

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Warm greetings, once again. I am pleased to introduce this Fall Edition of the *Beacon*, the quarterly StFXAUT newsletter. I know I am not alone in feeling that the past few months have been a blur. I will try to highlight some of the important events that have occurred, and also identify the main areas of focus for the StFXAUT going forward.

Our main priority has been to enhance our communications and advocacy efforts. These efforts have been influenced in large part by the release of the Presidential Task Force Report, to which we responded with two events to promote dialogue amongst our members and learn from the experiences with program prioritization at other universities. These events helped give shape to the StFXAUT response to this Report, which was circulated to all members via email on October 27th. In a personal response from the university President, Dr. MacDonald noted our “positive and constructive approach.” We will continue to pay close attention to the process by which recommendations may be acted upon in the months ahead, and to promote adherence to the six principles that were outlined in our response.

You will also have noted that the two events mentioned above were branded as ‘Unioniversity’ events. This is a label we devised a couple years ago

that is attached to spaces we create for our members to dialogue collegially with one another on issues of collective concern and relevance. Moreover, the label Unioniversity underscores the central role of unions in contributing to the academic mission of universities in general, and of our union in the future of StFX in particular. As a part of this agenda, three of the four union Presidents with the addition of representatives from the Students' Union Executive came together to discuss matters of shared interest and to appreciate the interdependencies that exist between us all. We look forward to strengthening this relationship in the months and years ahead.

Amongst our other communications and advocacy-related activities, we hosted two CAUT workshops. First, CAUT facilitated a communications workshop for members of the StFXAUT executive committee, communications committee and other invitees. Second, we hosted the CAUT equity workshop, open to all members, in which we shared our experiences and concerns relating to matters of equity on campus and discussed strategies for advancing common equity objectives. Of course you will hopefully have noticed and perused the new StFXAUT website, designed to be more functional and more resourceful, and thus of greater value to all members.

The last week of October also coincided with the CAUT Fair Employment Week campaign. This campaign brings national attention to the concerning trend within the university sector of relying upon contract labour in the form of limited term and part-time appointments and other forms of contractually limited positions. This *Beacon* highlights the prevalence and experience of this phenomenon at StFX, which is detrimental to both the job security and employment sustainability of many of our members.

You may also know that the provincial government is hosting consultation sessions with various stakeholders in post-secondary education in Nova Scotia, including academic associations. Although I was unable to be present in person, other Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers ([ANSUT](#)) members carried our

interests forward, and we prepared this submission [[found here](#)] as a StFXAUT contribution to this process. Special thanks go to Dr. Cory Bishop and Ms. Rita Campbell who both informed this letter to a great extent.

The StFXAUT is preparing to hold a general meeting of the membership on Thursday, November 27th at 5:15pm in SCHW 205. At this meeting, some of the work of our many committees will be highlighted, such as grievance, benefits governance, pension plan, status of women and the joint committee. Our union succeeds and becomes stronger as a result of the contributions members make in so many ways, as well as the general level of engagement in the important issues that affect us all. Thank you for your interest and your care.

Brad Long

UNION LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON HOSTED BY BRAD LONG



Pictured (left to right) are Sylvia Phee, President of Unifor Local 2107; Hailey Vidler, Vice-President Internal, StFX Students' Union; Alicia Silliker, Vice-President, StFX Students' Union; Derek Bekkers, President of NSGEU Local 88; and StFXAUT President Brad Long.

On October 24, Brad invited campus union leaders to join him for lunch to acknowledge and celebrate the important contributions all union members make in serving and supporting students, and the varied labour that makes StFX a successful and collaborative learning environment.

