

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The beginning of any academic term is, for most, an exciting time of year as we welcome new students and new StFXAUT members, introduce new instructional strategies and elements into our courses and labs, and continue the journey of developing students' skills in communication, critical thinking, analysis, and so on. The Fall term of 2016 has some additional excitement as our Nursing Faculty and Nurse Educators will move into their newly-renovated space on campus. In the fall of 2016, we also anticipate the completion of our *Fourth Collective Agreement*.

Following the Annual General Meeting in May 2016, the committees of the StFXAUT have been busy. During the summer, the Executive and the Negotiation Support Committees met on a regular basis for both general AUT business and with the Negotiating Team (Ken MacAulay, Chief Negotiator, Christie Lomore and Kris Hunter). The Communications Committee met to prepare a quarterly issue of the *Beacon* along with two Bargaining Bulletins. The Social Affairs Committee was preparing

for our first social for this academic year, and the Grievance Committee and the Chief Grievance Officer continue to address a continuous flow of potential issues.

I am in the beginning of my first academic year as President of the StFXAUT, and my initial experience of the scope of the position is that it is daunting but manageable. I am impressed with both the infrastructure that has been built by the Presidents and Executive Committees before me and the number of members who are dedicated to the work of the StFXAUT. Further, the support of Susan MacKay, StFXAUT Executive Assistant, is invaluable.

I enjoyed seeing everyone at our first social of the academic year and look forward to seeing you again at our next regular meeting of members on September 19th.

In solidarity,

Mary Oxner
StFXAUT President

Monitor *StFXAUT* social media activity by following [@StFXAUT](#) on Twitter and liking our [Facebook](#) page, www.facebook.com/StFXAUT.

“STRATEGIC” INTRODUCTION OF MERIT PAY?

by Mary Oxner

The University’s strategic planning process has produced a strategic plan for the next five years (2017-2022). The release of a strategic plan for the University is a momentous occasion, as it is the first such plan issued in the last two decades or even longer. The strategic plan (circulated via e-mail on July 25, 2016) opens with the words “The Way University is Meant to Be” and continues by identifying five distinct pillars that are each accompanied by various goals and related objectives.

On review, the finalized strategic plan in July contained several surprises. Under the pillar “Sustainability & Stewardship” (see p. 26), one of the objectives under Goal 1 (“Develop the capacity for transparent, evidenced-based decision making to inform all areas of University operations”) states that the University will “Develop a merit system for departments or individuals who exceed targets or lead in the University.” The inclusion of merit pay as an objective embedded in the strategic plan raises various questions, including:

- 1) Is merit pay being considered for StFXAUT members as member compensation is negotiated in the context of a Collective Agreement? The issue of merit pay is inherently problematic and is fraught with potential inequities (see the article on the subject written by Brad Long in [Volume No. 6, Issue No. 2 of the Beacon](#)).
 - 2) Would the application of merit pay require formal evaluation? It is difficult not to regard any request which leads to formal evaluations linked to merit pay with a great degree of suspicion if not cynicism. Arguably, such formal evaluation is the gateway to post-tenure review.
 - 3) Given the lack of consultation with the Association, we wonder: is it the case that merit pay is only being considered for senior administrators? The prior administrative regime (under Dr. Sean Riley) had a system of merit pay through annual bonuses, which ineffectively rewarded administrators. The response to questioning by a reporter from the *Chronicle Herald* (February 1, 2013) and by our members was to roll such bonuses into individuals’ base salaries. The disconnect between high tuition and bonuses paid to University administrators as voiced by the public persists, which must cause us to further question the use of merit pay in a public institution like a University.
 - 4) Why was the objective of merit pay not disclosed in any previously circulated communication of the strategic plan process nor in the presentation by President MacDonald to faculty and staff? Having read all the circulated material, participated in all of the opportunities to contribute to the process, and having attended the strategic planning presentation in July 2016, merit pay, a sensitive topic, was not disclosed nor discussed.
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“Getting to Know You: Colleen Cameron”

by Philip Girvan



The Fall academic session marks Colleen Cameron’s last as full-time teaching faculty with the Coady International Institute (she retired from the School of Nursing last year). However, her history with Coady precedes her teaching career: “My father taught at Coady and my mother worked with Dr. Coady. She helped him write his book *Masters of Their Own Destiny*.” Noting that Dr. Coady officiated her parents’ wedding, Colleen quips: “I guess you could say that it was in my blood.”

