

Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers

ANSUT/APUNE

Association des professeurs des universites de la Nouvell-Ecosse

January 2006

**ANSUT President's  
Report**

*By Bernie Davis*

Under the presidency of Linda Van Esch and later under my presidency ANSUT has continued to carry out its mandate to facilitate communication and mutual assistance among its members and do provincial and regional lobbying. We have met with the Minister of Education and the education critics, the provincial Standing Committee on Human resources, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Committee, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and several local members of parliament.

Since January of 2005 ANSUT has undertaken a major project which, so far as we can determine, is showing signs of being successful. The project began when the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union approached ANSUT and the Canadian Federation of Students with the idea of forming a coalition to more effectively lobby provincial politicians. The coalition was formed and, since by pooling resources we could afford to do it, a province wide poll was undertaken to measure Nova Scotian's views on tuition fees, accessibility and government funding of universities. Vector Research was hired to do the polling.

Poll results were released on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005. In rapid succession the coalition met with the Provincial Liberal and NDP Education critics, Alexa MacDonough and the Provincial Progressive Conservative caucus. To the best of my knowledge this is the first time any of the coalition partners have been invited to appear before an official caucus meeting of a governing party. Next a petition campaign was started. To date about 10,000 signatures have been collected and delivered to the Provincial Legislature.

*(Continued on Page Six)*

**Nova Scotia Negotiators Meet  
To Discuss Strategy**

*By Chris Ferns*

With the bargaining season either under way or approaching for many of our member associations, ANSUT organized a meeting of negotiators last October to share information and discuss strategy. The meeting was attended by representatives from all ANSUT members, and also by Neil Tudiver from CAUT, who provided an overview of some of the most important issues to have arisen in bargaining nationwide.

Several factors are likely to influence the bargaining climate this time around. On the plus side, the increasing pace of retirements and the need to hire new faculty is effectively creating a seller's market, in which improved terms and conditions are essential if universities are going to be able to hire at all. And while not all associations in bargaining have succeeded in exploiting this, it has been an important factor in some extremely impressive recent settlements at Laurentian and Wilfrid Laurier.

On the negative side, employers will of course point to the substantial decrease in government funding that has taken place over the past decade and the fact that the level of future enrolments remains uncertain.

*(Continued on Page Seven)*

**In This Issue:**

**News from Nova Scotia Universities  
Mandatory Retirement at 65  
Operation Groundswell  
Poll concerning NS university tuition fees**

## **APPBUSA**

*By Bryan Empson, President*

The main thing to report from Université Sainte-Anne are the negotiations underway to renew the collective agreement. Our former collective agreement expired in June 2004. The President of APPBUSA, acting as chief negotiator as well as three other members have been leading negotiations with the employer since April 2005.

Let us put the issue in context. As a result of the amalgamation of the former Collège de l'Acadie and Université Sainte-Anne required by the provincial government and the subsequent decision by the Nova Scotia Labour Relations Board to integrate the ten college-level professors into the APPBUSA bargaining unit, the negotiating committee had to completely rewrite the collective agreement. Before the amalgamation, these ten professors were members of the NSGEU.

Both parties have met approximately twenty times. The first round of bargaining has been completed. We have agreements on non-contentious issues. However, profound disagreements remain on certain key issues, namely:

- workload
- salary increases
- the creation of a new category of professors
- the right to set aside required qualifications and salary scales "when warranted by market conditions".

How can we qualify the negotiations to date? The negotiation team is moderately optimistic but also realistic. The optimism comes from the fact that progress has been made. However, there is still a very large gap between some of our demands and the offers made by the employer. For example, let us note that the workload for our teachers remains at seven courses and that there is a 20% wage gap between ourselves and our colleagues from other universities in the Maritime Provinces. The members have given the committee the mandate to negotiate a narrowing of this gap. The ultimate

objective is to reach the provincial average over the medium term.

Another newsworthy item is that we have noticed a new phenomenon at Université Sainte-Anne: increasingly, high school students entering university have inadequate literacy skills. Our observation in this area is that many students experience significant difficulties because of their lack of knowledge of basic grammar.

Two of our colleagues from the French Department, whom I would like to congratulate, have implemented a pilot project: an intensive French studies program for those whose linguistic skills do not allow them to pursue university studies in French. We hope that this program will allow students to successfully pursue their university education.

The pilot project is in its second and final year. It will be evaluated by the initiators of the project as well as the administration at the end of the current academic year. The APPBUSA supports this project. We would be prepared to exchange information with other member associations of ANSUT who might be interested by this pilot project. It is likely that our colleagues from Anglophone universities may encounter the same problem.

Finally, a key issue for us since the amalgamation of both institutions is that of course equivalencies. We add to this the issue of "joint" programs (students complete their first two years at the college level and the final two years at the university level). Over the medium term, ANSUT and the CAUT will have to examine the issue and provide clear instructions. At present, teaching quality, program integrity, and defending the rights of our members in both sectors are of the utmost importance. These joint programs are fairly new and we must strive to better understand them. Since we are seeing the emergence of these types of programs in other provinces, time is of the essence.

