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# FAUST *news and views*

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

*“Teaching, Research and Service for the Integrity of the University”*

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February 14, 2007

## **A word from the President...**

*As we present the third issue of FAUST News and Views for the 2006-2007 academic year, we find ourselves at an exciting time and indeed at the moment we've been preparing and planning for since the current collective agreements were signed: Collective Bargaining! As members are aware, the administration gave notice of their desire to renegotiate the part-time and full-time collective agreements on February 2, 2007. Within twenty days of notification by either party to the collective agreements, negotiations begin and we see all of our hard work on preparations taking life at the bargaining table.*

*With impending negotiations in mind, we decided to dedicate this issue of FAUST News and Views to further information about collective bargaining, including a summary of Peter Simpson's (Assistant Executive Director, CAUT) recent presentation. We also present a discussion of a matter that is always important during negotiations, salary and wage parity. I am grateful to Julia Torrie, Robin Vose, and Anita Saunders for their continued high quality contributions to the newsletter. On behalf of the Executive, I would also like to extend sincere thanks to the FAUST negotiating team (Nancy Higgins, Moira McLaughlin, Michael Boudreau) and to the numerous volunteers who have worked so hard on the back-up teams. The reports that are coming in from the back-up groups are thoroughly researched and organized – in a word, superb! It is very gratifying to witness first hand the collective efforts of FAUST members and your dedication to fostering excellence in teaching, research, and service through the collective bargaining process. Way to go FAUST!*

*In solidarity,  
Suzanne Prior,  
President*

## **The National Picture**

*A summary by Peter Simpson (Assistant Executive Director, CAUT) of the presentation he gave to the FAUST membership, 19 January 2007*

The goal of the presentation was to identify what might be relevant for FAUST from a national perspective as it prepares for collective bargaining. In effect, there are three things that may have implications for negotiations here that are patterns in bargaining elsewhere: employers behaving more and more like corporations, and introducing a sort of brinkmanship to collective bargaining; radical

employer proposals at the bargaining table that, if implemented, would alter the character of academic practices; and the importance of a fully-informed and fully-mobilized membership.

The brinkmanship is a sharpening of what used to be called 'hard bargaining': employers digging in their heels around items on the table (often monetary)

and refusing to move. Now we are seeing more and more that employers are refusing to meet at the table, refusing to move from very aggressive proposals, and indeed calling for conciliation – testing, in many respects, the resolve of faculty associations in the face of a more adversarial approach than we are accustomed to. The likely source of this is the increasingly hands-on approach taken by boards of governors, and the corporate figures on those boards. The hegemony of corporate-minded board members has often coincided with the appointment of human resources personnel, often at a senior administrative level.

As a part of this brinksmanship, employers are tabling increasingly dramatic demands in collective bargaining, and maintaining that these proposals are both serious and winnable in negotiations. Examples include the introduction of teaching-only streams, the use of external referees for all tenure and promotion decisions, and the introduction of productivity targets in the annual performance reviews most faculty already face. In almost all cases, well-mobilized associations have been able to resist these proposals, and in fact have relied on them to mobilize faculty. But employers are becoming increasingly shameless about the things that are put on the table.

All of which leads to the need to have associations prepared, from the outset, to demonstrate support for the bargaining mandate they have given their

executives and bargaining teams. It is important for associations to keep members informed on all levels, and to share with the membership the employer's positions. It is also crucial that the association membership be ready to reiterate in a formal way its support for its mandate and team, and its rejection of employer demands. This form of reiteration includes strike votes, which are the clearest and most unequivocal expressions of the solidarity of the membership behind its positions at the table. In the past year, strike votes has been overwhelmingly successful across the country in turning negotiations around, and the votes have passed with high percentages at a number of campuses where such votes themselves might have been unthinkable a few years ago. More and more, employers want to test the resolve of associations, and it is important to know that going in to negotiations, and to be prepared to respond in the ways permissible under labour relations legislation.

May this be a successful round of bargaining for the association, and please rely on us whenever we might be of assistance!

