



University of Victoria Faculty Association

THE

F.A. RELAY

SPRING 2017 Volume 2 Issue 1



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CAUT Bulletin - November 2016



*Fish drying in the classroom at T'elemia
- Trish Rosborough*

COVER PHOTO: Association Past President, Doug Baer, receives a CAUT Dedicated Service Award at the 2016 OGM from CUFA-BC Executive Director, Michael Conlon and Association President, Helga Hallgrimsdottir.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

The core mission and purpose of the Faculty Association is twofold: to provide effective representation for Members in any dispute arising from the application of the Collective Agreement, and to bargain for salary, benefits, and workplace rights. However, because we are an academic staff union, we have additional obligations to our membership with regards to our role and responsibility in defending collegial governance, supporting equity in academic work, and protecting the integrity of academic work.

The Association needs Bylaws that support meeting these goals and obligations.

Our Bylaws date from the initial incorporation of the Association and have only undergone minor revisions over the last 25 years. Since then the Association has grown both in numbers and diversity; in addition, our academic workplace has undergone key changes to become more administratively, as well as bureaucratically, complex. Certification as a union in the spring of 2014 enhanced key rights of the Association vis-à-vis the University Administration, but also increased the obligations of the Association towards the Membership. Finally, the *BC Societies Act* has also recently undergone revisions that took effect on November 28, 2016.

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Member Sound Off

“ There are 34 languages Indigenous to BC and every one of them is considered to be endangered. ”



Trish Rosborough with Tahltan language speaker Theresa Etzerza at the immersion camp at Glenora

Q. WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU ENCOUNTER WHEN WORKING WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES AROUND LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION?

A. There are 34 languages Indigenous to BC and every one of them is considered to be endangered. This rich linguistic diversity brings unique challenges to Indigenous language revitalization. In the communities where I have worked, the fluent speakers are elderly and the need to prepare a new generation of speakers who can teach the languages is urgent. Many of today's language teachers are also learners of their language who are working hard to develop their own language proficiency while developing their teaching skills. This dual task of learning to teach

while gaining language proficiency is challenging.

Because the languages have been naturally transmitted as oral languages, there are few materials and resources to draw from. Language programs and teachers are working hard to develop learning resources, curriculum and assessment models to support their practice. In order to develop effective resources and approaches to teaching, we need greater understandings about how to teach in ways that honour and continue to transmit the culture and knowledge that is reflected in the languages. A constant hurdle in this work is insufficient funding to respond to the need to do this work now while there are still living first language speakers.



Dehcho students working on a hide with Elder Margaret

Q. WHERE DO YOU SEE THIS WORK GOING AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS OVER THE NEXT NUMBER OF YEARS?

A. While there is much work to be done I feel really hopeful about where language revitalization is going. Communities who are taking cross-generational approaches to this work are an inspiration. I am seeing young adults becoming speakers and in turn bringing the language into everyday use in their families, to their work with children in schools, and to their work with babies in language nests. Fluent speakers are actively contributing in many ways, as mentors, teachers, storytellers and traditional knowledge experts. In some communities, former speakers who have had their language severely disrupted though experiences such as residential schools are participating in language

work as they recover the languages in their own lives. The recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission has helped to bring awareness to Canada's relationship with Indigenous people and the responsibility that Canada has for action. The calls to action that have come out of that process address the need to protect the right to Aboriginal languages, to support communities to lead the work, and to provide sufficient funding for language revitalization. The report also points to the responsibility of post-secondary institutions to participate in this work through the development and delivery of degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages. Through work with community partners our own programs are changing to include even more courses and experiences for building language proficiency, supporting learners to become speakers. ■

... I feel really hopeful about where language revitalization is going.

