

FAUST *news and views*

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

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

September 12, 2006

A word from the President....

Welcome to the inaugural issue of FAUST News and Views for the 2006-2007 Academic Year! This newsletter is part of a series of initiatives by the Executive designed to facilitate communication with and among the membership. With this in mind, we decided to start with the basics: What is FAUST? We hope you find this issue informative and stimulating. My sincere thanks to Julia Torrie, Robin Vose, and Anita Saunders for their dedicated work on this issue!

We have an exciting year ahead and we have every reason to be optimistic and proud. The Executive is diligently preparing for collective bargaining. We are working hard towards strengthening and improving the Collective Agreements for the full-time and part-time bargaining units. We will continue to be vigilant and passionate about issues that affect the faculty and our working conditions. The Executive and all members of FAUST also have a reason to celebrate: FAUST is a strong and vibrant faculty union that has been in existence for nearly 30 years! Indeed, we will be celebrating our 30th Anniversary on November 23, 2006! Stay tuned for announcements about celebratory events!



*In solidarity,
Suzanne Prior,
President*

What is FAUST?

The Faculty Association of the University of St. Thomas (FAUST) is a certified trade union, as defined by the New Brunswick Industrial Relations Act. It represents both full-time and part-time faculty members who teach and research at St. Thomas University.

What does FAUST do?

FAUST represents its membership. It informs members of their rights, and uses both protective action and advocacy to promote their welfare and professional interests. FAUST listens to members' concerns, and fosters collective action toward the achievement of faculty members' goals.

Defense:

Perhaps the most important part of FAUST's defensive role involves negotiating with the university administration to obtain and preserve employment conditions. As a trade union, FAUST is the sole collective bargaining agent for its members. It negotiates both the part-time and full-time collective

agreements with the employer. Using these agreements, FAUST protects academic freedom and tenure, for instance, and monitors relations between its members and the administration. FAUST also has "carriage rights," making it the only body legally able to carry a grievance on behalf of a faculty member against the university administration.

Education and Advocacy:

FAUST tries to ensure that you understand your rights as a faculty member under the full-time or part-time collective agreement. New faculty orientation sessions, regular general meetings, etc., spread information to faculty members.

In its advocacy role, FAUST seeks to enhance conditions for education and research activities at STU and beyond. FAUST is affiliated with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations (FNBFA). It works with these organizations, as well as other associations of university teachers, to bring the concerns of the membership to the public eye.



A short history of FAUST:

- 1976: FAUST becomes a trade union representing full-time faculty at STU (Yes, 2006 is our 30th Anniversary Year!)
- 1984: FAUST's first "Action Committee" is formed "to increase pressure on administration to settle negotiations of Collective Agreement"
- 1985: Part-time faculty are certified as a bargaining unit
- 1998: Suzanne Prior, now FAUST President, is elected to the FAUST Executive for the first time
- 2005: after prolonged and difficult negotiations, FAUST signs our current collective agreements for full and part-time members
- 2005: FAUST action ensures that faculty have an input in the search for a new STU President



What is CAUT?

The CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers) is an umbrella organization representing most locally-organized Canadian academic unions at the national level. It was founded in 1951, and today represents about 55 000 teachers, librarians, researchers and other academic professionals. CAUT works to promote such goals as defending academic freedom and improving the quality and accessibility of post-secondary education, as well as improving professors' working conditions generally. The national office regularly communicates with government, the media and other coalitions to these ends. It also undertakes extensive research, runs training seminars, and publishes reports, newsletters, books and a monthly newspaper. It is thus an important resource for a small union such as FAUST. In its own words:

"CAUT advances equity and human rights within our profession. We fight for fair working conditions, compensation and benefits that foster quality teaching and innovative research. CAUT works for collegial institutional governance that is publicly accountable and gives the academic community its proper voice."

More information is available from their website at www.caut.ca

What is FNBFA?

The Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations / La fédération des associations de professeures et professeurs d'université du Nouveau-Brunswick is comprised of the six faculty associations which represent the professors, researchers and librarians who work at the seven campuses of this province's four publicly-funded universities : ABPPUM (U de M - Moncton); APPBUMCE (U de M - Edmundston); APPUMCS (U de M - Shippagan); AUNBT (UNB - Fredericton and Saint John); FAUST (St. Thomas); and MAFA (Mount Allison). The objects of the Federation are to promote the interests of teachers, librarians and researchers in the universities and colleges of New Brunswick, to advance the standards of their professions, and to seek to improve the quality of higher education in the province. In carrying out this mandate, the Federation is primarily involved in government lobbying and public relations activities."

What is a UNION?

Unions have a complicated and controversial history. Here is a quick summary of points that are relevant to us as unionized university professors.

University professors have ALWAYS existed in something of a "unionized" collective atmosphere. They first went on strike in 1229 at Paris. After that 2-year strike, labour disturbances continued to brew as administrators sought to reduce professors' collective power by bringing in "non-union" academic staff.

Fast-forward to the twentieth century, and modern unionization of workers in many trades. We all know why workers need unions—to protect them from arbitrary actions from employers, and to bargain for improved working conditions such as limited hours, better wages and benefits, in ways that are simply not feasible for individuals acting alone. By the 1970s university professors began to realize that they also needed to unionize in a modern way for these same reasons, though of course debates ensued over whether trade union organization was appropriate for "us" as white-collar professionals with a certain stake in managing our own workplace. These debates continue, but for the most part Canadian professors have voted to organize themselves in some sort of faculty union.



Mark your calendar!

FAUST

General Membership Meetings:

15 September (wine & cheese to follow)

13 October

3 November

17 November

8 December (Christmas Party, in BMH)

**All meetings will be held from
3:30 -5:00 in JDH G1
(unless otherwise indicated)**

The FAUST bulletin...

...is intended to inform you, the members, about FAUST activities. It is published by the FAUST Executive. Future issues may cover important topics like collective bargaining (what is it?), organizing faculty beyond STU (where do we fit into the regional and national schemes?), etc. The editors of the bulletin, under the direction of the FAUST Executive, are responsible 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



FAUST demands transparency and openness in the search for a new STU President last year.



Brad Cross walks the picket-line in solidarity at UPEI.



Strike at UPEI

FAUST President Suzanne Prior hands over cheque to Larry Hale of the UPEI Faculty Association.