



**Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers  
Newsletter • 7 March 2014**



**In Solidarity: ANSUT supports MAFA on Strike!**

**ANSUT President's Report**

*Chris Ferns*

During the term of the Dexter government, writing the President's Report for the ANSUT Newsletter came to feel more and more like a bad case of déjà vu. Pointing to the disconnect between the government's rhetoric about the importance of Nova Scotia's universities, and the reality of their policies merely served to highlight how little attention the government paid to the repeated representations of faculty, students, staff, and even administrators regarding the disastrous consequences of its actions.

Now, of course, we are in a new era, follow-

ing an election in which the NDP was reduced to third party status – although their policies on post-secondary education were likely only one factor among many that led to their defeat at the polls. So has the picture finally changed?

**Four months into the new Liberal government's term**, the picture remains unclear. The Premier's recent remarks in an address to the Sydney Chamber of Commerce were certainly encouraging. Rather than talking about there being "too many" universities in Nova Scotia, he declared, we should see them for the asset they are, not than a liability to be managed – a view that could almost have been lifted verbatim from an ANSUT brief.

However, as we know from the example of the

previous government, promising words don't necessarily translate into positive action. While the Dexter government's early fanfare about promoting Nova Scotia as "Canada's University Capital" was widely welcomed, it was followed in short order by the commissioning of the O'Neill Report, a **10% cut in university funding over three years, the authorization of annual tuition fee increases of 3%**, and the declaration that it was acting on a "change mandate" that had somehow materialized out of nowhere, given that it had never formed part of the platform on which the NDP were elected.

From initial meetings ANSUT and our PSE Coalition partners have had with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, it appears that whatever first steps the new government takes will be cautious ones. It is unlikely that the final year of the current MOU will see any further reductions in public funding – more likely a modest increase, likely one percent (although taking inflation into account, that still translates into an effective cut). Tuition fees will likely be allowed to continue to rise, although the government also seems prepared to make good on its campaign pledge to make provincial student loans interest-free.



*PSE Coalition press conference: Province House, February 4, 2014*

**The recently released public opinion poll** commissioned by the Post-Secondary Coalition of which ANSUT is part confirms that public support for post-secondary education remains strong. As in previous polls, it is clear that the majority of Nova Scotians believe university education is too expensive, and that this is a barrier to access, that the level of government funding is too low, and that nearly two thirds of the respondents would be prepared to pay higher taxes if this would make university education more affordable. There was also strong support for making universities more accountable for how they spend their money. We have shared these findings with the new government – but it remains to be seen whether it will be more responsive than its predecessor.

Plans are also apparently afoot for a process of **wide public consultation over the future of PSE**, to be held in the spring. What form this will take, and what its agenda might be remains unclear, and it seems quite possible that, notwithstanding the Premier's encouraging words, the issue of whether the province "needs" ten universities may yet rear its head once again. It also seems likely that if there is any significant restoration of funding to the university system in the longer term, the government's preference (reinforced by the recommendations of the Ivany Report) would be to prioritize funding for research with commercial potential and the recruitment of more international students. So as things stand, it seems mainly a case of wait-and-see.

**On the labour relations front**, the past year has been considerably quieter than its predecessor, with settlements at the Atlantic School of Theology, Cape Breton University, and Université Sainte-Anne, while at Acadia negotiations over a salary reopener in the final year of a four year contract were also successfully concluded. However, while there thankfully no strikes were required to reach a settlement, in several cases – as has increasingly become the norm in recent years – the negotiations involved were needlessly prolonged. It has begun to appear that conciliation is now seen as a normal part of the bargaining

process, rather than a last resort, and that employers are less and less willing to take responsibility for reaching a settlement; rather, settlements are something they want to be seen as reluctantly having been forced to accept, usually only after prolonged delays.

Over the border in New Brunswick, of course, the picture has been very different, with **three week strikes at both the University of New Brunswick and Mount Allison**, the latter concluding with the union accepting a proposal to refer the outstanding issues to binding arbitration – something which our colleagues at StFXAUT successfully resisted during last year’s strike. Given the extent of collusion between university administrations in the region, it seems quite likely that upcoming negotiations in Nova Scotia may see the adoption of a more hardball approach on the part of the Employer. So we should all be prepared . . .

Whatever the bargaining climate, however, one thing that is clear is that the level of **full-time faculty complement** is likely to be among the most pressing issues. At the meeting of the Atlantic Canada Council of Faculty Associations held in Halifax in June of last year it was clear that the erosion of full-time faculty numbers, and the increasing reliance on contract academic staff, was a serious concern for most of those present – and this concern was emphasized once again at the meeting of Atlantic Chief Negotiators held at Moncton in the fall.

