



The Beacon

Volume 5 • Issue 3 • Summer 2015

The Beacon is an information bulletin for StFXAUT members

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This Summer *Beacon* marks the unofficial end of summer, despite my calendar indicating that several weeks remain. This time of year might find you appreciating the break that was perhaps had, celebrating or regretting all that was or was not accomplished, and looking forward to another new beginning of a StFX academic year. Regardless, this is a time of welcome: to new and returning students; to new members of the StFXAUT along with those returning from leaves or breaks in employment; to new administrators and staff across campus, along with those appointed into new positions. I look forward to this time of welcoming, and to this end hope that you may find yourselves able to attend the StFXAUT social at Crystal Cliffs on September 11th (your invitation was already sent by email).

Your Executive continued to meet throughout the summer and made progress on several internal management items. For example, we now have an Employee Handbook that governs the relationship we have with our Executive Assistant, we have created guidelines and a process for receiving and approving requests for financial donations, and we have updated the Book Prize nomination form. Please see the Announcements section of *The Beacon* for more details.

I am quite pleased to see that our newly created Contracts and Benefits Committee, with Cory Bishop as your Chair, has also begun the process of anticipating our next round of collective bargaining. More information will be forthcoming in the months ahead about how you may contribute to this process with your suggestions on how our conditions of employment could and should be improved.

We also have intentions to continue to build upon the Unioniversity brand of events that we carried through last year with our initiatives surrounding the PPP/Presidential Task Force. Our most recent initiative was in collaboration with the Students' Union and other campus unions on Labour Day as a show of our solidarity. We are aiming at drawing students' attention to their numerous routine interactions with unionized employees who work in collaboration to realize the mission of the University (please see page 5 for more information about this campaign).

As we strive to meet our objective of quarterly newsletters, please share with me or any member of the Executive or Communications Committee your comments and ideas on how well we are meeting your information needs and building community as an Association.

Welcome (back) to campus, everyone.
In solidarity,
Brad

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Philip Girvan

The StFXAUT Communications Committee met throughout the summer and has initiated, and are in the process of, initiating a number of communications tools. The Committee has received and reviewed a Communications Strategy prepared by the recently hired StFXAUT Communications Officer, Philip Girvan. This strategy builds upon the AUT objectives, agreed to during the September 19-20, 2014 CAUT Communications and Media Relations Workshop. The strategy identifies audiences, partners, key steps, and the tools necessary toward achieving our objectives, and will be finalized very soon. As suggested by the objectives, one of the StFXAUT's most important tools is Twitter. To this end, a series of social media protocols, beginning with Twitter, is being developed.

The most visible new campaign on display during frosh week, to be seen by new and returning students, parents, guardians and other family members, visitors to campus, and others, is the infographic poster series highlighting StFX as a "Unioniversity". These posters, a collaboration between the StFX Students' Union, the StFXAUT, NSGEU, CUPE, and UNIFOR, showcase the regular, day to day interactions between students and the various unions working on campus. This is a powerful solidarity-building exercise that will help develop a campus-wide recognition of union activity at StFX and the role of unions to enhance student life at X.

A blog component to the StFXAUT website is being developed and Beacon articles, beginning with this issue, will soon be available as blog posts on the website.

A regular Beacon feature, commencing with this issue, will be an interview with a StFX alumnus on the topic of how StFXAUT members mentored, counseled, and inspired them during their student days. James Smeaton, founder and president of Highland Multimedia here in Antigonish, is featured in this issue.

StFXAUT social media activity is ongoing: follow @StFXAUT on Twitter and like our [Facebook](#) page, www.facebook.com/StFXAUT, to monitor goings-on.

JOINT EMPLOYMENT EQUITY COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Lise Brin

Thank you to the 164 AUT members who completed the first ever employment equity questionnaire at StFX. The results will provide the University and our Union with a much better idea of how to go forward with equity surveying in the future. Many

thanks to all Joint Employment Equity Committee members, past and present, for all your efforts.