Revising our Bylaws so that they are congruent with these changed realities is thus both necessary and urgent.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee, with support and guidance from the Executive Committee, began work on revising the Association's Bylaws shortly after certification. This work is presently in its final stages, with a set of **principles** (to guide the Constitution and Bylaws Committee in constructing the final draft Bylaws revisions) having been discussed and endorsed unanimously by the Membership at our 2016 Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) in November.

These principles commit the Executive Committee to presenting a set of revised Bylaws for ratification by the Membership no later than at the April 2017 Annual General Meeting. In addition, the Membership voted at the OGM to direct the Executive Committee and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to present to the Membership, Bylaws that incorporate several significant departures from Association past practice. Key among these is a proposal to move towards a form of bicameralism, involving the creation of a *Representative Council* (made up of Members elected at the unit level), whose role will be to advise the Executive Committee on important Association business, primarily related to budgeting and collective bargaining.

Key areas of change are intended to enhance our services to Membership

The key areas of change are intended to create enhancements in three areas:

- Governance
- Financial Stewardship
- Services to the Membership

In this, any proposed revisions are intended to balance the needs of the Association as a *civic organization* and as a *service organization*.

As a civic organization, we must place first priority on ensuring we are as democratic as possible. As a service organization we must also protect the Association's ability to work effectively on the Membership's behalf.

Therefore, the proposed revisions are intended to balance our need for a high level of internal democracy with effective management and governance.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee is now working on incorporating these principles into a draft set of revised Bylaws to be considered by the Executive Committee. Once reviewed, the final draft of the Bylaw changes will be circulated to Members no later than the beginning March of 2017. We are currently scheduling presentations of the final draft directly with each unit, where I, along with other key members of the Association, can answer questions and consider your feedback prior to the ratification vote. In the meantime, please look for further communication on this issue.

While, as of November 28, 2016, the *BC Society Act* will lower the default approval threshold for constitutional and bylaw changes to a 2/3 majority, it is worthwhile noting that our current Bylaws require 75% of the Membership to vote in favour of any revisions to the Bylaws.

I, on behalf of the Executive Committee, am hopeful that the changes being proposed are enthusiastically supported by the entire Membership. I sincerely thank the Constitution and Bylaws Committee - and especially the Chair Martha McGinnis-Archibald - and the Executive Committee for their dedication and extensive work in developing the revisions thus far.

Thank you,



Helga Kristín Hallgrímsdóttir

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

The *F.A. Relay* welcomes content submissions.
Contact our Editorial Department at: comsfa@uvic.ca

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

2016

FALL





3.



4.



6.



5.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DEPARTMENTAL LIAISONS BYLAWS WORKSHOP (1, 6, 7 & 8); PROMOTION & TENURE CELEBRATION (2 & 3); OGM 2016; (4, 5 & 9)



7.

UPCOMING - SPRING 2017

JANUARY

- All Member Merit Increment Mentoring Event - *January 11*

FEBRUARY

- Departmental Liaison Workshop - *February 16*
- Faculty Feedback Cafe - *February 22*

MARCH

- Academic Freedom Panel - *March 8*
- CAUT Equity Workshops - *March 23 & 24*
- Faculty Feedback Cafe - *March 29*

APRIL

- Annual General Meeting- *Mid April - Date & Time TBD*
- Faculty Feedback Cafe - *April 26*

Contact Maria Furtado at adminfa@uvic.ca for more event info.



EC PORTFOLIO PROFILE

EQUITY AND DISABILITY

By Victoria Wyatt

In the Summer 2016 issue of the *F.A. Relay*, Association President Helga Hallgrímsdóttir announced the creation of several Executive Committee Portfolios as a measure to help the Executive Committee serve Members more effectively. These portfolios are intended to enhance the scope of work undertaken by our Membership Services Advisor. I am both excited and honoured to have been asked to serve as the Equity and Disability Portfolio holder (EDP Rep) for the 2016-2017 academic year.

The Equity and Disability Portfolio embraces a diverse range of responsibilities and activities.