Most of us are aware of the problems that stem from the failure to maintain an adequate full-time faculty complement – problems of workload and morale for the declining number of full-time faculty, the exploitation of growing numbers of contract staff, and the denial of opportunity to significant numbers of qualified young academics who would otherwise be entering the profession. Given that all these adversely affect the quality of education we are able to provide, one might think university administrations might be concerned about the impact – but it actually seems that the reverse is the case. The more over-worked full-time faculty are, the less time they have to oppose administration initiatives that are contrary to both their interests and those of stu-

dents; contract staff are seldom well enough organized to be much of an obstacle; and as for the pool of qualified young academics out there – well, the more there are, the easier it becomes to select only the very very best.

Ironically, despite the funding cuts implemented by the Dexter government, **universities are actually ideally positioned to engage in serious faculty renewal**. Given the faculty demographics on most campuses, the sheer number of retirements to be anticipated over the next five years means that increasing full-time faculty levels, let alone merely maintaining them would be easily affordable, given the gap between entry level salaries and those of retiring senior academics.

“But we don’t have the money to replace all the faculty who retire,” I hear a Vice-President bleat. That fact is, though, that they do. By way of illustration, let us take the case of Mount Saint Vincent University (merely because that’s where I happen to work). When a faculty member retires they will almost always been at the top of the scale for that rank (step ten). As of July 1, 2014, a Full Professor at step ten would be earning \$135,275; and Associate at step ten would be getting \$112,270. An incoming junior faculty member with a PhD would earn anywhere between \$67,067 (step one) and \$75,256 (step four) depending on experience. Without a PhD, they would be hired as a Lecturer, most likely at step one, on a salary of \$60,527. **Simply replacing everyone who retires would yield a minimum cost saving of \$37,014** (retiring Associate replaced by step four Assistant) and a maximum saving of \$74,748 (retiring Full replaced by step one Lecturer).

Obviously those cost savings would decrease over time, as junior faculty progressed through the ranks – but even so, it would be a long time before the resultant salary mass would reach anywhere near current levels. In other words, universities have the financial capacity not merely to maintain existing full-time faculty levels, but to increase them. Yet that does not seem to be an opportunity university administrations are willing to grasp.

After all – why hire more faculty, when you could

use the money to pay off the debt on buildings you couldn't afford to build in the first place?

-CF

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## **SMUFU Report**

*Marc Lamoureux, SMUFU President*

Saint Mary's University Faculty Union (SMUFU) is currently in its second year of a three year contract that expires on August 31st, 2015. We are looking forward to developing our next bargaining platform over the upcoming year. In that respect, the Executive has met with the Employer as part of a **Joint Employer-Union committee** to review and make recommendations on the **Lecturer Stream position** (teaching only faculty position) at Saint Mary's University. The committee is expected to complete its work this term and recommendations proposed by that committee will serve as a framework for better working conditions for the Lecturer Stream in the next round of negotiations.

The Union continues to work in collaboration with the Employer to implement the revised Article on the **Positive Action to Improve the Employment of Women, Aboriginal Peoples, Visible Minorities, and People with Disabilities**. Three additional designated groups (aboriginal people, person with disabilities, visible minorities) were added to this Article in the most recent Collective Agreement. The University has begun the gathering of information (on a voluntary basis) about the four equity groups and will begin a consultation process to identified serious imbalances in the composition of Employees with respect to the equity groups. The Union is working with CAUT to organize a workshop/presentation on equity which will help members and departments identify potential gaps in the composition of employees in their Department.

**SMUFU is working with CAUT** to organize a workshop on Mental Illness in the workplace and on Governance and Mobilization. Mental illness is becoming an increasing concern for faculty associations. CAUT has reported several cases of faculty members being unjustifiably sanctioned when they were effectively ill. This situation has effectively

happened here at SMU and, because of the vigilance of the Union, our members were protected from any disciplinary actions. Like many sister organizations, SMUFU is experiencing difficulties with active member engagement in the Union's business. SMUFU is looking into organizing with CAUT a workshop on Governance and Mobilization of members to stimulate members to get more involve with their Union. SMUFU continues to be on the alert to protect our members' rights. The Union is currently working to resolve one critical grievance which is pending arbitration. The Union is fighting for the rights of limited-term contract faculty (i.e. appointment less than 12 months) to receive a 4% vacation pay as required by NS Labour Standards Code. The University is denying this benefit arguing that the members have been compensated otherwise. The University has furthermore changed the language of the appointment letters of limited term contracts by adding that the salary scale is "inclusive of 4% vacation pay" which is contrary to what was negotiated.

