
FAUST *news and views*

<http://www.caut.ca/faust>

"Teaching, Research and Service for the Integrity of the University"

April 4, 2007

A word from the President...

As the end of classes approaches, we are pleased to present the fourth and final issue of FAUST News and Views for the 2006-2007 academic year. My thanks to Julia Torrie, Robin Vose, and David Ingham for their informative and thought provoking articles. Thanks as well to Anita Saunders for her high quality work on the layout of the newsletter. Although this is the final issue for this academic year, you will continue to hear from the Executive and Negotiating Team in a series of Bargaining Bulletins. Through these bulletins, we will keep the membership fully informed about progress at the negotiating table.

I have been asked what members can do to support the Union as negotiations move forward. It is important that members stay informed and firm in their resolve. Read the upcoming Bargaining Bulletins, attend meetings, ask questions, and engage in the dialogue among members, the Executive, and Negotiating Team. It is also important to reassert your support in increasingly formal ways for the bargaining priorities and mandate of the Negotiating Team that the membership unanimously endorsed at the February 16, 2007 general membership meeting. And always remember our bargaining slogan: Respect ⇔ Excellence.

Finally, as this is my last address to you in this forum as FAUST president, I would like to offer a few reflections. This has been one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences of my academic career and I am grateful to the membership for this opportunity and for your support. It has been extremely gratifying for me to see FAUST go from strength to strength. We continue to have every reason to be proud and optimistic about the future. We are all very fortunate in the leadership and integrity of the new FAUST Executive who will lead us forward. Although we will face challenges of various kinds, we have shown that there is nothing that we cannot overcome when we act as a union. Together we can assert our rights to improve our working conditions and the quality of education and research at STU.

Thank you FAUST!

*In solidarity,
Suzanne Prior,
President*

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

RESPECT ⇔ EXCELLENCE

The ambivalence of “Anticipated Declining Enrollment”

Robin Vose, FAUST Treasurer

We’ve all heard about it in one form or another. Like GWB’s WMD, we should perhaps start using an acronym to describe this slippery phenomenon. Let’s call it DE... or perhaps better ADE (“*Anticipated Declining Enrollment*”) since it doesn’t really exist yet. But what does this ominous little catch-phrase really mean for STU and its professors? Let’s put one of our marketing slogans into practice and “think for ourselves”.

First, we must consider precisely what ADE actually describes. How serious a decline are we talking about? Well, that all depends on how you spin the issue. The specter of looming Maritime demographic collapse (does this sound familiar to anyone?) and imminent related crises in higher education have certainly been invoked in recent weeks—via media coverage of the PSE commission, for example, and in various discussions on campus as FAUST enters its new round of Collective Bargaining. The parameters are usually vague, and the predictions of disaster do not go beyond generalized utterances of fear that ADE might *somehow* have negative effects on STU at *some point* down the line. Yet when presenting an outlook to the NB Self-Sufficiency Task Force, STU’s record (including enrollment that “has tripled since the 1970s”) is presented by senior administrators as “*the greatest success story in post-secondary education in New Brunswick.*”¹ For the Board of Governors, it seems that if anything a certain amount of ADE at STU is a *good thing*. For although “the University became concerned about excessive enrolment growth after large increases... placed significant pressures on teaching resources and physical facilities... the declining number of graduates from high schools in the Maritime Provinces has facilitated the decrease in the entering class and prevented the University’s total enrollment moving beyond the range of 2400 to 2800 full-time students.”²

Obviously, then, the ADE tune can be played

differently for different crowds. What about reality? How much has our enrollment really declined over the last few years? Well, of course it hasn’t; we have consistently experienced rising enrollment at STU for over a decade. This has resulted in artificially (alarmingly!) high student numbers and extraordinary revenues for the University. If a decline was experienced this year and last, it has only brought us *back* from excess to peak capacity, well within our “ideal range” of 2400-2800 FTEs.³ To be precise, from FTEs well below 2000 in the 1990s, we peaked at 2860 in 2004-5. Reliable statistics are still lacking for the most recent years, but 2960 FTEs were budgeted for 2005-6, 2875 for 2006-7 and 2850 per year for 2007-9. So it seems that even losing 400 or more students (1/7 of our current complement, or about 14.3%) in the coming decades would still leave us well within the “ideal” range. In other words, we are starting at the very top of our game, with plenty of room to absorb possible drops in enrollment over time.

