



On Stream

Newsletter of the Selkirk College Faculty Association

March 2008

Ponderings from the President

By now many of you will have heard that part of the college's solution to the latest budget deficit will be **another round of layoffs**. When the budget deficit was at \$1.2 million, notices were given for a few layoffs, and now that the deficit has climbed an additional \$600,000, more are sure to come.

Even if you are not one of the instructors directly involved in the layoffs, or one of those who would be affected should bumping rights be used, this is bad news for everyone at the college. We will have fewer programs to offer, which means fewer students will come to us in the first place. With these students gone, we lose students in the science, math and English courses most would normally take, and this leads to lab and section cancellations and more layoffs.

As we turn a critical eye towards management's tactics to handle the deficit, we must also acknowledge the root cause of the problem, which is the current provincial government's chronic under-funding of the post-secondary education system in general, and the under-funding of the college system in particular. The purse strings are controlled by accountants in the Treasury Board with no real understanding of the workings of the college system, and no apparent realization that education not tied to immediate labour demands, is a worthy pursuit at a college.

The SCFA, through our provincial umbrella organization FPSE, has been pushing hard through

lobbying efforts and advertising to get more money back into the college system, to protect existing programs at the college level and thus ensure all people in BC have access to post-secondary education. Management professes to be lobbying for more money, but we would like to hear more about their efforts. An e-mail sent to our acting President and VP Finance from our VP Contract Administration enquiring about these efforts has resulted in no response to date. He did not even receive a phone call about the dreaded use of an 'All Employees' e-mail! I assure you that both the SCFA and FPSE will continue the fight to maintain current positions and increase college funding to a sustainable level. If you wish to help in the fight, become more active in the union, join one of the FPSE committees, or run for a position on the Executive.

Doug Henderson, President

Notice of the Selkirk College Faculty Association Annual General Meeting

**Thursday, April 10
Noon – 2 p.m.
Room: TBA**

Free Lunch! Free Elections!

Nelson faculty please submit requests for mileage reimbursement to John Stegman

Spring Time is Election Time!

If you would like to nominate someone for one of the following positions, if you are interested in the position yourself, or if you would like more information, please contact Tracy Punchard at ext 318 or tpunchard@selkirk.ca

Your interest and enthusiasm but no previous experience is necessary. Elections will be held at the SCFA AGM on April 10th.

SCFA Executive

The following positions are two-year appointments:

- President (25% release position)
- Treasurer
- VP Negotiations
- Retirement Issues
- Board Observer (one-year term)

Job descriptions for the above positions can be found in the SCFA constitution. The constitution is posted on our website scfa.ca

FPSE Standing Committees

The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators has ten Standing Committees where local representatives and FPSE Executive members meet to coordinate strategy and provide advice in critical areas. Standing Committees recommend policy and action plans which address current issues in their subject area. We will be electing representatives to the following committees:

- Education Policy
- Disability Management and Rehabilitation
- Human Rights and International Solidarity
- Status of Women
- Non-Regular Faculty
- Occupational Health & Safety

Details on these committees can be found at fpse.ca

Joint Union-Management Committees

These include:

- SCOPE
- PD
- Occupational Health & Safety
- Disability and Rehabilitation Management

FPSE AGM

We will also elect to send delegates to the FPSE AGM being held in Whistler, May 13-16. This is a great opportunity to learn about FPSE, learn through workshops, socialize and have fun.

Trustee Review

We will seek three volunteers to review the SCFA financial records. You do not need to be an accountant or a mathematician. Psychologists and librarians have been known to take on this important task! The time commitment is about one full day and we'll buy you lunch.

Faculty Representative to the Board of Governors

This is a very important position. As the faculty rep to the Board you have power and you have a voice. This person represents BOTH SCFA and BCGEU faculty members and is a voting member on the College Board. Bill Winegarden has been our faculty rep for the last two years. The SCFA does not run this election but we can put names forward. Please contact Tracy Punchard if you are interested in running for this position or if you want to nominate someone.

What Happened at the College of New Caledonia?

The Facts: On March 10, the following programs were suspended for new student intake:

- Forestry Resource Technology
- Business
- Hospitality Operations and Administration
- Adult Special Education
- Northern Outdoor Recreation & Eco-Tourism

- University Transfer Courses
- Lay off slips were handed to
 - 14 instructors,
 - 7 operational staff
 - 2 administrative employees

Two instructors announced they will retire so colleagues with less seniority can remain employed. The extent of the cuts to part-time instructors has not been determined.

CNC President John Bowman says:

The \$1.1 million dollar deficit is partly because of the College's success in landing trades training and medical lab technology program. Those two programs have received specific funding, but there is no additional money to cover the costs associated with those programs, for example, heating or maintaining the facilities. "That adds up to a million dollars a year that we're not receiving."

