



## *The Beacon*

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*The Beacon* is an information bulletin for StFXAUT members

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### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Warm greetings to you all - we sure can use all the warmth we can muster this winter. Welcome to this 2105 Winter Edition of the StFXAUT *Beacon*. During the hectic pace of activities characteristic of this time of year, I would like to use this space to highlight how many of you have still found ways to serve the StFXAUT membership and make important contributions.

We have two Joint Committees with the Administration that are learning about and discussing improvements to both our benefits and pension plans; this *Beacon* contains an update from the latter. Also reporting in this *Beacon*, the Status of Women and Equity Committee has been very active in building relationships and considering how they may contribute to our working conditions and our students' learning environment. Our Grievance Committee has been working one-on-one with a number of individuals who each have had some concern about whether the provisions of the *Third Collective Agreement* have been applied appropriately to them. Our Social Affairs Committee organized an open house at Keppoch Mountain, impeccably timed for perfect, snowy weather conditions. In addition to the publication of this *Beacon*, the Communications Committee has been taking a more strategic look at our

communications efforts and making plans for improvement in identifiable areas. The Salary and Benefits Committee is also in the process of regrouping and focusing on the data gathering and analytical task ahead. The Joint Committee for the administration of the *Collective Agreement* has been meeting regularly to overcome matters of ambiguity and resolve outstanding language changes that were referred to this Committee during the prior round of collective bargaining. Finally, but not least, the Executive Committee has been meeting bi-weekly to discuss matters of general importance, from student evaluations to program redundancy, and to ensure we oversee responsibly the business of the Association. To streamline these efforts, we are also discussing several overdue updates to our Constitution, and will be bringing forth recommendations for change in the form of motions prior to the next General Meeting of the Association.

This list of contributions is not exhaustive. I have not noted the particular work of such groups as the Handbook Committee, Occupational Health and Safety, the Joint Employment Equity Committee (also reporting herein), the ad hoc Joint Committee on Student Evaluations, our CAUT representatives and more, and yet my gratitude for all this service is the same and, I hope, shared by us all.

I hope you will find this edition to be as informative and interesting as the prior editions. As always, thanks to Susan MacKay for making it a reality. Please remember to stay up to date with both the public and members-only

portions of the new StFXAUT website, and share your feedback via the available channels.

Thank you,  
Brad Long

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## **PENSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

by Ken MacAulay

The Pension Advisory Committee met six times in 2014. We received an update on the Pension Plan from [Sun Life](#) in March 2014. In subsequent meetings, in May and August, the Committee requested and received information on the text of the pension plan and the terms of reference of the Pension Advisory Committee. The Committee has also initiated a review of the pension plan managers and the types of investment funds available to members.

One of the major items on our agenda is the introduction of target date funds where our members would choose a fund based on their expected retirement date. The fund automatically changes the mix of stocks and bonds as the member approaches retirement. The fund has a focus on growth early in a member's employment and then the investments in the fund become more conservative as the member approaches retirement. As part of this process, the Committee received presentations from Phillips, Hager & North and Sun Life on their target date offerings in November 2014. The Committee met in December 2014 to discuss and evaluate the presentations. This process is ongoing.

In addition to the above, members will have noted that we had Sun Life in to provide several education sessions on retirement readiness in 2014. Also in 2014, we were able to provide members with the opportunity to contribute to RRSPs and TFSAs through payroll deduction and invest these monies in our pension plan funds. In addition to the convenience of payroll deduction, this option could be very valuable to members because of the lower fees in our funds (compared to many mutual funds). For example, assume an employee starts work at age 30 and contributes \$7,000 per year to their RRSP and TFSA combined. Also assume that they were able to earn a 7% return from their investments before fees. In the average mutual fund with fees of 2.50%, the investments would be worth about \$570,000 at retirement in 35 years. In our funds with fees of roughly 0.50%, the investments would be worth about \$868,000, or almost \$300,000 more. We believe that this could be a significant advantage to many of our members.

Our plans for 2015 are to continue our review of the pension plan managers, the types of investment funds available to members, and the fees charged to our members. We should have recommendations on some of these topics later in 2015. Please feel free to contact any of the StFXAUT members on the Committee ([Jacques Boucher](#), [Ken MacAulay](#), or [Ping Wang](#)) if you have any questions.

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## STATUS OF WOMEN AND EQUITY COMMITTEE REPORT

by Donna Trembinski, Stella Maranga, Angela Weaver, Wendy Panagopolous, Chris Gilham (Chair), and Mark Fuller

The Status of Women and Equity Committee has been active this year. Committee members meet regularly in person or electronically to discuss issues of equity on campus and work to raise awareness about such issues, and equity-related events within the AUT membership.

