus Professor of English at Toronto) recently has, that there are "other ways of being intellectually open than by copying a scientist or aping a technician."

I would like to conclude, then, by asserting my own voice. I have no wish to teach literature as a set of conventions or techniques, an array of surfaces and styles that, fashioned in just the right way to flatter fashionable attitudes, will speed one toward the right 'networks' and granting agencies. I have no wish to participate in, or to 'train' undergraduate students to submit to, what Shaw justly calls the "obscene credentials game" stifling academic life, and which rewards only the "pushiest extroverts and highest bidders." I have no wish to increase at Saint Mary's the dehumanizing grip of Max Weber's 'iron cage,' the transformation of exuberant and imaginative young people into spiritless technicians and heartless voluptuaries. For myself, teaching at this undergraduate university raises twice a week the wonderful, difficult challenge of encouraging students to begin to develop in themselves the courage and resourcefulness to dissent from any and all orthodoxies, especially shallow ones like 'professionalism'. This is an impossibly high expectation, and I routinely fail both myself and my students. But I keep trying, pursuing again and again, in the midst of ceaseless frustration and inadequacy, the cultivation of the only life worth living for human beings: a life of self-examination based, not in the cynical acquisition of serviceable techniques, but in the difficult art of posing the right questions and confronting irresolvable problems. If

'professionalism' means the end of this life and this art as defining university education, then the glory of Saint Mary's is to remain a 'mostly undergraduate' teaching university.



## **Faculty Benefits**

**by R. J. Konopasky, Chair of the Benefit Trust Committee**

Faculty members have long received benefits from Saint Mary's that were selected by the administration with minimal input from faculty. More recently, faculty defined benefits as part of total compensation, the other parts being salary and contributions to the pension plan. As well, faculty expressed the preference for having control over its benefits package. In the last negotiations, our team successfully negotiated for control of this part of our compensation. It is noteworthy that Saint Mary's University Faculty Union is the first faculty union in Canada, though not the first union, to have such control. As part of the "Agreement between Saint Mary's University and Saint Mary's University Faculty Union, September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2009", an MOU outlines the process for the change in control of benefits from the employer to SMUFU.

The MOU required that SMUFU indicate its decision in regard to controlling benefits; SMUFU did comply with the deadline established in the MOU and formally indicated its intention to follow through and form a Trust to oversee and control our benefits package.

As SMUFU indicated its intention to control this part of our compensation package, within thirty (30) days of the signing of the Collective Agreement, a committee had to be established to oversee the process of this change and to negotiate the transition from the current Group Benefit plan to a union trust. The following are members of the Committee: V. Catano, L. Haiven, R. Konopasky, M. Sanford, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Canadian Benefits Consulting Group (a SMUFU consultant), and G. Morrison, K. Squires, S. Delaney, and J. Rose, who represent the employer. The Committee met once and we have obtained much, though not all, of the data that we need to effectively negotiate with new carriers for benefits.

SMUFU retained Mr. Ron Pink, Pink Breen Larkin, to draft the SMUFU Trust Agreement. This draft was provided to all the members of the Committee and reactions to it were invited from the employer. SMUFU continues to use Mr. M. Sanford as a consultant. We

provided the employer with a copy of the draft of the Trust Agreement.

SMUFU appointed R. Konopasky as the Chair of the Trust. F. Boabang, and N. Conrad were appointed as trustees. Three alternate trustees were also appointed: D. Bateman, S. Bjornson, and D. Gilin.

Trustees have been provided with the draft of the Trust Agreement, and a meeting with Mr. Pink will take place on April 19, 2007 to address questions or concerns in regard to the Trust. It is expected that the Trust will be finalized within a month of this meeting.

Once the Trust has been formed and signed by SMUFU and the trustees: the trustees will select a consulting firm to help in negotiating with carriers; the trustees will select a company to provide the services now provided by SMU's HR office; and, the trustees will select a financial institution to hold and manage the fund.

The Committee, in consultation with SMUFU and the Trust, will establish the date on which the Trust will assume responsibility for purchasing and providing benefits to faculty. All faculty members will be required to complete appropriate forms to allow us to obtain coverage from providers in accord with the Trust.

Once we have entered an agreement with the new carriers, our goal will be to establish a smooth transition from our current providers to the new carriers. It is essential that all faculty members complete the necessary forms at the point of transition. As long as each faculty member completes those forms, there will be no gaps in coverage during the transition from one carrier to another.