In solidarity,

Peter Simpson  
Assistant Executive Director  
Canadian Association of University  
Teachers/CAUT

## **Wages, parity and respect at STU**

*Robin Vose*

Wages are inevitably part of collective bargaining between employees and their employers, including FAUST and STU. Professors have not only a right to expect equitable pay for their extraordinary levels of training and service; their salaries must be negotiated in full consideration of national and even international norms. This is a question of basic respect, but it is also a matter of fairness and of remaining competitive in pursuit of excellence as a university.

For many of us, scholarly work is a labour of love—and it's a good thing, since professorial wages can be shockingly low when compared to similarly

highly-educated and internationally-recruited professionals in other sectors. This is especially true when one considers the long-term impact of lost income and accumulated debt over the many years we spend in graduate school. Of course, the situation is even worse for professors employed on unreliable part-time or limited-term contracts. Yet no matter how much we love our work there is no reason why we should be expected to forego fair monetary compensation according to the norms of our profession.

A recent study of university salaries by Statistics Canada should serve as a sobering warning to the STU community. Out of 59 Canadian universities surveyed in 2004-5, Saint Thomas ranked third to last in terms of overall average and median salaries (only Trinity Western and University of Cape Breton had lower overall salaries than STU). When it came to our most numerous cohort of professors, we were *dead last* regionally—with only Trinity Western, Concordia and Winnipeg registering lower average and median salaries for Assistant professors. It is important to note that our close colleagues at regional universities such as UNB and Moncton all earned average salaries exceeding those paid at STU by a significant amount (15-25%). Salaries at larger institutions and in larger cities were generally even higher.

Bargaining surveys of STU faculty have revealed that we understand the need to move toward redressing these imbalances. In the past, wage parity among regional universities was a goal. It remains critical that we obtain such parity, but that target is no longer enough. Today we must consider our low levels of overall remuneration in a national context. Maritime

universities should not become a destination of last resort, or a mere first step in faculty careers. Instead we should proudly build upon the excellence we have already achieved, negotiating competitive wages and other benefits to help attract and retain the very best faculty. Fair wages must be taken into consideration as we move forward toward a new round of collective agreement negotiations.

Complete study available as catalogue no. 81-595-MIE (“Salaries and Salary Scales of Full-time Teaching Staff at Canadian Universities, 2004/2005: Final Report”) at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)



A woman giving a thumbs up, wearing a pin that says 'FAUST 30 Years Strong'.



## Frequently Asked Questions about Collective Bargaining and Negotiations

Julia Torrie

### ***What is collective bargaining?***

Collective bargaining is the relationship (or framework) between employers and employees within which negotiations occur concerning terms and conditions of employment. Rather than each employee negotiating wages, hours, and other working conditions independently, representatives of both groups meet to discuss and agree on such issues. Negotiating collectively allows employees to neutralize the power differential between themselves and their employer. At the beginning of the bargaining process, each side brings a set of proposals (bargaining priorities) to the negotiating table. These are then discussed and sometimes modified over a period of several weeks, or months, until compromise positions can be reached.

### ***What are FAUST's bargaining priorities and how are they determined?***

Bargaining priorities are the main proposals that each side brings to the negotiating table. FAUST's bargaining priorities are determined through a process that begins at least a year before the onset of collective bargaining. Members are first surveyed about the items they would like to see appear on a formal survey of bargaining priorities. The bargaining survey is then developed, filled out, and the results compiled. After that, the negotiating team consults with departments and other groups of faculty members (for instance, part-time faculty specifically) to determine additional priorities. Some priorities may be brought forward by the negotiators themselves or the FAUST Executive, whose intimate knowledge of the collective agreement allows them to identify unclear or problematic clauses that need renegotiation and clarification. The FAUST membership is consulted repeatedly as the bargaining priorities are developed, and is asked to endorse them at a general meeting just prior to the beginning of negotiations with the employer. For the current round of negotiations, this meeting will take place 16 February, 2006.