One of our first priorities was to try to understand how our role intersected with other offices and people who work on equity issues. In October our Committee met with other individuals on campus who do equity work, such as the University's Equity Officer, the student advisors, and the Students' Union equity representatives. The result of that meeting indicate that there is a lot of energy dedicated to dealing with equity issues on campus but that more communication between the groups is needed, as is a clear rationalization of how the various committees, offices and individuals relate to each other. Certainly this will be an ongoing project for the next while.

To facilitate greater clarity of the role of the Status of Women and Equity Committee itself, we have just completed a revision of the Committee's terms of reference (TOR). The TOR now reflect a widened mandate for equity and clarifies the advisory role of the Committee with respect to the Executive and the Joint Equity Committee. Chris

Gilham sits on that Committee and has an update piece in this edition of the *Beacon*.

On November 1, 2014, members of the Status of Women and Equity Committee, the AUT Executive, and other interested parties attended an all-day Equity Workshop organized and facilitated by Rosa Barker of CAUT. Topics examined included: what equity is legally and socially; how a commitment to the principles of equity might work in practice; barriers to equity; steps to take to achieve equity on campus; and bargaining for equity. Some of the discussions were difficult but the group was energized by some of the possibilities for improvement that were raised during workshop discussions.

The Committee is now thinking about next steps. Some possibilities we have explored are: coffee houses to discuss members' concerns about equity on campus and how such issues may be positively addressed; a needs survey to direct the Committee about the most pressing concerns around equity on campus; and an infographic educational campaign to raise awareness amongst members, administrators, and students alike about often hidden issues of equity. We also welcome both feedback and ideas. Please email [Chris Gilham](#).

**How well do you know your *Collective Agreement*?**

**Take a quiz on page 8 and find out!**

## AN IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR ALL StFXAUT MEMBERS FROM THE JOINT EQUITY COMMITTEE:

### THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY SELF-IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

by Lise Brin, Tara Buksaitis, Chris Gilham, and Richard Nemesvari

The [\*Third Collective Agreement\*](#) between the StFX Board of Governors and the StFX Association of University Teachers (StFXAUT) provides clarification and guidance with regard to understanding our obligations to employment equity.

**Article 1.8** specifies four designated groups to which its Employment Equity Policy applies: “women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and persons with disabilities” (**Article 1.8: 1.2**). It further specifies that “the primary criterion for appointment to positions at the University is academic, professional, administrative, or technical excellence,” and that “[n]o candidate shall be recommended for appointment who does not meet the criteria for the appointment in question” (**Article 1.8: 2.2**). Where “the qualifications of two candidates for appointment are demonstrably equal,” and one of these candidates is a member of the four designated under-represented groups, “then, all else being equivalent, the candidate of the under-represented group should be offered the position” (**Article 1.8: 2.3**).

As a first step to attaining our goal of employment equity, it is important to know how many members of these four groups are currently employed as StFXAUT members. We also wish to take this opportunity to obtain equity-related data pertaining to additional populations that are not included within the Employment Equity legislation. Statistical reports developed from equity data will help to establish baseline information for future comparison, so that we can know whether our commitment to employment equity is achieving the desired goals.

**Article 1.8: 2.6** of the *Third Collective Agreement*, therefore, states that “the University will build and maintain an on-going database to identify membership, career progress and retention in the designated groups.... The development of the database will be based on a process of voluntary self-identification by means of a form approved by the Committee. Such form to be distributed to current members and new hires.”

In order to implement these measures and collect the appropriate data, the creation of a joint Association/University Employment Equity Committee was mandated by **Article 1.8: 3.0** of the *Third Collective Agreement*.

The current Joint Equity Committee would like to acknowledge the contributions of committee members, previous and current, for their work in the development of an Employment Equity Self-Identification survey. We are pleased to report that the survey appears to be in its final stages of approval. We are hoping to “launch” this survey before this term ends OR at the beginning of the Fall term. As we get closer to a launch date we will provide more details.