**The Union is also keeping a watchful eye about any FOIPOP request** to access Union members' personal communications (paper, electronic, etc.). The Union was alerted to the fact that a FOIPOP request to access email records of a member was in progress. The Union communicated its position (and also the position of CAUT) to the Employer that all member's communications are private and therefore not under the custody and control of the University. This position is also recognized in our Collective Agreement. The University agreed with our position and has rejected the FOIPOP request!

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the certification of SMUFU. This makes our Union the oldest certified union of academics in English Canada. We will be celebrating this milestone at our upcoming 6th Annual Appreciation Dinner organized by the Union for its members.

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## MSVUFA Report

Linda Mann, MSVU President

The **MSVUFA Constitution and By-Laws** underwent a much needed revision that was approved by the membership at the September 2013 general meeting. The roles and duties of the executive committee and the standing committees were all updated including the establishment of liaison roles for executive members with various standing committees. The previously ad hoc communications and contract committees were formalized. The communication committee was introduced in the last round of bargaining and proved to be a valuable addition. The contract committee will make recommendations for bargaining, involve an unlimited number of members and replace the negotiations committee

Also last September, the MSVUFA **Executive Assistant job description** was revised and moved to a full-time position with provision of benefits. The duties of our Executive Assistant have evolved over the years and he plays an important role in the efficient and effective functioning of our union.

**Member discussion sessions** were introduced this past year. In the hour prior to the general meetings, we host a discussion on topics of importance to our members. The first discussion was held before the October general meeting and the topic, *Annual Reports: Avoiding the Pitfalls and Maintaining Your Rights*, was timely as members had recently received, for the first time due to changes in the collective agreement, their dean's comments on their annual reports. The discussion helped inform members about what is and is not required in an annual report, and how to respond to a dean's comments and requests for more information.

Our second discussion session was held in January and the topic was *Faculty Complement and Succession Planning*. At this session we explored members' views on whether they think erosion of full-time faculty is an issue for departments/faculty; how this has affected program delivery, succession planning and workload; and what action they would like to see the union take in addressing this issue. This is

a serious concern for us as we have seen a decline in tenured/tenure track members of over 7% since 2007. With 36% of our members over 60 years of age, the failure of the employer to address succession planning is unacceptable.

We plan to continue to host a series of these discussion topics so we can have an exchange about emerging issues/concerns and help ensure our members are informed about their rights. These sessions also serve as a source of valuable information for our contract committee.

The regular **discussions with the employer** (MSVU president and vice presidents) that Rhoda Zuk initiated last year have been ongoing. At our most recent meeting we discussed our concerns about the declining faculty complement and the need for succession planning. It is valuable to continue to have this open dialogue about issues as it contributes to mutual understandings if not resolutions.

We have established **links with the other unions** on campus and discussions have been held about items of mutual concern. Last September we hosted the first MSVU Labour Union BBQ for all unionized employees. Representatives from CUPE, NSGEU, IOUE, as well as HDDLC and NSFL attended.

Following a meeting with the student union president last Fall, he wrote to the MSVU president, on behalf of the student union and the faculty association, about problems with technology on campus. A fairly prompt response was received and some improvements such as new computers for a student computer area and the addition of a message function for the recently upgraded but problematic Moodle have been made. However, troubles with Moodle and slow computers in classrooms and computer labs remain. We hope to schedule regular meetings with the student union to discuss this as well as other issues of mutual concern.

MSVUFA members and executives have participated in a number of external meetings and events this past year. These include the ACCFA Forum, ANSUT Council Meetings, CAUT Get Science Right Halifax Town Hall, Atlantic Chief Negotiators Annual Meeting, CAUT Defence Fund Meeting, CAUT - ANSUT Mo-

bilization and Governance Workshop, CAUT Senior Grievance Officers Workshop, CAUT Council, CAUT Presidents' Forum, and CAUT Equity and Diversity Forum. We plan to participate in the CAUT Chief Negotiators Forum, the next CAUT Council and the NU-CAUT Convention. We appreciated the reports prepared by Matthew Furlong on the Get Science Right Town Hall and the Mobilization Workshop.

Our challenges for 2014/15 include finding ways to engage our membership in the union, preparation for our next round of bargaining in 2015 and succession planning for the executive committee.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge the value for ANSUT and in particular the outstanding leadership of Chris Ferns over many years. It will be challenging to replace him but we will offer our full support to whoever takes the helm of ANSUT.

