
FACULTY TIMES

A Newsletter of UWOFA

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President's Report:

Jane Toswell, President

It's a busy time at UWOFA. Our building at 1393 Western Road is to be razed to the ground in the not-too-distant future and we expect to be moving onto the main campus at some point. Our internal processes and procedures are in a ferment of activity as we develop more professional approaches to our work. Our negotiating team for librarians and archivists continues to report a very unproductive negotiating relationship at the bargaining table and absolute intransigence from the Employer with respect to academic freedom and academic status for librarians and archivists. This is deeply worrisome for three reasons. First, librarians and archivists at every other Canadian university hold academic freedom and academic status as a matter of course and it would be a profound embarrassment for them not to have that status at a university that boasts one of seven Master of Library and Information Sciences (or Master of Information Studies) programs offered in Canada (there are two additional universities offering a Master of Information Studies). Second, our librarians and archivists will not be able to negotiate very many of their articles until this point is settled, since it has far-reaching effects on other aspects of their employment conditions. Third, this bodes very ill for the upcoming negotiations with faculty.

Our Contract Committee is very hard at work (in the adjoining room as I type this) and is close to being on track to having its proposals ready for what is for me the deadline date. We are permitted to serve notice to bargain ninety days before the end of the current collective agreement, which is 1 April 2006. The language proposals are moving along, though all of us working on them have been dismayed at the number of articles that need rethinking and the number of new articles to propose. The compensation and benefits proposals are well in hand as well. What will happen once both sides are at the bargaining table is, of course, impossible to predict, but given the length of time it took for the first two collective agreements of the faculty, I am not myself sanguine. It seems profoundly unlikely that we will have a new contract on 1 July 2006. Some wonder if we will have one on 1 July 2007.

We will be negotiating at the same time as the staff association, the food workers, and the teaching assistants' union (and, it seems certain, our own librarians and archivists' Bargaining Unit). This will provide some opportunity to coordinate, and to encourage each other. Our most vulnerable group of Members, the part-time faculty on limited-duties contracts, have in many cases working conditions that are worse than those of the teaching assistants' and yet that union will no doubt be making proposals to ameliorate working conditions for its members. I teach in the early evening myself, and as I roam the halls I see part-time faculty members with degrees just like the one I hold crammed two and three into small offices' but nonetheless having long and profound conversations with their students. In other words, despite having precisely one drawer and one shelf to call their own, they are excited and proud to be teaching at this university. Their pride shows through in the dedication they have to their work. Some days, when I am prone to complaining about the amount of work on my desk, I wonder what it would be like to have the same amount of work, but also to be commuting to three colleges and at least one other university.

Next on the list of vulnerable groups in the faculty is the growing group of limited-term faculty members. In several faculties, these colleagues are teaching five full courses (or ten half-courses) a year. Their days are filled with classes and office hours, their evenings with marking and course preparation. Few of them have research requirements in their contracts, though many now have service requirements in addition to the rest of their responsibilities. In addition to wondering how these stalwart individuals manage to keep going from day to day (especially if the entire teaching load is crushed into the fall and winter terms), I find very profoundly worrisome the way in which the expansion of these appointments divides teaching from research. I know that in many places in the university the advent of one of these colleagues has been greeted with sighs of relief as the teaching load lightens for full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty and there is, at once, more time for research. However, these are insidious changes, and at some point they prove irrevocable. If we split apart teaching from the tenured and tenure-track faculty and establish more hierarchy in the university, then

we have no argument against the proposal Bob Rae made in his recent Ontario report that the first two years of university education could take place at the community colleges. This would halve the size of the university: we could joyfully get rid of all the large classrooms but would we wave good-bye with equal good cheer to all that money and all those faculty appointments (because it's not 'just' the limited-term appointments whose departments would be cut or eliminated)?

And, while I'm on the topic of vulnerable groups in the academy, I'd like to note the existence of the post-doctoral fellows. Our post-docs at Western got themselves organized into an association last year, and have come to the table at the Unity Group (the monthly meeting of employee groups) and the Campus Council (the monthly meeting of the administration with the employee groups). They are also awaiting a ruling from the Canada Revenue Agency which seems likely to change their status from 'independent contractor' to 'employee.' If that happens, I for one am inclined to think that post-docs who are employees at Western have a very great deal in common with faculty members who are also employees at Western.