**Mandatory Retirement At Sixty Five  
the situation in ANSUT'S member institutions**

*By Brian Empson President of APPBUSA*

At a time when one Premier on the Provincial level as well as the outgoing Prime Minister are more than 65 years old, revisiting the issue of mandatory retirement at 65 has become critical. The present article deals with the situation facing members in our teachers and librarians' associations who will be subject to mandatory retirement in the Province's universities.

First of all, it is a fact that the arguments in favour of mandatory retirement at 65 are well supported. They often originate from the employer side. Mandatory retirement allows for better staff management. It also allows for the removal of "deadwood"; i.e. teachers who are neither doing research nor serving the community and whose teaching leaves much to be desired. The argument concerning costs is rarely mentioned, but early retirement is clearly seen by managers as money saving. Indeed, a full professor at the end of his/her career earns a much higher salary than a young teacher just starting out. Finally, some administrators have voiced their concern that it would mainly be the problematic teachers who would hold onto their positions after 65.

Another argument can be added to those on the employer side: the need to renew the faculty. This renewal helps maintain vitality within the high knowledge institutions of universities. The Supreme Court itself mentioned the argument in its 1990 ruling. Lastly, inter-generational solidarity has been mentioned to justify retirement at 65. In effect, room should be made to allow young people to be placed into relatively well paid positions.

Arguments in favour of the abolishment of mandatory retirement are equally common knowledge. Firstly, this is a discriminatory practice, as acknowledged by the Supreme Court in its 1990 ruling. Furthermore, this measure often penalizes women: having left the labour market to raise their children, they have contributed to their pension fund for fewer years. Those in favour of abolishing the measure remark that in those Canadian provinces where there is no mandatory retirement, there is no indication that

older professors cling to their profession into old age. Finally, experience shows that many teachers are still productive at 65, and by imposing this artificial age barrier to induce professors into retirement, a university is often depriving itself of excellent researchers. Let us stress that CAUT, in its statement of policy, positions itself against mandatory retirement as being discriminatory.

What is the situation like in Nova Scotia? Overall ANSUT's member associations display three clearly distinct situations. NSCAD's stands out as a pioneer: there, professors can work till 67 before retiring. There are clauses for those wishing to claim for their right to retire at early as 58 (or after 20 years of service). Université Sainte-Anne and Cape Breton University present another scenario: there, retirement is mandatory at 65. There is no clause as to pre-retirement or progressive retirement. The third scenario is that of Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU). There, retirement age is 65, but there are two alternatives: first, professors who are 58 and have done 20 years of service can apply for early retirement. Second, professors can apply for partial retirement at 60. The other institutions are closer to the MSVU scenario, with variations. For instance, at St. Francis Xavier University, one can retire early either at 60 or after 25 years of service.

Looking at the situation in the Province's universities, certain obvious observations can be made. Benefits for members who retire before 65 vary widely from one institution to another. One can see at once that in the latest negotiations, associations have stressed the need to upgrade salaries. Clauses on various retirement components are not very progressive overall, with the notable exception of NSCAD. Texts, in their phrasing as well as their intent, still leave a large amount of flexibility to managers, especially regarding professors wishing to remain in their positions after 65. Given the aging of faculties, many members are going to take advantage of the various clauses. Only when these are carried out will we be able to correctly assess their impact.

**Nova Scotia College of  
Art and Design  
FU President's Report  
By Jane Milton**

FUNSCAD will be entering into negotiations on its Unit 1 (Faculty and Librarians) Collective Agreement again in 2006. Unit 2, (Technical and Educational Resource Personnel), go back to the table in 2007. Unit 2 is also engaged in developing a job evaluation system to apply to all the jobs in the Unit in order to re-evaluate the jobs. Many have changed considerably over the years with no change to actual job descriptions or salary.

We have just resolved two grievances scheduled for arbitration in the Spring. The grievances arose out of hiring issues and Academic Freedom. The Union and individual grievors are happy with the resolution.

NSCAD is expanding its campus to include a third location (in addition to the Duke/Granville campus and the Academy Film Building) at Pier 20. A plan is in place to move the Foundation Program, Ceramics, Sculpture, and the Metal and Wood shops to the new building for September 06. This will free up space in the downtown location and just about everybody will be moved around. We expect to be busy dealing with questions arising out of the move and the split campus.

We are also engaged in the search process for a new President for NSCAD following the current President's resignation.

Jane Milton met with the Union Presidents from the other three independent art colleges (Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Ontario College of Art and Design and Alberta College of Art and Design) prior to CAUT Council. This meeting was facilitated by CAUT. We discussed matters of mutual concern with regard to the particular situations we have in degree granting art colleges, such as the shift to degree granting status, working conditions, and health and safety.

All the best to ANSUT members in the New Year.

