

Academic Matters

OCUFA'S JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LA REVUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR D'UAPUO

October | Octobre 2014

*The future of
faculty associations*

Carol Anderson
OCUFA at 50

**Stephanie Ross
and Larry Savage**
Faculty associations at the crossroads

Trish Hennessy
The staying power of unions





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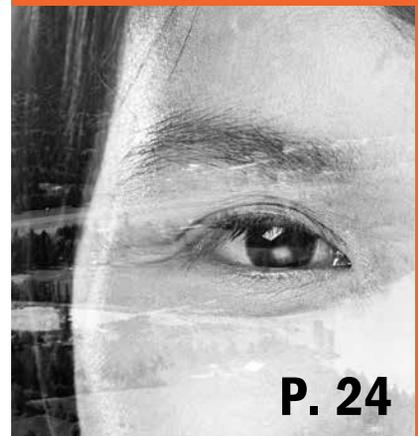
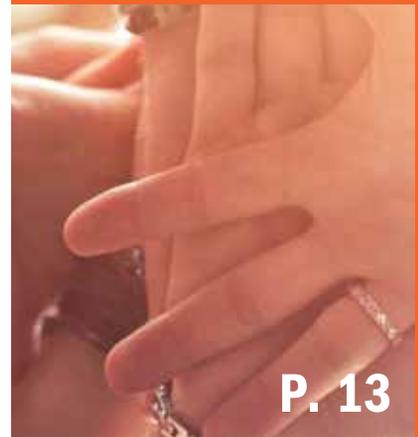
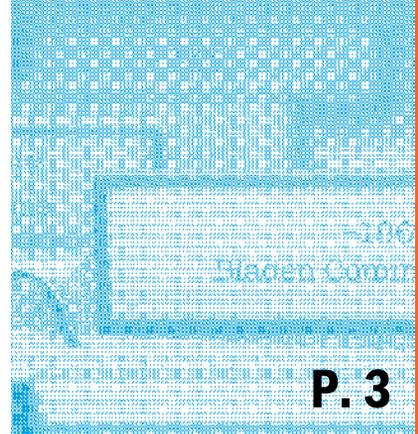


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Academic Matters

OCUFA'S JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LA REVUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR D'UAPUQ

Academic Matters is published two times a year by OCUFA, and is received by 17,000 professors, academic librarians and others interested in higher education issues across Canada. The journal explores issues of relevance to higher education in Ontario, other provinces in Canada, and globally. It is intended to be a forum for thoughtful and thought-provoking, original and engaging discussion of current trends in postsecondary education and consideration of academe's future direction.

Readers are encouraged to contribute their views, ideas and talents. Letters to the editor (maximum 250 words) are welcome and may be edited for length. To provide an article or artwork for Academic Matters, please send your query to Editor-in-Chief Graeme Stewart at gstewart@ocufa.on.ca.

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Letters to the Editor

On "Doing the PPP: A Skeptical Perspective"

...When you say "In the case of academic departments it is hard to see what is gained by putting a department on trial when it has a superior research record, first-class teaching...etc." but that "on the other end of the spectrum, what is needed is a focused intervention," it implies that the other end of the spectrum is no research record, mediocre teaching, and struggling enrollment. However, a number of departments at teaching-intensive universities (with little release time for research), that are not popular majors these days (such as philosophy), and which may not lead straight to jobs but still provide an essential part of a liberal arts education, might also fall under this. I suppose Latin, Classics, and courses on Chaucer vanish... while career-oriented fields like "concrete management" (a new field in my university!) and pop culture courses prosper. (And I'm in what can be called a popculture oriented discipline—media—so guess I'm safe...sorry about you other blokes.)

CLARE BRATTEN

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OCUFA at 50

Carol Anderson

Looking back at five decades of change, challenge, and growth in Ontario's university sector.

Revue des changements, des défis et de la croissance dans le secteur universitaire au cours des cinq décennies.

This year, 2014, is the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, or, as it was then known, the Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations. OCUFA's creation came at an important moment in the province's history. During the 1960s and early 1970s, Ontario's postsecondary education system underwent an unprecedented expansion. A robust economy, demographic pressures, and increased public interest in the benefits of higher education combined to drive government investment in the higher education sector.

Within the academy, the growing numbers of unionized faculty—a trend that reflected accelerating unionization rates in the broader public sector—began to think of themselves and their influence in the university system differently. They needed a voice to advocate on their behalf to a government now very interested in the operation of Ontario's universities. OCUFA was created in response to this need.

Since its inception, OCUFA has become a key advocate for its members, the now 17,000 university faculty and academic librarians in Ontario who are represented by their 28 faculty associations. Over its half-century of existence,

OCUFA has grown from a small stakeholder group to become the leading voice for faculty in Ontario. OCUFA is also now a strong advocate for high quality and accessible education in the province, and indeed the country.

The Birth of OCUFA

In late 1962, delegates from Ontario's then-15 universities met to discuss the formation of a committee of faculty associations, during a time of growing optimism in the province's future and of significant expansion in the postsecondary education sector in Ontario, and in Canada.

The Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations held its first meeting on September 14, 1963, and adopted a constitution on June 16, 1964.

During OCUFA's first few years, the organization responded to the issues created by the dramatic expansion of the higher education sector, including effective governance in the universities; the changing relationship between the universities and the government; and adequate remuneration for faculty. OCUFA's formation also dovetailed with new financial arrangements between the federal and provincial governments, arrangements which would, moving

December 7, 1962

Gentlemen,

During the Council Meeting of CAUT at Montreal on November 25, an informal meeting was held of various representatives of Ontario Universities and Colleges, and it was decided to look into the possibility of the formation of a Committee of Faculty Associations of Universities and Colleges in Ontario with the objective to discuss matters of mutual importance and to establish contact with the Advisory Committee of the Ontario Government on University Affairs.

You are requested to send a delegate to a meeting to be held at the University of Toronto on Saturday, December 15 at 1:00 p.m.... terms of reference for and future activities of the Committee will be discussed...

Yours sincerely,

A. de Vos,
Provisional Secretary, Ontario Agricultural College

forward, give the province greater influence over the development of its postsecondary institutions.

Postsecondary education after the war

Soon after the end of World War II, and aided to a great degree by federal initiatives, veterans poured into Ontario's universities—53,000 between 1944 and 1951—straining the province's still-small higher education system. And more demographic pressure was on the way. By the mid-1950s, as the baby boomers began to grow up, the need to expand the system was clear. A 1956 Royal Commission report on Canada's economic prospects highlighted the country's growing need for better educational prospects, and for more university graduates. Between the early 1950s and 1963, the university population in Canada more than doubled, as new universities received their charters and existing institutions expanded. Thousands of new faculty members were also recruited.

Within this context of expansion, OCUFA's mandate was clear: to formulate policies and to negotiate with government on behalf of the faculty of Ontario's universities. The organization's first major research initiative was the preparation of a 1963 brief to the Premier of Ontario, *University Education in Ontario*, which it wrote together with the Committee of Presidents of the Universities of Ontario (CPUO). OCUFA and CPUO (later the Council of Ontario Universities (COU)) worked closely together on a number of initiatives in the early years, including the establishment of joint pensions, salary, and taxation committees. The two organizations also co-sponsored a conference on university affairs in 1964, and worked on a number of other initiatives together over the next decade.

OCUFA soon began to put a more permanent team in place to handle the growing demands created by its position

within the sector. In 1967, Charles Hebdon became OCUFA's first full-time staff person, taking on the role of Director of Research and Financial Planning. In 1969, OCUFA moved into its first permanent offices at 40 Sussex Avenue in Toronto, which it leased from the University of Toronto.

Late 1960s to early 1970s: Expanding the system

The late 1960s and the 1970s tend to be remembered as the "golden years" of postsecondary education in Ontario and beyond. During this time, the largest expansion of the province's university system to date took place. In the newly created Ministry of Colleges and Universities, more than 900 government employees now focused on the needs of the higher education sector.

The expansion of all levels of education occurred under Premier John Robarts Progressive Conservative government, aided by his Education Minister, Bill Davis (who would eventually go on to become Ontario's Premier from 1971 to 1985). Premier Robarts put in place a new system to finance this expansion: for every registered student, a university would receive funding corresponding to a formula designed around the "basic income unit," or BIU. As well, additional funding envelopes were created to help account for the unique needs of parts of the system, such as the higher costs of running universities in the north, or the requirements of bilingual institutions.

As the postsecondary education sector expanded, so too did OCUFA's role in that sector. Although CAUT—the Canadian Association of University Teachers—was already an active organization focused at the federal level, education was a provincial responsibility, and it became increasingly clear that a stronger and larger provincial advocate was needed to help Ontario's faculty associations lobby effectively.

More staff were hired for management, research, and administrative positions. In 1968, Charles Hanly came on board as OCUFA's first Executive Vice-Chair. OCUFA responded to this organizational growth through an internal restructuring process that began in 1979. A new "Statement of the Rationale for Change in OCUFA" laid out the organization's focus moving forward:

OCUFA should serve as an intelligence source, passing information on relevant events and inchoate developments to local associations... Secondly, it should serve as a conduit of communication and influence from representatives of local faculty constituencies to appointed officials, politicians and the media... Thirdly, it should be—and be seen to be—a central voice for the professoriate of Ontario... Fourthly, it should—through advice and example—strengthen the will and capability of its constituent associations in identifying and coping with problems at the local level... Finally, OCUFA should protect the well-being of the professoriate...

“I think that OCUFA’s core mission in my day was to try to stand up for the university system, to protect its independence, its autonomy. To protect the quality of the universities, to educate the public and the ministries involved and the politicians about how important universities are, and to continue to get that message out.”

HOWARD EPSTEIN, Executive Director, OCUFA, 1984-88

A number of new committees were also struck during this time, including Teaching Awards (1973), Salaries (1967), Pensions (1967), and Status of Women (1972; disbanded in 1974; re-formed in 1984). A few other committees were more short-lived, including Teacher Evaluation (1971-73), and Educational TV (1970-72).

The 1980s: Inflation and Contraction

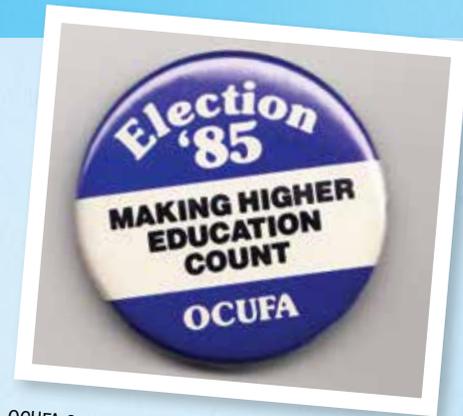
The expansion of Ontario’s postsecondary education sector came to an abrupt halt by the early 1980s. Runaway inflation from the mid-1970s (the rate of inflation reached 12.5 per cent by 1981) did not significantly decline until the early 1990s. The ensuing economic challenges, combined

with government efforts to rationalize the system, ushered in a very different era for university faculty by the beginning of the 1980s.

