



# NEWS

Volume 28 No.1 December 2012

## Concordia University Part-time Faculty Association Newsletter

### President's Report

The Association's membership voted by secret ballot for an unlimited strike mandate at the Special General Assembly of November 4, 2012. Fully 95% of the membership supported the mandate. What does this mean exactly?

First, this does not mean we are on strike or that a strike will be declared tomorrow morning. What it does mean is that the Association has been given the confidence to engage in diverse pressure tactics that will be brought to bear for both the abysmal implementation of our current Collective Agreement and of the stalled contract negotiations. Put simply, the last few months of negotiations has not produced anything of substance. The mandate means that unlike the previous negotiations, we are not prepared to wait another seven years to achieve our next Agreement. Secondly, our mandate does not mean we oppose Concordia as a University community but rather Concordia as an employer of a public administration. No one wants to go on strike (yet). Members will continue to fulfill their obligations until such time as it may be necessary to engage in a "form of strike action".

The Association's Executive, its Advisory Council, and the Nego Team continue to be dismayed about how labour relations continue to be conducted. Whether at a Labour Management Committee table or now, at a Negotiation table, no serious attempt is made to prevent conflict or even to resolve issues. We know from our conversations with other bargaining units concurrently seeking their next Collective Agreement from Concordia that our experience is by no means an anomaly.

It is our contention that the present institutional confusion between the roles and jurisdictions of the Offices of Institutional Relations and the Offices of the Provost has resulted in a paralysis when dealing with the question of effective labour management. Devoid of collective memory, an inability to understand academic imperatives and an inability to understand a public administration are some of the root causes of the hostile culture all employees – staff and faculty seek to address. We hope that our new President can bring his own vision and leadership into this quagmire. It is time to drain the swamp, clear away the debris of the past, and allow all parties to proceed in new directions.

### 2011-14 CUPFA Executive

#### President

Maria E. Peluso

#### Vice President, Collective Agreement & Grievance

Patrice Blais

#### Vice President, Professional Development

Lorraine Oades

#### Treasurer

June Riley

#### Secretary

Scott Chlopan

**Chair of Communications** – David Douglas

**Chair, External Relations** – Francine Tremblay

**Chair of Mobilisation** – Erwin Regler

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#### Office Hours

Monday through Thursday

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### Grievance Clinic - By appointment

Patrice Blais, Grievance Officer

Michael Pinsonneault Asst. Grievance

Officer

#### Professional Development Clinic

By appointment

Lorraine Oades

The issues diverse groups on campus are confronting are not pure "union" issues but reflect a mindset, a confrontational and litigious approach to policy formation and implementation. No one is prepared to tolerate the old "it's the unions on campus who are making life difficult". Such platitudes will no longer work to justify the deep rooted discontent felt within the community. There remains a serious disconnect with the principles of management, labour and the ethics we teach/research and how those principles are administered in real time. Presently at Concordia, there are no "best practices" that would stand the test of academic analysis. It is ironic that an academic endeavour such as a university that should celebrate creativity, original thinking, and discourse discourages such practices with the administration of its policies.

Regardless of the challenges the Association confronts on the administrative side, we continue to advance in the area of research, teaching and learning, and the personal development of our members. Our Campus Equity campaign this year focused on the unavailability of research funding for part-time faculty and how best to address this lacuna. Stay tuned to the special events planned to highlight the creative endeavours of our members for the winter semester in the Montreal arts community, the comprehensive session being planned in May on approaches to retirement, or the teaching and learning orientation planned for the fall of assisting students we teach with special needs. As a service organization, the Association will continue to meet the academic and personal needs of the membership. No unlimited strike mandate will diminish the obligations the CUPFA Executive or its Advisory Council provides its faculty members.

As to Concordia (as a University), CUPFA continues to contribute to the Concordia Shuffle, the Centraide Campaign, the Memorial Golf Tournament, the CUPFA Endowment Scholarship, the Visiting Scholars program with the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, and a host of student projects. Whenever possible, we engage the services of our members and/or of students for employment opportunities. The design of the CUPFA website is one such example.

It is hoped that Concordia's new President and Vice Chancellor, Dr. Alan Shepard, will succeed in establishing harmonious relations within the University community. The first step would be to recognize that our challenges cannot continue to be defined in such terms as left/right, union/management, faculty/administration but, rather, the pressing need to establish a balanced human approach for our community. In this manner, the mission of our University will grow and thrive.