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*The StFXAUT Executive would like to make the membership aware that the University Administration has recently launched a campus-wide Quality of Work Life survey. Please note the StFXAUT was not involved in the planning or design of this particular survey, although we were informed that it was forthcoming. Should members choose to complete the survey, we encourage careful consideration of the issues presented. We have been told we will have access to all of the report results.*

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU: AN INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW SCHUMACHER

by Adela Sandness

*There are so many wonderful people on campus who it can be hard to get to know. We work as one community, but often it is in adjacent buildings, so opportunities for conversation may seldom arise. So, we add to the “Beacon” a feature designed to help us get to know each other better as fellow members of our community. Our first in this series is an introduction to Matt Schumacher, lab instructor and lecturer in Earth Sciences.*



Matt Schumacher prefers a face-to-face conversation over coffee, an “old school” approach to community building. Raised in a small town outside of Kitchener, he looked to StFX as a means to continue to appreciate the small town rhythm and enjoy the quality of life outside of big city southern Ontario. Having completed his Master’s in late 2009, he did consulting work before coming to StFX in 2010, choosing to remain in an academic setting and be close to family in Halifax. His wife, a planner by profession, joined the Eastern District Planning Commission before coming to serve as deputy clerk for Antigonish County. Their son, Ross, is now two and a half years old, and they are expecting a second child in June.

*Photo: Lab instructor and lecturer Matt Schumacher conducting work in the field.*

A hydro-geologist by training, working in surficial geology, Matt was selected for his job because we were looking for someone who “grabs the bull by the horns and gets things done”. He is sought after on campus amongst colleagues and students especially for his technical skills with geomatics, and in particular GIS (Geographic Information Systems), computerized mapping with analytic components.

Matt is among the roughly 19% of AUT members (excluding the 15% who are part-time academic instructors) who have contractually limited terms and are  $\frac{3}{4}$  welcomed by our community: they work on regularly renewed nine-month contracts and systematically need to find summer income replacement.

Matt works on campus and, with his go-getting quality to excel in his job, during summer months to make up that gap. With a growing family, a consistent summer lay off takes away stability that he works to create in other ways.

Having been “head-hunted” by Ontario companies, he is, for the moment at least, choosing the benefits of a rural Atlantic Canadian lifestyle. For the past two summers, he worked doing substrate mapping for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in New Brunswick, studying the Atlantic Canadian sea bed. Yet the travel and distance are hard on his family. Considering the importance of both ground and sea bed water in Nova Scotia, there is also much potential here for his skillset to be valued; he is putting in place what is needed to start his own business and apply for government tenders.

It is an experience of “almost being at home” shared by many in our community. Matt loves his job, loves what he is doing, knows the students appreciate him, values that his family is settled in a small town setting where his wife also has work as a professional, appreciates all our town has to offer his growing family, feels fortunate to have his job, and yet also feels the pressure and weight of being <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> welcomed on the job.

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## **NATIONAL ADJUNCT WALKOUT DAY**

by Bruce Sparks

National Adjunct Walkout Day ([#NAWD](#)) began with a casual suggestion in social media and gradually grew into an ad hoc but widespread American day of action on February 25<sup>th</sup>. The “adjunct” is a catch-all term that describes anyone teaching in other than a regular full-time or tenure track position, and encompasses a sometimes bewildering array of underpaid, insecure, and part-time teaching jobs. In Canada CAUT uses Contract Academic Staff to describe the same phenomena.

Anywhere from 50 to 75% of teaching positions in American colleges and universities are taught by adjuncts, and the wide variety of state laws and conditions, along with many, many different unions, organizations and lobby groups have made nationwide gains difficult and uncertain. And the problem is also one of visibility. Students can’t necessarily tell in the classroom whether their instructors are tenured or adjunct and the public tends

to lump all professors into the overpaid and underworked category.

It’s too early to tell how many adjuncts actually walked out for the day. Many feared for their jobs, or doing anything that would draw unwanted attention to themselves – anything that could be held against them when the next contracts came out. Many opted for other forms of action and protest, but there was certainly an increase in publicity and mainstream media attention to a problem that most institutions would like to continue quietly using to their benefit.

And, as one headline read, “How a hashtag turned into an international adjunct movement”. Support from Canadian and international universities and associations indicate the struggle for improved academic working conditions might just be moving to another level.

For more information about National Adjunct Walkout Day:

[Inside Higher Ed](#)

[The Chronicle of Higher Education:  
It’s Time to Review Your Adjunct Employment Policies](#)

## **TEACHING-ONLY STREAMS: A BAD IDEA**

by Peter McInnis and Brad Long

Reflecting a trend towards teaching-only appointments in some larger institutions, StFX administrators have floated the idea that we might follow in this direction. Teaching-only positions are typically defined as 70-80 per cent teaching and are allotted to an alternative lecturer rank structure. Being a small-sized primarily undergraduate university, StFX must carefully assess the implications of any such initiative. The motivation is obvious - cheaper labour because fewer instructors are needed to offer the same course load. Yet national longitudinal evidence indicates rank faculty costs as a percentage of the operating budget have remained constant or declined in recent decades. Faculty are simply not driving up institutional costs. So what are the implications of teaching-only?