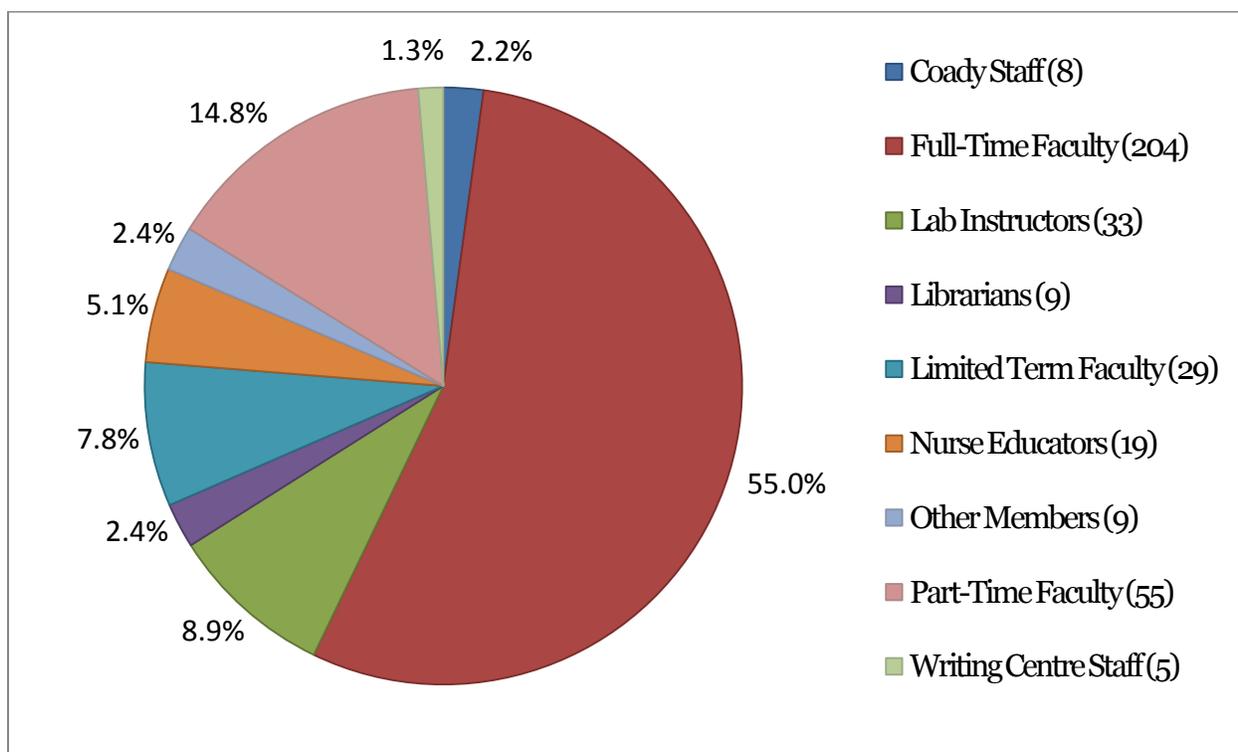
2014 FAIR EMPLOYMENT WEEK: OCTOBER 27 - 31

By Bruce Sparks

[Fair Employment Week](#) happens every year at the end of October. It's sponsored and encouraged by [CAUT](#) to highlight the issue of contract academic staff (CAS). These are our members who are hired for a specific term, or who are paid a per course stipend for their teaching. At StFX they are the LTAs (about 30 limited term appointments) and part-time academic instructors (about 40). It's not a continuing appointment, so each year they wait for contracts to be offered, usually at pay rates substantially below full time, or regular academic staff. Since these contracts are almost always for less than 12 months, members in these positions may have several months a year with no salaried income and usually collect employment insurance in the summer. This is the same situation for continuing appointments of less than 12 months a year— about another 40 members. There are provisions in the Collective Agreement to limit the number of years one can continue in an LTA position, but the reality is that enforcing these might result in jeopardizing a member's employment.

The advantage to the university is clear: reduced salary costs and “flexibility” in filling positions. It's a quick and easy fix to the dilemma of lower funding. But the disadvantages for CAS are also clear: less support and opportunity for research and professional development, no travel funding, no URPTA, increased teaching loads, career instability, and lack of opportunities to fully participate in the university, i.e. committee work. And honestly, don't these have a negative impact on the academic work of the university as a whole? Let's stop taking the easy way out and figure out how to fully incorporate all academic workers into the Xavarian community.

STFXAUT MEMBERSHIP FOR 2014 OCTOBER (371 MEMBERS):



StFXAUT HOSTS “UNIONVERSITY”, FOCUSING ON THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE BY LISTENING TO EACH OTHER, STUDENTS AND VOICES FROM OTHER CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

By Cory Bishop and Jon Langdon

This October brought more than just midterms and Halloween to the StFX campus. It also saw the return of the Presidential Task Force (PTF), our local version of a program prioritization process (or PPP) that is sweeping across numerous Canadian universities. The Taskforce released its long-anticipated report, and the campus community was given until 4 PM on Halloween to submit both program-specific and individual responses. In an effort to contribute to dialogue about this report in the weeks leading up to this deadline, the StFXAUT hosted its 1st Unioniversity event of 2014. The two linked events involved first hearing from AUT members about their thoughts on the report, and then holding a wider forum open to the public where what was happening here could be connected to other campuses across the country. Key in this second event was the inclusion of student voices.