-LM

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## **AUFA Report**

*Robert Seale, AUFA President*

Well. THAT's been a bit of a year, hasn't it?

When last you heard from our merry band at Acadia, **AUFA had some serious contractual concerns going into the last year of their contract**, particularly on the subjects of workload, complement, and per-course appointments. In the interim, not only do those concerns remain, they have become more pointed and problematic.

Last summer, in our re-opener on the financial clauses of the (present) 13th CA, we managed to not only hold our own but post modest gains. Much of that had to do with the brilliant strategic work of our Chief Negotiator, Dr. John Eustace, and his crack team- who seemed to be able to intuit subterfuge and hidden money from over the horizon. John has worked his way through the AUFA negotiation ranks the hard way (as John Houseman used to say in the Merrill-Lynch commercials): he EARNED it. We are blessed with his ongoing committee guidance in preparation for negotiations on the 14th CA. Kudos. Further, since that time, we have made significant

progress in formally pressing the administration on pay and gender equity issues. The Executive, since my election as President, has been forced to meet on a virtually weekly basis. Obviously, having to put up with me, a dedicated and long-suffering group.

Last Fall, we instituted a new "executive oversight" policy for our 21 committees, so that at any Executive Committee meeting one of the committee members can immediately tell us exactly what is happening in any specific committee, the issues that are of greatest concern, answer any questions about things on their table, and/or accept immediate direction from the Executive.

Also last Fall, **as we prepare for negotiations on the 14th CA in May of this year**, we broadened the process of membership consultation on outstanding issues, both internally to AUFA and with regard to the CA. AUFA has a constitutionally prescribed set of round tables and surveys, prior to our three main working groups, that produce proposed language for the next CA and the eventual prioritization by the membership of those issues we consider pivotal. Although consultation and feedback appeared broadly based on paper, I noticed that in past surveys and appeals regarding specific issues of focus, the majority of responses were from the party faithful. This is not unusual. Anywhere. But they are a minority. Going into negotiations, I felt it was incumbent upon us to reach out more pro-actively to those groups of the bargaining unit who (for a wide variety of reasons) were disinterested or disaffected. Once these units were specifically identified, I (and our Vice-President Elect) met with each one specifically, and listened to their concerns and ideas. These were not just academic units, but categories of bargaining, such as part-time appointments. We met with some of them - without Heads or anyone in an administrative capacity being invited or present - as many as three times. This requires some stamina. I took a lot of heat. I did a lot of listening. I did a lot of apologizing for the past. And, I feel, rightfully so. We tried to give them what anyone in any meaningful long-term relationship ought to be able to expect: face time, an ear, an open mind, and respect.

**When it became clear to these members** that there was a new and active attitude of inclusion, we had people showing up to general meetings to voice their opinions who hadn't attended in ten years. Literally. Disaffected units (the stereotypical usual suspects in business and science) produced **meaningful debate, great options, and helped populate our pre-negotiation committees**. Our Chair, in the Fall term, was from the School of Business.

We gave them back their voice. Although the process is time consuming and not for the faint of heart, it was an invaluable experience, and I would recommend it for every other association.

This Spring, we are about to make substantive changes to the AUFA Constitution, based on the incredible work of our past President, Dr. Gillian Poulter, who has proven to be such an indispensable resource of past-practice and wisdom for yours truly. We are also in the midst of a monumental battle over the control, type and direction of our Pension Plan, as the Admin and BoG were caught attempting to balance the books of the University on the backs of Plan members. Here particularly, I am blessed with Eric Alcorn, the AUFA Vice-president Elect, who manages to balance a rapier-like empirical understanding of numbers with an inclusive and Humanist heart. Personally, I believe I now know more about how pensions function than any decent human being ought. I thought weather people were the only ones allowed to professionally guesstimate outcomes, as in "a 30% chance of rain." Au contraire. Pension actuaries have refined this art into the legal term "assumptions." If anyone could actually predict with any degree of certainty what is going to happen in 15 years, they would be very rich and there would be no such thing as Wall Street. But actuaries rule the roost. At about \$500 an hour. Let me talk to you about logic.

Anyway.

The rest of this term will be spent combing AUFA's proposal and strategy hair for the negotiation prom (which begins in May). We have had innumerable and invaluable preparatory workshops with CAUT this past year, and aside from Scott's good news on

the CBU settlement front, we (like you) have had to witness and actively support the AUNBT and MUFA job actions. AUFA remains hopeful that the arbitration microbe apparently present in New Brunswick water does not find its way into Annapolis Valley aquifers.