Now, demographic projections do indeed suggest that there will be a long-term decline in Maritime high school graduation numbers (13% from 2005-2014 is the projection for NB alone—see *Report* p. 3) if current trends continue unaltered. That is a concern, but not a disaster, if we can afford to lose over 14.3% of our current numbers. It is a *manageable* challenge, and it is recognized as such by the President’s Advisory Committee and the BoG:

As indicated in last year’s report, the focus of enrolment management must now shift to stabilizing the entering class size at a level that will maintain total enrolments within the planned enrolment range... the University will need to give extensive consideration to its recruitment efforts during this period of decrease in the traditional pool of students... additional expenditures for recruitment and promotion must be viewed as an investment (*Report* p. 3).

It is of course sensible to plan for this ADE contingency. Investing money in recruitment and promotion is a good step to take; after all, it is fairly easy to offset the loss of a few scores of students from

¹ *STU presentation to the Self-Sufficiency Task Force*, March 18, 2007, pp. 3-4. Full text available online via <http://w3.stu.ca/stu/media/news.aspx?id=1685&returnId=48>

² *Report of the President’s Advisory Committee on the Budget for the 2006-2007 Fiscal Year* as approved by the BoG on May 8, 2006, pp. 2-3. Unless otherwise indicated, all information in this article is taken from this official administrative document, cited as *Report*.

³ Full-Time Equivalents—yet another popular acronym! See *Report* p. 3.

Maritime high school populations if STU can continue to expand its profile among booming populations throughout Canada and beyond. Indeed, it has been pointed out that successfully attracting students from other regions to STU could play an important part in helping to reverse negative demographic trends in the province.⁴ But this will not happen as a result of simply investing money in marketing strategies. Consumers of higher education have many choices, and they will not invest themselves or their money in a university on the strength of its glossy brochures alone. Investment in *quality of programming* at STU, beginning first and foremost with investment in its teaching staff, is absolutely essential to success here—as always.

Will enrollment decline over the next decade or three? Perhaps. Probably not to any disastrous extent, and certainly the ADE challenge is much less serious for traditionally over-enrolled STU than for some other Maritime universities. In any case, it is important to realize that the extent to which we *actually* experience ADE is only partly contingent on local demographics. It will be much more a function of the overall quality of the educational experience STU can offer. In order to invest in that essential ingredient, resources must be invested in the university's most vital asset, the asset which made STU the great success story it is today: its *professors*.

⁴ STU presentation to the Self-Sufficiency Task Force p. 5.

The Trouble with Course Releases

Julia Torrie, FAUST Secretary

Most FAUST members will be aware that one of the major gains in our last round of negotiations was an augmentation in the number of course releases available to faculty members. While the increase from a pool of four three credit-hour course releases to 40 was a significant improvement, we still have a long way to go. The trouble with course releases awarded on a case-by-case basis is that they do not afford us the kind of on-going, guaranteed reduction in teaching load that is necessary for us to devote essential time to other parts of our professional lives.

It's not that we don't want to teach. Teaching, research and service are the three parts of an academic job, and each feeds the others. University-level educators must be researchers or they can not be proper teachers. One of the crucial differences between a student's experience at high school and his or her experience at university is the chance to be exposed to cutting-edge knowledge as it is formed. The STU administration recognizes that students at the university are paying for something more than a high school education, yet it does not provide for faculty research adequately under the current Collective Agreement. Some faculty members win course releases – others do not, yet they are still expected to do research. They do it at the expense of their families, their health, their lives.