Colleen immediately points toward the development of the StFXAUT when asked about changes at StFX University during her course of her career. The StFXAUT “made a big difference to me personally. My pay in Nursing was well below what my counterparts in the public sector were getting: \$20-30,000 a year less. When the Union came in, my salary increased dramatically.”

In addition to teaching and nursing, service to the StFXAUT, including terms on the Negotiating Committee and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, Colleen is well known for her advocacy and her passion for equity. She has performed volunteer work with VOICES, a volunteer community group working to bring about local, healthy, and sustainable food options for residents, particularly in the downtown core, of Antigonish that began shortly after the closing of the last downtown grocery store in Antigonish in 2004.

She has also volunteered with the Naomi Society, the Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition, served as Chair of the R.K. MacDonald Board of Governors, was the first chair of the Guysborough Antigonish Regional Strait Area Health Authority (GASHA), was a member of the national council for Development and Peace, and sat on the board of directors for the Wild Blueberry Producers Association. Colleen is currently serving a term as Chair of the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society, an organization that recently received funding for the first phase of a multi-family building whose tenants will pay a monthly rent no more than 30 percent of their monthly income.

The voluntary sector provides opportunities to work with people in different fields and from diverse backgrounds, people whom you might otherwise not meet. This approach to learning informs much of Colleen’s practice, whether in the classroom or in the community. The development of the Gender and Health and International Health and Development courses accredited by the School of Nursing for StFX students and the Coady International for the School of Nursing created a space for, as Colleen puts it, “nursing students and Coady students to be in class together and to explore issues of global health and it was very fascinating course, I think, for everyone that took it.” Her position as GASHA Chair coupled with her being university faculty provided an opportunity to be “instrumental in setting up the very first Community University Research locally.” “It was interesting,” Colleen adds, “because people said, well I don’t

do health, I'm do Anthropology, I'm in Sociology, I'm in Mathematics and all of that, and what I was trying to do was get people thinking about the determinants of health."

Colleen sees little difference between volunteerism and her work at the university. "I don't distinguish between what I do for pay and what I do for non-pay," says Colleen. "For me it was never to get in a position of power, but I realized that a position of influence could make a difference, and that's always been my thinking: if you have an opportunity to have an influence, then do it."

Retirement doesn't seem likely to slow Colleen down. "I have a bit of work left to do with Coady [after December]. A real passion is doing the People Assessing Their Health (PATH). I'd like to do more of that work in the community. I'd love to do that with public health, work with the Community Health Board. I'd like to do more farm work. I'd like to spend some time doing some reading".

The StFXAUT wishes to acknowledge Colleen's service, her dedication to her students, and her commitment to the community and looks forward to seeing what's next.

Negotiations Update – September 2016

by Mary Oxner

The *Third Collective Agreement* between the Board of Governors of St. Francis Xavier University and the StFXAUT expired as of June 30, 2016. Prior to its expiration, the StFXAUT provided notice of the intent to engage in collective bargaining with a view to negotiate the next Collective Agreement. A Negotiation Committee of the StFXAUT was struck in late April 2016. It consists of Chief Negotiator Dr. Ken MacAulay (Faculty-Accounting), Dr. Christie Lomore (Faculty-Psychology), and Kris Hunter (Lab Instructor-Biology). The University's Administration also struck a negotiation

team: Chief Negotiator Andrew Beckett (Vice President, Finance & Administration), Dr. Petra Hauf (Dean of Science), and Jennifer Swinemar-Murray (Director, Human Resources).

Negotiation meetings have been held in July (three dates) and in August (five dates). Negotiations continue into September. At our next meeting, scheduled for Monday September 19, 2016, Ken MacAulay, Chief Negotiator, will provide a synopsis of the status and timeline for the completion of the *Fourth Collective Agreement*.

Remember to access your Professional Development Fund (PDF)...

Article 1.22 of the Collective Agreement entitles each member to an expense account, against which you can claim for reimbursement of PD-related expenses:

[PDF Information](#) • [PDF Expense Claim Form](#)

Some examples include: Travel, iPads, laptops, software, professional registration fees, conference fees, and graduation robes.