**Mount Saint Vincent University  
FA President's Report  
By Donna Varga**

MSVU faculty were less than delighted to begin the academic year with an "Internationalization Strategy" drafted by our Associate Vice-President International. Additional to reframing the Mount's mission from the education of women, to internationalization (minus any explicit inclusion of women), the Strategy informed faculty that, contrary to the Collective Agreement, the selection of new hires would be based on their international orientation; that applications for reappointment, tenure or promotion would be assessed according to participation in international activities; that teaching must be directed towards international content and international students. Oh, and having a Canadian doctorate is a liability. At what was supposedly to be an open faculty meeting to discuss the strategy with the Associate VP, he arrived flanked by Administrators and their assistants, and denigrated almost all concerns raised by female faculty.

Additional to being responsible for creating some of the most negative administrative-faculty relationships that we have seen for a while, under his leadership international student enrollment at the Mount has DECLINED. One might think of course that both these achievements would be cause to reconsider his role. It was – he was subsequently named Associate Vice-President Enrolment Management and International. We believe that this move is in perfect accordance with the new Mount student recruitment campaign: "Seriously, Don't Come Here".

While salary gains won during the most recent bargaining go-round gave us hope for attracting new faculty, our efforts in this regard continue to be undermined. While the Administration failed in its attempt during bargaining, to remove the contract requirement for advertising faculty positions in the *CAUT Bulletin* (based on the rationale that if the *Bulletin* stopped being published they would end up being in contravention of the CA!) the *Bulletin's* November deadline was "missed". Apparently the deadline had been changed, leaving us wondering how other universities managed to get their ads in on time. Oh well, things could be worse – we might have opened the *Bulletin* to find a replication of the student recruitment strategy.

Ever optimistic, we await developments in the search for a new MSVU President, and Dean of Arts and Science; seriously . . .

**NEWS FROM ST. FRANCIS XAVIER  
ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS**

*By Robert van den Hoogen*

It has been at least two years since the StFXAUT has given an update on activities at St.FX; During this time, the membership of the StFXAUT has expanded significantly; The Association now includes almost all academic staff at StFX. The legal status of StFXAUT has also changed, in that it is now the recognized bargaining agent for most academic staff on campus including Full and Part-time Faculty, Librarians, Lab instructors, Clinical Associates, Coady Lecturers and a host of others.

The StFXAUT experienced significant resistance from the University administration during its certification campaign, but in the end the certification was obtained. Fortunately it is all behind us now as we forge ahead with negotiations towards our first Collective Agreement. The StFXAUT has chosen Peggy Gallant as the Chair of the Negotiating Committee during this transition period. Peggy has a wealth of experience and will be able to successfully deliver our first Collective Agreement.

There are many challenges ahead as many of the groups that are now represented by the StFXAUT have never had any real language regarding their terms and conditions of employment. The StFXAUT is now working very hard to draft such language for these other groups. Hot topics up for negotiation, include, a proper grievance procedure, definition of workload, part-time stipends, competitive salaries, reduced teaching load, and intellectual property language. The successful completion of our first Collective agreement is a gargantuan undertaking, but there is a team of dedicated individuals who are committed to seeing it

through. Our current agreement for Full-time Faculty ends June 30, 2006. In order to better represent the newly expanded membership of the Association, the Executive Committee of the StFXAUT has been increased by two, to a total of nine members. We have a number of committees looking into current issues, most notably Recruitment and Retention, and on Retirees. The StFXAUT continues to publish a regular newsletter, and is becoming more active in lobbying our local government representatives in issues surrounding Post-Secondary Education.

The University and the University administration are experiencing significant changes as well. The senior administration of the University has selected a new Academic Vice-President and Provost, a new Dean of Science, and a temporary new Dean of Arts. The new Physical Sciences Building is now operational and there has been some marked improvement in the primary classroom, Nicholson Hall. However, there is still a lot to do. The old Science building remains vacant: the original plan was to convert it into new office and classroom space for the School of Business and Information Systems. Last winter, part of the roof of one of the buildings on campus blew off during a wind storm. This past autumn, a second roof was blown off another building. Accessibility is still an issue as many of the buildings on campus are not yet accessible.

## **ANSUT PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

*(Continued from Page One)*

Measuring the effect of a lobbying effort is always very difficult; there are just too many uncontrolled variables. However the attitudes of politicians do seem to be shifting. On May 19<sup>th</sup> on a motion from the NDP the Nova Scotia Legislature passed bill 207 which directs the Minister of Education to use the additional federal funds allotted for post secondary education by bill C48 for tuition reduction and grants to students. This seems to be a direct positive response to the coalition's spring campaign which emphasized loss of accessibility due to cost.

On October 31<sup>st</sup> Ken Clare and Ian Johnson of the NSGEU, Danielle Sampson for CFS and I for ANSUT spoke to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance at their meeting in Moncton. We all spoke on the need for adequate and stable funding for universities and for university students. While we had told the Committee we were a coalition we were scheduled separately. I spoke first, then the Atlantic Road Builders Association, then Danielle Sampson, then Financial Executives International Canada (they were really scary they wanted the government to finance education to be provided by them to themselves), next the New Brunswick Real Estate Association, and finally Ken Clare.