As for the rest of us, we're pretty vulnerable too. For the first time in the history of the Faculty Association, our Grievance Committee has referred a case to the CAUT Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee. The CAUT Executive will be deciding next week whether to set up an *ad hoc* investigatory committee. The faculty member whose case has been referred is a senior and highly-respected member of faculty with an impressive list of publications and many former doctoral students placed at universities around the world. The case began a year ago with two student complaints. It is a shocking example of just how crumbly the foundations under our academic feet can be.

We're also vulnerable in purely physical ways. Over the summer the denizens of the Social Science Building watched their experiments go south as humidity and temperature levels achieved new lows in highs. Colleagues talk of animals attracted to labs by unsanitary conditions (our custodial staff is down 40%), and many of us have jury-rigged work-spaces that would appall the campus ergonomist if

we thought to call him. Some of us have watched bemusedly as asbestos is removed from our buildings, and wondered at what point that supposedly safe stuff might become (or might have already become) carcinogenic dust. Western has also been identified by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board as a candidate for a Workwell Audit, based on poor safety performance. If you are interested in

the history of health & safety issues in the workplace, consider coming to a traveling exhibition of the Workers' Arts & Heritage Centre (Hamilton). Proposed by the Unity Group and co-sponsored by the administration, the exhibition is on display in the UCC Atrium during Reading Week; it is entitled 'Life...or a Living: A History of Occupational Health & Safety in Canada.'

Two Pictures in Time: Taking a Moral Stand

By Allan K. McDougall, Political Science

On 27 January 2006 I attended a meeting with about twelve others faced with age-based forced retirement to discuss our status. The briefing by representatives of the UWOFAs executive began with a clear statement that there was no legal recourse against mandatory retirement since the law eliminating it would not be implemented for a year. Discussion then moved on to ways to address retirement: the importance of maintaining ongoing research, research facilities, grants, and the practice of part time teaching. When questions about the legitimacy of mandatory retirement emerged, they were countered by legal constraints and perceived financial threats to UWO posed by an extended retirement age. The UWOFAs representatives presented statistics to counter the administration's concerns over costs to the University but then became sidetracked by parallel policy issues surrounding the implementation of universal mandatory retirement.

The sterility of the ensuing discourse of legal entitlement and fiscal management brought to mind an incident that occurred when I was President of UWOFAs some twenty years ago. Wes Dunn, retired Dean of Dentistry, visited my office one day to explain the financial difficulties many retirees were experiencing when faced with major dental expenses, which were not covered in the University benefits package. He then explained the issue to the UWOFAs bargaining team and we agreed to include the item in our bargaining brief, since the retirees had had no success in dealing with the administration as individuals.

At an early bargaining session, Clark Leith, then Provost, responded to the retiree benefits item, costing it at .03% of faculty salaries. The UWOFAs team accepted the cost and it was included in our

salary model. When the administration saw that UWOFAs was willing to retain the item with its cost, they asked Bill Trimble and Keith Gee, of Human Resources and Benefits respectively, to explore the implications in more detail. They did, and at the next bargaining session the Provost reported that they had not only explored possible changes to the retiree benefits package but that the costs would be lower than originally projected. Keith Gee contacted Wes Dunn and some of his colleagues and they established an avenue to discuss further issues. One of the highlights of that year was the expression of gratitude that the UWOFAs received from retirees.

It is important to point out that relations between UWOFAs and the administration were not particularly good at the time. Impasse procedures were invoked for the first time in difficult salary negotiations. Fiscal constraint was as bad – or worse – than in the budget forecasts for this year. However, when the UWOFAs showed it was willing to support the retirees cause, even with the additional expenses, the administration demonstrated equal generosity. Both sides recognized and responded to the human and moral dimensions of the issue. The broader University community was strengthened through their efforts.

Back to the present where the human and moral dimensions have been lost and where letters about mandatory retirement on the UWOFAs web site appear to be mere "pissing contests" between the bargaining sides rather than recognition of a real problem in the University community. The issue of age-based mandatory retirement is not a legal, or even a financial one. Those aspects are ancillary. It is a moral issue. The University is not willing to end a ground of discrimination – accepted as such

in the broader community and now by the government – until legally required. Ageism, like gender discrimination and racism, does not reflect competence or talent but is a category inappropriately imposed on human beings. The most pernicious constraints are those which dominate the minds of the participants until they become the limits of relevance, practice and truth. When the University falls behind society in recognizing and eradicating a ground of discrimination, hiding behind legal and fiscal rationalizations in the process as that discrimination is applied to members of the academic community, it is a reflection of the sterility of spirit in the current University's halls of