ALUMNI SHOUT-OUT

by Philip Girvan



The Beacon regularly features interviews with StFX University alumni on the topic of STFXAUT members who challenged, inspired, or helped in some way. This issue's interview is with Dr. Amanda Stanec (BSc '98), owner of [Move Live Learn](#), where she serves as an independent contractor to many sport, education, and health organizations.

Dr. Stanec is also the 2016 recipient of the StFX Alumni Association's Young Alumna Award.

The Beacon: Thank for agreeing do this, Amanda. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Amanda Stanec: I was born in Antigonish and raised at Gaspereau Lake, Antigonish County. We had a great neighborhood, and I am still very close with the wonderful people at the lake. I spent my youth playing soccer, highland dancing, and working different part-time jobs in the community. I went to Dr. JH Gillis High School and, as the fourth of five children, I followed in the footsteps of my three older brothers who all attended StFX. Three of us majored in physical education. I also played soccer at StFX for three years and sat out my fourth year due to an injury.

The Beacon: During your time at X was there any instructor, or possibly a research librarian, or a lab instructor... someone who was particularly inspiring or helpful and helped you choose a major or lessons you've learned that have helped you in your career?

Amanda Stanec: Definitely Daryl Ingram who was the anatomy lab instructor. He worked closely with Roy Rasmussen. Darryl was incredibly patient, available when people needed help, and truly seemed to love what he did. I was very lucky to work as a lab assistant to him the year after taking anatomy, and thus I moved from knowing material to understanding the material. This was a huge light bulb moment for me in that it helped me transition from someone who wanted decent grades to someone who wanted to understand, learn, and study more.

The Beacon: What in particular have you taken from those experiences and been able to apply to your professional career?

Amanda Stanec: I realize that without a heavy emphasis on the process, a product will never reach its full potential. I learned that leaving stones unturned is no way to meet the needs of my clients. It also reinforced in me the magic of humility - it's okay if I don't know something, but it's not okay if I pretend to know something I don't. When I returned to STFX as a professor in 2006, I realized how valuable the team at the Writing Center was. I actually required my B.Ed. students (physical education pre-service teachers) to visit the Writing Center as part of our first assignment. Nancy

Marenick was incredible to them, and their having to meet her early on set the stage for them to utilize her and her team.

The Beacon: I wonder if you can also tell me a little bit about Move Live Learn. Its origins, what prompted you begin this...

Amanda Stanec: This was born out of my relocating to the US and being told I'd have 6 weeks off without pay upon the birth of my first child. I thought there has to be a better way. I always took issue with sectors working in silos when there was so much to gain by learning and listening to each other. Thus, I started my company and haven't looked back. My daily tasks range from conducting research studies to writing youth sport curriculum. Current clients include the International Olympic Committee, Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation, Association for Summer Olympic International Federations, to name a few...I feel the values I learned growing up in Antigonish are why my business has been sustainable and successful - hard work, service, and treating others with respect. People always comment to me on these qualities and I respond, "That's the way I was raised."

I would like to thank local businesses who employed me during my years as a university student: Jim's Shirt Locker, the Credit Union, etc. I learned time management, fiscal responsibility, etc. by living at home and managing university, sport, and working. As you can tell, I am very proud of where I am from and very grateful for the people there. I was a prof at X from 2006-2009, hired to lead physical education pedagogy within the Faculty of Education.

I only left StFX as a professor because my husband didn't find work (his PhD is in electrical engineering). I was tenure-track and was well on my way...

The Beacon: It's an interesting jump: going from an academic career to becoming an entrepreneur.

Amanda Stanec: Yes, but I think it's also a perfect illustration of having to be resourceful to stay out of debt. My husband always told me I should own my own business as I found ways to have my Master's and PhD paid for. No debt - I lived as a nanny, as a dorm mother at a boarding school, etc. while studying to offset cost / debt. I didn't get to fly home for weddings or have nice things - but I stayed out of debt and that resourcefulness is how I find work now - so he says. And I find the work keeps coming my way - after I work with someone and they see I am responsive, want to please them, want to focus on it being the best it can be, they trust me and call me back.