Government efforts to deal with the effects of high inflation included legislation such as 1982’s *Inflation Restraint Act* (Bill 179), which limited annual public sector wage increases to five per cent, eliminated the right to strike, and extended current collective agreements by one year. As

well, Bill 213 allowed for direct government intervention in any university that incurred an operating deficit.

A growing focus on the role of postsecondary education generally, and on Ontario’s postsecondary institutions in particular, resulted in the formation of a number of significant committees and research efforts. Major reports during this time included 1981’s *Report on the Committee of the Future Role of Universities in Ontario* (the Fisher Report) and 1984’s *Ontario Universities: Options and Futures* (the Bovey Commission Report). In 1984, the Education Minister also announced a wholesale restructuring of Ontario’s university system.



OCUFA Campaign button, 1985.

OCUFA responded to the new realities in new ways: large-scale advertising and lobbying campaigns and a number of research reports that explored the crisis facing the postsecondary education sector. As OCUFA’s Executive Director, Patrick Wesley, noted in his report to the Board of Directors in 1983, “It has been a year of very visible, amply reported, crises. They have come by the numbers: 179 and 213; and by alphabet soup: EPF, IRB, SERP, and so on.” (EPF refers to 1977’s *Established Programs Financing Act*; IRB to the Inflation Restraint Board, instituted in 1982; and SERP to 1978’s Secondary Education Review Project).

OCUFA’s Bovey Campaign—“Ontario’s Universities, Ontario’s Future”—was its largest advocacy effort to date. Timed to coincide with the Bovey hearings, the widely distributed advertisements noted that more than 50,000 qualified students could be turned away from Ontario’s universities in the next 10 years if the proposed rationalization plan took effect. Special editions of OCUFA’s monthly newsletter focused on many of these issues as well, including the proposed restructuring of the system, the Bovey Report, and the crisis of access for students in Ontario.

OCUFA’s staff complement grew to seven by the end of the 1980s. A new ad hoc committee was also struck, which surveyed members on the status of their appeals under Bill 179, and assisted in the push-back effort where possible. This committee was the first of a number of such special committees. In 1985, the re-formed Status of Women Committee published its first major report, *Employment Equity for Women Academics: A Positive Action Strategy*.



OCUFA staff outside 40 Sussex Avenue office, 1988.
Photo copyright Sally Gibson.

Rae Days and the Harris “revolution”

The 1990s were a period of difficulty and upheaval. At the onset of the decade, a severe economic recession began, brought on by a slowdown in the U.S. economy and inflation-fighting tactics in Canada. The government in Ontario swung wildly from left to right, with the Progressive Conservatives replacing the New Democratic government mid-way through the decade.

In 1990, Ontarians elected the province’s first NDP government, ushering in what many hoped would be a new, more progressive era. By 1992, however, with the economy stalled and deficits climbing, Premier Bob Rae began a program of budget slashing and austerity, culminating in the implementation of the Social Contract in 1993.

Under this initiative, public sector unions were forced to implement \$2 billion in wage cuts through 12 days of forced unpaid leave (“Rae Days”). Public sector collective agreements were re-opened and re-negotiated. And faculty associations were forced to negotiate five per cent wage cuts. Those that didn’t comply had a settlement imposed upon them.

In 1995, Ontarians elected Mike Harris’ Progressive Conservatives, whose so-called Common Sense Revolution promised a more corporate approach to the public sector and public programs. The results were immediate and harsh. In 1995, university funding was cut by 16 per cent, programs

By 1997, however, a fundamental shift had begun. A new Board Executive and reinvigorated staff sharpened the organization’s focus on its key priorities: lobbying the government on behalf of faculty and protecting the economic needs of its membership. Election-readiness workshops, conferences, and major new research efforts began to be undertaken once again. OCUFA’s Executive reconnected with member organizations, travelling around the province to hear their concerns. And new working relationships with a number of student organizations helped strengthen and extend OCUFA’s message.

“Reaching Higher”: Postsecondary education in the 21st century

The new millennium brought different kinds of challenges to the postsecondary education sector, and to faculty. These included demographic changes, such as the impact of the double cohort and the baby boom echo on university enrolment; the resulting expansion of the university system; the impact of technology on teaching; new staffing models, particularly a significant increase in part-time and non-tenured faculty; and the pending retirement of thousands of faculty members.

Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals took over the reins at Queen’s Park in 2003. In its first budget that year, the new government signaled a significant shift in approach to the

“I think that when there are difficult times, you demand more of your provincial association. When things are going well, you don’t think about what your association is doing or how it’s representing you. But when you see that your tenure is being threatened, when you see that tuition is increasing, when you see that you know you have a Premier who devalues education, then you want to see that your provincial organization is very vocal, you want to pick up a newspaper and see their name.”

DEBORAH FLYNN, President, OCUFA, 1997-2000

were slashed, performance indicators were created and applied, and tuition rose sharply as the government allowed universities to increase fees by as much as 20 per cent.

The turmoil also took a significant toll on OCUFA, as the organization struggled to deal with a variety of internal challenges. Faculty associations grappling with government-imposed cuts debated how well OCUFA was serving their needs. A few associations either pulled out of the organization or threatened to leave. And at the Board and staff levels, high turnover and sharp differences in opinion bogged the organization down in infighting and strife.



OCUFA's then-Executive Director Henry Mandelbaum on the picket line with striking librarians and archivists at the University of Western Ontario, fall, 2011. Courtesy Rebecca Coulter.

challenges facing postsecondary education. It promised, among other things, to create spaces for 50,000 more students, freeze tuition fees, and expand access to student financial aid.

In 2005, former Premier Bob Rae was asked to lead a review of the design and funding of postsecondary education in the province. The resulting report, *Ontario: A Leader in Learning*, explored five themes—accessibility, quality, system design, funding, and accountability—and made 28 recommendations for change. Four months after the release of the

OCUFA's links to other organizations solidified as well, as the organization began working with student organizations and labour unions on a number of communications and lobbying campaigns.

What's next for OCUFA

Today, half a century after its creation, OCUFA has become the central voice for faculty in Ontario, and a key advocate in the province for high-quality, accessible postsecondary education.

“I think that lobbying has really been a very important role for OCUFA. Because postsecondary education is almost wholly a provincial responsibility. And so it is really important that there is lobbying going on at the provincial level, and OCUFA just excels at that.”

JOHN HOLMES, OCUFA Board member, 2001-12; Pension Committee Member, 2010-12; Finance Committee member, 2011-13

Rae Report, the government outlined its “Reaching Higher” plan for investment in postsecondary education, including an investment of \$6.2 billion over four years, the largest made to the system since the 1960s. This funding injection was welcomed, yet it was still not enough to overcome the severe cutbacks of the late 1990s.

A newly reinvigorated OCUFA responded to these changes in a number of ways. Support for faculty collective bargaining work increased significantly. OCUFA also held a series of communications and lobbying workshops for member associations, and began commissioning targeted public opinion polls, asking Ontarians what they wanted from the higher education sector. OCUFA has used this data to educate and inform its members, the public, and government officials.

New campaigns and publications were launched as well. OCUFA's 2007 “Quality Matters” campaign was the beginning of a longer-term strategy to ensure that faculty had the resources they needed to give all students the highest-quality education possible. A new magazine, *Academic Matters*, was launched in 2006 to explore current trends and relevant issues in higher education. OCUFA also began focusing attention on a wide range of issues, including low funding levels (by the early 2000s, per-student funding in Ontario was the lowest in Canada), high student-faculty ratios, and the continuing challenge of maintaining access to university for students from all backgrounds.

OCUFA also played a major role in the eventual elimination of mandatory retirement in Ontario in 2008, an issue that had been ongoing for many years. And it was instrumental in the extension of freedom of information legislation to universities.

Although many of the issues facing the province's university sector seem to have changed very little since the 1960s—affordability, accessibility, support for both research and teaching, adequate public funding, and more—other challenges have begun to command more of OCUFA's attention as it enters its second half-century.

These challenges include the needs of the ever-expanding number of contract and part-time faculty, increasing faculty workload and job-related stress, and pension reform. OCUFA is also focused on the complex issue of institutional differentiation and the push for program prioritization, as governments seek yet another way to trim university budgets and ask the system to do more with less.

Changing times, evolving priorities

These new challenges—and as-yet unforeseen challenges that are sure to arise in the coming years—will clearly demand that OCUFA keeps adapting to the needs of Ontario's postsecondary education sector and the professors and librarians who work within it.

Although advocacy has always been a key role for the organization, in recent years OCUFA has begun having a greater voice in the public realm, as it seeks to educate and inform all Ontarians about the quality and sustainability of the province's higher education sector. OCUFA's “We Teach Ontario” campaign, for example, promotes the important connection between teaching and research in the province's universities through highlighting the research of featured professors. ■■

Carol Anderson is a Toronto-based researcher, writer, and editor.

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Faculty Associations at the Crossroads

Stephanie Ross and
Larry Savage



Faculty associations must increase their community and political engagement to navigate a challenging new era.

Les associations des professeurs doivent augmenter leur engagement communautaire et politique afin de relever les défis d'un nouvel âge.

The preservation of academic freedom, collegial self-governance, and quality education increasingly rests on strong faculty associations. However, the continued existence of strong faculty associations is threatened by the broader public sector labour relations context and the entrenchment of the neoliberal university. Several decades of neoliberal restructuring have fundamentally transformed universities, and in order to effectively confront the challenges that lie ahead, faculty associations will need to undergo their own transformations. In the process, they will have to rethink their approaches to representation and advocacy. While change never comes easily, the stakes are far too high for faculty associations to remain complacent.

THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY

As part of a more general trend in public services, Ontario universities have been subject to a process of neoliberalization, in which market-based needs, practices, criteria, and forms of delivery become dominant and displace other goals, such as the development of an informed and active citizenry or the redress of economic and social inequality. In the public sector, this is often referred to as “new public management.” Within universities, neoliberalization includes the tell-tale signs of a shift to “revenue-generating” programs and activities; cost recovery between units or departments; and a “client-centred” culture that attempts to cater to student-consumers, whose rising tuition bills account for an

increasing proportion of university revenues. High fees fundamentally change students' relationship with faculty and the university. Such changes ratchet up forms of competition between and within institutions. Universities increase recruitment and marketing efforts to chase enrolments—and the tuition dollars and per-student funding that accompany them—while individual programs must increasingly worry about the popularity of their degrees and courses.

There is also a growing corporate influence over university governance and administrative processes, in both material and ideological terms. The corporatization of universities is driven by an emphasis on fundraising for endowments, named chairs, and infrastructure. This gives wealthy individuals and corporations outside the university enormous influence over the kinds of activities that will be supported. Senior staff are also increasingly drawn from the private sector and have management rather than academic backgrounds, bringing with them elements of corporate culture. Alongside this is a shift away from the traditional practice of faculty cycling in and out of administrative roles. Instead, faculty increasingly become part of a permanent administrative cadre and less frequently return to faculty bargaining units. Compensation practices for senior administration also begin to mirror those in the private sector, with increases to the salaries of university presidents, provosts, and deans outpacing those of faculty and staff in order to remain “competitive” in an inter-university market for senior administrators. All of this profoundly changes administrators' approach to labour relations.