The Lecture Factory

Teachers are being turned into machines

By R.M. Kennedy

Recently someone asked me why anyone would choose to be a college professor when they could make so much more money working in the private sector. The management response is that we choose this career because professors' working conditions are just so incredibly luxurious. It's a "quality of life" issue many department chairs say when recruiting highly skilled talent from industries where some workers can make up to twice as much as college professors. "Come teach in the college system for the flexible hours; for the vacation time; for workplaces free of the competition and stress that the private sector breeds," they say. The way some managers talk about our working conditions sounds a little like how right-wing law-and-order advocates talk about criminals getting a posh vacation in prison. We're just taking a walk on easy street.

The real story is that most of us choose teaching because we see it as a chance to be creative in a way that the private sector doesn't allow us, and because we love people, ideas and communication. We choose to teach because we believe that education has an important role in building better communities. Unfortunately, we often make this choice despite the working conditions. Until you've actually taught, it is difficult to imagine just how emotionally and physically demanding the work is. Teaching work is not something you can leave in

power. Such was not the case twenty years ago. The underlying question is: what has happened to the University as a substantial academic community?

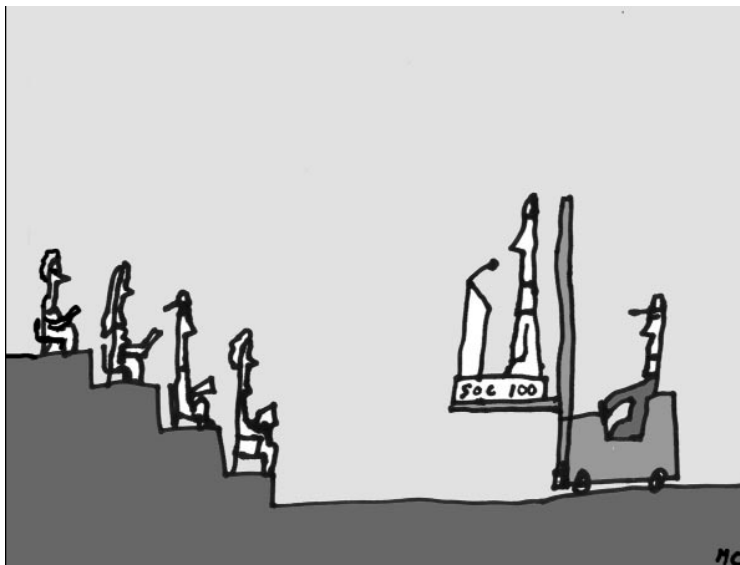
For a detailed report by Allan Gedalof on the meetings of the UWOFA-UWO Administration Joint Subcommittee on the Abolition of Mandatory Retirement, please visit the UWOFA website at:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwofa/issues/MandRetire-Subcommittee-report-Jan06.pdf>

the office at the end of the day. It's always on your mind. It's something you sleep, breathe and dream.

In many ways, our sense of teaching as a vocation stands in the way of seeing ourselves as workers who need to organize to achieve decent working conditions. White-collar employees, even when unionized, have a difficult time seeing themselves as workers. The problem is endemic to university-educated workers, whose education and career paths lend themselves to a kind of middle-class privilege that makes it difficult to acknowledge the ways that our economic system benefits some people more than others. For many college teachers, our sense of professionalism prevents us from seeing ourselves as workers within a system subject to a set of rules and power relationships we have no control over – except through the process of collective bargaining. We need to reflect more on the privilege we do have as unionized professional workers, as well as recognize that we are still just that – *workers*.

Last year in my social theory class, where we explore major concepts of the 20th century like capitalism and socialism, a student asked me what I meant by the term "workers." I said that workers were the people subject to the power and control of others. My student said, "You mean like people who work in factories?"

All I could think about in that moment was the workload arbitration case that my union local put forward a few years ago about the right of management to tell professors exactly how and what to teach. In recent years, managers in many of Ontario's 24 colleges have found new and "creative" ways to manipulate the workload limits set out in our system-wide collective agreement. For example, by ordering professors to use multiple-choice exams, which take less time to grade, management can cut costs by fitting more and more students into our classrooms. The problem, however, is that, often, multiple-choice exams are not appropriate. They don't encourage communication or critical-thinking skills. They are confusing to, and unfairly biased against, students whose first language isn't English. All that such exams do is justify crowded classrooms where students get less attention. The effects of these disintegrating classrooms ripple throughout our communities. Access to quality college education is an essential part of providing decently paid quality jobs for students who largely come from working-class families and communities.