Teaching-only streams clearly stifle junior academic careers –Who has time to write anymore?–and many who opt for such jobs do so in the absence of traditional research/teaching/service appointments. Much has been written on how teaching-only jobs are relegated to a second-class status. Experiences at other universities suggest this is divisive and unnecessarily hierarchical. Some institutions have invoked additional teaching responsibilities as a punitive measure, which suggests a devaluation of teaching. Quality teaching is one key element of how we differentiate StFX from other universities so why undercut our advantage?

Academics have long argued a symbiosis between research and teaching. Teaching-only is connected with “consuming” knowledge rather than “producing” knowledge. Should students simply receive a “knowledge product” or share in the complex intellectual engagement of professors holding traditional appointments? Further, can those in the teaching-only category really perform their jobs without maintaining currency with ongoing research and pedagogy, work for which they will be neither be adequately paid nor appropriately credited? Reports of high stress and job burn-out are linked to teaching loads of up to five courses per term and expectations for intersession or summer teaching. Rather than offering job stability, the high turnover or “churn” of teaching-only results in the ongoing hiring of replacements.

Evidence also suggests Faculty in the traditional stream will need to respond to heightened expectations for narrowly-defined research “deliverables” or face the consequences of progressively summative reports. Disciplinary and interdisciplinary variations in “output” are frequently merged to conform to metrics that may be irrational. This amounts to post-tenure review with the explicit administrative rationale of weakening or eliminating tenure, and with it, academic freedom.

Furthermore, service is more than mere obligation to the university and one’s academic field as it represents a tangible form of collegial governance. Teaching-only streams often expect less, if any, service with the result that these responsibilities gravitate to Faculty in traditional appointments. This is similar for peer review processes for rank/tenure, internal/external funding, and scholarly publications as those in teaching-only positions may be perceived as less qualified.

Faculty at StFX, as researchers and teachers with a commitment to a broad definition of service, should resist the introduction of a teaching-only stream. It’s a bad idea that seeks to diminish the best principles of post-secondary education.

**TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ: HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT?** (Answers found on page 11)

1. When reviewing a Faculty member's dossier and application for promotion or tenure, the Departmental Evaluation Committee (DEC) may request, from the Dean, additional information concerning that Faculty member's performance that might not otherwise be available to the DEC. **True or False?**
2. Distinguished performance in the arts or in literature is not evidence of active ongoing engagement in the advancement of knowledge. **True or False?**
3. You can continue the tenure track clock if you are on maternity leave. **True or False?**
4. In the granting of tenure, a Faculty member must have demonstrated that his or her scholarly, professional, or creative activity is reasonable in quantity. **True or False?**
5. An individual has the right to appear before the Rank and Tenure Committee to support their file and respond to questions. **True or False?**
6. Teaching in a limited-term appointment is an indefinite employment status. **True or False?**
7. Part-time academic instructors are Faculty. **True or False?**
8. Lab instructors with continuing appointments are only guaranteed 38 weeks of employment per year. **True or False?**
9. Program Teaching Staff at the Coady Institute and Extension, Writing Centre staff, Lab Instructors, and Nurse Educators are eligible to apply for a Leave of Absence with a deferred salary option. **True or False?**
10. The policy with respect to copyrightable works and intellectual property applies to all AUT members. **True or False?**

**CAUT APPLAUDS SUPREME COURT'S RULING THAT CONFIRMS THE RIGHT TO STRIKE AS INDISPENSABLE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT**

(Ottawa - January 30, 2015) The Canadian Association of University Teachers welcomes today's Supreme Court of Canada decision recognizing the right to strike in collective bargaining.


“While striking is always considered a last resort, it is fundamentally important for workers to be able to collectively withdraw their services to ensure fair and equitable negotiations,” said Robin Vose, President of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. “Workers across Canada have much to celebrate for this affirmation of their constitutional protection of their freedom to associate.”

In its ruling on the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan, the Supreme Court determined that the ability to strike promotes equality in the collective bargaining process. It further stated that a meaningful process of collective bargaining protects important values of “human dignity, equality, liberty, respect for autonomy of the person and the enhancement of democracy.”

The Court also found that a Saskatchewan law that includes university staff as essential service workers is unconstitutional.