Stay tuned for a more thorough update from this Committee in the next edition of *The Beacon*.

CONTRACT AND BENEFITS COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Cory Bishop

At the 2015 StFXAUT AGM a motion to amalgamate the Handbook Committee and Salary and Benefits Committees was approved. The Committee, composed of Cory Bishop (Biology; Chair), Suzanne van den Hoogen (Library; Secretary), Stephen Finbow (MSCS), Joanne Tompkins (Education), Chris Byrne (Philosophy), Donna McDougall (Nursing), John McKenna (Psychology; former Chair of Salary and Benefits), Iker Gondra (MSCS) and (not least!) Mark Fuller (Business Administration) represents a good cross-section of the AUT membership. During the summer, the CBC has met three times to begin a major homework assignment meted out by AUT President Brad Long. This assignment has been undertaken in preparation for the next round of collective bargaining, which (believe it or not) is expected to occur Spring 2016. The primary objective of the CBC is to develop a slate of issues that will form the basis of items negotiated for the 4th Collective Agreement (CA). In keeping with previous efforts by our colleagues we have taken two main avenues.

The first is to generate a list of issues that have arisen, either as a result of items that were identified in previous consultations, but were conceded during the last round of negotiations, or that have arisen as a result of attempts to implement the current CA. Collectively these issues form the foundation of our growing list of “identified issues.” So far, we have consulted formally with Charlene Weaving (HKIN; Chief Grievance Officer), Bruce Sparks (Art; Joint Committee), Denton Anthony and Sasho McKenzie (Business Administration, HKIN; Benefits Governance Committee), the AUT Executive Committee, and Kris Hunter (Biology; Lab Instructor). On a special note we are committed to drafting language around workplace diversity, equity, and harassment, with an eye for language that ensures provision for all members of a workplace that upholds the highest ideals without abrogating our obligations to academic freedom. We have also received unsolicited suggestions from several members on various and sundry items; keep them coming!

The second avenue, well underway, is to mine Collective Agreements from 9 comparator institutions (Acadia, Bishops, CBU, UNBC, Lethbridge, Mount Alison, Mount St. Vincent, Saint Mary's, and UPEI) for information about numerous elements of our compensation package and working conditions. In addition to wage, benefit and pension comparisons, we are documenting such items as teaching load, compensation or course release for Chairs and Coordinators, the degree to which guidelines for adjudicating tenure and promotion are explicit and ‘best-practice,’ retirement incentives, market supplement language, credit for Honours and Graduate instruction, and the like. We are conducting this exercise, as appropriate, for all constituencies in the AUT.

Over time, as a result of this iterative process of bargaining collectively, we hope to be able to codify the concerns and aspirations of our members, in the ultimate service of strengthening our collective capacity to deliver on our mission of excellence as an institution of higher learning. In the coming weeks, the CBC will formally seek input from you, in the form of a survey, and follow up visits with individuals, self-identified groups, or departments. These consultations will really help us to get a sense of the issues of highest importance to you. In order to give our eventual negotiating team the strongest and most unequivocal mandate to negotiate on your behalf, we urge you to participate fully in this consultation process. All members of the CBC and the Executive will have our ears open during this upcoming academic year. We want to hear from all members!

ALUMNI SHOUT-OUT

by Philip Girvan

Beginning with this issue, *The Beacon* will regularly feature interviews with StFX University Alumni on the topic of their relationships with StFXAUT members who challenged, inspired, or helped in some way. This issue's interview features James Smeaton (BIS '01, BBA '02) whose company was instrumental in creating the [StFXAUT website](#):



Philip: Please tell us about yourself.

James: My name is James Smeaton and I live in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. I run a business called [Highland Multimedia](#) which is now going into its 13th year. We do graphic design, website design, and internet marketing for businesses both small and large.

Philip: And you attended StFX University? You're an X grad?

James: Yes, I came here in 1997. In my first four years I got an Information Systems degree with a major and then I came back for a fifth year and got a Business Administration degree with a major in marketing. Then after I completed that, I started my own company, Highland Multimedia.