What was surprising was how effective this was. The questions from the Committee were primarily to us and the majority of the MP's present were very supportive. Yvon Godin even asked why we had not complained about the limitations on student loan bankruptcy, which he described as making students second-class citizens and treating them as criminals.

Before the federal election the coalition organized a forum in Halifax where representatives of all five parties presented their party's position on support for post secondary education. The most limited was that of the Conservative Party. Our universities and our students are probably looking forward to one or more lean years.

One of the recent campaigns of ANSUT and the coalition is called Operation Groundswell. In 2000 Bill 62, the Province of Nova Scotia Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, was amended to disallow income assistance to single parents attending post-secondary education programs of more than two years duration, basically making it impossible for single parents on welfare to attend university. ANSUT, the other coalition members and some independent groups are working to get this reversed. David Morse, the Nova Scotia Minister of Community Services has said he will only reverse this discriminatory provision if there is a groundswell of opposition. So the project has been named operation groundswell. This newsletter contains an article by Noreen Verberg explaining the problem and the campaign and, on the back cover for easy copying a petition to the Provincial Legislature. Support for our position has been strong among faculty and students, those who best know the value of a university education. If you are able to collect signatures and mail the petitions it will surely help. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bernie Davis, President

---

## **NOVA SCOTIA NEGOTIATORS' MEETING**

*(Continued from Page One)*

Yet while this is certainly a factor in Nova Scotia, where post-secondary funding as a proportion of provincial GDP has dropped from 2.2% to 1.25% over the past ten years, and where the province's demographics suggest that maintaining, let alone increasing enrolments is likely to be a challenge, it should be remembered that claims of poorhouse on the part of the employer are a standard feature of operating budgets devoted to faculty salaries has been steadily falling for more than twenty years, it is clear that such claims should be treated with the utmost scepticism. All the evidence suggests that faculty associations across the country have been leaving far too much money on the table in bargaining, and it is time for that to stop.

Other issues that are also likely to be central concern workload. There has been a general trend, both in Nova Scotia and nationally, to reduce the course load for full-time faculty, and there was a good deal of discussion of the best ways to achieve this goal, and the pitfalls associated with some approaches. As well, in the face of employers' increasing preference for hiring part-timers rather than tenure-stream faculty, a number of associations have succeeded in negotiating complement clauses to ensure adequate numbers of full-time staff. Moves by employers to institute teaching-only positions as a means of circumventing this also need to be guarded against.

What is also clear is that faculty pension and benefits schemes often compare unfavourably with those in other workplaces—and in this regard Nova Scotia is especially badly off. For example, while roughly half the universities in Canada

provide benefits with premiums fully covered by the employer, in Nova Scotia this is the exception rather than the rule, St. Francis Xavier being one of the few places where it is currently in effect. Moving to fully employer-paid benefits should certainly be a common bargaining goal. Employers of course, often advance the argument that where there are university-wide benefits schemes, they cannot negotiate improvements for just one employee group; this, in fact, is complete nonsense.

There was also considerable discussion of issues related to retirement—both the need to improve early retirement provisions, and also the importance of negotiating an end to mandatory retirement (assuming the provincial government does not follow the lead of other provinces in eliminating it). Once again, the practice elsewhere in Canada is often well in advance of that in Nova Scotia, and this is another area where the elimination of the so-called "Maritime Discount" needs to be our goal.

Of our member associations, Sainte Anne and St. Francis Xavier are already at the table, with NSCAD, Cape Breton, and Saint Mary's scheduled to commence bargaining this year. Acadia and Mount Saint Vincent go to the table the following year. It was agreed that, given the proven effectiveness of sharing information and working together during the last round of negotiations, this would be the first of a series of meetings designed to ensure that we work collectively to enable us to build on our colleagues' successes, and achieve terms and conditions of employment that are nationally competitive.

**NEWS AND ISSUES FROM  
CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION  
Formerly UCCBFAUT**

**Name change:** As most will have now heard, University College of Cape Breton changed its name to Cape Breton University in 2005, and the association followed suit in September when the membership voted to change the association name to Cape Breton University Faculty Association (CBUFA). The movement to drop “college” from the name of the institution began several years ago and was supported by the majority of UCCBFAUT members.

**Retirement:** A second change came with the retirement of long time executive member Michael Manson in 2005. Mike easily held the record for the longest number of consecutive years on the executive of UCCBFAUT (interrupted only by sabbaticals). ANSUT members may be familiar with Mike from his involvement in the formative years of NSCUFA, the precursor to ANSUT.