The next highest priority will be to establish an easy and efficient link between faculty and the consulting company that provides the equivalent of HR services, e.g., changing one's beneficiary for life insurance, or obtaining information about coverage.


The third priority will be to provide benefits that are equal to our current benefits, and, in regard to some kinds of coverage, to provide better benefits than we have now.

The fourth goal will be to establish a record of premiums and benefits that allows us to negotiate with providers for the best rates for benefits.

Faculty supported this change in our Collective Agreement in order to have control over its benefits and, possibly, to purchase benefits that offer more choice and better coverage. In the upcoming year, the Trust will survey the faculty to determine its preferences for changes

in our benefits and will determine the costs, if there are any, for such changes. The Trust cannot raise our premiums but it will inform SMUFU about the costs of changing or improving benefits. It is only SMUFU that can make decisions about increasing premiums in order to purchase improved benefits. In future negotiations, the Trust will keep our negotiating team up to date about the costs of benefits and suggest goals for negotiating this part of our compensation package that allow us to maintain and even improve our benefits.

In summary, SMUFU and our faculty have established control over benefits, part of our compensation package. Gaining control offers the advantage of choice of benefits, the chance to improve benefits, and the responsibility for administering the plans.



**Money Matters! Bargaining  
Total Compensation in the Post-  
secondary Context. Part 2  
CAUT Collective Bargaining  
Conference, Ottawa, January 26-28,  
2007**

*by Bob Cook, Negotiation Team Member & Editor of the Faculty Union News*

The CAUT Collective Bargaining Conference was held in Ottawa from January 26 to January 28, 2007. It continued the theme of "Bargaining Total Compensation" from last year's conference.

Neil Tudiver (CAUT Assistant Executive Director), speaking on "Total Compensation: What Are We Seeking?" outlined current developments in collective bargaining, drawing on examples from universities across Canada. He noted that employers are becoming more aggressive in negotiations, as reflected in threats of pension rollbacks, reductions in academic rights such as sabbaticals, and a tendency to drag their heels in negotiations. Along with these factors, faculty unions increasingly have to deal with employer rollbacks outside of collective bargaining in the form of policy changes or failure to do what they agreed to. Faculty associations have been fighting back through tactics such as mobilization of members, conciliation, strike votes and, occasionally, strikes.

Tudiver summarized trends in recent settlements across the country. These settlements have rarely been for less than 3% on salary scales, and this has generally been in

combination with elements such as floor increases and reductions in the number of steps within each rank. Non salary issues have included workload reduction, flexible retirement, and improvement of benefits packages. With regard to benefits, SMUFU's success in negotiating control of our benefit plan is a notable breakthrough and the first in Canada. Tudiver pointed out, however, that there is a great variety in the status of benefits at different CAUT member institutions. For example, the employer pays the full costs of extended health at nearly half the institutions but only pays half the costs at about a third of the institutions. There are similar discrepancies in dental plans, parental benefits, retiree benefits, professional expense re-imbursments, and sabbaticals. As for the way forward, Tudiver argued that aggressive negotiation gets results. Faculty associations have been losing ground as employers prefer to spend on other things and we must negotiate for our fair share.

Jennie Hornosty (Department of Sociology, University of New Brunswick), speaking on the topic "Working Conditions: What Should Be in the Package?" examined the various elements of a bargaining package and how they are related to total compensation. She observed that in bargaining salary, benefits, and working conditions, faculty associations must ensure equity for traditionally marginalized groups and represent fairly the interests of diverse groups in the bargaining unit. Hornosty claimed that a positive working environment, with equity in the areas of workload and protection of academic rights, and an academic environment free of harassment and discrimination, is essential for recruitment and retention. Hornosty further argued that promoting an inclusive and equitable work environment is an important goal for bargaining. Some components of this goal are elimination of systematic discrimination, enhancing gender equity, providing generous maternity and paternity leaves, child care, pay equity, and accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Doug Lorimer (Chair, CAUT Collective Bargaining and Economic Benefits Committee), and Bill Salatka (School of Business and Economics, Wilfrid Laurier University), delivered a session on "Costing the Package." Lorimer explained the importance of establishing the Union's credibility by costing out proposals, understanding the University's finances, and researching comparative information for other institutions. He also suggested having an accountant on the Union bargaining team. He noted that it is critical for the Union to fight on its own turf, which is improving the terms and conditions of employment, and not on the employer's turf. The cost of the settlement is the employer's problem and the employer's tactic is always to maximize cost projections and to plead poverty. As well, Lorimer argued the

importance of making intelligent choices, based on costing, in setting priorities, as opposed to just entering into negotiations with a shopping list of proposals. Salatka continued the theme with a detailed discussion of sources of information about the University's financial condition, including audited financial statements, budgets and projections, and bond ratings.