“This crucial decision sends a strong message to lawmakers and employers who attempt to dismiss or weaken the rights of workers at the bargaining table,” said Vose.





Join us for a  
**FREEDOM**  
read-on

Thursday, February 19 12:15pm – 1:15pm  
Angus L. Macdonald Library, new book area

If you own a banned or challenged book that you would like to release into the community, bring it. You can participate in the "Bookcrossing: Free a Challenged Book" initiative.

**Honouring, asserting and celebrating our freedom to read, write and speak.**

FEBRUARY 22-28, 2015  
www.freedomtoread.ca



## **FREEDOM** READ-ON by Rita Campbell

At a **FREEDOM** read-on in the Angus L. Macdonald Library on February 19<sup>th</sup> individuals from all across campus read from books that have been challenged, banned, or burnt. The theme of the **FREEDOM** read-on, held to mark [Freedom to Read Week](#), was “Honouring, asserting and celebrating our freedom to read, write and speak.” Freedom to Read Week is also a good time to appreciate how our academic freedom is protected in our [Collective Agreement](#) (**Article 1.5**). Members are entitled to carry out research and publish results; and to teach, discuss, and criticize without institutional censorship.

Some of the StFXAUT members who participated in the Angus L. Macdonald Library’s **FREEDOM** read-on event (pictured from top, left to right):

Dr. Rachel Hurst (*Tiger Eyes* by Judy Blume), Dr. Maurice Arpin (*Les Feés Ont Soif* by Denise Boucher), Dr. Joanne Tompkins (*And Tango Makes Three* by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson), Dr. Brad Long (*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck), Ms. Wendy Panagopolous (*Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes), Dr. Michael Linkletter (*Ais-Eiridh Na Sean Chánoin Albannaich* by Alexander MacDonald), Dr. Joseph Houry (*The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World* by Nawal El Saadawi), Ms. Suzanne van den Hoogen (*Fahrenheit 450* by Ray Bradbury), Dr. Rhonda Semple (*The Stone Angel* by Margaret Laurence), Dr. Ronald Charles (*Native Son* by Richard Wright), Dr. Nancy Forestell (*Beloved* by Toni Morrison), Dr. Yvon Grenier (*The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie), and StFXAUT executive assistant Ms. Susan MacKay (*The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding).

## A FUN-FILLED DAY AT THE KEPPOCH



*Photos (left to right): Chris Gilham and Frankie Gilham, Jaime ten Brinke, and Brad Long and Oliver Long.*



*Photo (left to right): Nancy Forestell, Rita Campbell, and Amanda Casey holding Justin Price, son of Sunny Wang and Joel Price.*

Thank you to the Social Affairs Committee members, Deb Graham, Charlie ten Brinke, and Mike Melchin, for organizing a fun-filled day at Keppoch Mountain on Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. AUT members and their families enjoyed playing in the freshly-fallen snow and savoring hot beverages by the fireside.

The StFXAUT made a \$300 donation to the Positive Action for Keppoch Society (PAK) to thank the organization for hosting the winter social.

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## KEY DATES

Some of the upcoming deadlines in the [Third Collective Agreement](#) include:

### April 15:

- Applications for URPTA, based on research or publication, shall be made to the appropriate Dean, at the Faculty members' initiative, by **April 15** of each academic year (**Article 2.7.1: 3.1**).

### May 15:

- Each Librarian shall submit to the University Librarian a copy of an Annual Report of professional activities by **May 15** of each year (**Article 3.3: 1.0**).
- The Performance Evaluation shall take place by **May 15** or the Lab Instructors contract termination date, whichever is earlier (**Article 4.6: 2.0**).

## 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

### ANSWERS TO TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ

1. **TRUE - Article 2.2.2.1: 7.0** (p. 85).
2. **FALSE - Article 2.2.1: 3.2 b)** (p. 82).
3. **TRUE.**
4. **FALSE.** This is a requirement of advancement from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor (**Article 2.2.3.3: 6.0**; p. 93), but not for granting tenure (**Article 2.2.3.2: 1.1**; p. 91).
5. **TRUE - Article 2.2.2.2: 8.0** (p. 88).
6. **FALSE - Article 2.1.3: 2.2** (p. 60).
7. **FALSE - Article Definition 1.1** (p. 10) and **Article 2.10: 2.1** (p.117).
8. **TRUE - Article 4.2: 1.0** (p. 182).
9. **TRUE - Appendix 1: 2.0** (p. 237).
10. **FALSE - Article 2.11** (p. 122).

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

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