Why did most of us become college teachers in the first place? It certainly wasn't because we wanted to be automated machines in a production process. Nobody benefits from this kind of education. But, until the day when we are able to bargain back more control, we'll just keep churning out our product.

Welcome to the lecture factory.

In this particular arbitration case, the college lawyer, making the point that management could tell college teachers to teach any way the college wanted, argued that, "If we told Professor Rea to stand in the corner and recite his name, hour after hour... we have the right to direct him [in such a manner]." Can you believe that a representative of an academic institution actually argued this point?

"Yes," I told my student, "workers are people who work in factories." Including the lecture factory.

This case represents just one example of many changes that have been steamrolling through college education. Underfunding of the system is chronic. Class sizes are increasing. Course hours are being cut. There is an increasing emphasis on the standardization of curricula. And, when professors have been directed, under the banner of standardization, to lay out material in a week-by-week format, often electronically, underpaid and under-supported sessional teachers are then hired to walk in and teach the course.

All of these changes have made teachers feel like they are being turned into machines in a production process. Like Professor Terry Rea, we often feel as if we are being told to stand in the corner and say our names over and over again.

RM Kennedy teaches at Centennial College in Scarborough, Ontario, and is vice-president of Ontario Public Service Employees Union Local 558. This commentary won the Canadian Association of Labour Media's 2004 Morden Lazarus prize for "most thoughtful editorial." For more information about CALM, go to the website: www.calm.ca. This commentary appeared in the Labour Day 2005 issue of *Our Times*, Canada's independent labour magazine (www.ourtimes.ca) and is reprinted here with permission of the author.

Academic Freedom and the Ivey Redesign

By Kim Clark, UWOFA Vice-President

The Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) statement on academic freedom highlights a number of important aspects of academic freedom, many of which are very familiar to us, such as the importance for democracies of fostering independent thinking among students and faculty, the importance for science and the arts of the free search for knowledge, and the role of academic freedom in making critique, commitment, and intellectual discourse itself possible. Academic freedom means freedom to teach (for instance, to choose teaching methods and course content -- although not necessarily to choose exactly what courses we teach), freedom in our research, and freedom to criticize the government, the university administration, and, as our Collective Agreement specifies, yes, even the Faculty Association.

One dimension of academic freedom that is perhaps not always at the forefront of our minds -- except when it is undermined -- is that academic freedom also involves the following, item number 5 in CAUT's policy statement: "Academic freedom requires that academic staff play a major role in the governance of the institution. Academic freedom means that academic staff must play the predominant role in determining curriculum, assessment standards, and other academic matters." In Western's Senate the largest category of Senators are faculty members, elected by their peers: 46 from main campus, and another 6 from the affiliates, totalling 52 of 102 voting members of Senate. This is all to the good, and to ensure that sufficient time is available to elected Senators to discuss the implications of the matters before Senate, this month UWOFA initiated pre-Senate caucus meetings for elected Senators to further strengthen this democratic institution. The next level of democratic participation in the governance of the institution is Faculty Councils, and this is where there seems to be an enormous difference in the degree to which these are actually -- rather than just nominally -- decision-making bodies for faculty.

On September 15, 2005, the administration of the Richard Ivey School of Business announced a far-reaching redesign of their degree programs, and of how faculty themselves would be grouped within

the school, eliminating the "area groups" and establishing four research "Centres of Excellence" (for which all four appointed directors were drawn from just one of the previous area groups, and whose scope, criteria and nature were not debated publicly). On September 15 itself, Ivey faculty saw the shape of the changes, at the same time that they were announced with fanfare to the public; questions were allowed at this meeting, but only for clarification of the details of the redesign. The Strategy Task Force that developed the redesign was not elected. No votes had been taken on the changes when they were announced, nor had these been discussed at Faculty Council, although Faculty Council finally did meet on Nov. 22 and voted on one element of the changed programming. Senate has not voted on any of these changes, nor has any Senate committee discussed them.