MEMBER CONSULTING

Upon request of our Membership Services Advisor, Reuben Kellen, the EDP Rep can meet with Members who have individual concerns relating to workplace related equity and/or disability accommodations. While the EDP Rep does not replace Reuben as the official Association representative, he or she can be invited to participate in meetings between Members and supervisors, or HR, to provide additional perspective and support. For example, the EDP Rep can assist a member who is anticipating maternity, adoption or parental leave occurring mid-teaching term to ensure the arrangements asked of them are consistent

// ...the EDP Rep can meet with Members who have individual concerns relating to workplace related equity and/or disability accommodations. //

with the Collective Agreement (CA). The EDP Rep can also advise Members who may need specific accommodation to support either a short- or long-term medical condition.

LIAISON FUNCTIONS

To help ensure the Association Executive is aware of member concerns related to equity and disability, the EDP Rep acts as a liaison between the Association Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, and other external groups. As such, he or she will sit as Chair of the FA Disability Committee, and will be a member of both the FA Equity Committee and the FA Advising and Dispute Resolution Committee. The EDP Rep will also liaise with the Chairs of the Academic Women's Caucus, the Minority and Indigenous Women Instructors' network, the Indigenous Faculty Caucus, and other campus-based groups with an interest in equity and disability issues. In this capacity, the Association Executive can be kept up-to-date with any concerns raised various committees as well as get feedback from other parties on any specific issues raised by the Association.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

The EDP Rep participates in the University Human Rights Committee and sits on their Employment Equity Advisory Group; and, represents the Association on the Provost's Equity and Diversity Steering Committee and on the university's Continuing Benefits Advisory Committee.

EC Equity & Disability Portfolio Contact Info:
Dr. Victoria Wyatt
vwyatt@uvic.ca

JCAA & THE CA

It is the EDP Rep's responsibility to suggest items relating to equity and disability for the Joint Committee on Administration of the Agreement (JCAA). The JCAA, (comprised of representatives from the Association and the Administration), meets between bargaining rounds to clarify interpretations of the CA when specific language is ambiguous or absent. Similarly, the EDP Rep will suggest items related to equity and disability that the next negotiating team may consider when bargaining changes or additions to language in the CA.

REPORTING & EVENTS

The EDP Rep will prepare and submit (to the Association) an annual report on issues relating to equity and disability that are relevant to the next bargaining round. During bargaining years, the EDP Rep also provides support to the Association Negotiating Team and to the FA's Compensation and Benefits Committee. The EDP Rep will also contribute to and participate in Association workshops and events designed to raise member's awareness around equity and disability rights.

NEXT STEPS

The EDP Rep will work with Association Officers, other Portfolio holders and staff to create and maintain a section on the UVic FA website that will host information to members on equity and disability rights, and on University policies and procedures relating to equity and disability.



BIOGRAPHY:

VICTORIA WYATT

Since coming to UVIC in 1989, I have gained experience in a number of capacities relating to equity and disability advocacy. I have served as co-Chair of the Faculty Disability Caucus and Chair of the Academic Women's Caucus, and currently sit on the Academic Women's Caucus Steering Committee. I have sat on the FA Disability Committee since its formation and have served on (and chaired) the FA's Advising and Dispute Resolution Committee. For many years, I served as the Equity Representative for the Faculty of Fine Arts, and have sat on the Employment Equity Advisory Group and the Provost's Equity and Diversity Steering Committee. This year I started my second term as an elected Member-at-Large on the UVic FA Executive Committee and am in my second term as a Faculty-at-Large member of Senate. My research and teaching in Art History and Visual Studies relate to indigenous arts of North America with a focus on arts, indigenous ways of knowing, and contemporary issues. I have lived experience with a disability and with accommodation, sick leave, and LTD at UVic.

I am eager to talk to members or groups with an interest in equity and disability and I look forward to holding the Executive Committee Equity and Disability Portfolio for 2016-2017!