A session addressed by Ashley Crozier (Canadian Benefits Consulting Group) dealt with recent bargaining and legislative developments in pension negotiation. Unfortunately, the session focused exclusively on those fortunate enough to have that Cadillac of pension schemes, the defined benefit plan. The rest of us could only envy the problems they have been experiencing of late, although trends in the broader financial environment that are behind some of these problems are also having a significant impact on the fund balances in our defined contribution plans.

Mike Sanford (Canadian Benefits Consulting Group) provided conference attendees with tips on the knowledge and skills required in negotiating benefits packages. He urged that, to meet the challenges in negotiating benefits, Unions should set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic goals and define a clear timeline for accomplishing each of these goals. As well, he emphasized the importance of starting early, thinking strategically, focusing on value and not just price, educating and communicating with the Union membership, and seeking professional help.

Cindy Oliver (President, Federation of Post-Secondary Educators, and member of the CAUT Executive) brought together the themes raised by preceding speakers with a presentation on the politics of "Bargaining the Total Compensation Package." She observed that collective bargaining is both about moving the employer out of its comfort zone and an exercise in power sharing. Preparation, research, and mobilization of the membership play a critical role in bargaining. As well, it is necessary to seek broader public support by making the case that post secondary education is critical and needs better funding. Oliver also mentioned two roadblocks to bargaining. The first is the concept of professionalism and the view that unions are in conflict with an academic's higher purpose. The second is the need to persuade the membership to support the interests of distinct, disenfranchised groups. Oliver concluded by emphasizing the power of the right to free collective bargaining, and the importance of collective experience as reflected in organizations such as CAUT.

The Conference provided a good overview of the trends, issues, and effective strategies in bargaining total compensation. The formal presentations were supplemented by breakout group sessions that provided further opportunities for discussing the issues raised, as well as hands-on practice in collective bargaining techniques.



Canadian Association of Labour Media cartoon

## **CAUT Women's Conference**

*by Judy Haiven, Member-at-large 2006-07*

In February, Linda Van Esch and I attended the CAUT Women's Conference in Ottawa. This is held every other year and focuses on equity issues.

A Feminist and Equity Audits 2006 report was released by the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences. It is grim reading. For example, in 2003 though 41% of PhD graduates were women, only 31% of academic jobs across the disciplines in Canadian universities were held by women. In 2003, women held about 18% of academic jobs at the highest rank in Canada – in the US they held about 27%.

When it came to Canada Research Chairs, women held just 21% of them – 15% at the Tier I level and 26% at the Tier 2 level. In 2003, some women academics complained to the Canadian Human Rights Commission that the Canada Research Chairs program discriminated against women and possibly some minorities (see <http://www.affairesuniversitaires.ca/issues/2003/apr/en25.pdf>. and [http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662281578/199909\\_0662281578\\_3\\_e.pdf](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662281578/199909_0662281578_3_e.pdf) ).

Statistics from 2001 showed the under-representation and salary gaps by sex and visible minority status. (Ref: <http://www.fedcan.ca/english/issues/whatsnew>)

2001	University. teachers, full & part-time	Average employment income
Non-visible minority men	55.4%	\$69,173
Visible minority men	9.1%	\$58,459
Non-visible minority women	32.1%	\$47,674
Visible minority women	3.4%	\$38,337

There were many discussions on equity issues, from poverty, to employment and promotion prospects for women and minorities, new faculty issues and more. After this conference, I am convinced we need an Equity Committee at this university. If anyone else is interested please drop me an email ([jhaiven@smu.ca](mailto:jhaiven@smu.ca)) or phone me at 8650.