At Ivey, the tradition of faculty involvement in curriculum design, teaching assignments, faculty needs assessments and hiring, and workload planning seems to have been swept away. So, if faculty do not have the right to participate in decision-making about a fundamental restructuring of their work, is their academic freedom at risk? If the areas of research in a Faculty are constrained in this process, is academic freedom at risk? If clear procedures are not available to faculty for proposing additional research centres, and if a faculty member who insists that he wants to develop such a proposal is told that it wouldn't be in his best interest to continue pursuing this, is academic freedom at risk? If there is no faculty input into or oversight of the appointment of program directors and research centre directors (who are empowered to freely include or exclude faculty from their programs and projects), is academic freedom at risk? If control over teaching assignments is taken away from area groups and centralized in the Dean's Office, with no transparency about the distribution of those assignments, is academic freedom at risk? If the assignment of teaching duties is inequitable, and those who feel the brunt of this are faculty who have expressed disagreement with either the changes or the methods by which the changes were designed and implemented, is academic freedom at risk? If PhD students are told

that they will not be affected by the redesign of Ivey, except, of course, if their faculty supervisors are among the dissenters, is the academic freedom of both students and faculty at Ivey at risk? And if one or two of these issues are only hearsay, but rumours are rampant about the consequences of dissenting at Ivey, then do faculty end up undermining their own academic freedom, by censoring themselves? The available evidence suggests that answer to all of these questions is *yes*, but the Administration continues to assert that, to the contrary, academic freedom is not at risk. If they could go beyond simply *asserting to demonstrating* that there is no risk, all of us might be more reassured.

The Statement of Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada states: “The AUCC recognizes the *obligation of universities* to ensure the academic freedom of individual faculty members to conduct inquiries, to make judgments, and to *express views without fear of retribution*” (1986, p. 2; emphasis added). The question before us is: How do we make this happen? Western in the past has strenuously defended academic freedom in some controversial cases. We must continue to be vigilant to ensure that we make effective and give real content to the provisions in our Collective Agreement to protect Academic Freedom.

There but for the grace of ... go we (or at least, our money)

By Mike Carroll, Chair, UWOFA Pension/Benefits Committee

Every so often the different groups on campus—unionized and non-unionized—meet to discuss issues of common concern. The result is called, somewhat optimistically I think, the Unity Group. I attended a recent meeting called to discuss benefits and in the course of the discussion learned something I didn’t know: generally, the Administration has negotiated the same benefits for almost all employee groups. The Professional Managerial Association and CUPE 2692 (Physical Plant workers), for example, get the same princely \$15 a visit for chiropractors that we get; the same 80% reimbursement for major restorative dental; the same \$200,000 limit on out-of-country coverage; and so on. But there is one glaring exception: most other groups have an 85/15 co-payment (i.e. the employee pays 15%, up to a specified cap) for Extended Health and Dental Benefits that Faculty get at no cost (that is, where our plan pays 100%). I asked why this was so. The answer surprised me: “Because we were told that faculty had accepted this.” In fact, after some digging by Kim Clark, UWOFA VP, it turns out that this was true. This is what happened:

In the salary negotiations for 1996-97, before certification and following years of salary freezes under the Social Contract, the Administration insisted that the Faculty Association accept some form of cost containment for benefits. What was finally agreed to was this: if the costs for certain faculty benefits

exceeded a specified threshold, faculty members would pay the excess cost via payroll deduction. The Association, however, had the foresight to insist that the costs in question be for faculty alone (not a pool of all employees) and that they be verified by outside auditors. Sure enough, in 1998, the Administration told us that the threshold had been reached and we needed to start paying. The problem: the information had not been verified by outside auditors (read: the Administration had simply ignored the part of the agreement they didn’t like) and had not been broken down by employee group (that is, the data did not demonstrate that the cost of *faculty* benefits had exceeded the threshold).

Eventually we did get verified information but in a form that was hard to evaluate (no surprise to anyone who’s read the budget documents presented at Senate). Further scrutiny revealed that detailed information on other employee groups had been hidden but not deleted in that document. It turned out that runaway LTD (Long Term Disability) costs associated with another employee group were behind the Administration’s search for more money - and at this point the Administration backed down.

A similar cost containment plan, again specifying an 85/15 split (with cap) after a certain threshold has been reached, was incorporated into our first Collective Agreement - but again, at our insistence, with the “outside auditors” requirement. It was this

agreement, apparently, the Administration then used as leverage to secure the same or similar arrangements with other groups.