I extend to the membership good tidings for the upcoming holiday season with family and friends. Cherish your time together with loved ones. May 2013 herald the beginning of a new era for our University and for the global community at large. May peace reign in our hearts and minds.

Maria E. Peluso,  
President

## **NOTICE OF MEETING - AGM**

All regular part-time faculty members are invited to attend the  
CUPFA Annual General Meeting

on

Thursday, March 7, 2013

Hall Building H -763

4:45 p.m.

*Happy Holidays*

*Meilleurs Voeux*

## **An Unlimited Strike Mandate Part One – Where to go from here? The Nego Team Responds**

The Nego Team thanks the membership for their continued contribution to achieve a new contract. Thanks to all those who attended the Special General Assembly of November 4<sup>th</sup> and who voted (95%) to pursue an unlimited strike mandate. The Nego Team is also indebted to all of you who continue to provide information about your needs, suggestions, and areas where improvements for the implementation of a Collective Agreement will be successful. We remain (again) dismayed at the excessive costs with negotiations at Concordia.

Negotiations for the administration are costly in a number of ways. We were told that they met for one year to produce a document that alters every single one of our normative Articles. No monetary Articles were submitted. Three individuals, non-academics, their time, and salary produced something that the Association and its members rejected outright. The same negotiators who are unable to implement what they negotiated three years ago, resulting in additional legal costs with an excessive amount of grievances. Then there are costs associated with the actual length of negotiations at Concordia. The longer negotiations take place the more costs escalate. To paraphrase "Do the arithmetic". The last negotiations that lasted seven years cost the University over 2 million dollars (in conservative terms) in negotiations alone. Such is the cost of ignorance and bad faith – being penny-wise and pound-foolish.

### **There are plenty of solutions that can lead us away from declaring an actual strike:**

1. an option for the administration to consider is mediation, a professional mediator hired to lead us out of the impasse; this would work if faculty or administrative staff that worked in what was once "Faculty Personnel" could be brought to the table; no Collective Agreement will be reached with the University's current team;
2. limit the number of Articles that need to be negotiated rather than attempt to reinvent the wheel; normally with a fourth Collective Agreement, professionals limit themselves to the essentials (remuneration, reserve courses, job security, benefits, etc.);
3. avoid delays with some unknown conciliator; not a single Collective Agreement has ever been successfully concluded at Concordia when a Conciliator has been brought in from the Ministry of Labour; in fact, Conciliators are not interested in dealing with Concordia either;
4. obtain input from the administrative staff that need to work and understand the Collective Agreement. These are the Department staff who deal with the nitty-gritty (the posting of courses, scheduling Hiring and Curriculum Committee meetings, etc.); and
5. lastly, fixing the areas that have caused grievances; it means more details and procedures need to become an integral part of a Collective Agreement and not less.

### **What do we want?**

1. a return to remuneration at par with our sister Universities – the University of Montreal and UQAM; an understanding of teaching vs. extra contact hours so what we currently have can be implemented as per the proportional hourly rates; COLA (Cost of Living)
2. a return to understanding reserve courses, how they were once distributed, a limited percentage in any one Department and something that safeguards our own security;
3. clarity with deferred salary leaves, pensions, retirements, health plans – what worked as past practice and when required, to achieve market standards;
4. class size and class hours for our members in Fine Arts and with members who teach electronic courses (right now the total amount of hours these members teach is all over the map)
5. support research as part of the academic mission, with professional development resources for part-time faculty members
6. monetary sanctions associated with administrative failures to implement Articles they have agreed to (e.g. how courses get posted); "best practices" that have meaning.

The Nego Team continues to be flexible, continues to negotiate, and continues to provide solutions to a number of problems being experienced by all. We want to avoid declarations of war. The trouble is, brinkmanship has been the only thing the administration has understood until now.

## **The LTA Question: The Answer that solves little...**

Dr. David Douglas, Chair Communications

In the world of seemingly ever tighter budgets and calls from all quarters to “do more with less,” Concordia will likely consider the viability of an increase in LTA and ETA positions. We often hear that this stop-gap is an acceptable response to the pressures that Departments and administrations find themselves in. The limited or extended-term appointment is the poor orphan to a tenure-track position, a position that was originally designed to respond to a short-term staffing question, but increasingly has become a standardized method of keeping up appearances while avoiding many of the financial burdens that accompany a tenure-track line. While we can acknowledge there is a value to retaining both types of appointment for short-term problems, CUPFA cannot support the recourse to LTA/ETA appointments as an on-going and long-term response to our staffing needs. We believe that these positions in fact hurt Concordia, both at the level of pedagogy and at the level of sound labour management. We believe that LTA/ETA appointments should be kept at minimal levels, and that other alternatives be considered to fill the needs of the University on an on-going basis.