**Issues:** Over the last years, we have tested our dismissal clause with two negotiated terminations. The clause has been instrumental in protecting members and giving us the wherewithal to negotiate for the member when a termination is unavoidable. However, a recent policy regarding dismissal after 30 months in LTD has led to the dismissal of one of our members and the subsequent arbitration (ongoing) of the decision. The policy itself is a cause for concern both in its implications and the way it came into being. After its inclusion in the CUPE local contract, it was applied institution-wide without consultation, negotiation or board approval. We are concerned about its failure to accommodate in the case of individuals suffering from conditions that may have a longer recovery time and the subsequent loss of health and tuition benefits that are the result of dismissal.

A second issue that has recently arisen is also heading to arbitration. In this instance, the rights of faculty to assert their authority over their office space and pedagogical decisions in the classroom is at risk. In the present situation,

despite mitigating circumstances (including a refusal by the student to leave the faculty member’s office), the administration has disciplined the faculty member for engaging in a heated and, at times, emotional discussion. Our position is that students must also bear some responsibility for their role in this type of situation, and that an attempt at mediation between the parties by the dean should be the first step before the discipline clause is invoked.

Fair hiring is also a concern for us, as recent events have exposed a flaw in the search/hiring procedures outlined in the contract. Because the association does not receive the offer until it has been signed by the successful candidate, and the committee have no involvement after its recommendation has been forwarded to the dean, there is no way to track the offer or discussions between the candidate and the dean’s office. Because the material sent to the candidate is marked as copied to the association, he or she is likely to assume all aspects and offers are made with the associations knowledge and/or approval. This grey area leaves a window for potential abuse. Despite the fact that deans can refuse to accept recommendation of the search committee under the terms of our contract, they have not been willing to exercise this veto over a committee decision. Up until now, we have felt the process has been sufficiently transparent, but it is now clear that in the negotiation phase, lacking as it does association or search committee involvement, there are opportunities to compromise the process.

**Restructuring:** Since the hiring of a new president, the university has been engaging in a restructuring exercise. It has meant the amalgamation of two schools into one and the creation of a new school along with the creation (in some schools) of an associate dean. The association was party to the discussions surrounding the stipend and responsibilities of the new classification.

*(Continued on Page Nine)*

## **CBUFA**

*(Continued from Page Eight)*

The restructuring has also included the return of some departments to old names and structures. Several of the combined departments created in the last restructuring have separated in the last year. The university is also engaged in Academic Planning again as part of its attempt to identify where growth needs to happen and to plan for future hires.

Who belongs in the bargaining unit: The specialist categories continue to create problems, since the administration is unwilling to see them as having common interests and the incumbents and association feel otherwise. In this particular case, the original specialist position was grandfathered in the first contract after the administration had argued for a lab instructor categorization. After the incumbent left, the position was filled as such, but later terminated and when it was re-offered, it was no longer in the union. This case is likely to go to the Labour Relation Board in the near future.

For the most part, the second contract built upon the first. We have had few language issues, and where there have been multiple interpretations of a clause, we have been able to sign memoranda of agreement to cover the situation until the next round of negotiation. In our last contract, we were able to get two three-credit releases to be taken within the first three years for our new faculty, along with a one time payment of seed money to help them in their research. We also agreed to language on professional study leave to allow those who want to pursue further studies the opportunity to do so. The limited-term contract continues to present challenges, and the question of whether or not the university should have a teaching stream will no doubt create some heated discussions over the next few rounds of negotiation. All in all, the association remains strong. We continue to be committed to competitive salary scales, protection of faculty rights and privileges, and the fostering of an environment in which quality education can take place.

## **Atlantic School of Theology Faculty Association**

*By Keith Noseworthy, Secretary—Treasurer*

Since 2003 ASTFA's two greatest areas of focus have been related to salary/remuneration and to the status of the ASTFA vis-à-vis unionization and AST's affiliation with Saint Mary's University. ASTFA is not a ratified union. It fortunately has a fairly amicable and productive relationship with the school administration. The AST administration seems committed to bringing our salaries up to competitive standards. And while AST has used Acadia Divinity College as the local benchmark, the administration appears to be aware of the need to bring our salaries up to national levels. ASTFA is also currently reviewing promotion review processes at AST.

AST became formally affiliated with Saint Mary's University (SMU) in 2002. The memo of understanding between both universities allows them to retain their independent status, but is vague on details. ASTFA is exploring the implications of this relationship on our faculty, and ASTFA's potential relationship with Saint Mary's University Faculty Union (SMUFU). We are also continuing our research into becoming a bargaining unit, especially in light of our potential relationship with SMUFU.

ASTFA has successfully encouraged the school administration to fill several faculty vacancies in the past couple of years. In 2003 we actively encouraged the administration to hire a new library director when the part-time director retired. We also strongly encouraged AST to perform a library review to measure how well the library meet the needs of our new curricular, distance education, and ongoing research and teaching endeavors. The library review is expected to conclude this term.

ASTFA has elected a new association President. Rev. Dr. Nancy Cocks replaces Rev. Dr. Jody Clarke who served one 2 year term as president.