During negotiations for our second collective agreement, however, the Administration quietly dropped the insistence for the 85/15 split for faculty. Why? Partly because it seemed clear faculty costs were unlikely to rise past the agreed-upon threshold. But there's also some feeling, among those present at the time, that because the Faculty Association kept pushing back on this, and because the Administration regularly needed to hire outside auditors, it just wasn't worth the effort. I suspect that there was a third reason as well: having used the "faculty have agreed" argument to hammer other employee groups into agreeing to a 85/15 split - and given that that split, or something similar, was (and is) still enshrined in other Collective Agreements, the Administration could back off on faculty and still feel satisfied.

There are several lessons to be learned here. First, despite the high salaries we pay to the senior administrators in Stevenson-Lawson, they sometimes make silly mistakes and sometimes those silly mistakes can have important consequences. Remember that if we had taken the Administration at face value in 1998, we would

I was wrong, but how wrong was I?

By Allan Gedalof, Past-president, UWOFA

During the last academic year, in my final presidential report to the UWOFA membership in *Faculty Times*, it turns out that, in the words of the absolutely rational horse-like Houyhnhmns in Book 4 of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, I said "the thing that was not so." In that article, I mistakenly reported that Vice-provost (Policy, Planning and Faculty) Alan Weedon had reissued his infamous 2004 memo to Deans advising them not to offer overload teaching to faculty members with significant research productivity lest such extra teaching diminish their output. At the time, UWOFA protested that the Collective Agreement clearly allowed for such overload teaching (see Appointments 14) and that until and unless it could be demonstrated that a particular faculty member's research productivity dropped as a result of taking on such teaching, the prohibition was inappropriate.

have been paying more money out-of-pocket for medical and dental costs - and that might well have added up to a substantial sum over the intervening years if you or your family had needed to make a significant use of your benefits. Second, in dealing with faculty benefits the Administration likely always has an eye on how they can use faculty concessions to obtain concessions from others. Third, it is to the Administration's advantage to make sure the different employee groups don't share information (remember that other groups thought that faculty still had the 85/15 arrangement).

Generally, as I have become more and more involved in reviewing various data on our Benefit Plan over the last few months, I've come to realize that when the Administration tells us (as they do regularly) that our Benefits package is good, that's true but only partially. Certainly, there are some aspects of our Plan that are good (and the absence of the 85/15 split is a good example), but the more general pattern is that on balance our Plan is not really that much better than faculty plans at other universities (especially if we restrict attention to Extended Health and Dental coverage) and in certain areas our Plan is decidedly inferior - but these are issues for a later *Bargaining Bulletin*.

We also pointed out that such a prohibition could well prevent students from taking courses given by the best-qualified and most highly-accomplished faculty members. When in 2005 two faculty members in different faculties reported to UWOFA that they had been denied such teaching and that their deans had cited this policy and memo as the reason for the denial, I assumed that the memo had been reissued. Michele Parkin, Director of Faculty Relations, has since assured me that was not the case. Instead, it seems that at least two Deans, in determining who would be teaching courses during the summer of 2005, were operating as if the intent of that memo was still in force and citing it as the reason for the denial of the faculty member's request. It would be interesting to know if that is still the case.

Grievances ‘R’ Us

By Kim Clark, Co-chair, UWOFA Grievance Committee

All UWOFA members should know that they have a group of dedicated colleagues working on their behalf in the Grievance Committee, who are not only dealing with active grievances, but resolving many difficulties before they become grievances. UWOFA members contact us through various channels – sometimes through UWOFA departmental reps, or through members of the UWOFA Board, or through members of other UWOFA committees, or directly through our Professional Officer, Don Heslinga (uwofapro@uwo.ca) – when they have concerns about whether their rights are being violated, or about how the Collective Agreement is being interpreted and applied in relation to any matter, large or small.

Many issues and queries can be (and are) dealt with quickly by our Professional Officer. In other cases, one or two members of the Grievance Committee will be assigned to meet with and advise a UWOFA member on the specific issue s/he has raised. Some of these issues eventually lead to formal grievances, but many more are resolved before they escalate into grievances. Members of the Grievance Committee have been very busy this year providing advice and assistance to members who have been asked to submit additional information during the Promotion and Tenure process, who have concerns about how workload is being assigned, and many other issues.