## **News from the Center for Academic and Instructional Development**

*by Margaret-Anne Bennett, Director of the Center for Academic and Instructional Development*

I looked at my ringing telephone and saw that Bob Cook was calling. After an exchange of pleasantries, he told me that he edits the SMUFU newsletter and asked if I would be willing to write a short article for the next issue on my new job responsibilities. Caught a little off guard by the unexpected question, I said "Uh, sure, I think I could do that. How short is short, what's your deadline?" Two things were running through my mind as I answered. I have edited the faculty newsletter *Teaching and Learning at Saint Mary's* for many years now and have asked many people over that time to contribute articles to each edition. I'm always pleased (and somewhat relieved) when they say 'yes', so I was predisposed by my own experiences to reply in the affirmative. However, on another level I was thinking, this all happened so recently, how best to explain or elaborate beyond the memo that was distributed in mid-February. So, let me take this opportunity to share with you what I have been involved in to date, and perhaps even gaze into the future.

Actually, for almost a year now my thoughts on my future focused on a possible early retirement – maybe next spring, summer I mused. Time to scale back, maybe work part-time, develop my creative side, take more art classes, spend time with grandkids, travel with

my husband. So much for that future! In early January, Dr. Terry Murphy, Vice-President, Academic and Research, discussed with me the possibility of my working more closely with him on a number of strategic academic initiatives. The opportunity to contribute to the development of these important initiatives at Saint Mary's was an offer I could not refuse.

But what is this latest opportunity? What are the responsibilities that come with it? Most of you will have seen the February 8 memo in which Dr. Murphy listed these responsibilities – academic planning, strategic initiatives, program reviews, and faculty relations within a renamed Center for Academic and Instructional Development. With a half time associate on a current one-year contract assuming some of my previous responsibilities, and with a little concern on my part that the math may not add up, I have begun to immerse myself in several of these areas.

**Program Reviews:** The most active one at the moment is in the area of program reviews as several were already underway during the winter semester. I am becoming familiar with the review process and am currently working with one department on their self-study. Saint Mary's does not have a history of doing systematic reviews on a 5 – 7 year basis like many post-secondary institutions, but recent initiatives by MPHEC may serve as an impetus for change in the near future. In fact, representatives from the AAU – MPHEC Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee were at Saint Mary's on April 10 as the first step in a university wide, year long, 'quality assurance assessment'. Five Maritime universities have completed the monitoring process within the past six years, three are nearly finished, and Saint Mary's, along with three others, is in the beginning stages. See the MPHEC website for several of the MPHEC reports, [http://www.mphec.ca/english/pol\\_b.html](http://www.mphec.ca/english/pol_b.html). I will be taking the lead role in guiding the university through the assessment process and researching and drafting the report to MPHEC. As part of this process, Saint Mary's Senate Procedures on Program Reviews, dated 1997, are in need of revision so that they more closely follow current MPHEC guidelines and are ultimately more helpful to academic units under review. My role will be to work with Senate and Academic Planning to update these guidelines, to be of assistance to departments during their self-study, and to provide support and guidance throughout the process.

**Policy and Planning:** A series of meetings and consultations are currently underway to assist with updating and revising the 2002-07 Academic Plan. My responsibilities in this area will include working with the AVP to organize the consultative process, preparing reports from these consultations, liaising on behalf of the AVP,

drafting revised text for the Plan, and liaising with relevant academic units to develop and draft proposals for new academic initiatives.

**Strategic Initiatives:** As a member of the Task Force on Student Success (2005 – 2007), I participated in consultations aimed at learning from various campus consistencies about student success issues, and I participated in writing the report and reporting the results to the campus community. The implementation of many of the Task Force recommendations will be a focus for academic and administrative departments over the next few years. My role in this area will be to work with individuals or groups on campus as we move student success initiatives from recommendation to reality.

And finally, though committees are not yet in place, I anticipate working with SMUFU on a number of academic initiatives outlined in the latest Collective Agreement. MOUs on faculty engagement in student recruitment and the recruitment and retention of new faculty may serve to create closer working ties between the Center for Academic and Instructional Development and the Faculty Union.

Relying on some semblance of truth in the old adage that 'a change is as good as a rest', I'm looking forward to the changes these new responsibilities will bring to the Center and to me personally, because I'm not so confident about the 'rest'!