Respectfully submitted,

-RS

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### **CBUFA Report**

*Scott Stewart, CBUFA President*

Scott Stewart began a two year term as President of CBUFA on July 1, 2013.

Upon recommendation of the CAUT, **CBUFA has obtained indemnity insurance for its Executive Members** and is for the first time having an audit done on its books.

In October, CBUFA honored Chester Pyne at a social event where he was presented with the CAUT Distinguished Service Award. Chester has worked for CBUFA for more than 15 years in various capacities including President, Chief Negotiator, Grievance Officer, Strike Coordinator, Vice President, and Past President. We are all thankful for the incredible service he has done for us.

Our Collective Agreement expired on June 30, 2013, and a new collective agreement was ratified by the CBUFA on Jan. 27, 2014. It will come before the CBU Board of Governors for approval on Feb. 25.

**The CBUFA and Employer bargaining teams met approximately 30 times** from the beginning of July until negotiations broke down in November. The two sides applied jointly for conciliation. The main unresolved tabled issue was faculty teaching workload. CBUFA was looking for a reduction in teaching workload from 3/3 (18 credits) to 3/2 (15 credits) to bring us into line with our comparator group in the region. The Employer was willing to do this only if some portion of our faculty, who were deemed 'non-active researchers', saw a dramatic increase in

their teaching workload. The Employer was also interested in creating a teaching only stream for faculty.

CBUFA held a general membership meeting where a strike motion was made, which received support from 92% of voting members. Conciliation talks were held on Dec. 18 and 19. Both sides finally tabled their monetary articles. The two sides also made significant progress on faculty teaching workload. But the conciliation talks failed to reach a settlement and so the conciliator filed a report on Jan 7, 2014, which started a two week countdown to legal job action. The conciliation also set up a meeting for Jan. 21, the final day of the cooling off period. At approximately 10 pm that evening, the two sides reached a tentative agreement. The executive met the following day and, after hearing the details of the tentative agreement, voted unanimously to endorse it. A general membership meeting was held on Friday, Jan 24 to discuss the details of the tentative agreement and to begin a ratification, which ended on Monday, Jan. 27.

In the tentative agreement, those faculty members deemed to be active researchers by their School Dean and VP, Academic would teach 15 credits per academic year while non-active researchers would teach 18 hours. The deal also called for a 6 % increase in salary over the three year period, although the last 0.75% of the raise would not be given until April 1, 2016, only 3 months before the end of the agreement. More specifically, Economic adjustments to all salary scales for the life of this agreement shall be July 1 2013 1.75%, 1 July 2014 1.5% and July 1 2015 2% and 01 April 2016 0.75%.

There was an increase from \$800/year in professional development funds to \$1000/year by the end of the agreement and the Employer also agreed to increase their contribution to our (defined contribution) pension plan from 7.5% to 8%, again during the last year of the agreement. Departments with fewer than 10 members, unfortunately, saw a decrease in Chair release time from 6 credits to 3 credits, but saw an increase in the stipend they received. A number of other articles were also cleaned

up and/or improved.

The meeting was lively and it quickly became clear that the science and math faculty were on the whole displeased with the agreement since they would see no teaching workload reduction from the current collective agreement because of the way lab hours were going to be counted (1 lab hour = ½ hour of classroom teaching) and because faculty were no longer going to receive teaching credit for lab courses that they ‘supervised’ but which they did not themselves teach. Overall, however, most members thought the deal was a good one and approximately 75% of voting members voted in favour.

**Soon after this new agreement was reached**, the Employer announced a “pause” in faculty hires to determine which hires were both reasonable and sustainable. We will not know the results of this pause for a few weeks yet. CBU is suffering from a decreasing number of high school graduates – and a declining population in general – in our traditional catchment area. Hence, even with a dramatic increase of international students in the past 4-5 years -- ~ 30% of our current enrollment – we are still looking at a possible decrease in our overall enrollment. The last 5 months or so of our new President’s regime has seen an intense discussion of where we should go in the future and how many international students we should have. It seems clear that part of the President’s strategy going into the future will be to see a further increase in international students.

-SS

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### **Université Sainte-Anne Report**

*Daniel Long, vice-président*

**Au début du mois de juin 2013**, l’APPBUSA et l’administration de l’Université Sainte-Anne ont amorcé les négociations en vue de renouveler leur convention collective, qui était échue depuis un an. Au bout de trois semaines de pourparlers, les deux parties en sont arrivées à une entente, qui a été signée le 13 septembre. Il s’agit d’une convention collective d’une durée de quatre ans qui arrivera à échéance le 30 juin 2016. Tout le processus qui a mené à cet accord peut donc être qualifié de rapide et d’efficace.