These two changes—growing competitive pressures and the corporatization of the administrative cadre—are combining in specific ways to drive the restructuring of university communities. In addition to a growth in upward accountability processes that require faculty to document their worth and productivity through performance indicators, universities now seem permanently engaged in restructuring processes. This is driven by the presumed need to adapt to the “market” for postsecondary education and the constraints placed on funding by provincial governments. In Ontario, this has recently taken the form of the linked processes of differentiation, wherein universities specialize in particular areas and receive public funding tied to those specializations, and prioritization, in which each university decides which programs will be allowed to grow, stagnate, or wither. Insofar as faculty and their commitments to particular research and teaching priorities constitute barriers to the internal transformation of universities through prioritization and differentiation, their containment or marginalization in decision-making processes becomes an important goal for university administrators leading restructuring efforts.

THE EFFECTS OF NEOLIBERALISM ON UNIVERSITY WORK

These transformations have important effects on the quality of work and labour relations at universities.

These two changes—
growing competitive pressures
and the corporatization of
the administrative cadre—
are combining in specific ways
to drive the restructuring of
university communities.



University work of all kinds is more precarious, as the “flexibility” to meet changing market demands requires a move away from career-length job security (in the form of tenure for faculty or permanency for staff) and towards contract-based teaching, project-based research staffing, and temporary support staff. The growing inequality amongst university workers that results creates real tensions, particularly when it comes to who can lay claim to the institution's resources. Such tensions grow all the more as university administrations turn to concession bargaining in order to break the obstacles collective agreements place in the path to a market-driven university.

WHICH PATH FOR FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS?

In this context, faculty associations have a choice: to stay the course, using the tried and true methods to defend their own memberships and hoping they will weather the neoliberal storm. Or, they can alter their strategies to proactively confront, resist, and ultimately transform the neoliberal university.

The tried and true approach to faculty unionism is characterized by a narrow focus on members' economic interests through collective bargaining, and procedural justice through defense of the collective agreement. Within this context, similar to a guild mentality, faculty are united by common identification with a shared profession with high educational barriers to entry that make the work both high status and high reward. There is much power inherent in the rarity of these skills, making professors central to the mission

of the university and thus allowing faculty associations to make important gains in the realm of labour relations. The dominant guild approach has served faculty relatively well for many years, as evidenced by better pay, benefits, and other protections embedded in collective agreements.

However, the relatively privileged status of university professors is increasingly under threat. While the dominant guild approach may continue to be effective for some faculty in the short term, faculty associations risk diminished power over the long term if they do not move past the limits of the current model. In particular, the risks of reverse class resentment—the tendency of working-class people to misdirect their anger at better-off union members rather than wealthy corporations—are growing, given the context of economic stagnation, growing inequality, anti-tax populism, and the negative pressures of public sector finances on services and labour relations. This type of resentment is most acute towards the public sector since taxpayer revenue is used to pay the salaries and benefits of public sector workers, including university professors.

If the clock is running out on guild-based strategies, what are the alternatives? University faculty associations can learn much from some of the most innovative strategies emanating from other sectors of the labour movement. There, given the enormous downward pressures on both membership numbers and bargaining power, unions have had to develop ways to amplify their capacity to attract, mobilize, and educate members. They have also needed new strategies for pressuring various workplace and political decision-makers in an increasingly hostile anti-union environment. In our view, faculty associations should prioritize three strategies: 1) deepening our understanding of workplace power relations; 2) building strong and sustained cross-campus and community coalitions; and 3) engaging in meaningful political action to shape the policy environment.

As a first step, we need to move beyond our collective agreements and consider our workplaces: how they are organized, who does what work, who possesses what kinds of power, and where key decisions are made. Many union organizers use workplace mapping to develop such knowledge and to reveal social relationships of influence, key pressure points, and specific power dynamics. This mapping is often done to challenge assumptions about how the workplace operates, and it typically reveals surprising information about opinion leaders (often not the self-identified union activists) and sources of leverage in the institution.

Pursuing this method can also force faculty associations to tear down the self-imposed division between “union issues” and “academic issues,” the former dealt with in collective bargaining and the latter in Senate or faculty councils. Academic decisions are always workplace issues, because they affect the kinds of work—courses, programs, missions and strategic plans, rights and responsibilities—that university faculty are expected to carry out. Such matters fundamentally affect faculty workloads, choices, and

academic freedom. Senior university administrators have no qualms about coordinating their interventions in bodies like Senates in order to push through restructuring initiatives. So why are faculty associations so apprehensive about collective efforts to influence academic decisions that so clearly and profoundly affect their members’ work? In fact, faculty associations are one of the only spaces that unite professors across departmental and faculty divides and help us develop a collective orientation as teachers and researchers. Most workplaces do not feature collegial self-governance or any form of workplace democracy. To ignore these spaces is to throw away a unique source of power that faculty possess.

Workplace mapping, and the clear picture of workplace power relations it reveals, is also the essential first step in building campus coalitions. Coalition work is now considered one of the most important strategies used by unions to amplify their power and reduce their isolation, particularly when in difficult fights with employers. Coalitions are even more important for public sector workers like university faculty, because community members—whether service users or taxpayers—always have a stake in our collective bargaining processes. Whether they side with workers or employers is a crucial factor in the success of the collective bargaining efforts of public sector workers. However, analysts of union coalition work caution that such efforts must be deep, long-term, and to the mutual benefit of all involved, rather than ad hoc and abandoned when one group satisfies their particular needs.

While it is not uncommon for faculty associations to share information with other campus unions, this is often done in an ad hoc manner and tends to follow the cycle of collective bargaining, receding when bargaining concludes. Many campus coalitions have proven difficult to sustain over the long term, not least because they involve working across real power imbalances between different groups of university workers. The university is replete with material and status hierarchies, which means that we don’t enter the room as equals, even when we seek to create forms of solidarity between us. Any coalition work within the university means faculty must approach such work with a clear sense of their relative power, and their responsibility to use it in ways that defend a much broader community of interest than has traditionally been typical or necessary.

In the face of the management strategies designed to play employee groups against one another, building alliances with other campus unions, associations, and student organizations over shared interests is more important than ever. These efforts must be rooted in learning about the way our experiences of the university, whether as workers or students, are being negatively affected by restructuring processes, making the links between those different experiences and identifying their common root causes.

For instance, students often encounter frustrating roadblocks trying to access university services and support, and take those frustrations out on front-line staff. For their

Faculty unions can lead in creating spaces where everyone can get beyond these adversarial symptoms to focus on their basic common causes.



part, overworked faculty and staff often use defensive measures to fend off student demands for service in order to cope with ever-increasing pressure for greater productivity. Faculty unions can lead in creating spaces where everyone can get beyond these adversarial symptoms to focus on their basic common causes. These deeper collective understandings must be backed by solidaristic actions on each other's behalf, particularly in the context of cuts or difficult rounds of collective bargaining. And they must go beyond the formal leaders of campus organizations, creating opportunities for the membership of different groups to build connection and common cause with each other. Such alliances also have real tactical advantages, given that various groups are positioned differently in university processes and can take advantage of unique forms of power for collective benefit.

The need to act beyond our particular unions and universities is about more than being solidaristic. More than ever, university workplace issues cannot be resolved only at the bargaining table, because the true sources of these problems don't always originate at the university level. While university administrations may take particular approaches to restructuring or labour relations, they are responding to broader political trends that are changing the nature of the university as an institution. As such, bargaining in the university sector (and in the public sector more generally) must be linked to political campaigns about the role of universities, led by coalitions of university workers and interested publics.

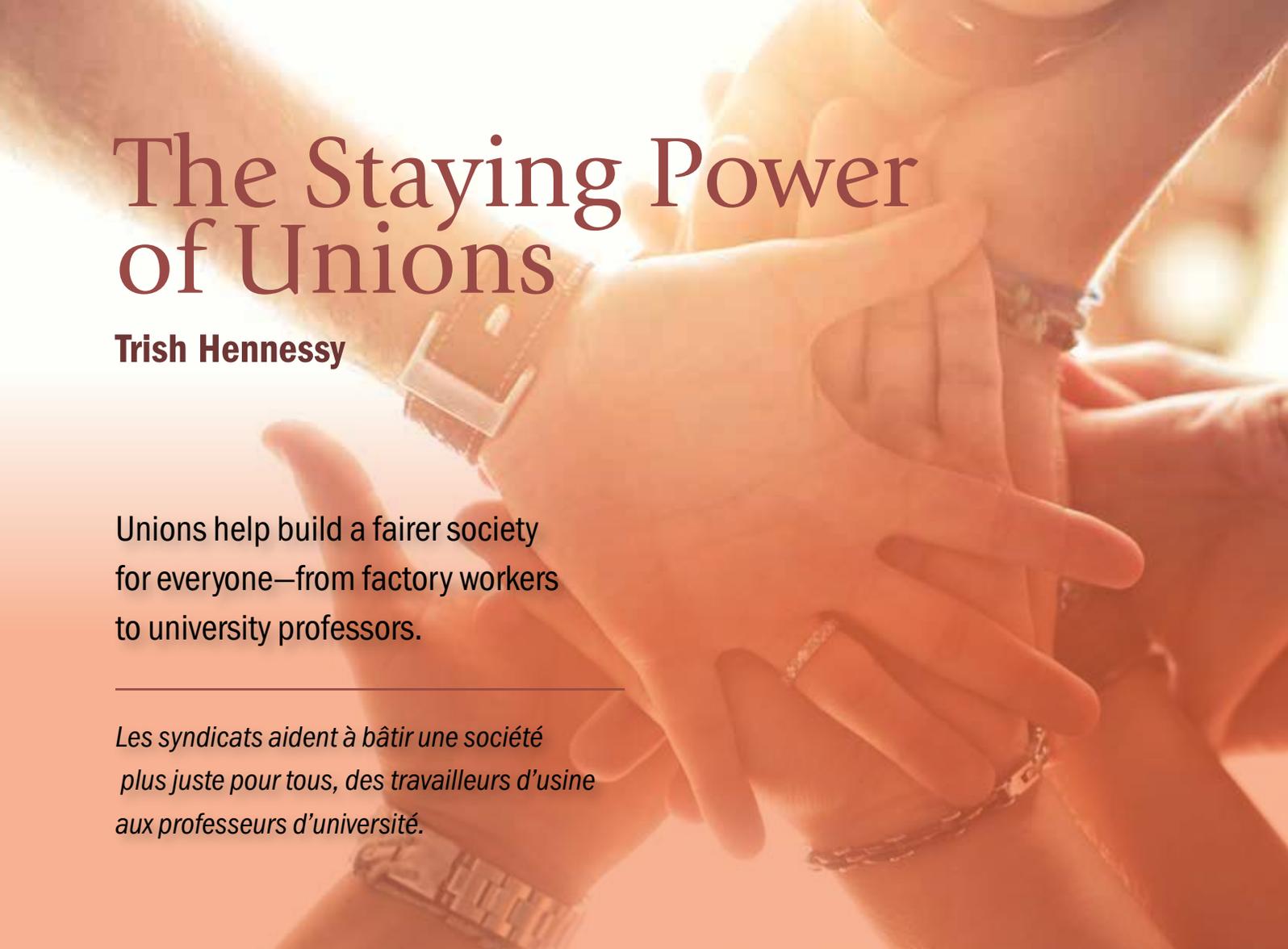
Even if they are able to strengthen their coalition-building capacities at their individual workplaces, faculty associations need to face up to a growing need to engage in broader and more meaningful political action. Faculty associations, through federations like OCUFA and CAUT, have largely restricted their political interventions to lobbying and non-partisan information sharing on a narrow range of postsecondary policy issues. However, there is utility in advocating for a broader political agenda as it can help reduce isolation from other groups, including students, parents, and community partners. After all, questions of fair taxation, income inequality, and the role of the public sector all shape what happens in and to universities.