Members should be aware that we (faculty members) always have a right to take an Academic Colleague with us to any meeting with a Dean or Associate Dean. This colleague may be someone involved with UWOFA (a member of the Grievance Committee, a departmental rep, a member of the

UWOFA Board, etc.), or may be any other faculty colleague. Many of you may have thought about taking a mentor into a meeting with you, and have been dissuaded by those who suggest that this will be taken as confrontational: it's not confrontational if we all begin to do this whenever we suspect that what will happen in a meeting over which we have no control may result in harm to us or to our careers.

While the Grievance Committee has been very busy working on issues raised by individuals, the Committee has also launched an unprecedented number of policy grievances during this academic year, dealing with issues ranging from miscalculation of Association dues, to privacy issues (with the outsourcing of our pension information), to improper constitution of Appointments Committees, and beyond. As with individual grievances, so too with policy grievances we have also been working hard to get some of these potential policy grievance problems resolved through channels other than arbitration. In other cases, we are closely monitoring situations which appear to be grievances in the making. In some cases, our work leads to proposals for where our Collective Agreement language needs to be tightened up, in either the Grievance and Arbitration article or (especially) with respect to Discipline. In other words... in the Grievance Committee, just as in many other committees within UWOFA and elsewhere on campus, you have committed colleagues who are quietly solving problems before they arise, and making your lives better in ways that you may not even have noticed (yet).

Letters to the Editor

Regarding “The Case of the Missing Full Professors, Revisited”;

UWOFA Bargaining Bulletin, Volume III, Number 9, January 31, 2009.

While I appreciate the UWOFA’s concern that the UWO may have a smaller proportion of Full Professors than other comparable universities (the “Bovey Six”), the comparisons presented to the membership are based strictly on numbers of faculty, gender distribution, mean age at the time of promotion, etc. (UWOFA Bargaining Bulletin, Volume III, Number 9, January 31, 2009).

Unfortunately, no data are provided (or available) to compare the quality of the individuals that are eligible for consideration to promotion. I would like to suggest that UWOFA gathers additional information to compare quality indicators of UWO faculty with 5 or more years after promotion to Associate Professor, with those who are holding the rank of Professor for 5 years or more. Scholarly and research performance, as defined by national and international contributions to the applicable area or field, national and international impact of the individuals in their field of expertise (e.g. track record of grant funding national and international awards), and quality of training of graduate students and fellows, could be examples of the type of indicators that will speak to the overall quality of

our professorial faculty. Promotion to Full Professor should not be perceived as a “right” for those in the system but a demonstration of achieving a superior level of competence. I frankly could not care less if we have a smaller number of Professors at the UWO than our neighbouring universities. But I would be really concerned if we were missing in attracting and maintaining the best scholars in their fields. Are we recruiting the best possible junior faculty with the best potential to succeed in academia? Are we providing them with the appropriate mentoring and nurturing support and facilities to succeed? The UWO tag line says that we are among Canada’s leading research universities. Perhaps the “Case of the Missing Full Professors” at the UWO is the “Case of not putting the money where the mouth is”.

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Strike Mandate Needed

I am writing about the upcoming negotiation with the administration. I feel that the negotiating team MUST go into with the negotiations with a strike mandate already voted in by the faculty. My reasons for this are as follows:

1. In the last round of negotiations the administration would not seriously negotiate with us until after our strike vote. Their first offer actually would have given us no net raise at all when you considered the benefits they wanted us to give up. The administration obviously feels that the longer they drag out negotiations the more likely it is that the membership will get fed up and settle for anything.

2. The administration has continually tried to drive a wedge between the negotiating team and the faculty to weaken the negotiating team's position. If the negotiating team already has a strike mandate, they cannot do this.

3. If the administration refuses to negotiate in good faith, as they have done in the beginning of the last two negotiations and will certainly do in these negotiations, it would be easier for the negotiating team to call for a strike date that is favourable for the faculty (e.g. the beginning of a term) rather than have the administration threaten to lock us out at a time favourable for them (as they did with the staff over the Christmas holiday).

I have been very impressed with the restraint the negotiating team has shown in the past, and I fully trust them to do what is best for the faculty. I feel that giving them an initial strike mandate will actually make a strike less likely and will lead to a rapid and fair settlement. Without a strike mandate the administration will again drag out the negotiations, make grossly unfair offers, and get the faculty so angry they WILL want to strike.