## **Saint Mary's University Faculty Union**

*By Judy Haiven*

*Member at Large SMUFU*

This has been another whirlwind year for the Saint Mary's University Faculty Union (SMUFU). We are just beginning to put together our proposals for a new round of collective bargaining. Our contract expires on August 31, 2006. As a first step, the bargaining committee has been struck and the executive has sent a bargaining position survey to faculty and Librarians in order to gauge interest and commitment to various bargaining proposals. More than three-quarters of the membership has already responded and we are currently compiling the results. In terms of negotiations, we are looking at major issues such as readjustment of the number of steps in our salary scale and a change in the mandatory retirement age of 65, among others.

The SMUFU executive has noticed that the university administration has acted in a less consultative manner with the faculty union and other unions on campus over the last few years. Our objective is to ensure that the university administration consults with the unions and does not arbitrarily take action on issues that affect members adversely. To that end, SMUFU has been able to make a couple of presentations to senior administrators on the meaning of collegial governance, what it is and how it should work in the university. These presentations have been generally well received and at SMUFU's suggestion, the administration has invited CAUT's

executive director, Jim Turk, to give an in-depth presentation in February.

SMUFU and the administration have established a benefits joint committee. SMUFU seeks significant changes and updates to our benefits plans. There is a joint committee because benefits, up to this point, have not been bargained collectively.

SMUFU has dealt with a number of grievances in the last year, including one about pay stubs (the lack of them since our pay system has gone totally electronic), parking, performance evaluation and other matters. We also have had discussions concerning our on-campus Health Centre which is attempting to limit their practice to students only, rather than accept faculty and staff as well.

Finally, SMUFU is concerned about the difficulty students have in accessing quality education because of very high tuition fees. SMUFU has been working with ANSUT to get the results of their poll on higher education out to the community. Continued regular polling of this issue might help raise its profile with university administrators and the government as well as the community at large.

**Editors—Bernie Davis  
Barbara Casey**

**Layout—Jan Brown**

## **A Looming Crisis in the Valley?**

*By Richard Cunningham*

*President, Acadia University Faculty Association*

Nova Scotia, as lovely as it is and as serene as it can be, is out-of-the-way by the standards of the majority of those who earn Ph.D.s and thereby qualify themselves to join the faculty of a university. While this has always been true, the Canadian academic job market was so tight for the last three decades that even the so-called “Maritime discount” was not enough to propel NS institutions of higher learning into crisis. That may be in the process of changing.

Change is certainly in the wind. The only open question is whether or not the extent of the change will reach crisis proportions. The Canadian academic market is opening up as it hasn’t since the expansionary period of the 1960s. Lateral movement has long been a common feature of the academic scene in the US and the UK, but not so in Canada. The majority of currently employed and recently retired Canadian academics spent their entire careers in one place: the place where they secured their first job. This is changing, as has long been predicted. (1) The result, for institutes of higher learning in Nova Scotia, and the more remote ones especially, will be a need for much greater emphasis on issues pertaining to recruitment and retention than has previously been necessary.

Home to Acadia University, the Annapolis Valley can in many ways be viewed as the jewel in the crown of Nova Scotia’s natural, lovely serenity. That and a good compensation package may well be enough to attract and keep good faculty over the coming years. The “Maritime discount” must be consigned to the dustbin of history for Acadia to compete for good faculty in the first place, and to keep us once we are here. But even a competitive rate of pay is only one part of the employment package that is going to be required to attract to an out-of-the-way rural setting people educated, in the majority, in large urban centres such as Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver, or even in smaller centres, such as Kingston or Quebec City, with ready access to large cities. Acadia is also going to have to match the teaching load available to faculty elsewhere, is going to have to provide the ancillary services—e.g. a daycare—available elsewhere, is going to have to ensure that progress through the ranks is not an undue burden in comparison with other Canadian universities (as many Acadia faculty currently feel it is and has been for some time), is going to have to ensure we have a highly competitive benefits package (we currently have no dental plan), and is going to have to develop a

more realistic salary grid (e.g. we currently have 23 steps on our full professor grid).

While the majority of changes we are going to have to institute will require a more realistic approach to collective bargaining than we have seen from Acadia’s administration for the past several rounds of negotiations, a couple of the issues I have just raised may be further complicated by a lack of consensus among the membership of our faculty association. Specifically, not everyone agrees that our Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion process is a problem that needs to be addressed. Many people do, however, and as long as that perception exists—whether or not it is justified—we are going to have a hard time convincing potential hires that they can expect to progress through the ranks at Acadia just as quickly and just as fairly as they would elsewhere. Similarly, not every faculty member wants to see the salary grid shrink. For me, the advantages of a shorter grid on which any faculty member can realistically expect to reach the top before the end of her career are obvious, but I know that not all share this point of view. We at Acadia are going to have to open the channels of communication in order to make sure we have a consensus that supports a clearly articulated position on both RTP and on the salary grid before we enter into negotiations in 2007. And whatever consensus we reach should be arrived at with an eye focused firmly on the larger problem of recruitment and retention.