More importantly, the character of the government fundamentally shapes what happens at the workplace, and what faculty associations win at the bargaining table can easily be taken away by the legislature. Indeed, in Ontario, the threat of a rabidly anti-union Progressive Conservative majority government led to a concerted effort by some segments of the labour movement to defeat Ontario PC leader Tim Hudak at all costs. Even police associations were drawn into the #StopHudak campaign. OCUFA's decision to remain outside this effort, despite the threat a Hudak majority posed to the very future of labour unions, and its resistance to electoral activity more generally, is increasingly untenable given what is at stake. How faculty associations approach electoral politics (and political action more broadly) is an open question and is context specific. However, there is no doubt that faculty unions ignore active engagement in politics at their own peril.

Changing course does not require faculty associations to embrace a militant, industrial style of unionism, although many more of us are having to use the right to strike to defend our working conditions. Nor does it require us to relinquish our professional identity. If anything, our attachment to professionalism and our desire to protect the conditions that allow us to be fully effective teachers and researchers is one of the most powerful motivators for involvement in a proactive and expanded set of strategies.

What is at stake if faculty associations don't change their strategies? At present, with the rate of unionization in postsecondary education still very high and faculty collective agreements still fairly strong, the stakes might seem low. But the power that comes from a strong union presence depends on what we do with these resources. As university administrations become more business-like and adversarial, as concession bargaining and divide-and-conquer strategies become more common, and as the quality of work life and education is increasingly threatened, faculty associations have both a need and a responsibility to change their organizations to effectively respond to these new challenges. ■■

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The Staying Power of Unions

Trish Hennessy

Unions help build a fairer society for everyone—from factory workers to university professors.

Les syndicats aident à bâtir une société plus juste pour tous, des travailleurs d'usine aux professeurs d'université.

The spring air, typically redolent with a sense of hope and renewal, hung over Queen's Park in May 2014 like a menacing storm cloud ready to break into a twister.

Two years of rancorous, scandal-ridden minority government had collapsed into itself. As the election writ dropped, Ontarians faced a stark political reality: the prospect of a hard-right Progressive Conservative leader intent on declaring outright war on the province's labour movement.

The right to collective bargaining was going on political trial.

If successful, the prospect of a provincial government pulling out all the stops to break the power of Ontario's labour movement would have spread like contagion to other Canadian provinces.

For the labour movement, it had the feel of an existential crisis.

We all know how that story ended: the Progressive Conservatives were roundly defeated at the polls and the leader not only resigned but faced a virtual caucus revolt to push him out as fast as politically plausible.

Another year in the life of Canada's labour movement. It's a movement that, from day one, has had to fight to secure workers' rights. It's a movement that is constantly under trial, politically and at the bargaining table. A movement whose staying power relies purely on a steady resolve that going it together is better than going it alone.

No one ever handed unions an easy victory and no one likely ever will. Perhaps that is part of their staying power.

Steps from Queen's Park, there is a simple plaque commemorating a watershed moment for Canada's labour movement. In the spring of 1872, workers represented by the Toronto Typographical Union went on strike for the right to a nine-hour work day—down from the widely practiced 12-hour requirement. By mid-April, they were joined by 10,000 working-class supporters at Queen's Park. Solidarity in motion.

Some members of the strike committee did jail time. Some lost their jobs. But, eventually, there was a payoff. The *Trade Union Act* of 1872 legalized union activity in Canada. And after the strike of 1872, the fight for a shorter work

week became a core focus of union negotiations. We've all benefited from that bargaining victory, whether we're in a union or not.

It has become cliché to thank unions for the eight-hour work week, but it did not come without sacrifice and struggle. Those collective efforts have had staying power.

The labour movement found its stride marching to the heartbeat of the industrial revolution. The movement was about securing basic human rights to worker safety. The movement also sought to protect the fundamentals of a worker's craft or trade. This was particularly important during the deskilling efforts of Taylorism, which attempted to break down skilled work into small, repetitive tasks (as opposed to allowing a worker to, for instance, make a chair from start to finish).

Back when Canada had royal commissions on emerging socio-economic issues, the plight of the exploited worker became a national concern. The federal government created a Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in 1889. Such a commission is fairly unthinkable in today's political zeitgeist, but, given the current rise of precarious work, it is possible we may see something similar in the not-too-distant future.

The Commission reported that many workers were being injured on the job. They laboured under oppressive working conditions. The solution? Government intervention to correct the excesses of capitalism.

But even a royal commission endorsement of workers' rights was small potatoes. It would take the courage of workers to act en masse, on behalf of all workers' rights, to secure real improvements. And that was only a few decades away.

Canada after World War I wasn't exactly a haven for good jobs. There was high income inequality, high unemployment, high inflation, and massive worker unrest. There were more than 400 strikes in Canada between 1919 and 1920.

The flashpoint for resistance came in May 1919, when the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council called for a general strike after negotiations broke down between building and metal trades workers and their employers. Within hours, more than 30,000 workers walked off the job. They closed the factories. They stopped the trains. The city ground to a standstill.

Many paid a price. Some strike leaders were convicted of trying to overthrow the government. A charge by the RCMP resulted in many casualties and one death.

But on the streets of Winnipeg, the true staying power of the labour movement was forged as the various Western Canada unions decided to become "one big union" and try to reverse exploitative working conditions. Their point was not lost.

The royal commission that resulted from this disruption warned, "if Capital does not provide enough to assure Labour a contented existence ... then the Government might find it necessary to step in and let the state do these things at the expense of Capital."

It took decades, but eventually, workers' rights took root in Canada.

In 1937, Canada was coming to grips with what had become the Great Depression, with mass poverty and increasing social unrest. It was also the year collective bargaining was officially recognized in Canada, following a strike by the United Auto Workers at the General Motors' plant in Oshawa.

While the gains made by Canada's labour movement are often associated with the strengthening of blue-collar workers under the industrial revolution, it is no accident that Canadian workers who made automobiles took the first great strides in collective bargaining. The automobile was a symbol of hope and prosperity in North America. Automaker like Henry Ford understood that to create a sustainable market of consumers for his automobiles, he needed to pay his workers a higher minimum wage (so they could buy his goods). The gains in collective bargaining made by auto-workers ultimately morphed into the symbol for middle class prosperity.

The middle class dream: own your home, buy a car, enjoy a modicum of job security in return for hard work, expertise, and company loyalty. It was good for the company and it was good for capitalism.

In today's political climate—where some politicians deride the idea of job security in an attempt to score cheap political points and others make empty promises to curry favour with middle class and working families—that history is readily forgotten, to our detriment. The promise of a vibrant middle class requires the same sensibility as a vibrant democracy: neither survives on mere autopilot. Complacency is a killer.

As I've written elsewhere, unions can be a great equalizer in society. Before the 1950s, Canada didn't have a strong middle class. Income inequality was higher. The quality of life was not what it is today.

Unions and broadly shared prosperity go hand in hand. Economist Jordan Brennan's research (<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2014/06/27/who-built-the-middle-class-unions-did/>) shows that as union density grew modestly between 1910 and 1940, hourly earnings grew by 43 per cent. But between 1940 and 1977, union density in Canada doubled—and hourly earnings tripled. During this same period, as unionization was on steady ascent, income inequality in Canada dropped. Before World War II, the story in Canada was really one of the rich and the rest of us. But the rise of unionized workers in the 1950s, '60s and '70s made a difference. That's when Canada got busy building its middle class, solidifying the notion that as the economy grew, prosperity should be shared.

Since 1977, income inequality has gotten worse—mirroring many of the trends in place before Canada's labour movement was fully entrenched. As union density



declined post-1977, so did hourly earnings. It's a story that affects us all, whether we're among the lucky ones earning more than 90 per cent of the rest of Canadians, or whether we're among Canada's most vulnerable.

It matters—and unions matter—in several ways.

With the rise of the middle class came the ability for people to pool their tax contributions to pay for public services that benefit everyone: universal health care and public education, to name just two. I was born a farm kid, with dim chances for a university education, for a life as a writer and researcher. But in 1965, the federal government promised to implement three public programs: universal public health care, public pensions to greatly reduce seniors' poverty, and affordable university tuition.

I was the first in my immediate family to go to university, thanks to that policy decision, and thanks to Canadian taxpayers, who gave the ultimate gift: opportunity.

But yesterday's gains hold no iron-clad promise for tomorrow's workers.

It has only been 68 years since Canadian political parties agreed to uphold one of the most important legal decisions affecting unionized workers: the Rand Formula, a 1946 legal judgment granting unions the right to include a union dues clause in their collective bargaining agreements.

This right to expect all unionized workers to contribute, by way of dues, to the viability of a union is exactly what the Ontario Progressive Conservative leader was hoping to undermine in his bid for power. The Rand Formula articulates the ultimate expression of union solidarity. Everyone contributes, everyone benefits.

It is a principle of collective bargaining that is as relevant today as it was in the contested days of the industrial revolution.

The anti-union trope goes like this: during the industrial revolution, where exploitation of desperate blue-collar workers was rampant, unions served a purpose. They secured safer working conditions. But Canada has moved on. What, possibly, do educated white-collar workers have to gain from a union?

The promise of a vibrant middle class
requires the same sensibility
as a vibrant democracy:
neither survives on mere autopilot.
Complacency is a killer.

In the 1970s, as decades of middle-class growth began to falter, faculty associations began to unionize. They did so not only in response to hard economic times, but also to fight back against administrators who sought to centralize control of the university. A decade earlier, a new organization formed in Ontario—the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. As its member associations unionized, OCUFA began to help them bargain for fair working terms while trying to set a higher bar for public investment in an affordable, quality university system. Unions are never about individual pay, though the premium is undeniable. They're also about setting the terms for better jobs, a condition critical to the longevity of the middle class. OCUFA and its member associations have been fighting for better academic jobs for decades.

Today, young academics find themselves completing their PhD studies only to land in an uncharitable work reality: one that is precarious, low-paying, and the antithesis of the promise of a well-trained academic. No one is immune to workplace exploitation. For OCUFA and its members, this will be a defining issue in the coming years.

