

Faculty Matters

Views and News of Douglas

College Faculty Association Members

Number 2, Fall 2011

Workplace Changes

Sandra Hochstein ponders
Management's approach to "consultation"

Deceive, inveigle, obfuscate." *X-Files* fans will recognize this recurring tag-line from the series. When I joined the Faculty Association executive four years ago, I posted these words on the wall outside my office, as a "note-to-self" reminder of management's messaging tactics and their approach to decision-making.

Recently the college has made three important organizational decisions: to change the instructional matrix; to relocate the Child, Family and Community Studies (CFCS) faculty and programs to the David Lam Campus, effective September 2012; and to disband the Faculty of Developmental Education. That *X-Files* mantra rang in my ears as these changes unfolded.

Welcome to the Matrix

The new matrix configuration presented to the Senior Management team is deceitful. It refers to "event blocks" as though they will be times when faculty, students, staff, and administrators will be able to gather together to share a common experience and build the Douglas College spirit. It characterizes these new "event blocks" as being more family-friendly, more responsive to student scheduling needs, and more compliant with Collective Agreement provisions than the Matrix Committee's original recommendations and the current Monday/Wednesday 4:00-7:00pm slot. But the truth is that there is nothing community-building or family-friendly about event and meeting times scheduled for 8:30-11:30am Monday mornings, and 3:30-6:30pm Friday afternoons. The Faculty Association's proposed alternative – three two-hour blocks, scheduled in order to meet both the letter and spirit of our Collective Agreement – has not been entertained.

Moving CFCS

Despite the college's assertions to the contrary, and notwithstanding Blaine Jensen's statements in full-page interview in the late September issue of the *Other Press*, the faculty, staff, and students in Child, Family and Community Services were *not* consulted. The decision was made by Senior Management in isolation, without considering either any evidence or outside input.

In response to the Faculty Association's formal protest, Board Chair Paul Wates wrote that the Board's planned change policy did not apply in this case. Following the unexpected backlash

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The views expressed are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Association. Contributions are welcomed and can take almost any form: letters, articles, reports, reviews, announcements. All copy received will be edited for length, clarity, and/or stylistic conventions. Submissions should be accompanied by a digital file, either in a recent version of MS Word, or in RTF format.

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from students and faculty, the College agreed to allow currently-registered students to complete their program at the New Westminster campus, thereby inveigling current students to support the decision to relocate the program in the future.

Disbanding Developmental Ed.

Last year the college revived the unit review process by creating a new Program and Unit Review Policy. Vice-President Academic Kathy Denton implemented it by targeting four departments: Developmental Studies (DVST), English as a Second Language (EASL), Economics, and Political Science. But the fix was in from the start. The college used this policy to target EASL and DVST, while using the review of Economics and Political Science as a smoke-screen to obscure their real intentions. As a result, the Faculty of Developmental Education will disappear and the departments will be merged with Languages, Literature and Performing Arts, and Science and Technology. Was this unit review an exercise in obfuscation?

Deceive, inveigle, obfuscate. Mislead, entice, obscure. Is that the mantra now driving collegial governance at Douglas College? 

Making Lemonade:

Glen Stanger & Robin Wylie with the latest on Bargaining

We are now at the first anniversary of bargaining since opening in the fall of 2010, after the expiry of our agreement on 31 March 2010. While some progress has been made on process issues such as selections and workload allocation, we have still not got to any new substance, either working condition issues like chair and co-ordinator workloads, hybrid courses, personal harassment, or money. To add injury to insult College management intends to make a number of concession demands around lessening regularization and requiring mandatory performance evaluations for all faculty.

The provincial bargaining context is one where 70 percent of public sector union members have accepted the zero mandate for agreements ending in 2012. Most locals within the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators have now settled for the two years at zero, Kwantlen being the latest. Two have mined their agreements to pay benefits for faculty over age 65 and to pay for a two-year phased retirement plan by lessening regularization.

Back to the future

The Clark provincial government has stated that it plans to extend its zero mandate bargaining position into 2012-2013 by requiring that any salary increases be funded by "savings" within each sector. Program cuts and layoffs to fund salary increases will be the Clark government's solution to a fiscal problem created by Liberal tax cuts over the last decade. We are faced with a difficult situation that will require some tough decisions in 2012.