In order to devote appropriate time to research and other professional obligations, a real reduction in our teaching load is essential. Needing to apply for a

small number of selectively granted course releases is counter-productive. Complicated procedures actively discourage applicants, and the aleatory nature of the current system is problematic on many levels. For example, rather than fostering research among those who most need support, course releases tend to reward those who have already produced significant publications, or are coming to the end of a large research project. Faculty members just beginning a research project may decide not to apply because their chances of success are slim. The unpredictable course release system also makes it difficult to apply for grant money to support research to be conducting during a release period. What would one do if the release were to be denied?

The rules regarding course releases at STU are unclear, and some of them are ridiculous. Consider the fact that course releases are not granted if one is already taking a half-sabbatical in the same year.¹ Would a course release not be essential in that year, in order to prepare for and then make full use of the sabbatical already granted?

The “freedom” to apply for course releases also varies across departments. Some departments are very supportive of their members' research agendas, while other departments actively discourage course release

¹The policy that “No course releases will be available during the academic year when faculty are taking a half sabbatical” may be found at http://w3.stu.ca/stu/administrative/research/funding/content/course_release_application_procedure.pdf.

applications because of concerns about staffing and the fulfillment of teaching obligations. The present system encourages us to see research as a burden on other members of a department, rather than an enrichment to the university and beyond. Since the final approval of course releases lies in the hands of the administration, the course release system favours the employer's objectives, and not those of FAUST members. Over time, such a scheme risks creating a two-tiered university in which some faculty members are "researchers" while others are "teachers."

One could go on. Clearly, a reduction in teaching load across the board would enable greater productivity, be easier to administer, and quite simply fairer to everyone concerned. Reductions in course load have been at the forefront of negotiations for every faculty association in Canada. The present course load at STU is the highest allowable load in the country, and it is clear that without a reduction, our university will face serious recruitment and retention problems. The 2005 increase in the course release pool was a step in the right direction, but what we really need is 3:2.

FAUST Representatives	
Name	Area
Mary Lou Babineau	EC1
Cecilia Francis	EC2
Jonathan Rahn	EC3
Wendy Bourque	BMH1
Norma Jean Profitt	BMH3
Michael Fleming	BMH4
Rodger Wilkie	HCHG
Kathleen McConnell	HCH1&2
Debbie van den Hoonaard	MMH3
James Whitehead	MMH4

Offices? What Offices?
David Ingham, FAUST Part-time Representative

In spite of an explicit promise from the Administration that the opening of McCain Hall would result in office space for part-timers, it appears that little or nothing has been done. If you're a part-timer, you already know that (unless you're fortunate enough to have a full-timer generously share her or his office) we have to make do with "common" (*not* "shared") space. There is no place



to see students confidentially or without disrupting the others in the common area, no desk to call your own, no computer to call your own (so no "desktop", no "favourites" - *all* files and settings saved to the C: drive are automatically deleted on restarting), no bookshelves, and one measly drawer in a filing cabinet - and part-timers can have more students than full-timers. The total of this "common work

space" amounts to three offices, each about the size of two or three "regular" offices, which must be shared among the 55 unionized and 42 non-union part-timers at STU.

So how does this compare with other universities? It's arguably better than at UNB, where part-timers aren't unionized: there office space is at the whim of departments. But *all* the unionized part-timers elsewhere in the Maritimes have "shared office space" (not just common work space); in Ontario and Quebec, part-timers are treated *much* better, even at Community Colleges.

Incidentally, an e-mail this fall to a member of the committee that supposedly handles office space allocation produced the reply that "if and when space is available" (um, aren't there going to be offices in McCain?), there is "a policy" to determine "which part-time faculty members (if any) will be assigned offices."

How reassuring.

Women in Academia: A Report on the CAUT Women's Conference

Julia Torrie, FAUST Secretary

In late February, I attended the CAUT Biennial Women's Conference in Ottawa. The conference provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about equity in academia, and to think about how to address women's issues more specifically.