The Beacon: There is a strong entrepreneurial culture in Antigonish combined with a strong commitment to community.

Amanda Stanec: Yes. I agree. Also, my dad is in automotive sales, and I would see him leave dinner on a Sunday night to help someone who had a flat and bought a car 3 years earlier from him. I learned that getting the gig / making the sale is just one small part. People won't come back to you if you don't take care of them. Taking care of my clients makes me most proud. There is not a better compliment than being told they

only want to work with Move Live Learn going forward, because they know I will go through a brick wall for them.

The Beacon: I think this is plenty for me to work with, Amanda. If I have further questions I'll email.

Thanks so much for taking time from your busy day, and congratulations on being recognized by the Alumni Association.

EQUITY IN THE CLASSROOM

by Rhonda Semple

September is welcomed by most academics with a mixture of excitement about the promise of new courses and fresh minds, and the resignation that not all (or any) of our great new assignments will work as planned and that the grading will keep us way too busy to do as much writing as we'd like.

Alongside those mixed emotions arrive additional yearly events. While we had an Equity Advisor – a position that has been quietly vacant since last Spring – that person would suggest to Faculty that we include a statement of support in our syllabi for creating an equitable learning environment in our classrooms. In the past couple of years this practice of advocating for classroom equity is seemingly more formally supported by our institution as evidenced by the fact that the reminder is now sent out by administrators – at first by our respective Deans and latterly through the office of our A-VP and Provost. Certainly CAUT and our own union support policies of Equity and Inclusion.

Supporting Equity demands that we not reify any one point of view but it in no way proposes that we instead either uncritically ignore difference or accept all perspectives equally. It does acknowledge that when we sharpen the tools of our respective disciplines with diverse cultural and individual perspectives we develop richer understandings of the sort of complex and important questions that deserve to be asked. As a historian it is clear that the inclusion of race, gender and class analysis over the past 50 years has enhanced, not replaced the important arguments made by the political, military and religious historians that dominated past practice. A recent article in *The Atlantic* offers evidence drawn from several studies that female science students continue to have to out-perform their male peers to achieve recognition for their work, and that the fewer female instructors that teach them also face systematic biases in their evaluations.¹

And this matters in institutions of higher learning. Acknowledging the various perspectives our students bring to our classrooms is no threat to thinking; not only can we still dig in and ask tough questions, but in fact we benefit from the opportunity of hearing each other, and hearing difficult challenges to deeply held values. As Joanne Tompkins argued at our teaching workshop a few days ago, what a learning space constructed on equitable principles does is create a 'safe space' where 'unsafe ideas' can

¹ <http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/02/male-biology-students-underestimate-their-female-peers/462924/>.

be explored – where students can respectfully recognize and acknowledge that privilege – of race, ability, gender – and the lack of privilege impacts all aspects of life and learning. It will be uncomfortable, but ideally we can move past ‘judging’ that reality and focus on understanding it and reshaping it. It will be uncomfortable, but model open enquiry and be prepared to be challenged and to meet the challenge. By that we teach, and through that we all learn.

What might this look like? One of most simple yet meaningful acts you can adopt is to have students tell you their names at the beginning of class rather than you reading out their names from the class list. Doing so this year evened the playing ground in terms of my pronunciation of names, and it avoided me ‘outing’ any student that may have or may be in the process of transitioning, or that might gender-identify in a manner I might not immediately recognize. Ask students to let you know which personal pronouns you should use for them. This might matter to only one student in ten years of teaching (I bet there’s more but you don’t know) but for that person your choice could be profound.²

² As I wrote this I was influenced by the storm of reaction to the letter John Ellison, Dean of Students at University of Chicago, wrote to incoming students refuting the value of ‘safe spaces’.

IN SUPPORT OF AND IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The StFXAUT Executive provided a \$1,000 donation to the [Concordia University Faculty Association \(CUFA\)](#) in support of Dr. Homa Hoodfar. To learn more about how you, too, can support Dr. Hoodfar, please visit the Free Homa Hoodfar website: <http://www.homahoodfar.org/>.

In May, the StFXAUT Executive sent a \$500 donation in support of the Halifax Typographical Union (HTU) (Local 30130).