CNC is not the only rural college facing funding woes, and he calls on the Province to review and change its funding formula. "We're offering programs in smaller communities, we can't expect to have 37 students in a University class in some of our smaller communities, Quesnel for example, but we should be able to get 20, and we do, often. So, when we offer classes at less than 100% capacity that affects our FTE utilization rates, and it also affects the revenue generated through tuition. We have multiple facilities, we also have a different demographic than an urban environment; 13% of our College region population is First Nations and we need to provide supports for those students close to home if we are going to help them build the capacity they need in their communities. We at CNC also see a larger ratio of adult education programs, a larger ratio of trades and technical training."

CNC Faculty Association President George Davison says:

Staff were not involved in any meaningful way in the budget preparations, the lay offs will affect 22-24 instructors, the administration is top heavy. "[T]here's been a huge growth in the ranks and expense of the administration. We used to have one VP, now we have 3 in title and one in practice.... In 1999, we had one position that earned over \$100,000. As little as two years ago, there were only 3. Now we have 10."

Since 1999 administrators have seen salary increases from 41-54%. "One of the reasons admin salaries have increased so quickly is something I discovered while looking at HRDB numbers: in 2005, all admin pay scales (10 of them) except the CEO had 5 steps, ranging from \$50,442 to \$120,000. In 2006, those grids were all shortened, with two or three steps removed from most of them. This means that administrators get much bigger pay increases and move to the top more quickly."

"It's also interesting that the College, up until now, has been saying that the biggest problem they have is with the way Trades programs are funded. I can't count the number of times I've heard the 60 cent dollar figure. And it's not just CNC – I've heard it from many different institutions. If CNC was funded properly for the instructional support costs of apprenticeship and trades foundation programs, there would be no deficit. Why now are all our problems the result of negotiated step increments for faculty or mat leave costs?"

As for University Transfer: "CNC is not the only institution suffering from low enrolment in UT areas, nor are just rural colleges affected. The government's own policies – especially 25,000 FTEs before 2010 – are largely responsible. This initiative saw universities get their increased allocations early on, and a funding review gave them more money to do so. In effect, they took students away

from colleges all over the province, and the Ministry has been refusing to allocate new FTEs to colleges whose utilization rates have been reduced by the policy designed to get more students into post-secondary education. The solution to this problem won't be easy, either, but cutting programs and laying off faculty is very short-sighted."

Source: Prince George Citizen

A report from our SCFA rep on the College and FPSE Disability Management & Rehabilitation Committees

The College DMRC consists of myself and Linda Gomez representing the SCFA and Michele Laurin and Lianna Zwick representing the College. We meet monthly to discuss the status of current Short-Term Disability and Long-Term Disability Claims. By working together we keep everyone involved in the loop with appropriate information and can provide a pool of resources with which to help a member on a claim or in the process thereof.

Our role is to offer support to members to ensure their experience on sick leave is as streamlined as possible so recovery can proceed without unnecessary added stress. When necessary, we advocate on behalf of the SCFA member.

Linda and I also represent the SCFA on the FPSE Disability Management & Rehabilitation Committee that meets in the fall and winter.

On February 15th I attended the FPSE DMRC meetings in Vancouver. In a round table discussion each of the 22 Locals provided a brief update. Most faculty association reps feel they are working well with the college reps to support members in the stages of the claims process.

The number of claims seems to be increasing across the locals, including Selkirk. Many locals are experiencing an increase in "invisible disability"

claims (mental health issues). Getting approval for partial disability claims continues to be difficult. **Everyone agreed how important it is for members to report health problems right away and not to do their own "accommodations"** as this can result in the claim's legitimacy being questioned by Manulife, as it may appear that the faculty member can cope.

Discussion surrounding the detail to which Manulife thoroughly assesses potential claims when the application is first received was informative. The reason for this initial in-depth assessment is for Manulife to determine the likelihood that the person will return to work at all.

The OH&S committee from one college felt the need to survey faculty to find out whether their physical well being has changed since they began to teach online. A significant number of people responded identifying a variety of concerns including back, neck, shoulder and wrist pain as well as headaches and eye strain. Currently this issue is an OH&S concern but it has the potential to become a DMRC issue.

FPSE has provided us with a resource manual entitled "Dealing Effectively with Disability Claims" which includes a guide to partial disability benefits.

After the meeting I attended the FPSE Spring Joint - Committee Conference. This year it focused upon "Building Capacity in Union Leadership". I attended two DMRC workshops, as well as workshops on the Pension Plan and Women in Union Leadership.

Having attended these meetings and workshops, I feel more knowledgeable about DMRC issues. I gained useful insights and found that we are all more alike than different in our college lives.

Sally Glock

Important notice: Manulife will cover the cost of your flu shot! Thanks to Rob Macrae for helping to keep us all bug free.