The core mandate of the StFXAUT is to serve the interest of its members, guided by principles of clarity, equity, and respect, all of which are enshrined in our Collective Agreement. With the advent of the Presidential Task Force and its attendant report, our members along with members from our sister unions on campus, are in new territory. Whereas no one can claim to know what the specific end points of this process may be, or how we get there, the broad implications seem clear – prioritization seems synonymous with reorienting resources (human and financial) from one part of the university to another. As a first step toward

mounting a collegial and productive response toward this ongoing program prioritization process, the StFXAUT organized two events entitled ‘Unioniversity’ in which we sought perspectives from our members as well as from colleagues from across Canada whose institutions have engaged with their own PPPs. On October 17th, we held a Town Hall style event, whose purpose was simply for AUT members and the executive to listen to the experiences, opinions and concerns of our fellow members about all aspects of the PTF. The second event on October 21st was a panel discussion, entitled “UNIONiversity – Re-framing Institutional Reform Processes: Voices from Other Canadian Universities.”

The Town Hall event took the form of a round-table discussion, which included a range of concerns. Some members expressed discomfort about having to reduce the diversity and interconnectedness of university programs into specific categories for quantitative analysis. Indeed, an ecosystem is more than the sum of its components. Other members raised concerns about categories such as “revise” vs. “enhance” and what they actually entail in terms of concrete, decisive action. Still others identified the problematic way that many academic support programs (e.g., the library and Writing Centre) are not easily carved up into the types of categories that may be natural for academic programs (e.g., Majors, Honours, etc.) Along similar lines, members wondered how one could classify things like clean, technologically

modern and functional classrooms as supporting and not being central to the academic mission of the institution. Members also expressed concern that not knowing what will happen next with the process makes it difficult to provide measured, thoughtful and informed responses from members. For instance, is there a unified vision for the institution, such that changes we make are guided by that vision? The information collected in the PTF process has certainly yielded much to think about, with one member noting its potential usefulness as a process, but the lack of clarity as to its intended use raises cause for concern. These points were aptly captured and summarized by AUT President Brad Long at the Tuesday night Panel Discussion (a video of which can be viewed [[found here](#)]).

The Panel Discussion was composed of Dr. Dawn Bazely (York U), Dr. Linda Rose-Krasnor (Brock U), Dr. William Cormack (U of Guelph) and Dr. James Cheesman (U of Sask). They were joined by Ellen Austin, a student representative on the University Senate. The assembled crowd of AUT members as well as a large contingent of students benefited greatly from the voices of our colleagues from Universities of Guelph and Saskatchewan, both of which are further along in their respective processes and therefore provided us with a much-needed perspective on where we might be headed and how we can shape the road ahead. Dr. Cheesman shared how the financial justification for the PPP at the University of Saskatchewan was ultimately shown to

be a misrepresentation, and that there is always a choice that can put quality education first without sacrificing financial viability.

The representatives from Brock and York Universities similarly provided some national context for our experiences. Dr. Linda Rose-Krasnor, described how using existing governance structures and highly personalized interactions with Brock University Senators, allowed their Faculty Association to steer the ship in a different direction from a Presidential PPP. Instead, the Brock Senate lay claim to the process and has created a completely transparent process of program review where all decisions are made in full public view, and with on-going campus wide inputs. This has ultimately reinforced collegial governance, in thought and deed. Meanwhile, Ellen Austin sketched out how students felt uninformed by the process, and vastly underrepresented on the Taskforce committee. She called for a concerted effort by StFX administrators to better inform students about what this report would mean to programs to which they are associated. The panel concluded with contributions from AUT members present, students, and a NSGEU member as well.

The StFXAUT is currently planning its next Unioniversity event, the first for 2015, and is looking to hear from members as to potential foci for the event. Please contact [Susan MacKay](#) with your suggestions.

To learn more about program prioritization processes (PPP) at other Canadian Universities, please visit the [news page](#) of the [StFXAUT website](#).

2014 CAUT LIBRARIANS' AND ARCHIVISTS' CONFERENCE: FROM TALK TO ACTION: BUILDING SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS

By Suzanne van den Hoogen, MLIS

Libraries and archives are under attack. Managerial encroachment across the country has been demoralizing the profession by hiring non-librarians for librarian positions. In 2012, the Canadian government, under the veil of “modernization”, announced that [Library and Archives Canada \(LAC\)](#) was to have its budget reduced by \$9.6 million over three years. As a result, LAC would lose 20% of their workforce and inevitably became subject to a drastic decline in services. Moreover, a new code of conduct was introduced to LAC employees which included “expected behaviours” and defined “high risk” activities.

Working to improve the academic environment for librarians and archivists, CAUT has been defending our community in an attempt to protect our core employment rights and to intervene on our behalf at both the local and national level. From October 31 to November 1, academic librarians and archivists from across the country gathered in Ottawa as part of a CAUT conference to strengthen and advance the collective pursuits of this community. Robin Vose, CAUT President, opened the conference with the resonating message that librarians and libraries are integral to our academic institutions.