CAUT LABOUR DAY STATEMENT

(Ottawa – September 1, 2016) The Canadian Association of University Teachers marks Labour Day by recognizing and celebrating the contributions of the trade union movement in Canada.

Through collective representation and bargaining, unions have raised the standard of living for all workers, have secured protections for health and safety in the workplace, and promoted equity and fairness in society.

At Canada’s universities and colleges, unions and employee associations have been and remain crucial advocates for academic freedom and professional rights. This Labour Day, CAUT and its member associations celebrate our past achievements, and restate our commitment to fighting back against the casualization of academic work, to advancing equity, and to promoting health and safety in the workplace.

[2016 ANTIGONISH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL: OCTOBER 21ST – 23RD](#)

The StFXAUT has sponsored the Antigonish International Film Festival (AIFF) since 2008, and has been one of the major sponsors since 2013.

The StFXAUT is very pleased to sponsor the following films in this year's Film Festival:

***The Bad Kids* (2016) 96 min. USA.**
Directors: Keith Fulton & Louis Pepe

Re: extraordinary educators teach love, empathy, and life skills to at-risk students

<http://www.thebadkidsmovie.com/#the-bad-kids>

Friday, October 21 at 3:55pm-5:30pm at the Town Library

***Human* (2015) 180 min. France.**
Director: Yann Arthus-Bertrand

Re: a beautiful, wide-ranging, and deeply moving exploration of what makes us

human

<http://www.human-themovie.org/>

Friday, October 23 at 1:00pm-4:00pm at Nicholson 151

[CAUT LAUNCHES A GUIDE TO READ UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS](#)

(Ottawa – September 8, 2016) Knowing how to read and analyze post-secondary financial statements is the best way to understand how much money a college or university has and how that money is spent. *CAUT's Guide to Analyzing University & College Financial Statements*, written by Profs. Cameron and Janet Morrill of the University of Manitoba, is a step-by-step guide to assist academic staff associations in identifying the amounts and sources of resources available for additional support for academic teaching and research.

“This guide is an essential tool for our members and for the public,” said CAUT Executive Director David Robinson. “As public institutions, universities and colleges need to be open, transparent, and responsive in all matters, including their finances.”

Download the [guide](#).

REMINDERS:

1. The StFXAUT provides a [Student Bursary](#) equal to the cost of one six-credit course for an undergraduate student with demonstrable financial need. In your conversations with students about financial aid, please remind them of this possibility. The deadline to submit an application for the StFXAUT Student Bursary Award is **Sunday, September 25th**.
2. The deadline to submit the [StFXAUT Sponsorship Application Form](#) is **Saturday, October 1st**. The StFXAUT invites sponsorship requests from organizations committed to education, labour, social justice, and community development.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Please note there will be a **Regular Meeting** of the StFXAUT on **Monday, September 19th** at **5:15pm** in the **Schwartz Auditorium**.

Light refreshments, vegetarian and gluten-free options, and coffee/tea will be served at 4:30pm.

On behalf of the StFXAUT Executive Committee and Negotiating Team, we look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

SOME OF THE UPCOMING (LATE SUMMER / EARLY FALL) KEY DATES AND DEADLINES IN THE [*Third Collective Agreement*](#):

- **September 15th**: Letters of intent for Faculty wishing to apply for tenure and/or advancement in rank are due. **Article 2.1.5** (p. 64) and **Article 2.1.6** (p.64).
- **October 1st**: Faculty members' Academic Dossiers are complete and submitted in support of applications for tenure and promotion. **Article 2.2.3.2** (p. 91) and **Article 2.2.3.3** (p. 92).
- **October 15th**: Letters of intent for Librarians seeking advancement in rank are due. **Article 3.1.5** (p. 151).
- **October 31st**: Faculty members' Annual Reports are due. **Article 2.0.1:7.1** (p. 49).
- **November 15th**: Librarians' Academic Dossiers are complete and submitted in support of application for permanent appointment and/or advancement in rank. **Article 3.2.3.2:5.0** (p. 163) and **Article 3.2.3.3:5.0** (p. 164).

YOUR 2016-2017 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mary Oxner, President (mmoxner@stfx.ca)
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Bruce Sparks, Vice President (bsparks@stfx.ca)
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