The challenges to collective action are constant, and constantly changing. That's why unions are a great equalizer, the counterforce to unfettered capitalism. They are sometimes even the catalysts for something revolutionary. That is part of their tremendous staying power. It's why unions matter. ■■

Trish Hennessy, a former OCUFA staffer, is director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Ontario office.



Solidarity in the Ivory Tower

Herbert Pimlott

Only by working together
can contract and full-time faculty
protect academic work and
the future of our universities.

*Ce n'est qu'en travaillant ensemble que
les professeurs contractuels et à plein temps
peuvent protéger le travail universitaire et
l'avenir de nos universités.*

"I never thought teaching at a university would become a dead-end job."

Jason Sager, an innovative professor whose courses are very popular with students, made this comment when he told me of his difficult decision to leave academia, after teaching for seven years at Wilfrid Laurier University (where he earned his PhD in 2007).

Dr. Sager, like thousands of highly educated—and experienced—faculty members, working at universities across the country, are learning that our profession is indeed becoming a dead-end job—an unfortunate new twist on the PhD's description as a terminal degree.

The growing number of precarious academic workers teaching an ever-larger number of undergraduate students is a threat. It is a threat to our profession, with serious implications for our working conditions, our compensation, and the future of collegial governance. It is also a threat to the existence of higher education and the public university as we know it. Indeed, it is also part of the tale of Canada's shrinking middle class.

A common adjective for contract faculty is part-time. At one time, such an adjective was accurate because universities

employed part-time professors—or, instructors with other careers outside of the university—to share their real-world expertise with students. However, the long trajectory of public funding cuts and massive increases in student enrolment has meant a surge in part-time faculty positions, filled with academics who have no other source of income. These part-time jobs for full-time scholars are the increasingly likely future for many graduates of PhD programs.

Most people, including permanent professors, don't realize that the number of full-time faculty hires have not kept pace with growing student enrolments. They also might not realize how the expectations for tenure-track jobs have changed, becoming more stringent in response to dwindling positions and an increasing number of young PhDs.

I want to address what the growth in contract faculty means for faculty associations in Ontario. To do so, it is necessary to sketch out the rise of precarious academic employment, and the consequences of the growing use of contract faculty for the public university. Then we can examine the implications of precarious academic work for higher education, the tenure-track professoriate, and faculty associations. This issue is not only about the livelihoods of

our colleagues in contract positions, but also the future of the public university.

THE PRECARIOUS PROFESSORiate

For decades, corporations have hired temporary workers. These individuals work, often on a semi-permanent basis for months and years, alongside permanent, often unionized, employees. They do the same work, but temps are paid at a much lower rate and usually receive no benefits. Employers often take no responsibility for these workers even when they have worked for the same company for years.

For contract faculty, employment tends to be on a semester-by-semester rather than a day-by-day basis, and many work for more than one university or campus in any given semester.

The employment of temporary workers is also used to threaten the working conditions and compensation of permanent workers. Many unions have often agreed to two-tiered workforces to try and protect their existing membership; however, such actions can also undermine solidarity and actually weaken the ability of faculty associations to protect their members.

Employers often depend on temp agencies to find their temporary employees. These agencies work on commission, and work to fill slots with little concern for the people they put in them.

As the university relies increasingly on precarious professors to teach 30, 40, 50 per cent (and possibly more) of undergraduates, the more it resembles a corporation contracting with a temp agency: hiring workers “just in time” for different programs, paying far less for the same jobs done by permanent employees, and providing few or no benefits.

It wasn't always so.

The first major expansion of contract faculty or adjunct professors in US universities began in the early 1970s, even before heavy industry underwent downsizing, offshoring, and outsourcing. By 1975, 57 per cent of faculty were permanent and 43 per cent were temporary full- and part-time. According to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), those numbers were reversed by 1993. As the number of precarious positions accelerated, with 92.4 per cent of new faculty appointments between 1995 and 2009 going to part-time positions, the number of tenure-track faculty has dropped to barely one-in-four today (some 1.2 million out of 1.6 million faculty are in temporary positions).

In Canada, between 1987 and 2006, full-time faculty positions increased by 19 per cent, just one-third of the 56 per cent increase in full-time student enrolment. In Ontario, between 2000 and 2012, full-time faculty increased by 34 per cent, just half of the 68 per cent increase in student enrolment. In the same period, half course equivalents taught by contract faculty increased from approximately 20,000 to 43,500 according to data from the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA): a massive 87 per cent increase versus the 33 per cent increase in courses taught by full-time faculty.

We can get a better sense of the impact of these trends by focusing more closely on a single example. At Wilfrid Laurier University between 2008 and 2012, while student enrolment increased 23 per cent, there was only a seven per cent increase in full-time faculty (including *temporary* one- and two-year appointments). Management, however, increased by 44 per cent: almost double the student increase and more than six times the increase in full-time faculty.

At Laurier, the proportion of undergraduate students taught by contract faculty in all areas of the university—labs, tutorials, and lectures—has risen from 38 per cent in 2008 to 52 per cent by 2012 according to data and analysis from the Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association (WLUFA). Contract faculty are now responsible for educating half of all undergraduates at the university. Although this growing reliance on contract faculty is certainly not unique, it is certainly notable. The high proportion of students taught by contract faculty at Wilfrid Laurier has ensured that WLUFA has one out of the six seats at the Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) national committee for contract faculty.

Between 2010-2012, contract faculty cost Laurier an average of \$9 million per annum, accounting for just 3.4 per cent of 2012 revenue, or less than four cents of every dollar spent by the university. Senior administration could double contract faculty pay and it would still amount to less than seven cents of every dollar, while significantly improving the lives of contract faculty.

Total salary costs for all staff at Laurier, from the lowest paid to the president, dropped to just below 47 per cent (or 43.6 excluding contract faculty wages) of revenue in 2012, down from 51 per cent in 2008.

So what was the 19.2 per cent increase in tuition fees for in 2008-2012? The senior administration still insisted on making cuts. Students paid *more* for *larger* class sizes and *fewer* course choices and program options.

We know that Ontario has the largest class sizes and the lowest per-student funding in Canada. Our students also pay the highest tuition fees.

If, as the Laurier example suggests, we're not spending it on new full-time faculty or better salaries for contract faculty, where does the money go?



It's therefore important to make contract faculty much more expensive for senior administrations to hire, especially if we want our faculty expertise and knowledge not to be devalued.



We should also ask if the treatment of contract faculty reflects the values of and the claims made for the value of higher education by the university. Does it reflect the university's commitment to its central mission of education?

Indeed, what message does the treatment of contract faculty by universities send to students, parents and the public about the credentials they bestow?

If universities are promoting themselves on the future potential earnings of graduates with a bachelor's degree, why do the same universities pay only subsistence wages for those with two and three degrees?

THE THREAT TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

The conditions under which educators work and students learn must be a central concern for anyone who claims to care about higher education. The working conditions of contract faculty are in fact a barrier to the quality of the student learning experience. Talented teachers are forced to cope with low pay, working across multiple campuses and institutions (a consequence of poverty-level wages), a lack of real academic freedom, no job security, no office space, no benefits, and no pension plan.

But it's not just contract faculty who are feeling the strain of precarious employment. With fewer permanent faculty, those who remain face growing workload pressures. According to a 2012 OCUFA survey of faculty, 73 per cent said workloads had increased over the previous five years (10 per cent disagreed), another 42 per cent believe that the quality of undergraduate education had declined (28 per cent disagreed), and 63 per cent said class sizes increased in the same period (versus 17 per cent who disagreed).

PERMANENT VS. CONTRACT FACULTY?

I want to outline a few points of conflict that arise between permanent and contract faculty. Some permanent faculty are involved in the hiring process of contract faculty or have supervisory functions. Contract faculty, unlike permanent faculty, are likely to be subject to greater scrutiny because their (re)employment repeatedly depends upon satisfying not just students but also department chairs and hiring committees.

Since permanent faculty have first choice in the courses they teach, contract faculty are much more likely to

be teaching large first- and second-year courses, including required foundational courses. They also frequently prepare new courses, and do so at unpopular day-time slots (that pose difficulties for contract faculty with child- and/or elder-care responsibilities). Contrary to the popular perception that permanent faculty don't like to teach, it's more likely that they choose to teach smaller classes as well as upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses where there can be a closer alignment between research interests and course material.

Collective agreements often stipulate that permanent faculty have right of first refusal for teaching courses on overload (i.e. above their regular workloads). When permanent faculty choose to teach additional courses, the number of courses available for contract faculty to teach is reduced. This has a direct impact on the ability of thousands of contract faculty to pay for basic living needs like rent, utility bills and even food.

This is why some degree of job security is so critical for contract faculty—it ensures they have access to a reasonable income, while building solidarity among all faculty members.

WHY PERMANENT FACULTY SHOULD FIGHT FOR CONTRACT COLLEAGUES

Despite potential points of conflict between permanent and contract faculty, it makes more sense for us to work together. There is strength in numbers. Many faculty associations represent both full- and part-time members. We all have an interest in providing a high quality educational experience. So let's focus on what unites rather than divides.

Since contract professors are such a small expense for universities, and since some are even now becoming successful in obtaining national research grants, some administrators might be tempted to stop hiring full-time faculty altogether.

It's therefore important to make contract faculty much more expensive for senior administrations to hire, especially if we want our faculty expertise and knowledge not to be devalued. If we push for compensation for contract faculty that is proportionate to permanent faculty and commensurate with their education, expertise and experience, administrators might be more inclined to hire more full-time faculty, lifting many out of the precarious ranks.

Where precarious work persists, contract faculty should be paid what full-time faculty are paid for the same

work. Their pay should also recognize career development or progress-through-the-ranks, as they gain experience in teaching courses for each year of full-time course load or equivalent.

Like permanent faculty, contract faculty should benefit from time and resources allotted for professional development, especially given their responsibility for an ever greater role in undergraduate education.

Greater job security for contract faculty also increases the voice and power of faculty in the university. Fewer permanent faculty to defend academic freedom and participate in collegial governance will ultimately result in the loss of our autonomy.

Full-time faculty might also want to wonder how long our pension plans will survive without enough permanent faculty paying into the plans *and* defending them from management that leaves them with large deficits (through, for example, contribution holidays). Extending pensions and benefits to contract faculty can help improve the security of our pensions, while ensuring some form of retirement income for contract faculty.

FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS AND CONTRACT FACULTY

Faculty associations are the primary means by which we protect our profession, the quality of higher education, and the university as a community of teachers and scholars. Faculty associations and their national and provincial confederations, such as CAUT (1951) and OCUFA (1964), were formed as a way of dealing with centralizing, top-down administrations and governments to improve compensation and retain control over working conditions, professional autonomy, and academic freedom. Protecting these rights became more important as collegial governance declined. As Neil Tudiver writes in *Universities for Sale* (1999):

“Until the late 1950s professors endured conservative governance, low compensation, weak protection of academic freedom, and poor working conditions. They enjoyed freedom of speech in teaching but were constrained in voicing views on controversial issues or challenging the status quo. They were poorly represented on university governing bodies and had no organizations of their own with standing to challenge managerial authority”.