The conference included presentations and hands-on workshops on how to conceptualize and build successful campaigns. Angela Regnier, CAUT Communications Officer, reviewed the key components of a successful campaign and how to identify goals, objectives, strategies and tactics. CAUT Graphic Designer, Kevin Albert, provided a session on using design to

effectively disseminate information to target audiences. Laura Banfield, President of the McMaster University Academic Librarians' Association, Robert Ramsay, CAUT Professional Officer and Kevin Skerrett, Research Officer (CUPE) spoke about the successes, setbacks and lessons they learned from campaigns in which they were involved.

For the workshop component of the conference, participants were divided into groups and assigned fictional scenarios. Each group was tasked with developing a campaign that included an organizational structure, design elements and a communication strategy. During the process, CAUT experts visited individual groups to provide assistance and guidance. Finally, delegates presented their campaign in plenary; revealing their artistic designs and holding a mock press conference.

A common theme expressed throughout the conference concerned the financial challenges that academic institutions across the country are facing. As more and more institutions of higher learning adopt a for-profit business model, we must acknowledge that universities and libraries are not corporate businesses. We must uphold that there is a deeper meaning to academia and to our professions. We are the curators of knowledge and the protectors of academic integrity. Together, with our academic colleagues, we share a common pursuit of knowledge and must not forget the intrinsic public value that we provide to our community. Collectively, we are at our strongest.

KEY DATES

Some of the upcoming (late Fall / early Winter) deadlines in the [Third Collective Agreement](#) include:

December 1:

- The Outstanding Teaching Award Committee shall invite nominations for Outstanding Teaching Awards by December 1, of each academic year (**Article 2.7.1 University Research/Publications/Teaching Awards**).

December 15:

- The President shall normally communicate his or her decision regarding grant of tenure to the applicant by December 15 (**Article 2.2.3.2 Evaluation of Faculty Seeking Tenure**).
- The Performance Evaluation Committee (see **Article 5.5** for details) of the School of Nursing shall conduct a performance evaluation of each Nurse Educator holding a probationary appointment by December 15 in each year except the initial and final year of a probationary appointment (**Article 5.4 Probationary Appointments**).

January 1:

- Members electing the Phased-In Retirement Option must apply in writing to the AVP no later than January 1 of the year in which they wish to commence a phased-in retirement. Phased-in retirement options shall commence on July 1 (**Article 2.5.2 & Article 3.5.2 Phased-In Retirement Option**).

January 15:

- A Librarian holding a Probationary Appointment shall be given notice by January 15 (**Article 3.1.7 Renewal of a Probationary Appointment**).

January 21:

- The Dean shall forward the external referees' letters to the Chair of the Rank and Tenure Committee for the Committee's use. The Chair of the Rank and Tenure Committee will forward a copy of the external referees' letters to the relevant Departmental Evaluation Committee (or equivalent) and the Candidate by January 21 (**Article 2.2.3.3 Evaluation of Faculty Seeking Advancement in Rank**).

January 31:

- The deadline for the receipt of nominations by the Outstanding Teaching Awards Committee shall be January 31 (**Article 2.7.1 University Research/Publication/Teaching Awards**).
- A Faculty member electing early retirement will notify the Academic Vice-President and Provost to this effect by the January 31 preceding the academic year during which the early retirement will commence (**Article 2.5 Retirement from University**).
- A Librarian electing early retirement will notify the Academic Vice-President and Provost to this effect by the January 31 preceding the academic year during which the early retirement will commence (**Article 3.5 Retirement from the University**).
- The President shall normally communicate his or her decision regarding grant of permanent appointment to the applicant by January 31 (**Article 3.2.3.2 Evaluation of Librarians Seeking Permanent Appointment**).

February 28:

- The President shall normally communicate his or her decision regarding advancement in rank to the applicant by February 28 (**Article 2.2.3.3 Evaluation of Faculty Seeking Advancement in Rank**).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On **Thursday, November 27th** the StFXAUT Executive will host a General Meeting in **SCHW 205** at **5:15pm**.

The Social Affairs Committee would like to invite you to an end of term social on **Thursday, November 27th** in the **SCHW Faculty Lounge 330** following the General Meeting.

The [St. Francis Xavier Association of University Teachers Bursary](#) was awarded to an undergraduate student in October. This bursary is equal to the cost of one six-credit course, \$1,475.00.

YOUR 2014-2015 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

[Brad Long](#), President

[Peter McInnis](#), Past President

[Chris Frazer](#), Vice President

[Rita Campbell](#), Secretary

[Stephen Finbow](#), Treasurer

[Charlene Weaving](#), Chief Grievance Officer

[Jonathan Langdon](#), Member at Large

[Bruce Sparks](#), Member at Large

[Wendy Panagopoulos](#), Member at Large

[Cory Bishop](#), Member at Large

**The StFXAUT Executive wishes you and your family
a joyous holiday season!**



Seasons Greetings

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE STFXAUT OFFICE:

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