I am not traditionally a union person. In fact I did not even vote for the union. However, I do not

Salary Anomalies and the Mid-career Salary Gap

I am motivated to write as a consequence of the recent bargaining bulletin pointing out the salary gap for mid-career faculty (roughly those currently age 45-54) and the fact that the gap has not been closed during the period of the current collective agreement. If anything, from the information in the bulletin, the 'mid-career' trough in the curve has increased while salaries have been compressed from below and the age-salary curve has flattened.

This is a long-standing issue. Those of us in this (now) mid-career salary trough have been surfing this charming little trough for at least 10+ years – it's been moving along the age curve with us. It's not something one passes through as one hits that age, it's something that has affected one particular age cohort (and no other) for a good chunk of their careers to date. The long-term effects are multiplying and carrying through to pensions and the financial damage done so far cannot be recovered. This has happened despite repeated reassurances from UWOFA over the years that they would be fixing it as part of the next negotiations.

As I understand it, the anomalies fund in the current contract was explicitly put in place to address the mid-career salary trough. Yet it seems to have

believe that the administration's actions warrant our trust. I thus feel that the Faculty Association should be working towards a strike mandate for the negotiating team, not only for the sake of the faculty, but more importantly for the welfare of the University and students.

Vincent L. Morris
Professor
Department of Microbiology and Immunology

failed conspicuously in this respect. One possible reason for this is apparent. A primary comparator in the anomalies analysis is the regression formula based on current rank, age, years since PhD etc. As an individual I can be anomalous with respect to people at the same rank, age, etc. but the cohort as a whole can not be anomalous. The process juggles the individual residuals around the curve but it doesn't shift the curve. Shifting the curve is what's needed. The consequence of the current process is that after 3 iterations of the anomalies process the mid-career salary gap is as big, or bigger, than ever.

I have one simple plea – that in the next round of negotiations UWOFA and the Administration make finding a formula that actually fixes the problem the first priority in the compensation package. Those of us in this cohort don't want to 'surf the sag' for the remaining 15+ years of our careers, hanging ten to earn our merit points and promotions, only to get washed up on the beach of retirement with substantially less in our pockets than those who rode the waves in front of and behind us.

Peter Ashmore
Professor and Faculty Scholar

Faculty Times welcomes your contributions and letters to the Editor.
We look forward to lively responses and debate on issues related to
UWOFA and its membership.
Please address them to us at djheap@uwo.ca.

Life is Like a Sewer...

Editorial by David Heap

... what you get out of it depends on what you put into it. These words of wisdom from songwriter Tom Lehrer are true of many aspects of university life (including perhaps teaching, learning and research ... though perhaps not all committee work), but most especially of collective bargaining. We can only get the changes we want and need out of our next round of negotiations with our Employer if we are collectively prepared to put something into the process first. As individuals this means becoming informed about our bargaining goals, attending the General Membership Meetings where they will be discussed, and casting your ballot in our electronic vote to ratify these goals. This process will give our Negotiating Team a mandate to bargain on our behalf to improve our Collective Agreement in many important ways.

You will also be called upon to participate in more surveys about bargaining issues over the coming months, and to follow negotiations when they begin in April. Communications—between you and your Union, but also among all of your colleagues—is a vital part of this process. Your Department or School should have a UWOFA Representative to help keep lines of communication working well both ways: if you don't (or if you're not sure who they are), contact the UWOFA office. And if you'd like to help us build faculty involvement in negotiations, please consider joining the Bargaining Support Committee (contact Ann Bigelow abigelow@uwo.ca).

It's all of our Union, all of our Collective Agreement—get involved in order to get more of what you want out of it.

Demutualization: Your Cheque is (Nearly) in the Mail

When insurance companies demutualized in the late 1990s so that they were no longer owned by policyholders whose premiums in effect bought a “share” of the company, those companies were enjoined to return those shares to the policyholders. That return was held up for years while some employers (although not UWO) tried to claim all or some of that money for themselves. Last year a Supreme Court decision upheld lower courts who decided in favour of the employees. Once that was decided, all of the employee groups at Western got together to press the Administration to distribute the funds, and selected four representatives to negotiate on behalf of all UWO employees on the effective demutualization date of January 28, 1998. After months of negotiations, we now have an agreement which was signed as this issue of Faculty Times went to press. So, after almost eight years of waiting, you may soon get a cheque—but don't rush to spend it yet. The net amounts to be distributed to each employee are extremely modest: for details on how they are calculated, as well as the history of this process and how we got where we are now, please see the UWOFA web page: http://www.uwo.ca/uwofa/docs/Demutualization_Nov16_05.html