This speaks to the situation of contract faculty today.

About half of Ontario universities have faculty associations that include contract faculty, either in the same bargaining unit (e.g. Windsor) or in separate bargaining units (e.g. Laurier). Yet, many leading contract faculty activists feel that associations will only bargain for what permanent faculty will allow. As such, contract faculty members often feel as though they are always considered and treated as second-class citizens. As precarious workers, contract faculty are already vulnerable to possi-

ble repercussions for their activism from both permanent faculty in supervisory positions and from administrators. This is why it is critical that faculty associations take the lead in modeling ways and means for supporting (not leading) contract faculty in fighting to improve their pay and working conditions.

In 1999, the leadership of the California Faculty Association (CFA) representing faculty in the California State University (CSU) system transformed the way the CFA operated and worked to support contract faculty. It put substantial resources under the control of lecturers and enhanced the formal organizational position of contract faculty. This combination has seen substantial gains in working conditions and compensation. In June this year, the CSU got 700 new tenure-track positions. Success is possible.

Faculty associations, whether or not they include contract faculty in their ranks, also need to work with other unions that represent contract faculty, especially the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). CUPE’s Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee (OUWCC), which is attempting to coordinate bargaining for contract faculty and support staff across the university sector, includes eight locals representing contract faculty (out of 15 nationwide).

Given the Ontario government’s attempt to direct universities through the new Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) negotiation process, and the introduction of American-style program prioritization plans by university administrators, the OUWCC’s idea of sectoral bargaining might not be a bad idea. Indeed, it might be in contract faculty’s best interests to become organized at a provincial level. It will be important for existing and provincial and national faculty organizations—such as OCUFA and CAUT—to help facilitate greater organization and coordination within the contract faculty ranks, and with full-time faculty. There are some promising signs that this is beginning to occur.

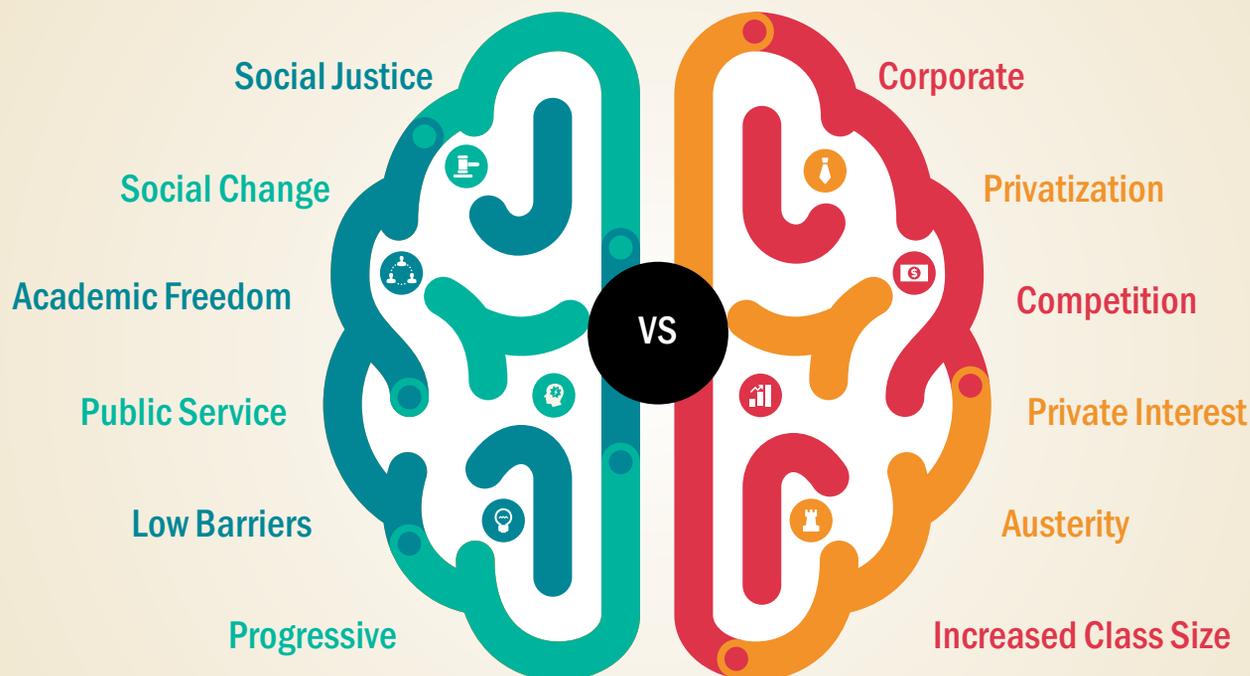
We should also be looking at the model provided by the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education in the United States, which has launched a broader movement of the public, academic staff, and students working to improve higher education. The working conditions of contract and permanent faculty affect the learning conditions of students. As public servants, we have a duty and responsibility to the public to maintain the highest standards of higher education and to ensure that governments, boards, and administrations are held accountable for sustaining the core mission of the public university.

All academic jobs should be good jobs. Every university experience should be a quality one. Only by working together can contract and full-time faculty achieve these goals. **AM**

Herbert Pimlott believes tenured faculty have a duty as both scholars and public servants to exercise their academic freedom to sustain the quality, integrity and future of higher education and to do so in the public interest. He is an associate professor of communication studies at Wilfrid Laurier University and can be contacted at hpimlott@wlu.ca.

NEOLIBERALISM AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: A View From The Colleges

Kevin MacKay



Colleges are struggling with the same trends that threaten universities. By working together, college and university faculty can push back.

Les collèges sont aux prises avec les mêmes tendances qui menacent les universités. En travaillant ensemble, les professeurs des collèges et universités peuvent les repousser.

A TALE OF TWO MANDATES

Last September, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology—Academic (CAAT-A) division organized a campaign to connect with faculty and investigate the state of education at Ontario’s community colleges. As part of the campaign, I traveled to all 24 colleges in the province to discuss the experiences and perceptions of professors, counselors, and librarians. The impetus behind the project came from a pervasive sense that college faculty are facing unprecedented challenges to their working conditions and to their ability to deliver high-quality education.

The challenges being faced by faculty speak directly to the mandate of Ontario’s postsecondary education system, and in particular to the role played by community colleges. The original mandate of the CAATs was laid out in their founding legislation, introduced in 1965. The colleges were initially seen as providing access to postsecondary education for groups who wouldn’t normally attend university due to socioeconomic barriers. The mandate also closely linked each college with its surrounding community, and ensured

that colleges would be responsive to local educational, job training, and community development needs.

Community colleges were structured around a progressive vision that reflected government and social priorities of the time and saw education as a tool for promoting social justice and social change. However, as public institutions, the CAATs have been subject to shifts in government priorities in the years since their founding.

As governments in the 1980s and 1990s embraced a neoliberal ideology, a competing vision of the colleges emerged. This new vision emphasized corporate organization, privatization, entrepreneurship, and inter-institutional competition. On today's college and university campuses, the two visions are locked in conflict. At stake is whether postsecondary education continues to fulfill a progressive mandate centered on education as a tool for social justice and change, or whether it succumbs to a neoliberal agenda driven by government austerity and private interest.

THE NEW CORPORATE COLLEGE

Effects of the ascendant neoliberal vision have been increasingly apparent in Ontario's colleges in recent years. This vision has led to decreased government funding, the casualization of the academic workforce, the expansion of online learning, reliance on private service providers, and the erosion of academic freedom. These effects have in turn had an impact on students, manifested in sky-rocketing tuition fees, a crushing student debt burden, increased class sizes, decreased services, and lower-quality education.

Arguably the most direct effect of the neoliberal turn in provincial and federal politics has been the steady decline in government support for Ontario colleges and universities. The election of Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government in 1984 saw a decline in federal funding to the provinces for health, education, and social services. This led to fiscal crises in the provinces, which struggled to maintain levels of public service delivery. From 1995, Mike Harris' Progressive Conservative government accelerated the fiscal transformation of Ontario. At both the federal and provincial levels, corporate taxes were slashed along with marginal tax rates for the highest income earners. As a result of these policies, governments lost billions of dollars per year in tax revenue, income inequality steadily increased, and funding for public services steadily declined.

At the time of their founding, approximately 75 per cent of operating funding for the CAATs came from provincial government grants via the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU), and the Ministry of Skills Development (MSD). The next greatest sources of revenue came from federal government purchases of apprenticeship program seats, and from tuition fees paid by students. Tuition

originally accounted for between 10 and 15 per cent of operating revenues. This financial situation did not last long. From 1978-79 to 1981-82, government grants fell by 28 per cent. An infusion of new funding came in 1986-87, addressing some of the shortfall, but still leaving the real (inflation-adjusted) level of government funding at 84 per cent of its 1978-79 levels. Since the 1980s there has also been a steady decline in federal funding for higher education. In 1992-93 federal cash transfers for postsecondary education were 0.41 per cent of GDP. As of 2012-13, they were only 0.20 per cent of GDP—a 50 per cent decrease.

Provincial funding for colleges has continued to decline. The Harris Conservative government in Ontario was instrumental in these changes, cutting \$7 billion in funding for health, education, and social services. By 2005, Ontario colleges were getting 40 per cent less funding per student than they did in 1988-89.

Tuition fees tripled over the same 15 year period. Today, funding per full-time postsecondary student in Ontario is the lowest among all the provinces, and government grants make up less than 50 per cent of college revenues. Tuition fees currently account for 33 per cent of the operating revenue of Ontario colleges, a 300 per cent increase from 1967. In essence, the cost burden of postsecondary education has shifted from tax revenue paid by the wealthiest Canadians and by corporations, to tuition fees paid by students.

The consequences of declining funding for the colleges should be familiar to any university observer. With less money flowing in, college management has been relying heavily on less-expensive part-time faculty, while also increasing class sizes. In the 15 year period from 1988-89 to 2004-05, full-time student enrolment in the colleges increased 53 per cent, while the number of full-time faculty decreased by 22 per cent. The decrease in full-time professors, counselors, and librarians means that two thirds of college faculty are now part-time. Of the 24 colleges, all but three have not come close to recovering their highest complement of full-time faculty, and most are substantially below this number.