### ***In addition to determining the bargaining priorities, what else does FAUST do to prepare for negotiations?***

Having a trained, experienced and effective negotiating team is crucial for successful negotiations. The FAUST Executive has appointed the following team: Nancy Higgins (Chief Negotiator), Moira McLaughlin (Part-time Representative) and Michael Boudreau (Full-time Representative). Both Nancy Higgins and Moira McLaughlin have been through negotiations before, and all three members of the team have received extensive training from CAUT. Their work is supported by 11 back-up teams of volunteers, who have researched individual clauses of the collective agreement, obtained comparative data from universities across Canada, and compiled this background information so that it will be available to assist in negotiations. A job action committee has also been formed so that FAUST will be prepared for job action if necessary.

### ***What can I, as a FAUST member, do to get ready for negotiations?***

The chances are, you have already participated in the development of FAUST's bargaining priorities by completing the on-line survey last summer, and attending one of the consultation meetings with the negotiating team this fall. Your attendance at FAUST membership meetings is another way to be involved, and many faculty members have also been part of the back-up teams investigating particular clauses of the collective agreement. As negotiations begin, and while they are on-going, the negotiators will need your full support. Although, for strategic reasons, you may not hear about every single thing that transpires at the bargaining table, you will be informed of major developments. An informed, engaged membership that gives strong support to the negotiators will help obtain gains for everyone at the table.

*The responses above are based on information from the CAUT Collective Bargaining Manual. For further information about collective bargaining, refer also to the November 2006 issue of FAUST News & Views.*

## Report on the Independent Discussion Electronic List

Dawn Morgan

*At the General Membership meeting of 15 Sept. 2006, the Executive informed the membership that they were no longer willing to host the FAUST-L list due to liability issues. A motion, "that FAUST-L be shut down immediately," was passed. In addition, the membership also passed a motion "that the executive create an ad hoc sub-committee to look into a more appropriate form of electronic communication amongst the membership and report back at the earliest possible moment." The report of this committee follows:*

At the general membership meeting in October 2006, Bill Patrick (Social Work) and I (Dawn Morgan, English) spoke in favour of an electronic discussion forum for FAUST members, particularly when collective bargaining is in process. The Executive asked us to explore the idea and report back with a recommendation, if possible, on the question.

Our immediate point of reference was the intense and informative debate that took place on the STU Faculty/Staff list on the Senate proposal for mid-term teaching assessment. That debate raised the questions of whether an additional and independent forum is needed and of what purpose it would serve. Would the discussion of the midterm assessment have continued if an independent forum were available? While we could readily imagine the need for an independent list to discuss that issue and others that may arise in the context of bargaining, such a list would require members to sign-in and agree to the terms of discussion, such as maintaining a civil and respectful tone.

We are uncertain whether FAUST members feel strongly enough about the need for an independent list to bother with locating the list on an independent server, where it could be readily "parked," and then going through sign-in procedures. Given the alternative venues now

available for members to discuss and debate issues, such as the newsletter, the floor "stewards," the increased frequency of general membership meetings, and the bargaining committee meetings with departments and programs, we believe that what is needed, first of all, is an indication from the membership about the need for an independent discussion list as well.

From our vantage point, which is more or less out in the wilderness of junior faculty-land, we see no evidence of a great demand. If any Faust members experience the need for an independent discussion list once bargaining commences this spring, however, we invite them to contact either Bill ([wpatrick@stu.ca](mailto:wpatrick@stu.ca)) or Dawn ([dmorgan@stu.ca](mailto:dmorgan@stu.ca)), and we will bring the issue once again to the attention of the Executive.

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 Hoonard	MMH3
James Whitehead	MMH4

### **In the News...**

- FAUST President Suzanne Prior has recently returned from the CAUT Presidents' Forum.
- Chief Negotiator Nancy Higgins was just at the CAUT Chief Negotiators' Forum.
- FAUST Secretary Julia Torrie will attend the CAUT Women's Conference in late February.
- FAUST now has an office, located in BMH 411.

### **The FAUST bulletin...**

...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](mailto:jtorrie@stu.ca)) or Robin Vose ([rvose@stu.ca](mailto: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.

### **Mark your Calendar!**

FAUST General Meetings

16 February

2 March

23 March (Annual Meeting)

20 April



***All meetings will be held at 3:30 pm in James Dunn G 1***