En outre, le comité de négociation estime que les deux parties ont agi de bonne foi, ce qui a sans aucun doute contribué au bon déroulement des négociations.

Grâce à cette entente, **l'APPBUSA a obtenu un certain nombre de gains**, notamment en ce qui a trait aux salaires, aux contributions au régime de retraite, au traitement durant les congés sabbatiques, aux contrats à terme fixe et à l'allocation professionnelle. Pour ce qui est des salaires, les professeur.e.s et bibliothécaires ont reçu les augmentations suivantes :

<i>Année</i>	<i>Salaire</i>	<i>Progression dans les rangs</i>
2012-2013	1,5 %	1,5 %
2013-2014	1,75 %	1,75 %
2014-2015	2,5 %	2,5 %
2015-2016	3,5 %	3,5 %

Les contributions au régime de pension, elles, passent de 10,5 % à 8,5 % pour la durée de la convention collective 2012-2016. De plus, l'APPBUSA et l'administration ont signé un **protocole d'entente** selon lequel le régime de retraite existant doit être examiné par un évaluateur/trice externe indépendante. Celui/celle-ci a pour tâches d'analyser les répercussions que les modifications à la loi « Pension Benefits » ont eues sur le régime de retraite, ainsi que le financement actuel et futur du régime et les changements qui pourraient être apportés à ce dernier. Cette procédure d'évaluation a été lancée en janvier 2014.

Par ailleurs, le traitement durant un congé sabbatique accordé à un membre de l'APPBUSA passe de 75 % à 80 % de son salaire.

En ce qui a trait aux contrats à terme fixe d'un seul trimestre, ceux-ci peuvent maintenant être prolongés à l'intérieur de la même année universitaire suite à une recommandation favorable formulée par le département concerné et le doyen.

Quant à l'allocation professionnelle versée à un

membre, elle passe de 750 \$ à 1000 \$ par an. Cette indemnité couvre les frais de voyage liés aux activités professionnelles, les cotisations aux sociétés savantes et aux organismes professionnels et les frais d'abonnement aux revues savantes. En outre, les départements recevront annuellement 150 \$ pour chacun de leurs membres qui perçoit l'allocation de 1000 \$. Enfin, le montant d'argent auquel a droit un membre du corps professoral pour l'achat de livres et de fournitures de bureau passe de 15 \$ à 20 \$ pour chaque crédit d'enseignement, jusqu'à concurrence de 360 \$.

Tout bien considéré, l'APPBUSA est satisfaite du déroulement des négociations et de l'entente qui a été conclue, **compte tenu de la conjoncture économique et politique** dans laquelle évoluent les universités de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

-DL

**Translation:** At the beginning of June 2013, APPBUSA and the Université Sainte-Anne's administration commenced bargaining with a view to renewing their collective agreement, which had expired a year prior. After three weeks of bargaining, the parties reached an agreement which was ratified September 13th. The collective agreement has a 4-year duration and expires on June 30th, 2016. The entire process that produced the agreement can be described as rapid and effective. Moreover, the bargaining committee feels that both parties acted in good faith, which no doubt contributed to a good bargaining process.

Thanks to this agreement, APPBUSA has made a certain number of gains, notably with respect to salary matters, retirement plan contributions, fixed-term contracts and professional development.

Salary-wise, professors and librarians received the following increases [see table].

Pension plan contributions declined from 10.5% to 8.5% for the duration of the collective agreement, 2012-2016. Additionally, APPBUSA and the administration signed a protocol agreement according to which the extant retirement plan must be exam-

ined by an external independent evaluator. The evaluator's task is to analyze the repercussions that modifications to the "Pension Law" have had on the retirement plan, along with the plan's current and future financing and changes that could be applied to the latter. The evaluation process began in January 2014.

Otherwise, the sabbatical pay given to an APPBUSA member has risen from 75% to 80% of his or her salary.

With respect to single-semester fixed-term contracts: they can now be extended within the same academic year, following a favourable recommendation from the department concerned and the dean.

Concerning the professional allowance provided to a member: it rose from \$750 to \$1000 annually. This compensation covers travelling costs associated with professional activities, membership fees for learned societies and professional organizations, and subscription fees for scholarly journals. Additionally, departments receive \$150 annually for every member who receives the \$1000 allowance. Lastly, the amount to which members of the professoriate are entitled for purchasing books and office furniture has increased from \$15 to \$20 per teaching credit, to a maximum of \$350.