The Faculty Association's bargaining committee will, hopefully, fully canvas all of our issues with the administration's bargaining team by early next year – and hear out management's wish list for a more 'flexible' labour relations environment to pursue the strategic plan without investing in faculty, even to the extent of maintaining our purchasing power.

At that point, we will need to decide whether we want to conclude bargaining and sign off on whatever improvements both parties can agree to – or move to an impasse to hold a strike vote. Either decision will have to be

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Photo: JP Henry

The Solidarity Notes Labour Choir in full voice

Faculty Association AGM April 2011

More than 120 faculty members attended this year's DCFA AGM. Besides recognizing the unique contribution of staff member Lil Mair, and being serenaded by the Solidarity Notes Labour Choir (*see photo*), the topic of the day turned out to be the new electronic accountability form (*see "Faculty Issues"*).

Bargaining


Robin Wylie, VP Negotiations, reported that local bargaining was progressing on housekeeping issues, such as clarifying wording in parts of the Collective Agreement, but that substantive issues, such as compensation, were not yet being addressed. Robin predicted that once substantive discussions start the parties could quickly reach impasse, probably in late fall 2011. He recommended that faculty members make financial plans around the possibility of job action. Both Robin and Cindy Oliver, the president of Federation of Post-Secondary Educators, thought that the course of our bargaining will be influenced by the progress, or lack of it, of the Teacher's Federation bargaining.

Faculty

Sandra Hochstein, President of the Faculty Association, and Erin Rozman, the VP / Stewardship, both reported an increase over the past few months in the number of faculty issues that have not been resolved informally, and so

Lemonade ...

made with an eye to the next round of bargaining in the sector which will begin in the spring of 2012.

We will canvas faculty prior to the end of March 2012 to determine the focus for bargaining in 2012. 

Elections

Sandra Hochstein President
Erin Rozman VP Stewardship
John Fox Ombudsperson

are progressing to the formal grievance stage. Faculty who are experiencing a problem in the workplace were advised to begin by consulting Ombudsperson John Fox, in order to attempt an informal resolution of the problem. Keep in mind, however, that management imposes a timeline on these issues, so any formal process needs to be initiated within those time constraints.


The hot topic of the day was the new electronic accountability form that had just been issued to the Science and Technology faculty. This form is an electronic version of the paper form we currently use to record our Professional Development and Accountable Time activities during our non-teaching semesters. The electronic form, however, appears to require us to account for all of our professional activities during all three semesters. Furthermore, it does not allow us to report any work we do over the weekends. A great deal of concern was expressed by faculty members both about the idea of being micro-managed in this way, and about the problem of not being credited for the work we do on weekends.

Faculty Association operations

The time release committee reported increasing workloads for table officers, and accordingly recommended some

increases in time releases. The Executive Council, however, while recognizing that table officers are over-burdened, has decided for financial reasons not to add new sections of time release at present. Instead, a structural review committee has been formed to review Faculty Association operations to see whether they can be made more efficient. Among other possibilities, they will consider the advisability of hiring a professional with extensive experience in union work who could provide expertise and continuity as elected faculty come into new positions and face steep learning curves. The Structural Review Committee is to report out by the end of January 2012.

Finances

Glen Stanger, the Secretary Treasurer, reported a budget surplus and a roll-over budget from last year. He thanked Natasha Davidson, the previous Secretary Treasurer, for her work on the budget and for initiating the Faculty Association office renovations. These have now been completed – to general acclaim – and were completed under budget. Faculty are invited to come and admire the new improved workspace.... 