Recruitment and retention of the best possible faculty is increasingly, I believe, the key issue facing Acadia. Faculty, the faculty association, the administration, and the Board of Governors all have a role to play in this. Unless all sides agree to address teaching load, compensation, benefits, and ancillaries with a view to making Acadia sufficiently attractive to lure people away from their familiar terrain in larger Canadian centres, we are likely to find ourselves in a crisis before very much longer.

(1) See, for example, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission’s 2002 Report entitled “Faculty Recruitment and Retention in the Maritimes,” or the Background Report entitled “University Teaching Capacity” released by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada in June of that year: in the latter document the AUCC recommends that “universities . . . redouble their strategic recruitment efforts to attract, retain and support the required numbers of new faculty that will enable them to meet their teaching and research missions in the decade ahead.”

**February 2005 Poll of Nova Scotians**

**Canadian Federation of Students**

**Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers**

**Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union**

Conducted by Vector Research.

Data collected week of February 28, 2005

Surveyed 807 Nova Scotians aged 18 and over.

A sample size of 800 produces results reliable to within plus or minus 3%, 19 times out of 20

**Q1. As you may know, Nova Scotia has the highest university tuition fees in Canada, at \$5600 a year for undergraduate programs. In your opinion is this tuition level too high, about right or too low? (rotating order)**

**Too low—2.6%, about right—12.4%, too high 79.9%, depends—1.0%, don't know/refused—4.1%**

**Q2. Which of these comes closer to your view even if neither is exactly right?**

- the provincial government should provide universities with enough funds to freeze tuition for two years, or**
- the provincial government should allow universities to set their tuition at the level they think is needed**

**freeze tuition for two years—64.1%, colleges can set their tuityion—28.3%, no difference—2.0%, depends—1.5% don't know/refused—3.2%**

**Q3. Recently the provincial government and the universities reached an agreement to allow university tuition to increase by up to 4 percent a year in each of the next three years. Do you support or oppose this agreement?**

**Strongly oppose—54.5%, Somewhat oppose—18.8%, somewhat support—15.5%, strongly support—6.4%, don't know 4.5%**

*(Continued on Page 13)*

(Continued from Page 12)

**Q4 A. Do you think the provincial government should provide a grant to scholarship program based on financial need to help the neediest students afford college or university tuition, or don't think so?**

Yes—88.1%, no—10.4%, don't know/refused 1.4%

**Q4 B. (asked of those responding 'yes' to Q4 A) Would you be willing to pay increased taxes so that the provincial government could provide grants or scholarships to help the neediest students afford college or university?**

Yes—52.0%, no—40.9%, depends—5.8%, don't know/refused—1.2%

**Q5. Most students or their families borrow money to pay for university or college tuition and expenses. In your opinion, what's a reasonable amount of debt or loans for a student or a student's family to have to borrow for a college or university education?**

0—2.2%, under 10,000—21.1%, 10,000 to under 20,000—22.3%, 20,000 to under 30,000—21.9%, 30,000 to under 40,000—5.7%, 40,000 to under 50,000—5.3%, 60,000 to 80,000—1.0%, 100,000 and over 0.3%, don't know/refused—18.9%

**Q6a. In the past two years, have there been times when you or someone in your family had to drop out of college or university because they couldn't afford the tuition and other costs?**

Yes—116 (14.4%), no—572, don't know--3

**Q6b. In the past two years, have there been times when you or someone in your family could not attend college or university because they couldn't afford the tuition and other costs?**

Yes—232 (28.7%), no—572, don't know—3

**Q6c. In the past two years, have there been times when you or someone in your family decided not to attend college or university because it would mean having to take on too much debt?**

Yes—276 (34.2%), no—524, don't know—7

**Q7. Using the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means a poor job and 5 means an excellent job, how well do you think the provincial government is handling the issue of making college and university affordable?**

Poor--27.6%, 2--33.5%, 3--27.1%, 4--5.9%, excellent--2.2%, don't know/refused--3.6%

## Operation Groundswell: How the Nova Scotia Government Discourages Single-Parents from Attending University.

In 2000, the Nova Scotia government introduced a policy to prohibit social assistance recipients from attending university. The Act states: "A person attending a post-secondary education program of more than two years shall not receive assistance unless the person is funded to attend by the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Program" [Province of Nova Scotia, Employment Support and Income Assistance Act (ESIA), Chapter 27, 2000, Bill 62]. Shaunderay Clyde, a single parent attending St. Francis Xavier University, had her income assistance terminated when she began university in 2002. Like other single parents, Ms. Clyde's university costs were covered by federal and provincial student loan programs. However, student loans in Nova Scotia have a "ceiling" therefore the loan is insufficient to cover the cost of raising dependent children. Student loan administrators readily acknowledge that the financial needs of single parent families vastly exceed the maximum allowable student loan. The loan ceiling is perhaps appropriate given that single-parents already incur a debt of approximately \$40,000 under the current system. Because they have dependent children the majority of single parents attending university with student loan assistance meet the poverty requirements of the income assistance program. In other words, if they had an employment income of the same amount as the student loan income, they would qualify for income assistance. So why then, if the program is conceived as a poverty-relief program, would the government deny student parents income assistance?