While full-time faculty have become scarce within the system, the number of full-time administrators has been rapidly expanding. Between 1995-96 and 2011-12, the number of college administrative staff increased by 55 per cent. This increase in administration reflects sweeping institutional transformations that occurred in the face of privatization and increased competition. Under the Harris government, college recruitment strategies changed. Originally the CAATs recruited students from their regional catchment areas, and thus each institution had a defined territory from which to draw students. Under the Harris Conservatives, the catchment areas were abolished, and colleges and universities were encouraged to compete for



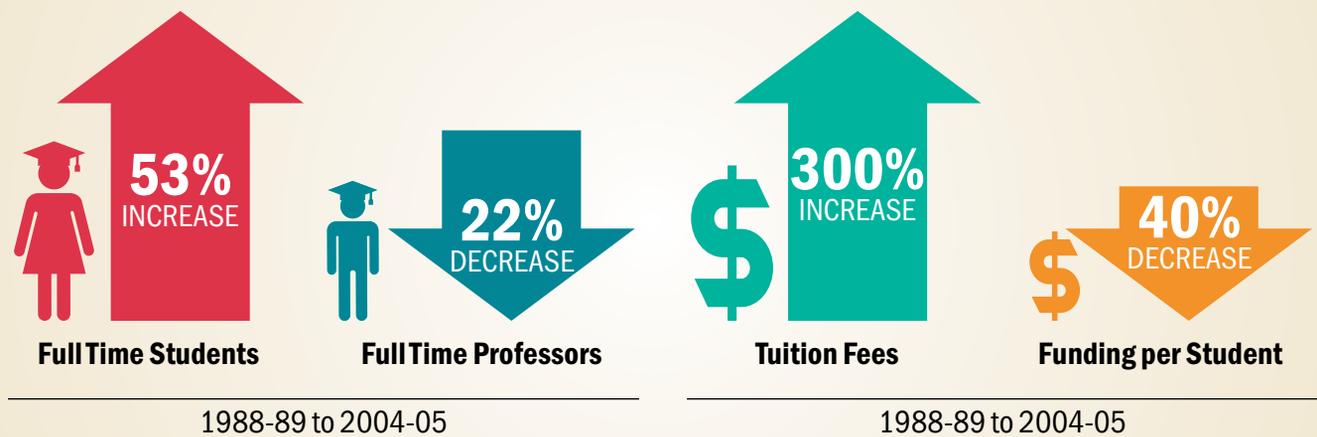
The subsidiary campuses operate under a licensing agreement with the publicly funded college, in which the name, branding, curriculum, and credentials are purchased by the private institution.

students in a province-wide, deregulated “educational marketplace.” In keeping with the Harris government’s neoliberal ideology, other changes were made that increased the competitive nature of the postsecondary education environment. For example, the CAATs were given the authority to grant degrees and were encouraged to partner with universities on collaborative degree programs.

The competitive pressure to deliver education with less funding has also seen the privatization of college programs.

College partnering with Hansen College in Brampton and Toronto; Mohawk College partnering with Pures College in Scarborough; and St. Lawrence College partnering with Alpha International Academy in Toronto.

Another outcome of cost-cutting pressure in the colleges has been the proliferation of online learning. In the 1995-96 school year, seven northern colleges created Contact North, a consortium that launched Ontario Learn, a hub for delivering online credit courses. Since its creation,



Today a number of government-funded community colleges have formed partnerships with private, for-profit campuses. The subsidiary campuses operate under a licensing agreement with the publicly funded college, in which the name, branding, curriculum, and credentials are purchased by the private institution. The private campus instructors are not Ontario college faculty or OPSEU members, and their credentials and training are unregulated. Instructors at private campuses are paid substantially less than Ontario college faculty, and they have no union protection and little job security. In addition, the private campuses overwhelmingly target international students. Tuition fees for these students are unregulated, making them attractive revenue generators. Through the combination of lower staffing costs, lower building costs, and lucrative international student fees, private campuses have become an important revenue stream for several publicly funded colleges. The private college campuses are generally in different communities, with Cambrian

Ontario Learn has been expanding its offerings. In 2000-01 there were 285 online courses with 11,314 registrants. By 2012-13 this had climbed to 1,115 course offerings with 69,838 students enrolled. Online learning can be a useful option for many students. However, colleges have pursued online learning as a means to cut costs, not improve the educational experience. The proliferation of online courses has also been a way for colleges to transfer work away from full-time professors. Most online instructors are part-time, and the majority of their work involves delivering courses that would otherwise be taught in regular campus settings. Using the standard workload formula currently contained in the college faculty collective agreement, OPSEU has calculated that the number of courses being taught through Ontario Learn is roughly the equivalent of 500 full-time faculty jobs.

In 2012, then-Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Glen Murray released *Strengthening Ontario’s*

Centres of Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge. This document argued for the need to re-organize postsecondary education through a process of differentiation that would eliminate supposed duplication of courses, programs, and credentials across the college and university sectors. The motivation behind increased differentiation was to control costs and a key strategy outlined in the document was to use online learning to deliver core courses to students at multiple institutions.

The government and administrative push for online course delivery is having a profound impact on colleges. At Mohawk, for example, the online mandate has been enforced institution-wide, and has completely superseded faculty's ability to determine the form and content of their courses. It has also impaired the ability of students to access delivery methods that meet their diverse learning needs. College management has decreed that every lecture-based course must eliminate one hour of class time and replace it with one hour of online content. This "hybrid" or "blended" model of course delivery has met significant pedagogical criticism from faculty, and has triggered an outpouring of student anger and dissatisfaction.

For college faculty, the widespread use of online learning is a direct attack on academic freedom. Long a source of contention within the colleges, academic freedom has historically had a de facto existence in most institutions, while not obtaining de jure status in the faculty collective agreement. Under current cost-cutting and privatization pressures, the formerly collegial environment that saw college professors control academic issues has given way to an autocratic management regime that denies faculty control at every turn.

In the colleges today, managers are increasingly changing faculty grades, imposing textbooks, mandating publisher-developed "courses in a can" for faculty to teach, determining course evaluation methods, and dictating course delivery methods. With no protection for academic freedom in the collective agreement, faculty have little grounds to contest these impositions, or to criticize management decisions that are clearly detrimental to academic quality and student success. Additionally, with no academic freedom, faculty have no grounds to contest the appropriation and sale of their intellectual property. Faculty-developed online courses become the exclusive property of the college. Faculty curriculum can be sold to private institutions, who deliver courses and programs in direct competition with the faculty who first designed them. With no academic freedom, college faculty are essentially being directed to work themselves right out of a job.

RECLAIMING EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

What college faculty have increasingly realized is that the cost-cutting and privatizing pressures they now face are part of a wider assault on postsecondary education itself.

We know that our colleagues in Ontario universities are enduring the same process of differentiation, through which courses, programs, departments and institutions must engage in economic competition for their very survival. We know that sessional and contract appointments are swelling the ranks of university faculty, and that academic freedom is being slowly dismantled through casualization and budget pressures. We also realize that students enrolled in both colleges and universities are bearing the brunt of neoliberal adjustments, as they pay steadily greater amounts for steadily diminishing educational returns. We all have a shared interest in the integrity of postsecondary education, and if the system is to be reclaimed in the name of education, then this shared interest must catalyze into shared action.

Of necessity, our action will involve local struggles within each institution, and within each association and union local. These are important. However, faculty and students must also engage the larger forces that determine government priorities, and that constrain local realities. The neoliberal ideology that now ravages our colleges and universities has penetrated every aspect of Canadian society—replacing the notions of collective good, public service, and government stewardship with an individualistic market fundamentalism that is as dogmatic as it is, ultimately, irrational. In order to combat the effects of this ideology within colleges and universities, we need to shift the political culture and the legislation that perpetuates it. This will involve coalition-building between faculty and students at all postsecondary institutions, and political action at both provincial and federal levels.

Ultimately, our political struggle must help connect the dots—for our members and for the public at large—between government policy and institutional realities. Tax breaks for the rich and corporations lead to gutted government revenues and high income inequality. Budget deficits caused by missing tax revenue are then used as a pretext to dismantle social infrastructure. Public services are bled to the point that they are too weak to resist private intrusion. Public service professionals—protected by unions and possessing pensions and decent salaries—are eliminated. Finally, the public good of education—long a source of critical reflection and progressive change—instead becomes a mere credential mill, and a lucrative source of "knowledge capital". This is the logic we are now facing, and this is the future that awaits us should the corporate mandate prevail. The outcome of this struggle is not yet decided, but our failure to act decisively will only see us slide further down the neoliberal slope. ■■

Kevin MacKay is a professor of Social Science at Mohawk College in Hamilton. He is vice-president of the college faculty union, OPSEU Local 240, and has recently produced a Report on Education in Ontario Colleges for OPSEU.



Taking the Long View of Indigenous Teacher Education

Iolehawk Laura Buker

Exploring what
Indigenous education
can bring to our
universities and
our communities.

*L'exploration de ce que
l'éducation autochtone
peut apporter à
nos universités et
à nos communautés.*



To “take the long view” is to reflect, discuss, or dialogue on the effectiveness and/or power something will have in the future instead of the present. The 21st century is proceeding at a relentless pace of change. This has brought disruption to faculty across the Canadian landscape, including those who work in the Ontario university sector. Why is it important at this juncture to turn our collective intelligence and action to the future of Indigenous teacher education? What transformative ideas are unfurling in university teacher education programs by Indigenous faculty and their Indigenous students?

As an Indigenous professor, I carry two important perspectives that guide and shape my work. First, I identify with the Coastal Mountains of the Fraser Valley and the Big River in British Columbia known for thousands of years as the Stó:lō. The River and the People have the same name, Stó:lō. I am a river woman of the Stó:lō and learned at an early age that everything that fed our family came out of that river. Salmon, it is said by my elders, “is found in our bones. It is in our DNA.” Second, I have spent the better part of my adult life reclaiming my identity, renewing the foundational knowledge of culture and language, and walking the path as a peaceful warrior for social justice, equity, and women and children’s rights. I continue to work alongside Indigenous communities to bring a new era of Indigenous teacher education programs to the university and am deeply committed to mentoring the Indigenous scholars that are fulfilling their goals in higher education.

This is a point in time when a renewed commitment could be made by Faculties of Education to make bold curriculum and pedagogical change through acknowledgment that Indigenous epistemologies, cultural worldviews, and community partnerships have a place at the table of learning. Why does this matter more than ever in the halls and walls of the university? Relationship building does not happen because a document, a policy statement or a vision statement are signed and protocol is addressed. Let me explain.

Indigenous stories of the land, people, and culture are narratives that inform a way of respectful living. The stories are told time and again, sometimes seasonally, and often when protocol requires. This is how respectful relationships are formed and trust built over time. For example, in the spring season in my territory, there is the First Salmon Ceremony. The Elders share this story of the relationship that joins the People and the Salmon. It is an old story. The narrative is about sustainability and maintaining a relationship, so that the Salmon will always return to feed the People. It is more than preservation of an ecosystem, it is a deeper recognition that “respect, and setting things right,” are the ties, the roots, and the lineage narratives of language, culture, and

history. The protocol, the ceremony, listening and sharing of the stories of salmon keep the community together through acknowledging the importance of harmony, and appreciating a shared value worth remembering and honouring. A renewed commitment from our universities to move Indigenous education goals and programs forward is necessary as we move into the next decade.

How confident are the voices of Aboriginal, Inuit, and Métis Faculty pioneering original educational research along with ground-breaking policy recommendations in our universities? Are they being awarded respect, tenure, and equity throughout the university system? What is to be made visible and to be acknowledged in an authentic manner by peers, deans, and presidents of our institutions? What are new Indigenous teacher-scholars bringing to the art of learning as they come through the doors to higher education? Respect. Continuity. Humour. Protocol. These words describe how to reach people, and how to change and open dialogue.