The allure of the LTA/ETA is straightforward: in a climate that places ever higher pressure for Full-time faculty to produce research, coupled with a shift from small classes to the “small-class experience”, there is a palpable sense that something has to give. Invariably, the pressure release comes in two arenas: administration and undergraduate courses (especially introductory level, where enrolments tend to be the largest). When upper-level administration see faculty vacate these areas in favour of graduate level teaching, research chairs, and other endeavours, they apply pressure to slow the exodus. In this scenario, the LTA/ETA looks appealing: they count as a Full-time faculty member who can be tasked specifically toward teaching and administration: problem solved. Or is it?

We question this solution on a number of points, the first being sound pedagogy. Whether teaching an 18 or 21-credit load, the limited term appointment is by anyone’s estimation a heavy teaching load. In practical terms, it is doubly so as, in most cases, the course selection for these appointments is comprised of large section courses. When comparing a typical Full-time load (12 credits, with perhaps a mix of graduate and undergraduate, seminar, and lecture) with an LTA (18 credits, probably all undergraduate, mostly lecture classes), one could see a difference in student numbers ranging from 30 – 60 for the former to 150 – 250 for the latter. Where is the balance here for the students? In the case of the former, they are likely to receive more of their professors’ attention and energy than those who are unfortunate enough to be registered in courses with the latter. There is no disrespect here to the LTA/ETA and their skill and dedication, but rather an acknowledgement that teaching energy and focus is a finite commodity. Technology may allow one to expand one’s reach, but not without limits. A second area that must also be considered here is that of academic advising. One of the vital roles for Full-time faculty is that of the academic advisor. In an increasingly complex university environment (to say nothing of the global marketplace our students are heading into), the academic advisor is a vital role that is likewise getting caught in the time squeeze. Whether they need information to properly plan their academic career or their career after academia, our students need to have access to faculty. In this regard, time and experience are the most valuable commodities. For an advisor to be effective, they need to have a clear sense of the institution they represent. Institutional memory is rarely something someone can glean off a page when they walk in the door. When an LTA/ETA is a new arrival to Concordia (that is, if they are an outside hire), they do not have a strong sense of institutional memory to draw upon.

Thirdly, for the LTA/ETA, there is the question of career advancement. No one enters academia hoping to carve out a career as a limited term appointee. When one is early in their career, perhaps facing a tough job market, the allure of the limited term is understandable. The granting of the title “Assistant Professor” and the association with a university is for many an inviting addition to one’s CV. The downside is that the time demands of the position are directly opposed to the demand for research time that is so necessary for real career advancement. Some institutions employ the position to “road test” potential new faculty and do indeed allow them to progress into tenure-track streams, but too many use the position as cheap, convenient and entirely exploitable labour. For too many, what looks like a rung up the ladder, turns out to be the step before the fall.

For Part-time faculty, the LTA/ETA question is both a pedagogical burden and a problem in the arena of labour management. For those who are beneath the 90-credit level (or those who are over it, but choose not to teach 18-credits), the course-load of an LTA/ETA position is

significant. Even before one takes into account any time needs given to administration, the energy required to meet the course allocation of the limited term means that the faculty member will likely be surrendering time that normally would be devoted to other activities. But the number of courses is not the only added burden a Part-time member takes on when they accept a limited term position. At present, CUFA has no provisions dealing with either large-class stipends or requirements for teaching assistants. A Part-time member, who takes on an LTA position, could find themselves teaching one of the same courses they had previously taught, but receive less support from the University to teach that class.

Among the other losses the Part-time member would incur is the loss of access to Professional Development funds, as well as the loss of seniority credits. Part-timers who intend to return to the CUPFA pool after their appointment may find that they have slipped in seniority ranking, and this could have long-term consequences. Of course, when the contract dates clash with the normal deadlines for Part-time hiring, LTA/ETA members have no alternative but to resign their position early (at a loss of salary), in order to re-enter the Part-time hiring as a CUPFA member in good standing. Members who accept ETA positions must be mindful of the limits to the preservation of seniority as spelled out in Article 8.03 or risk losing all of their seniority.