Overall, women represent nearly half the labour force in Canada. However at universities, like many other workplaces, real equality is illusory. In 2003, women made up slightly less than two-thirds of full-time university teachers.⁴ Typically, these women were in the lower ranks of the professoriate. Women make up a disproportionate number of part-time faculty, 41% percent of assistant professors, but just 18% of full professors in Canada. This is a greater number than in Britain or New Zealand, yet less than in the United States, where women make up roughly a quarter of faculty at the highest academic rank in both public and private institutions. The overall small number of women at the highest academic ranks in Canada translates to a corresponding lack of women as deans, academic vice-presidents and university presidents. And it is not just a question of rank and prestige, of course – perhaps most shocking of all is the fact that in all subject areas combined, faculty women's salaries are just 87% of those of men.

Clearly, something needs to be done. A unionized environment with a strong collective agreement is one way to protect the interests of all faculty – women, certainly, but also visible and other minorities. Properly crafted collective agreements help ensure that all faculty members are treated equally. But some issues are bigger than that, and need to be addressed at the national level and beyond. CAUT Women's Conference participants were asked to consider why, for instance, there are so few women in the highest ranks of Canadian academia when 61% of Bachelor's degrees go to female graduates. Somehow, the percentage of women graduates decreases to just 42% by the time students reach the Ph.D. What can we do to repair these losses? Part of the problem is that the major early milestones in an academic career correspond with the years in which many young

people settle down with a life partner and perhaps start a family. If we want more young women to consider an academic career, we must advocate for the maintenance and extension of existing supports such as parental leaves, and for real advances in terms of availability of quality daycare, ideally through a universal, government-funded childcare system. Such a system would support not only faculty, but also students, making the path to the doctorate and beyond much more manageable for women especially.

The burdens not just of child care, but also the care of elderly parents and other dependent family members fall disproportionately on women. Perhaps ironically, the desire for equity (to have a representative woman on each university committee, for instance) in fact creates more work for the few women there are in academic environments. Female faculty members provide role models for future generations, but that means that they are sought out as supervisors and sometimes end up taking on more than their fair share of advising and mentoring duties. Recognition of these imbalances, which go far beyond simple statistics, is important as we think about ways to move ahead. The CAUT Women's Conference, which takes place every two years, is an excellent forum for thinking about and addressing these issues.

News


On March 13th 2007, the FAUST Executive passed the following motions about pension benefits and same-sex couples:

Motion: that a letter to the Minister of Justice and Consumer Affairs be written regarding the definition of spouse and pension benefits.

Motion: that the need to be sure that all benefits are extended to same-sex partners be communicated to the chief negotiator.

⁴ All figures from the 2006 CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education and the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences Feminist and Equity Audit 2006.

Mark your Calendar!



The FAUST
End-of-Term Party

5 April
3:30 p.m.

BMH Rotunda

The next FAUST General Meeting

20 April
3:30 p.m.
James Dunn G 1

FAUST News & Views...

...is intended to inform you, the members, about FAUST activities. It is published by the FAUST Executive. The editors of the bulletin, under the direction of the FAUST Executive, take responsibility for the contents of the FAUST bulletin. The opinions expressed in authored articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors. **Letters, articles and suggestions from FAUST members are welcomed,** and should be sent to Julia Torrie (jtorrie@stu.ca) or Robin Vose (rvose@stu.ca). Please be aware that we will not consider anonymous material for publication. Under special circumstances, the FAUST bulletin may agree to withhold the author's name. The editorial board reserves the right to edit and/or reject contributed material.

Effective June 1, 2007
the new FAUST Executive will be:

Suzanne Dudziak - President
Craig Proulx - Vice-President
Julia Torrie - Secretary
Luc Walhain - Treasurer
David Ingham - Part-Time Representative
Dawn Morgan - Member at Large
Suzanne Prior - Past-President