With each passing month, Ms. Clyde went deeper into debt. She decided to appeal the Community Services' decision to cut off her income assistance at the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. The Supreme Court upheld the Community Services decision to cut off her social assistance benefits. Other students have been forced to leave university because they simply cannot support their families while attending university. Moreover, ESIA discourages would-be students from attending university.

In March, Marilyn Moore, Community Services Critic for the NDP, introduced Bill 167 to amend the ESIA to allow single parents to receive appropriate income assistance (after taking student loan income into consideration) while attending university. David Morse, Minister of Community Service, claims that the single-parents can afford to attend university without income assistance, and that

he will only change the act if a "*groundswell*" of Nova Scotians call for the change (cited in the Halifax Herald).

A coalition made up of anti-poverty groups and women's associations formed to address the claim that single parents can afford to attend university. The "Changes" coalition prepared a brief entitled Fairness in Education for Single Parents in Nova Scotia, which they presented to Minister Morse in March. The brief demonstrates that university education is not affordable for single parent families under the current system with monthly deficits ranging from \$388.00 to \$643.00 depending upon the number of children in the household, child care cost, rent and so on. Minister Morse's office suggests that *if* single parents live in geared-to-income housing, have a child care subsidy, and access scholarships and bursaries, they will have adequate finances to attend university. 'Changes' coalition points out that most people who meet subsidy requirements do not receive a subsidy because there are far fewer subsidized child care spaces and geared-to-income housing programs in the province than are needed. Bursaries and scholarships are limited in number and they are awarded on the basis of merit, need, and availability. Operation Groundswell advocates allowing access to ESIA for those students who are not lucky enough to get subsidized housing, subsidized child care, bursaries, or scholarships. Since they can access student loans, the amount they would require from the province would be enough to cover the costs of feeding and housing their children).

The 'Changes' coalition started a letter campaign last spring to let the Minister Morse know that many Nova Scotians support the change to the ESIA policy. More recently, concerned citizens have come together to launch *Operation Groundswell*. Our goal is to let Minister Morse know that there is an expanding *groundswell* of Nova Scotians who wants single parents to have equal access to university. If they meet the poverty criteria of the ESIA program because their student loans are insufficient to cover the costs of raising a family while attending school, single parents who do not get subsidize housing and/or child care should be allowed to receive income assistance if they require it to support their families. Please invite the members of your community to sign the attached petition to tell David Morse that they support changes to the ESIA policy. The petition can be mailed to the organizers of Operation Groundswell at the address listed on the petition.

**The Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers**  
requests your participation in

***Operation Groundswell***

*Operation Groundswell* aims to demonstrate that there is a *broad base of support* for a policy change to allow single parents to access social assistance while attending university.

The Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers is asking its members to take part in this petition campaign. Other unions and associations in the province are doing the same. In this way, union members can work toward greater social justice for a vulnerable population: single parents and their children.

We hope you will take the *Operation Groundswell* petition home and circulate it among your friends, family, and neighbours, so that the Nova Scotia government can see that it is not just university professors and students who want this policy changed.

We hope you will circulate the feature article too. It explains how the ESIA policy discriminates against single parents because the student loan system is insufficient to cover the costs associated with raising dependent children, particularly pre-school children or children with medical or special needs. Many student parents who have student loans require *partial* income assistance to pay family costs. Without it, they fall into debt and are forced to quit school.

We need your support to get this policy changed!

Please return the petitions  
to the address noted on the petition form

**Operation Groundswell  
Advocating for Parents` right to Attend University  
Petition to the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia Assembled**

We, the undersigned residents of Nova Scotia, draw the attention of the Legislative Assembly to the following:

Whereas the current Employment Support and Income Assistance policy denies income assistance to singles attending university

Whereas the financial needs of single parent families vastly exceed the maximum student loan amount

Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia to:

Make **ESIA** benefits available to single parents who wish to enter a university program

---

Name	Signature	Address	Email address
------	-----------	---------	---------------

---

Name	Signature	Address	Email address
------	-----------	---------	---------------

---

Name	Signature	Address	Email address
------	-----------	---------	---------------

---

Name	Signature	Address	Email address
------	-----------	---------	---------------

---

Name	Signature	Address	Email address
------	-----------	---------	---------------

---

Name	Signature	Address	Email address
------	-----------	---------	---------------

---

Name	Signature	Address	Email address
------	-----------	---------	---------------

---

Name	Signature	Address	Email address
------	-----------	---------	---------------

**Please return to:  
Box 5000, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, B2G 2W5 Fax (902) 867-5456**