When the University elects to bring in new faculty as an LTA/ETA, the effect on Part-time members is direct and negative. The loss of 18 to 21 credits of teaching, potentially for a three-year period almost inevitably means layoffs and reduced contracts for Part-time members. Again, in the name of short-term advantage, the University creates long-term consequences. Members may leave Concordia to take up job opportunities at CEGEPs or other teaching institutions where employment is more stable. The effect on Part-time members will be more pronounced for those who are lower in seniority, and this too has long-term consequences for Part-time renewal. Obliging Part-time members to shift into courses previously taught by fellow members has the potential to create ill will. All of these factors should be taken into account when considering the value of adding new LTA/ETA positions, but all too often they are not part of the equation.

What should our stance toward limited term appointments be? We should not be against them, as they do have a place and a role to play within our institution. We should be against the abuse of them. When Departments and Faculties routinely employ limited term appointments and routinely roll-over appointment upon appointment, they are not responding to a specific shortage or need. They are gaming the system. They are employing LTA/ETAs where they should be investing in Full-time tenure-track appointments. If the University feels its budgetary constraints are too tight at any given time to justify such new appointments, it should look to other avenues to respond to its staffing needs, avenues which will not adversely affect its loyal Part-time employees.

What might these avenues look like? Let's return to the question of staffing needs to respond to either course co-ordination or academic advising. Rather than bring in someone from outside Concordia, perhaps the University should consider the value of creating a pathway for senior Part-time members to take on an advising role (perhaps by establishing a remission credit for such service). This would offer the Department a competent advisor, one with a ready institutional memory to draw upon, without placing stress on the overall Part-time complement of teaching in that Department. Departments could also use this option to respond to the need for course co-ordinators.

There are many ways to rethink how the University could respond to the needs of a Department for staffing. In almost all instances, we are further ahead to consider all aspects of the question: teaching needs, advisory roles, administration needs, faculty advancement and the management of financial resources. We must always bear in mind the short and long term consequences of the choices we make. In most circumstances, the limited term appointment is an option, but rarely the best option. It may present a faculty ratio that is greater in terms of a Full-time complement verses part-time, but there are better metrics to reflect the strength and health of a Department and/or faculty. We should discourage the exploitation of LTAs/ETAs and encourage the University to consider other means to meet their needs in a manner that enhances the integration of Part-time faculty alongside Full-time faculty.



## OFFICE EXPENSE CLAIMS FORMS

Members are reminded to send a letter (best do not call or email) to Suzanne Downs, Coordinator, Provost's Office, Academic Administration, L-AD-221 to obtain your Office Expense Claim Forms for income tax purposes. Please ensure your request is sent as early as possible, in January 2013. Do not wait until tax time. Suzanne Downs cannot respond to requests at the very last minute and no one is obliged to help you then.

## Financial Planning for Retirement

June Riley, CUPFA Treasurer

This is a notice for all CUPFA members, whether you have just started teaching at Concordia or have been here for over 20 years. The sooner you plan for your retirement, the less intimidating it becomes and the more successful you will be.

We are happy to announce that on **7 May 2013 at 4:45 p.m. in H-763** we will have an orientation on Financial Planning for Retirement, hosted by your Treasurer, June Riley, and Jean Freed, President of Financial Visions and another one of our members in the JMSB. There will be a presentation focusing on the three pillars of financial planning: determining how much you will need, understanding how much you can expect from Government/Concordia Pension Plans, and planning how much you need to save. Along the way we will explain how to budget, and we will clarify the main elements of the Government and Concordia Pension Plans. After the presentation, there will be questions and answers with Jean Freed to help you navigate this complex subject.

Last year's orientation on the Concordia Pension Plan was a great success and we are looking forward to a similar turnout this time. This is a meeting for all members - not just those about to retire!

Until our orientation we would like to stress the following two important points:

**1. It is important to become a member of the Pension Plan as soon as possible.**

Whether you are a new teacher or have been here for a while, be aware that to become enrolled in the Concordia Pension Plan you must by law earn, within a calendar year, 35% of the Yearly Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE) established by the Government. The YMPE for 2013 is \$51,100, so this means you would have to earn \$17,885 between January and December 2013. That's a little over 2 courses, so you either need to teach 3 courses in a calendar year or two courses with other eligible income such as large class stipends (vacation pay doesn't count). If you tend to teach 2 sections per year, it is worth putting off say one course in the fall and taking 2 in the winter, and then perhaps another the following summer or fall so that you can cross this threshold earnings level and become a member of the plan as soon as possible.