Philip: Is there any instructor that was particularly inspiring or helpful to you as a young man studying, trying to get into the business... Was there anyone at X that particularly helped you?

James: Yes. Professor Tom Mahaffey was a marketing professor of mine, and the nature of watching him teach was such that he didn't have 'ums' or 'aahs' when he was teaching you something. There was never a pause that came over him. The material that he was reciting to you, you could tell came from a very intimate knowledge not a rehearsed kind of Section 3, Paragraph 4...

It was just a real intimate way of understanding how people interpreted different trends for things like marketing. So, if you were looking at the possibility of introducing a new toothpaste into a market, he would be able to go and break down for you very quickly... if you were targeting Atlantic Canada, maybe you're dealing with 400000 people, let's go and break that down to the number of people who are actually going to be purchasing in a household and, before the end of the lesson was over, he went and gave you a very detailed analysis of exactly what portion of the market you might be able to go and penetrate with a given amount of marketing expenses. I've never seen anybody that was able to just logistically break down statistics to probable realities.

Beyond that, he was always on time, he was always clear, he was always available for you when you needed him afterwards. That just became a bar that I want to set for myself, in terms of having that articulated way of speaking about something that you love.



UNIONIVERSITY POSTER LAUNCH COMMEMORATES LABOUR DAY

by Brad Long

In commemoration of Labour Day, I am pleased to be able to share with you the outcome of an initiative jointly created by the StFXAUT and the Students' Union Executive, in collaboration with the other campus unions: NSGEU, UNIFOR, and CUPE. Today and in the days ahead, I hope you will notice around campus one of four variations of a Unioniversity infographic poster. These posters highlight the numerous – sometimes overlooked, sometimes mundane, but equally important – daily interactions students have with various union members across campus, each working to serve the student population and realize the mission of this University. Members of the StFXAUT, NSGEU, UNIFOR, and CUPE, along with numerous services offered by the Students' Union, are layered into these stories. While inevitably not exhaustive, what we have tried to produce is a demonstration of the solidarity amongst us all in a way that celebrates labour and seeks to build community and mutual appreciation amongst ourselves and the student population.

Special thanks go to the SU Vice President of Communications, Hillary Elliott, all the union presidents, and the graphic design talents of 4th year student Maggie Tait, whom the StFXAUT commissioned to bring this vision to life.

If you have not yet seen a poster on campus, you can also view them all by clicking on the following link on the [StFXAUT website](#).

CAUT LABOUR DAY STATEMENT

(Ottawa – September 7, 2015) On this Labour Day, the Canadian Association of University Teachers celebrates the achievements of the trade union movement in contributing to better terms and conditions of employment for working people, and to a more equitable society for all.

Trade unions have improved the quality of life of working people by promoting health and safety in the workplace, fighting for decent pensions and benefits, and securing maternity and parental leaves.

The union movement has been and remains on the front line in fighting against discrimination and harassment.

By winning better employment standards and important social protections, labour unions have improved the livelihoods of workers, their families, and their communities.

In colleges and universities, unions have been outspoken defenders of accessibility, quality, adequate public funding, and academic freedom. Academic staff face similar challenges as workers in other sectors, confronting increased casualization and pressure to roll back hard fought gains.

Faced with legislative attacks by some governments, including the federal government's Bill C-377 and Nova Scotia's Bill 100, we are reminded of the continued need for unity and vigilance in protecting working conditions.

CAUT commits to continued work in solidarity with labour unions across sectors to defend workers' rights on campus and across the broader work force.

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).

[2015 ANTIGONISH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL: OCTOBER 23RD – 24TH](#)

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

“The 50 Year Argument” (2014)

Directors: Martin Scorsese and David Tedeschi (118 minutes)

From its emergence during the writer strikes and Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s the *New York Review of Books* defied the modern culture of news reporting and frequently made challenges to mainstream thought. Scorsese puts together a bracing film about how fifty years of radical ideas can open a dialogue towards social and political change.