## **Report on the Halifax and Dartmouth Labour Council**

*by Judy Haiven, Member-at-large 2006-07*

On behalf of SMUFU, Judy Haiven and Bob Cook have attended the last several meetings of the Halifax and Dartmouth District Labour Council. These meetings are held monthly at the Labour Temple on Kempt Rd. There are over one hundred local unions in this area eligible to join the Labour Council and only about 20 unions are actual affiliates. This is because, up to now, the Labour Council has not been terribly active in addressing the issues of the day that concern working people. Now, a new Executive composed of mainly young working people want to change that. The following unions regularly send delegates: The Carpenters' Union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the Dalhousie local of the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union (NSGEU), the Canadian

Postal Workers Union (CUPW), some CUPE locals, the Canadian Autoworkers Union (healthcare workers at the IWK-Grace, and workers at IMP near the Airport), the staff union at the Council of Canadians office in Halifax, and unionized assistants for the NDP MLAs.

Recently, there have been presentations on a number of key union issues in Halifax-Dartmouth including the union organizing drive at the Casino on the waterfront.

The Halifax and Sydney casinos are probably the only two non-unionized casinos in the country. Wages are little better than minimum wage (\$7.15/hr). By contrast, the casino near Hamilton, Ontario pays its staff about \$18 per hour. Working conditions here in Halifax are not good. Recently, I saw an advertisement for staff at the Halifax casino; it specified that the job seeker had to be willing to stand on his/her feet for an entire shift of 8 to 10 hours -- little wonder only younger people tend to work there. (The day may come when only instructors under 35 years of age will be allowed to teach in our 3-hour evening classes!) The Halifax casino boasts a workforce of more than 600 people with a very high turnover rate. In the last two months the Service Employees' International Union – SEIU – has launched an organizing drive at the Halifax casino. The SEIU union organizers attended a Labour Council meeting and reported that the union is just about ready to apply for certification. This has also been reported in the local media.

In this province it is an uphill struggle for a union to be certified as a bargaining agent for any group of workers—including those at the casino. The process is long and frankly stacked against unions. First, the union has to submit membership cards signed by at least 40% of workers in a given workplace. Along with the membership card, every member also has to hand over \$2. The cards and the money are deposited with the NS Labour Relations Board. Within a few days of the cards being turned in, the Labour Relations Board orders a vote on the casino premises. For certification, 50% plus one of all the employees (not just the ones at work that day) need to vote in favour of the union. Sounds easy right? Even democratic! But the problem in this province is that the ballots are often not counted for months, even years, while management lawyers typically try to contest the number

of workers eligible to vote. The union merely guesses how many workers are in the bargaining unit, as the union is not entitled to a list. On the other hand, management typically tries to inflate the number of workers – and include supervisors, temporary workers or part timers - eligible to vote. For example, if the union believes that in a given workplace there are 100 workers, the union may sign up 50 and the vote (when counted) may be 60 in favour of the union. This would mean the union wins.

However, if management succeeds in arguing that the bargaining unit is really 150, clearly the 60 votes are not enough; there have to be at least 76 votes. This is the kind of game certification is in this province. In the case of the casino, we will not know the outcome likely for some time.

By the way, I was elected sergeant-at-arms for the Labour Council. I hope that my experience in my department at SMU will help



**TWEEDLE DEE AND TWEEDLE DUMB**  
Canadian Association of Labour Media cartoon

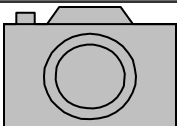
me in this new position. If any of you would like to come to meetings or the activities with me, I'd be really pleased... So get in touch.

### ON THE WEB

**CAUT Analysis of Federal Budget 2007. For report go to:** <http://www.caut.ca/en/issues/funding/2007fedbudgetanalysis.pdf>

### Your Two Cents: Submissions and Suggestions

All SMUFU members are invited to contribute comments, news ideas and, yes, even written submissions for future issues of the Faculty Union News. Contact: Bob Cook, Editor – 420-5174 E-mail: robert.cook@smu.ca

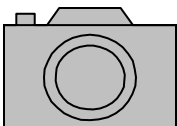


# PHOTO GALLERY



Incoming 2007-2008 SMUFU Executive: (Back row: left to right) Past President Larry Haiven, Chief Negotiator Victor Catano, Chair of the Grievance and Arbitration Committee Douglas Vaisey, Member-at-large Cindy Harrigan, Member-at-large Peter Twohig, (Front Row: left to right) Secretary Sally Wood, Treasurer Jeff Power, President Ron Houlihan, Vice-President Marc Lamoureux. *Absent:* Member-at-large Sean Kennedy