**2. If you are already a member of the Concordia Pension Plan, make sure you are a contributing member.**

Members of the contributory plan stand to earn nearly twice the amount of pension benefits, depending on the number of years you have been enrolled. No matter how many years you have been teaching or how many years left to your retirement, it is worth becoming a contributory member. You can change your membership status from non-contributory to contributory by submitting a change of status form to Concordia's Pension Office (explained below). The deadline for changing your membership status to contributory for 2013 is 30 November 2012. Bring the form to the Pension Offices at S-FB-1130 and make sure you get an email confirmation by the end of November.

**IMPORTANT: Your latest Pension Statement is not on the Portal!**

Many of our members became enrolled as non-contributory members of the Concordia Pension Plan when we received our retro-active pay settlement in 2010. If you are not sure whether you are a member of the Concordia Pension Plan or whether you are a contributory or non-contributory member, you can look for your annual Pension Statement. Your Annual Pension Statements for years up to 2010 are still on the Portal under Faculty & Staff Services. However, starting with the 2011 statements, these can only be found on Concordia's "Pension@access" website. There is a link to this site on the Portal where your previous pension statements are, or you can just go to the main Concordia website and enter

Pension@access or Pension Plan, and you can go to just about any of the pages that are offered about the Concordia Pension Plan and find a link to Pension@access.

**Be aware: if you have never used the Pension@access website before** it will not automatically accept your usual netname and password. The initial setting involves your date of birth - read the User Guide. If you make a mistake and the Pension@access site locks you out, just email Madalena Vidal at the Pension Office and she will unlock it for you.

**Forms for changing your Pension Plan membership status from non-contributory to contributory** are on the Pension@access site in a menu on the left.

**Have more questions about the Concordia Pension Plan?** Go to [www.CUPFA.org](http://www.CUPFA.org), FAQ, Publications and click on Pension Information. Our General Information document was written last spring and gives a complete explanation of how the Concordia plan works - and more - in a concise, easy-to-read format.

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## *Long Service Awards*

This year's long service reception celebrated part-time faculty members for their commitment to the University. The Association recognises your value and contribution to your students and to your profession. We congratulate this year's CUPFA members who have served as loyal members of the Concordia community.

### ***Twenty Years***

Gary Antonio  
Diane Bouchard  
Lisa Chalifoux  
Wray Downs  
Larry Jacobson  
Barbara Kes-Costa  
Gordon Leonard  
Pierre Ouellet  
Jeffrey Sacksner  
Ugo Sbarra

### ***Twenty-Five Years***

Elise Bernatchez  
Maria Jos De Brito Errunza  
Judith Garner  
Christian Hamel  
Shahla Hodai Hemani  
David Homel  
Renata Issley  
Catherine Moore

### ***Thirty Years***

Lucia Chamanadjian  
Micheline Lanctot  
Maria Peluso  
Andre Roy  
David Turner

### ***Thirty-Five Years***

S. Robert Aiken  
Eva Brandl  
Danielle Leb  
Mary Maly  
Marie-Paule Marelli  
Roland Pollak  
Michael M. Sotiron

### ***Forty Years***

Stanley Nachfolger

### ***Honoured Retired Members***

Micheline Dionne  
Mohammad Islam  
Paulos Milkias  
Hany Moustapha  
Brigitte Radecki  
Peter Rossner  
Marcia Segal  
Moses Tiepoh

## **Professional Development News**

Lorraine Oades, Vice-president Professional Development

The following is an update on Professional Development with some thoughts concerning PT faculty members' research options and concerns. If you would like specific details about PD applications and guidelines, please feel free to contact me either by calling CUPFA or emailing: locupfa@gmail.com

Don't forget to fill in the Small Claim's form and return it to the CUPFA office by **January 15th**.

### **PD Committee Members**

The 2012-2013 CUPFA Professional Development Committee consists of Dr. Arpi Hamalian, Full-time Faculty, Education; Leopold Plotek, Full-time Faculty, Studio Arts; Margaret Hodges, Part-time Faculty, Art History; and myself, Lorraine Oades, Part-time Faculty, Studio Arts.