All things considered, APPBUSA is satisfied with the bargaining process and with the agreement reached, given the economic and political conjuncture in which Nova Scotia's universities are evolving.

*(Translation by MF)*

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### **ASTFA Report**

*David MacLachlan, ASTFA Rep*

The AST Faculty Association proceeded through the past year with regular meetings and adjustments to positions on its executive such as a new secretary and a new ANSUT rep who continued to give regular updates on ANSUT's activities. The Association also began to work with electronic votes in the fall. This

was a new method of voting for us and it worked quite well.

**The first collective agreement with the School** expired on March 31 2013. There were relatively few and less contentious issues to be dealt with this time in negotiations with the administration. Still, negotiations were difficult through 2012-13 and there was a delay in bargaining through the first half of 2013. In the fall conciliation was needed and a strike vote was taken. Nevertheless, **a strike was avoided and the second three year agreement was ratified by early November 2013.** The salary adjustment for Faculty and Librarian members was modest with 1.0, 1.25, and 1.75% respectively for the three years of the agreement. Faculty and Librarian salaries were also increased for each step in the scales (we presently have two categories for librarians). Salaries, adequate professional staffing in our library and the library staff workload remain concerns for the Association.

This collective agreement also included the introduction of a Memorandum of Understanding by the administration as an appendix. The Memorandum allows higher course enrolments beyond the limit of 15 students for online and summer courses as stipulated in the collective agreement. This can only occur with the agreement of the professor and includes compensation in the form of a course release. If numbers in the course reach 25, additional compensation applies or the faculty member may opt to have a teaching assistant provided. The Memorandum expires in 2016. The Association is concerned about the teaching integrity and the pedagogical standards in our courses and will monitor carefully how this aspect of the relationship with the administration proceeds over the life of the agreement.

*-DM*

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### **StFXAUT Report**

*Peter McInnis, StFXAUT President*

Currently, the StFXAUT faces a major issue in the form of a "**Program Prioritization Process**" (PPP) closely modeled on U.S. education consultation Rob-

ert C. Dickeson's template in his *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*.

Our university calls its effort "Presidential Task Force: Sustaining the Academic Priorities at StFX, 2013-2018". It compels all academic departments to identify their "programs", complete a 37-page online report with the ultimate goal of ranking everything in five quintiles, with the bottom 20% being subject to unspecified cuts. Similar exercises have been imposed on faculty and staff at several Ontario universities—Brock, Laurier, and Guelph—and at the University of Saskatoon in Saskatchewan.

**The idea that PSE can be understood and assessed through crude quantitative metrics** is a direct attack on collegial governance and academic freedom. It's also a huge, and hugely expensive, waste of time. Critiques of this Dickeson-style PPP have emerged from faculty associations nationally, and the CAUT has also started to establish a response to this ongoing threat. StFx, meanwhile, enjoys the dubious accomplishment of being the first university in the Atlantic Region to adopt the Dickeson approach.

StFXAUT sent financial support and several representatives as CAUT flying/driving pickets to the faculty strikes in New Brunswick in support of our colleagues at UNB (AUNBT) and Mount Allison (MAFA). We feel that AUNBT's and MAFA's efforts to resist the imposition of Final Offer Selection Arbitration are critical to ensuring constructive collective bargaining in the region as well as nationally.

We are now mid-contract. StFXAUT is working to ensure that future Executive Committees are prepared to **deal with issues like Final Offer Selection Arbitration and PPP-style measures** as well as more routine matters in the Collective Agreement. We will be taking on an Administrative Assistant in the spring and look to augment our skill bases and available contact hours with this new hiring.

**Senior administration at StFX** has seen extensive turnover. Whether this is a ramification of our January-February 2013 strike is debatable, but we wel-

come the opportunity for change in a university that has embraced a highly corporatized management style unsuited to PSE in Canada. In our experience, the need for a strong faculty association has never been more evident. Our association, along with CAUT and ANSUT, **remains committed to protecting the fundamental principles** that establish the university as a centre for teaching and research—unfettered by the encroachments of those who would radically alter this traditional mission.

-PM

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### **FUNSCAD Report**

*Alvin Comiter*, FUNSCAD President

FUNSCAD has two bargaining units. Unit I represents Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time Faculty and Librarians. Unit II represents our Technical, Library and Gallery Staff.

Last year, **both bargaining units signed three year contracts** that run from January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2015. Three years of government funding cuts and great uncertainty about NSCAD's future were the background for two very difficult sets of negotiations. Both bargaining units went through lengthy rounds of conciliation and were hours away from strikes when agreements were finally reached.