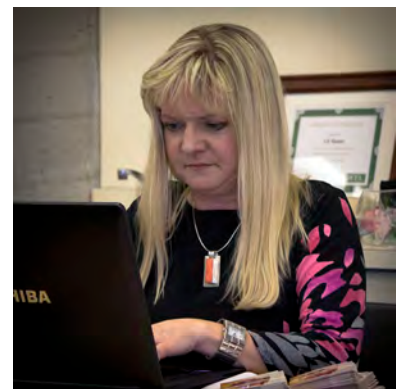


Photo: JP Henry

Staff member Lil Mairs

Goin' up to Rupert

Reports from the FPSE AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Post-Secondary Employees (FPSE) moves each year, and the most recent (in May 2011) was held in Prince Rupert. Faculty Association delegates were Natasha Davidson (Mathematics), Sandra Hochstein (Library), Jennifer Kirkey (Physics), Kathie Leroux (DVST), Chris Maguire (EASL), David Moulton (Marketing), Leda Rheume (EASL), Erin Rozman (Mathematics), Sarah Stephens (Computing Science), and Robin Wylie History).

Three key issues emerged at the convention – strike pay, pensions, and bargaining, the latter with special reference to the new Teaching Universities.

Raising strike pay

After the difficult experience of the strike by Vancouver Island University faculty in Nanaimo, the Federation has raised strike pay from \$40 *per FTE per day*, to \$60; and strike pay will begin on day four, instead of on day six, as in the past.

Pension Index

The Pension Committee reported that, beginning in 2011, the pension index will be capped at an inflation rate of 1.83 percent. It was noted that the current inflation rate is over 2 percent.

Bargaining Policy

The convention ratified a policy document to guide bargaining at the Special Purpose Teaching Universities; the goal will be to maintain equity among faculty. There was also a discussion on the need to safeguard the teaching mandate of the Special Purpose Teaching Universities, to prevent it from being eroded in favour of research.

The convention also took up a number of other topics, of which the following is a partial list.

- ❑ Discussion on the need to improve apprenticeship training.

- ❑ *Connecting the Dots: Stronger Advocacy* – this is the FPSE initiative to foster alliances with other groups with interests in post-secondary education, and to strengthen member activism.

- ❑ *Governance Action Plan* – the goal here is to raise faculty awareness about governance rights and management attempts to erode such rights.

- ❑ The Educational Policy Committee has produced a report on changes in learning environments due to new uses of communications technology. FPSE will be holding a forum on this topic.

- ❑ The budget was modestly raised for union projects in developing countries organized by the Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee.

- ❑ FPSE will develop a workshop on health and safety concerns in post-secondary environments.

Robin Wylie,

The FPSE experience

At last year's AGM, Sheldon Clare from the College of New Caledonia spoke about why we should go to Prince Rupert in 2011. While he admitted that it might be more expensive, he invited members to explore the communities where we work, arguing that it was important to understand the people in those communities. The Douglas Faculty Association sent ten of us, and our experience of Prince Rupert was both engaging and memorable. It was a privilege to get to know people from other locals, and also for us to get to know one another. I think this kind of rapport is important for working together in the days ahead. For those members who have not experienced a FPSE AGM, I encourage and invite you to attend one because they offer so many rewarding experiences, and also because your contributions can make a significant difference.

Sandra Hochstein

Academic Governance

At the workshop on Academic Governance and Collective Agreements, it was revealing to hear about the differences (and similarities) between Education Councils at the Colleges and Senates at the new teaching universities. Frank Cosco of Vancouver Community College presented an overview, and Terri Van Steinberg of Kwantlen related some of her experiences during the transition from Education Council to Senate. The transition seems to be a vulnerable time when the administration will attempt to maximize their control, for example by impressing new faculty members on Senate that they are not there as representatives of their faculty constituents but for the good of the institution.

In the workshop, we discussed various approaches to ensuring that faculty who are members of these bodies can increase their effectiveness. We talked about creating orientation materials of our own for faculty representatives, and working to build confidence in matters such as the rules of order. The speakers agreed that many students who are selected as representatives tend to side with the administration rather than with the faculty, and we discussed whether there are any approaches that might help faculty work more closely with student representatives.

Sarah Stevens

I attended the Governance session and what I came away with is the need for faculty to maintain a two-front approach to college governance, that is, not only through collective bargaining, but as well through existing governance structures at the college – Faculty education committees, Education Council, the Deans, and so on. Despite all the negative issues we're facing in collective bargaining, it's important to remember that we are here for the students. At times all of us (faculty, staff and administration) have a tendency to look inward when we must remind ourselves that "All of our work is for the students."

David Moulton