Friday, October 23 at 3:30pm at the Town Library

[“American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs” \(2013\)](#)

Director: Grace Lee (83 minutes)

Grace Lee Boggs is a 99-year-old Chinese American writer, activist, and philosopher. Rooted for more than 70 years in the African American movement, she has devoted her life to an evolving revolution that encompasses the contradictions of America's past and its potentially radical future. Grace's lifetime of vital thinking and action traverses major U.S. social movements of the last century; from labour to civil rights, to Black Power, feminism, the Asian American and environmental justice movements and beyond. Angela Davis, Bill Moyers, Danny Glover, and others help shape this story. “Revolution”, Boggs says, “is about the ability to transform oneself to transform the world”.

Best Feature, Toronto Asian Film Festival & Woodstock Festival; Audience Award, Wisconsin Film Festival

Friday, October 23 at 1:45pm at the Town Library

[CAUT: BILL C-377 BECOMES LAW](#)

(Ottawa - June 30, 2015) The Conservative government used its Senate majority to force the adoption of Bill C-377, legislation that will require labour organizations to report all transactions over \$5,000, and the details of employees and officials who earn over \$100,000. The information will be collected by the Canada Revenue Agency and posted on a public web site.

Bill C-377 has been criticized as unconstitutional, undemocratic, discriminatory, and an invasion of personal privacy. Many individuals and organizations spoke against it, including seven provincial governments, Canada's Privacy Commissioner, constitutional and labour lawyers, the Canadian Bar Association, the insurance and mutual fund industries, benefits and pension plan managers, medical associations, and professional sports associations.

The legislation will apply to all academic staff associations, unionized or not, forcing them to track and release thousands of transactions, and report on time spent by staff on specific activities. Time and resources will be needed to comply with the onerous reporting rules, instead of defending academic freedom, working conditions and quality of education in post-secondary institutions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1) The Social Affairs Committee members, Charlie ten Brinke, Deb Graham, and Bhavik Parikh, would like to remind you of the annual **Fall Meet and Greet** at Crystal Cliffs on **Friday, September 11th** from 4:00pm-8:00pm. Outdoor games begin at 4:00pm and you're welcome to bring your favourites! Supper will be served at 5:30pm.

The RSVPs have been submitted but there is always room for a few more! Please contact [Charlie](#) if you would like to attend the Meet and Greet.

Charlie, Deb, and Bhavik are currently planning for what will surely be a fun, community-building way to kick off the new academic year. We hope you all will make plans to be present!

- 2) 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 Friday, September 25th.
- 3) The StFXAUT recently created a [Sponsorship Policy and Application Form](#), and invites sponsorship requests from organizations committed to education, labour, social justice, and community development.
- 4) The StFXAUT **Book Prize Award** [Nomination Form](#) and [Terms of Reference](#) have been revised.

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](#)

YOUR 2015-2016 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

[Brad Long](#), President

[Peter McInnis](#), Past President

[Chris Frazer](#), Vice President

[Rita Campbell](#), Secretary

[Martin van Bommel](#), Treasurer

[Charlene Weaving](#), Chief Grievance Officer

[Bruce Sparks](#), Member at Large

[Cory Bishop](#), Member at Large

[Kris Hunter](#), Member at Large

[Wendy Panagopoulos](#), Member at Large

The StFXAUT Executive would like to extend a warm welcome to new and returning AUT members, students, and staff to our campus community, and wish each of you an engaging and successful academic year!

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

#219-42 West Street (Old Municipal Building) • (902) 867-3368

[Email](#) • [Website](#)

LOCAL THINGS TO SEE AND DO

[AHA! Arts & Health Antigonish](#)

[Antigonish Culture Alive Calendar of Events](#)

[Antigonish Kid's Corner](#)

[Experience Antigonish](#)

[Municipality of the County of Antigonish Events Calendar](#)

[Nova Scotia Tourism](#)

[Town of Antigonish Recreation](#)