The timing of these questions has come as a six-year window opens towards the year 2020. This sense of urgency to change the “way things are done” throughout the university towards a more diverse, transparent, and equitable relationship has been made clear through strategic reports on Aboriginal education in the past four years. One, came from the Council of Ontario Universities, *Unity Through Diversity*. This is a summary report from 2012 containing an immediate call to “reframe” the need for Aboriginal education funding because of the simple fact that, “investing in the postsecondary education of Aboriginal youth makes great economic sense.” The other commendable document was designed by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (2010), titled *Accord on Indigenous Education*. The Accord’s progressive goals give agency to the membership in the ACDE to foster respectful and welcoming learning environments; inclusive curricula; culturally responsive pedagogies; mechanisms for valuing and promoting indigeneity in education; culturally responsive assessment; affirming and revitalizing Indigenous languages; retention strategies for Indigenous education leadership; and to foster non-Indigenous learners and indigeneity through reflection and dialogue. Will the academy falter and continue to be bystanders and detractors as a new wave of Indigenous learners enters the halls of higher learning while little change is made to the systemic refusal to understand the rich environmental narratives, stories of community, and the heartbreaking healing that is a constant throughout Indigenous urban and rural territories?

It is my hope that a deeper appreciation will take hold in all corners of the academy and that minds will be open when recommendations are brought forward by Indigenous



educators. However, the perspective I offer is that for all the collective reports, policy documents, think tanks and recommendation forums, there remains a “ceiling of power,” that refuses to examine their resistance to an Indigenous viewpoint. I offer a story. It is told by Richard West Jr., a citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and a Peace Chief of the Southern Cheyenne. He is also a founding director of the Smithsonian Museum.

“The story begins by introducing a northern California Indian basket-maker, Mrs. Matt, who was hired to teach basket making at the local university. After three weeks, her students complained that all they had done was sing songs. When, they asked, were they going to learn to make baskets? Mrs. Matt, somewhat taken aback, replied that they were learning to make baskets. She explained that the process starts with songs that are sung so as not to insult the plants when the materials for the baskets are picked. So her students learned the songs and went to pick the grasses and plants to make their baskets.

Upon their return to the classroom, however, the students again were dismayed when Mrs. Matt began to teach them yet *more* songs. This time she wanted them to learn the songs that must be sung as you soften the materials in your mouth before you start to weave. Exasperated, the students protested having to learn songs instead of learning to make baskets. Mrs. Matt, perhaps a bit exasperated herself at this point, thereupon patiently explained the obvious to them: “You’re missing the point,” she told them, “a basket is a song made visible.”

When we put our children’s success in the centre of all our discussions and decision-making, it becomes increasingly important to take on opportunities that foster innovation and encourage transparency.

At the epicentre of Indigenous thought and philosophy is how to engage others in meaningful dialogue so as to make visible a worldview that is the foundation of all Aboriginal education. Indigenous student scholars are confronted with this negotiation for most of their undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Indigenous faculty, who themselves have had to swim through the treacherous waters of academic institutions to gain their degrees, continue to bring forward a deep appreciation for a way of learning and a philosophy of connectedness that anchors their original research and grant opportunities. Still, a glass ceiling of resistance is all too apparent when Indigenous faculty are challenged for suggesting innovative programs or pilot projects for reaching potential new students when funding is needed for travel to remote communities, or investment monies are needed to bring community partnerships into faculty programs. Funding agencies are reluctant to cover things like mobile computers or tablets when digital tools and software apps for Indigenous learning resources are necessary for a knowledgeable, mobile society.

An Indigenous ceremony involves a protocol that prepares the area for relationship building, a bringing together of everyone attending, acknowledging the territory, and

setting a respectful intention for the work, the speaking, the listening, and the sharing that will commence. The four areas that may assist in resetting our Aboriginal education goals towards the year 2020 are: change, respect for Indigenous knowledge, opening doors for community partnership, and recognition of the new storytellers.

First, it is time to create talking circles that share the ways and the means of developing and maintaining positive, progressive relationships between Indigenous faculty and all levels of the university. There are many talented and creative individuals that have brought Indigenous stories of the land, people, language, and history through courses, research, film, literature, dance, art, and story. Each and every member of the university community needs to be part of the healing process that addresses the horrific residential school history. In order to accomplish this, knowledge, reflection, and dialogue will ultimately open hearts. We can support the commitment to Aboriginal education that plays a role in leading the way to restore a longed for salve of grace and humanity throughout the halls of learning. This is the change needed to move the long view of Aboriginal education into new waters by 2020.

Second, the research undertaken by Indigenous education scholars continues to crack open new possibilities for ways of learning, revising curriculum to teach literacy and to put into place project initiatives that reflect the priorities of Indigenous communities. It is time to create an innovative expression for the word "research." The notable Maori Scholar, Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, is well known for her use of the term "decolonizing methodologies" to herald a new era of conducting innovative approaches to pressing issues throughout Indigenous education. The context shift is towards valuing the role Indigenous knowledge, language and culture play in all aspects of the research process.

Third, it may be opportune to push forward interdisciplinary partnerships within the university that would benefit collaboration and exchange of ideas, course content, and epistemological approaches to learning. For example, consider the opportunity for the health sciences and education to bring about a greater exchange of knowledge when health professionals and Indigenous educators bring both nurses and teachers together to focus on improving the lives of Aboriginal children. The approach could bring about new collaborations that would resonate locally, provincially, and nationally. The same could be applied to environmental and resource management as well as the disciplines of science, engineering, and business. What is at stake is the future of our Aboriginal children. When we put our children's success in the centre of all our discussions and decision-making, it becomes increasingly important to take on opportunities

that foster innovation and encourage transparency. It takes leadership, partnerships and a will to envision a better world for our next generation of learners.

Finally, and perhaps the most exciting prospect found in Indigenous education today is the new teacher-scholars entering our universities. They are the new storytellers. I have met these extraordinary students in my classrooms, in online courses, in graduate seminars, and in community events and ceremonies. I have witnessed their honours projects in community forums, Aboriginal education media presentations and have been inspired by their ground-breaking thesis work. These new teacher-scholars are arriving with a sense of purpose to create learning environments that are relevant to Aboriginal children. They are asking the hard questions about racism, discrimination, and equity. There is a better way. They are part of this new revolution of change. After completing their education degree and gaining full teacher certification, these new teacher-scholars are now changing the landscape of their communities. They are influencing the next generation to succeed at school and are embracing education leadership roles. The new Aboriginal, Métis, and Inuit educators are forward thinking in creating partnerships that make sense economically, environmentally, and above all, are placing social justice at the front of all policy decision-making.

The long view towards Indigenous Education is that change takes time to gain momentum, to get the wheels in motion, and to keep going forward. This is not the moment in history to reduce funding for the aspects of Indigenous education that are necessary for growth and capacity building, such as community partnerships with northern communities, developing innovative course delivery, and retaining and hiring Indigenous faculty.

An Elder in Northern Ontario explains it this way: "as long as the grass grows and the wind blows, there is no mountain too high or valley too low, to keep the People from doing the work." The long view must be kept in our sight for the children that are entering the classrooms of today and tomorrow. Somewhere by the Great Lakes is a native child preparing to lead the city of Toronto. Somewhere by the fast-moving river is a child preparing to take their place as the first Native Premier of the Province of Ontario. Somewhere walking the land is a native child destined to lead a nation as the first Indigenous Prime Minister of Canada. This is what it means to take the long view of Indigenous Education.

Chi Meegwetch. Thank you very much. **AM**

Dr. Iolehawk Laura Buker is a pioneer of Indigenous Teacher Education programs and is currently in the Faculty of Education, Aboriginal Education at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario. Dr. Iolehawk Laura Buker is Stó:lō from the Fraser Valley in BC.



TWO HEADS are better than one. There is strength in numbers. United we stand, divided we fall. Many hands make light work.

The clichés are numerous, but the point is clear: results tend to be better when people work together. It is a simple idea, but one that has proven incredibly powerful down through history.

Fifty years ago, the founders of OCUFA must have had some variation on this theme in mind when they came together to create a new provincial organization for faculty in Ontario. Faculty associations were founded on the idea that cooperation and solidarity are needed to protect the principles of the academic profession and the rights of those who work in it. OCUFA represented a scaled-up version of this vision of academic solidarity, expanding the power of local associations by connecting them to colleagues across the province.

This year, we mark the semicentenary of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. It's an important occasion for *Academic Matters*. OCUFA is our publisher, and without them we would literally not exist. But the significance of OCUFA goes beyond the pages you hold in your hands.

A 50th anniversary is a great opportunity to explore this significance in more depth. It is a chance not only to take a look back at the history of the organization (as Carol Anderson does, in this issue), but also to take stock of the present and look to the future. We've tried

to accomplish all three in the Fall 2014 issue of *Academic Matters*. Obviously, this is impossible to do in just 28 pages, so the record before you is necessarily incomplete. But we hope to provide some useful illumination for OCUFA—and organizations like it—going forward.

Since its founding, OCUFA has been witness to some extraordinary changes in Ontario's university sector. At the time of its founding, the higher education landscape in Ontario was very different. The system was still small, and participation was limited to a narrow slice of the population. As Anderson observes, this reality was already beginning to shift as OCUFA came into existence. Over the next few decades, the sector underwent a huge expansion. Not only were there more students generally, but more from a greater variety of demographic and socio-economic groups.

This growth followed the general trend of economic expansion and middle class prosperity following WWII. As Trish Hennessy notes, the labour movement played an important role in ensuring better working conditions and a bigger piece of the pie for working Canadians during this time. As economic growth began to stall in the 1970s and governments began to squeeze public sector finances, unionization became an attractive option for faculty associations across Canada. For many, union status provided the means to improve working conditions and ensure some measure of faculty governance in increasingly centralized universities.

Despite the bulwark provided by faculty associations, public funding for universities has continued to decline. Alongside this scarcity has come an increasingly market-driven and corporate model of the university. In recent years—and most notably in the recent Ontario election—the very existence of unions and collective bargaining has been attacked. In their contribution to this issue, Larry Savage and Stephanie Ross suggest that old models of the faculty association are no longer adequate to fend off these challenges and preserve the public university. They suggest that greater political and community engagement will be necessary going forward.

One of the clearest consequences of under-funding has been the explosion of the number of precarious faculty teaching at our universities. Herbert Pimlott argues that faculty associations must work to improve the working condition of contract faculty to build solidarity within the university and to protect the principles of public education. For her part, Laura Buker reminds us of the need to incorporate diverse voices into our faculty associations to make sure they speak for everyone.

Kevin MacKay points out that solidarity need not stop at the walls of the university, either. Faculty at Ontario's community colleges are struggling with similar issues, and coalitions across the province's postsecondary sector are necessary to push back.

The articles in this issue are challenging, and we're sure you'll disagree with some of the points raised by our contributors. I encourage you to leave your thoughts, comments, and arguments on academicmatters.ca. There, in addition to the articles in this issue, you'll also find our latest blogs and web exclusives.

Here's to another 50 years. Thanks for reading. **AM**

Graeme Stewart is the Editor-in-Chief of Academic Matters, Communications Manager for OCUFA, and a PhD student at the University of Toronto.

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