### **Please keep an eye out for a new PD section on our website**

Look for a new section dedicated to Professional Development on our website. This section will consolidate general information about Professional Development, PD guidelines, grant deadlines, frequently asked questions, university expense and travel policies, and information concerning internal and external funding from the Office of Research. You will be able to download application and budget forms for PD grants and Small Claims. We are also in the process of updating our Featured Member's Section. In order to expand this section, I am presently contacting members who have recently received PD grants to spread the news about their projects. Please feel free to email me if you have an event or project you would like to highlight even if it hasn't received PD funding.

### **Campus Equity Week**

In October, Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies, Dr. Graham Carr, met with members as part of Campus Equity Week. During his talk, Dr. Carr acknowledged PT members' contributions to Concordia as both educators and researchers and discussed external funding opportunities available to us if we acquire an Affiliate Faculty Appointment. With Affiliate Faculty status members can apply for Tri-council funding such as SSHRC and NSERC grants. For more information about how to apply please contact me.

It is important to keep in mind that PT faculty also have access to internal funding through the Office of Research. Grants available to PT faculty include Accelerator Funding and Aid to Research Related Events. Currently, FT faculty members have priority, but PT members can apply with the support of their Department Chair. The CUPFA Executive is in conversation with Dr. Graham Carr to find ways to speed up the process involved in obtaining an Affiliate Faculty Appointment and, hopefully, earmark Accelerator Funds specifically for our members.

### **Research@Concordia and Spectrum**

As the university's strategic vision is increasingly focused on research, it is essential that PT members' research activities are supported and communicated. While Professional Development funding plays a principal role in this regard, it is increasingly important that members take full advantage of other available resources. During the Equity event, organized by PT faculty member Dr. Francine Tremblay, David Ward demonstrated the Research@Concordia website, which highlights research by both FT and PT members. I would like to encourage all PT faculty members to take a look at the site and contact David Ward if you are interested in participating. The Research@Concordia site is an important tool, not only in promoting your research, but also in making connections with potential research partners. To participate go to the MyResearch@Concordia heading on your Concordia portal, fill out the form and book an appointment for a photo session with David Ward. To view Research@Concordia go to: <http://www.concordia.ca/explore/>

Another equally important resource that allows members to share their research is Spectrum, Concordia University's open access research repository. When research and creative works are archived on Spectrum, scholars worldwide receive access to it. Benefits to members include increased readership and increased citation of your work. Contributions can include previously published articles, book chapters, books and monographs. For more information about Spectrum please contact Margaret Hodges, CUPFA Representative for the Spectrum Advisory Committee at: [margaret.hodges@concordia.ca](mailto:margaret.hodges@concordia.ca)



## **What is Research?**

CUPFA would like to congratulate the university in advancing research as an important component of our strategic vision. This foresight has helped place Concordia in the limelight as a significant research institution within Canada and Internationally. According to Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies, Dr. Graham Carr, forty-eight million dollars in research funds were brought into the University last year. This money supports graduate students as they pursue their studies, provides money for undergraduate and graduate students to work with faculty members on innovative research projects, pays for equipment, and provides the University with a base for further fundraising as our reputation as a research institute grows.

As Concordia continues to take significant steps in prioritizing research, it is imperative that PT faculty members don't get left behind. In reflecting on research opportunities, a number of our members have asked "What exactly is research and is it possible for members teaching in areas like music or painting to obtain research dollars?" The short answer to this question is "yes." Federal and provincial funding agencies such as SSHRC and FQRSC have been funding research from within the Faculty of Fine Arts for a number of years. An important factor to consider when applying for research funding is how to frame your practice as research by defining specific research questions and perimeters.

As we ask ourselves "What is research?" and "How can we participate?", it is equally important to challenge the university to do the same. What concrete steps can the university take to ensure PT faculty members receive the credit we deserve, both financially and otherwise, for our research initiatives? We must also take this as an opportunity to insert a word of caution and consider some broader issues and ramifications that arise from the emphasis Concordia is placing on research as part of our strategic planning. These questions include: How is research measured? What is the relationship between teaching and research? Where do research dollars come from? Does research money replace other government funding to universities? Should the university be concerned about a "research divide" between the "Haves" who receive research funding and the "Have-nots" who don't? This is an issue that potentially affects not only PT faculty but also university departments, FT faculty members, and students.

## **We Make a Little Money Go a Long Way**

Over the last year, Professional Development grants have helped fund a record number of projects, which include: providing members with funding to present research papers at conferences worldwide, producing original artworks and music CDs, sending members on training workshops, and facilitating research studies. Last year, the PD grant maximum was increased from \$4000 to \$6000. While this is a welcomed increase, which we hope to maintain through our new collective agreement, CUPFA's mandate to fund as many eligible projects as possible remains our top priority. As the demand for PD funding continues to grow it is important to keep in mind that the maximum of \$6000 may be available only under exceptional circumstances.