Unit I successfully fought back the employer's attempts to close departments and lay-off tenured faculty, but ended up accepting minimal salary increases and a shrinking complement. Though we were able to secure minimum staffing levels in all of our teaching areas, faculty are not being replaced when they retire and over 60% of our classes are taught by contract academic staff.

**Regular Part-Time Faculty represent the majority of our members**, and over the last two rounds of bargaining we were able to focus on improvements for our part-timers. For example, we've successfully negotiated minimal health benefits for part-timers, greater transparency to the hiring process, and an increase to the per semester course limit.

For Unit II, we were able to secure some immediate protection against lay-offs - but only for the first year of the contract. Though we were able to negotiate increases to severance pay in the event of lay-offs, the threat of losing essential technical, library and gallery staff remains real. Unit II vacancies have been filled with part-time or temporary employees where full-time employees are required.

**Our entire senior administration is about to be replaced.** The Board is currently searching for a new President and a new Dean. A search for a new Vice-President Academic will take place next year.

The Board has hired consulting firms to do two studies: a space utilization study and a study on the possible financial benefits to affiliation with either Dalhousie or Saint Mary's. The Space study has recently been completed and it describes a variety of options for repairing buildings, selling buildings, and constructing buildings - all of which will require significant funds to accomplish. The Affiliation Study is long overdue and we're hoping to see it before the end of the semester. In addition, the Board has engaged a consulting firm to conduct a "Re-visioning" exercise. So many studies; so little money. What's clear is that the Board will have to take their fundraising responsibilities more seriously. And, we're hoping that the new government will recognize the value of Nova Scotia's only University specializing in Art, Craft and Design and make changes to the funding formula that will allow a small, specialized university with studio based programs and a 125 year proud history, to survive and thrive.

-AC

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## Communications Coordinator's Report

*Matthew Furlong*

March 1<sup>st</sup> marked my **fifth month with ANSUT**. The past months have been a crash course in the art of PSE advocacy - quite an eye-opener!



Since I haven't yet had an opportunity to introduce myself to the ANSUT membership as a whole, I'll

take the opportunity here: In July 2013 I completed a three-year term of full-time teaching in the Foundation Year Programme at the University of King's College here in Halifax. When I arrived back in Halifax in 2010 after seven years away, I was very quickly swept into a union drive at King's College, which led to our certification as the University of King's College Teachers' Association (UKCTA) in the spring of 2011. Between teaching and unionizing, I managed to complete my doctorate in philosophy at the University of Guelph, in May 2011.

During the 2011-12 academic year, I served as Chief Negotiator for our first round of collective bargaining. We ratified our first collective agreement in September of 2012 and I served as UKCTA President during my final year of teaching.

Nova Scotia is at an interesting juncture right now. In the face of demographic decline and economic stagnation, more voices can be heard posing the question: What is to be done? **The post-secondary education system is a crucial piece of the puzzle:** successive provincial governments have proclaimed, the PSE sector's social and economic importance to Nova Scotia. Most recently, Premier Stephen McNeil renewed that acknowledgment in remarking at an event in February that we need to start regarding our universities as assets rather than liabilities.

ANSUT's job, as I understand it, is to act as a public advocate for the PSE system. Its two chief tasks should be to 1) represent the university's mission to the public and 2) to shape policy and practice in the university, and in relation to the university. Times are tough: ballooning student debt, the growth of contingent academic labour, and the rise of administrative control are just three of the many problems we face. **The times are also interesting, however, which is a blessing of its own sort.**

I'm very pleased to work with ANSUT this time, and to help the cause of Nova Scotian PSE in whatever ways that I can. ANSUT members can feel free to contact me via the information provided on the newsletter's back page.

-MF

## **Upcoming Events**

- **29 March - ANSUT Council (10:00 AM; FUNSCAD Lounge, NSCAD, Granville Campus)**
- **17 May - ANSUT Annual General Meeting & Presidential Election**
- **13 June - Atlantic Canada Council of Faculty Associations Annual Meeting**

## **Members' Corner**

*ANSUT welcomes member contributions to our newsletter. Please submit opinion pieces, informative reports, photographs, and other items to ANSUT Vice-President Marc Lamoureux (marc.lamoureux@smu.ca).*

## **Contact**

**President: Dr. Chris Ferns, Mount Saint Vincent University**  
president@ansut.ca

**Communications Coordinator: Dr. Matthew Furlong**  
mfurlong@ansut.ca  
902-414-8578  
@ANSUT\_Tweets

**ANSUT Office: Evaristus Hall 425**  
166 Bedford Highway  
Halifax  
Nova Scotia B3M 2J6