Photograph by Bob Cook



Outgoing 2006-07 SMUFU Executive: (Back Row—left to right) Chief Negotiator Victor Catano, Treasurer Jeff Power, Chair of the Grievance & Arbitration Committee Douglas Vaisey, Past-President Steven Smith, Member-at-large Judy Haiven. (Front Row—Left to right) Member-at-large Tatjana Chorney, President Larry Haiven, Secretary Marc Lamoureux. *Absent:* Vice President Robert Konopasky, and Member-at-large Xiaofei Song.

Photograph by Bob Cook

## The Well at the World's End runs dry

**Bob Cook,**  
Editor Faculty Union News

William Morris, the eminent Victorian author, artist, designer, typographer, and socialist, is to become yet another victim of cost cutting governments and their philistine indifference to culture.

The William Morris Gallery is located in Walthamstow, northeast London, where Morris was born in 1834. It is one of the most delightful of London's smaller museums and a worthy tribute to this fascinating man and his many accomplishments. A visit to the museum is inspirational and serves as a reminder that there are viable alternatives to our present economic, social, and cultural norms. The Waltham Forest Council, however, has recently voted for budget cuts that could result in the Gallery losing millions of pounds' worth of internationally important art. As well, the Gallery's opening hours will be halved and skilled curatorial staff will be laid off.

For more information, or to sign an online petition, go to

<http://www.keepourmuseumsopen.org.uk/#downloads>



[Strawberry Thief](#) (chintz) by William Morris.

## UNION LIBRARY

The following items have been added to the library available to members in the Union Office:

### Newsletters:

- AUFA Communicator — February 2007, Vol 14, No 3

### CAUT Newsletters & Publications:

- CAUT News Wire—March 29, 2007

### SMUFU WEBPAGE DOMAIN NAME AND E-MAIL ADDRESS:

The Saint Mary's University Faculty Union webpage domain name is [smufu.org](http://smufu.org) and the e-mail address is [unionoffice@smufu.org](mailto:unionoffice@smufu.org).

## SMUFU Executive 2007-2008

<b>Ron Houlihan</b> President	420-5198 Library <a href="mailto:ron.houlihan@smu.ca">ron.houlihan@smu.ca</a>
<b>Marc Lamoureux</b> Vice-President	420-5652 SB303 <a href="mailto:marc.lamoureux@smu.ca">marc.lamoureux@smu.ca</a>
<b>Larry Haiven</b> Past-President	420-5082 Sob248 <a href="mailto:larry.haiven@smu.ca">larry.haiven@smu.ca</a>
<b>Jeff Power</b> Treasurer	420-5621 Sob342 <a href="mailto:jeff.power@smu.ca">jeff.power@smu.ca</a>
<b>Sally Wood</b> Secretary	420-5148 Library <a href="mailto:sally.wood@smu.ca">sally.wood@smu.ca</a>
<b>Cindy Harrigan</b> Member-at-large	496-8789 Library <a href="mailto:cindy.harrigan@smu.ca">cindy.harrigan@smu.ca</a>
<b>Sean Kennedy</b> Member-at-large	496-8269 MN326 <a href="mailto:sean.kennedy@smu.ca">sean.kennedy@smu.ca</a>
<b>Peter Twohig</b> Member-at-large	420-5447 5960 Inglis St. <a href="mailto:peter.twohigh@smu.ca">peter.twohigh@smu.ca</a>
<b>Vic Catano</b> Chief Negotiator	420-5845 MS301 <a href="mailto:vic.catano@smu.ca">vic.catano@smu.ca</a>
<b>Douglas Vaisey</b> Chair, Grievance & Arbitration	420-5540 Library <a href="mailto:douglas.vaisey@smu.ca">douglas.vaisey@smu.ca</a>

**Office:** Karen Crowell 496-8190 MM206C  
[karen.crowell@smu.ca](mailto:karen.crowell@smu.ca) or [unionoffice@smufu.org](mailto:unionoffice@smufu.org)  
**SMUFU Webpage:** <http://www.smufu.org/>