## **Showcase/Special Project Grant**

Another significant way CUPFA supports members is through a Showcase/Special Project Grant that is awarded on a one-time basis. Previous recipients include: Craig Morrison (2011-12), who presented "California Dreaming" at the Oscar Peterson Concert Hall last February, and Kate Bligh (2010-11), whose highly successful play "The Lieutenant of Inishmore" was presented at the Segal Centre.

The mandate for the Showcase/Special Project Grant is as follows:

- To promote a member or members who have achieved significant recognition in their field.
- To allow a member or members to produce a major project that is timely in nature.
- To provide increased visibility not only to the member or members but also CUPFA and Concordia University.

Please join us in congratulating Gary Schwartz, who is this year's recipient of the Showcase/Special Project Grant. As some of you may already be aware, last year Gary won the prestigious OPUS Award for Jazz Concert of the Year and nomination for Concert of the Year. This year's Showcase/Special Project grant will provide Gary with funding to produce and launch an audio CD of "LETTINGO," the music he performed for the awarding winning concert. Make sure you keep an eye out for the CD launch, which will be held next February.

## **Post-Secondary Education . . . A Wake-Up Call.**

Dr. Francine Tremblay, Chair, CUPFA External Relations

As part-time faculty, the primary concern is students. It is not only about our performance as teachers, but about the state of university education, the socio-economic context, and the continuing effects this context has on our student population. The present reflection is the fruit of extensive reading, discussing, and debating the unmistakable evidence of students' disengagement. In 2011, Dr. Salinda Hess, two full-time faculty members, and I applied for a Concordia grant to design a pilot project with the final results yielding a proposal to be sent to a major Canadian granting agency. The committee turned down the research proposal; it did not surprise me because those in Humanities are not the main recipients of research funds (Gagné, 2012). More significantly, some key players at Concordia are convinced that the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is the final word on students' engagement. This is not the kind of response I was expecting from people attached to this institution!

During the campaign leading to the last Québec election, Jean Charest appeared particularly proud of the numbers of Québec's university graduates. I certainly do not share his enthusiasm; yes, we do produce graduates but herein lays the problem: universities are beginning to resemble production lines! And what are we creating: citizens capable of critical thinking, researchers, or manufacturing over qualified workers? Why do so many students seem to be lost, walking around our campus, and sitting in our classes staring at their phone, tablet, or surfing the net? According to Dr Hess, one answer could be that this cohort of students is "not needed" in the downsized economy of today.

The average student in high school today has few job options, yet higher education is continually pushed as the way to a good job. Most students state that they attend university to get the "piece of paper," to find a "better job." As a whole, manufacturing in Canada has disappeared along with those good-paying jobs. Marketing commodities allows some to be involved in the "resource exploitation" industries (mining, oil, and forestry) and others can find work in product marketing, gaming, and pharmaceutical areas that are dependent upon the novelty consumption, and general malaise of modern society. For the majority, however, few options are available to reach even the lifestyle level of their parents, much less the image of success that is being communicated to them through consumer marketing. Kate Lunau's article *Campus Crisis: the Broken Generation* (*Macleans*, September 5, 2012) seems to reiterate Hess's position

Students might feel they have little choice but to compete as hard as they can. Tuition costs are rising, and the job market looks grim. In July, the unemployment rate for Canadians aged 15 to 29 was nearly 12 per cent; having an undergraduate degree doesn't make job candidates stand out like it once did. After graduation, often weighed down by student debt, many will have to string together short-term contracts with unpaid internships—and even those can be hard to get. [As one student said] "I need to get into this or that program, because the world is scary and I see people out of work."

In fact, the emotional frustration and anger could be felt at Concordia when students disrupted university classes last spring: "We have no future and you want us to pay more for it?" It is clear that the expectations of students are increasingly disconnected from the reality of their lives. Twenge (2006:9) finds that current generations are more anxious and depressed than ever before. Comparing psychological data from young people in the 1960s and 70s, with those of the young in the 1980s, 90s, and 2000s, Twenge found that the downside of the focus on the self and the "freedom" to be whatever you want has left young people with pressures to attain independence and stand alone, resulting in isolation and loneliness (2006:109). They cannot meet those expectations sold by marketers in this new economic climate, and the results are emotionally disastrous. In fact, this may be the first generation of the modern world unable to reach the standard of living and health enjoyed by their parents. As stated by Hess, young people today live in an increasingly fearful world, one that has become almost as problematic for young people as the early industrial period.

Aware of the economic and environmental problems, students are wondering where they will find their place in the world. Moreover, many students are wondering if an undergraduate degree will suffice. Indeed, the tendency, according to a colleague from the Department of Education at Concordia, is to produce more graduate programs and degrees, which she

suggests leads to academic grade inflation. This criticism has also been raised by Canadian scholars James Côté & Anton Allahar (2007, 2011) and Rob Beamish (2010) who find that academic inflation is an issue that occurs across the board in Universities on both sides of the border.

Jobs and institutions that once accepted individuals with undergraduate degrees now want Masters' degrees, and those who accepted Masters' now require PhDs. Therefore, Universities have been promoting graduate degrees and offer "packages" to potential students, and encouraging younger and younger students to enrol in these programmes. This raises many issues, among them the competency of relatively inexperienced graduates (on a practical/clinical level) in many fields of employment. Complicating things, the reverse is also true: some of us have to hide our credentials to get a job! As a part-time faculty, but a full-time teacher, I am concerned about the state of education and so should we all.

## La Voix Française

Le comité de négociations est formé de notre présidente Maria Peluso, Me Patrice Blais, Dave Douglas responsable aux communications, et Scott Chlopan secrétaire. Le 4 novembre 2012, trois membres de l'exécutif soient Me Blais, Dave Douglas et Maria Peluso se sont adressé à l'Association dans le but d'informer et de rassurer ses membres à la fin d'obtenir un mandat de grève illimitée. Les arguments présentés ont sut convaincre l'assemblée de l'importance de ce mandat. Les membres ont donné leur appui à 95%. Il est quand même important de noter que notre équipe de négociations mise sur la bonne volonté de notre nouveau président et vice-chancelier Monsieur Shepard qui nous apparaît comme une personne de bonne foi. Malgré les situations difficiles, comme un retour à la table de négociations, qui créent de l'anxiété deux membres de l'exécutif dont June Riley notre trésorière, et Lorraine Oades responsable du développement professionnel sont toutes les deux porteuses de bonnes nouvelles.

Mme Riley nous annonce une séance d'information en ce qui concerne les pensions. Cette rencontre aura pour but d'informer les membres sur ce sujet qui lors d'un questionnaire présenté dans le bulletin de 2011 avait été souligné comme étant important. Mme Riley sera accompagnée de Jean Freed, Présidente de Financial Visions. Mme Oades, en concert avec David Ward, nous présente le site Myresearch@Concordia un site sur lequel les membres pourront informer la communauté savante en ce qui concerne leurs recherches. Cette nouvelle fenêtre est une occasion remarquable et sans précédent pour nos membres car ce site est ouvert aux deux facultés – professeurs et chargé(es) de cours.

Ce bulletin de nouvelles contient trois articles: *An Unlimited Strike Mandate Part One – Where to go from here? The Nego Team Responds* (Me Blais); *The LTA Question: The Answer that solves little...* (Douglas) et *Post-Secondary Education . . . A Wake-Up Call* (Tremblay) que nous espérons provoquerons des discussions. Erwin Regler à la mobilisation et Francine Tremblay aux relations externes attendent vos commentaires et suggestions. Contactez nous par courriel :

Erwin [ercupfa@gmail.com](mailto:ercupfa@gmail.com) et Francine à [ftcupfa@gmail.com](mailto:ftcupfa@gmail.com)

En cette année de négociations toutes nos voix son importantes. L'Association est consciente que pour certains membres le contexte économique, jumelé au manque d'éthique qui règne dans certains départements rendent les relations avec ces derniers difficiles voir parfois même impossible. En accord avec Me Blais, responsable des membres mandatés aux départements, Erwin et Francine entameront au mois de janvier 2013 une tournée dans le but de rencontrer les membres siégeant sur les comités d'embauche. Préparez vos commentaires, vos questions vos craintes et ce que vous considérez comme les points forts de notre Association.

**Venez nous rencontrer à l'Assemblée générale : jeudi le 7 mars 2013 à 16 :45 dans le Hall Building H -763**

À l'occasion des Fêtes, toute l'équipe vous souhaite un joyeux temps des fêtes et une très bonne et heureuse année 2013.

Au plaisir et en solidarité  
Francine

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