UNIVERSITIES MISSING EQUITY TARGETS IN CRC PROGRAM

The Canada Research Chairs program is examining why many universities and colleges are failing to meet equity targets for chairholders.

In a letter sent this spring to the university presidents who participate in the program, the steering committee for the CRC program asked the institutions to make a concerted effort to address the under representation of the four designated groups in nominations for CRC positions.

“We are especially concerned by the very slow progress being made in this regard,” wrote Ted Hewitt, president of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. “For example the representation of women among chairholders has not increased at the same rate as the representation of women in academia.”

The program’s equity targets are set using the “availability” approach. According to the federal government, availability is determined by estimating the representation of a designated group within the pool of potential nominees

so that the percentage of the estimated representation becomes the target to meet for each of the four groups.

For women, the target is at 30.6%, but only 28.9% of research chairs are held by women; for visible minority, the target is 15% and the actual number is 13.1%; the target for Indigenous scholars is 1% and the actual number is 0.59%; and finally the target for persons with disabilities is 4 % but the actual representation is 0.59%.

The president of SSHRC has warned the participating institutions that the results of the current evaluation of the CRC program will be analyzed this fall with an “equity lens” to consider what program changes may be necessary to address equity.

“We would encourage your institution to conduct a similar review to see what changes are necessary within your own organization to affect substantive change,” added Hewitt.

- CAUT Bulletin, September 2016

UVIC’S PUBLISHING PROGRAM

By Inba Kehoe, Copyright Officer, Scholarly Communication Librarian University of Victoria Libraries

The Scholarly Communications Office (SCO) at UVic Libraries has been offering alternative scholarly publishing services to faculty since 2007. The Libraries, on behalf of the university, established a journal publishing service in 2007 and currently hosts 31 scholarly journals. The list of [titles](#) includes a number of peer-reviewed scholarly journals (e.g., *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, *Philosophy in Review*, *CTheory*, *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, *Migration, Mobility and Displacement*, *Illumine: Journal of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society*, and *Satir International Journal*) created by departments or Centres at the university. The site also hosts a number of undergraduate, graduate, and scholarly society/association journals (e.g., *Journal of Childhood Studies*, *The Midden*, and *Topiques, Études Satoriennes*).

All the journals are published using an open access business model, with the library providing hosting, indexing, and technical support. The peer-review and publication aspects are handled by the respective editorial boards, with assistance from the library when needed.

The successful development of a journal publishing program led to the development of a pilot book publishing program in 2009. Some faculty members approached the

SCO to discuss the creation of scholarly monographs on various topics. Each project includes editorial and publication support from the Office staff, including the procurement of a book designer. A faculty member who is interested in utilizing this service is responsible for bringing a well-edited book and the funds for hiring a professional book designer for the project. A majority of the books are published using an open access business model, under a [Creative Commons license](#), with the faculty authors retaining all rights. The Library hosts the electronic copies of the books in [UVicSpace](#) (UVic’s institutional repository), while paperback copies can be purchased through the [University Bookstore](#).

Titles Include

- *Voices of Kakehashi in Multicultural Canada* by Hiroko Noro and Tad Suzuki, 2016
- *Complexities, Capacities, Communities* by Alan Pence and Alison Benner, 2016. French translation also available.
- *Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships: Global Perspectives*
- *Canadian Public Policy and the Social Economy* by Rupert Downing, 2012

SEE PUBLISHING PROGRAM ON PAGE 16

2017 DISTINGUISHED ACADEMICS AWARDS

The Distinguished Academics Awards recognize faculty members of British Columbia public research universities who have made outstanding contributions to the community through their research.

All forms of research and scholarly activity that contribute to the community beyond the academy are eligible for consideration.

Nominate a colleague today!

EARLY IN CAREER

For outstanding contributions to the community beyond the academy by an individual or group in the relatively early stages of their career.

ACADEMIC OF THE YEAR

For a specific and recent outstanding contribution to the community beyond the academy through research or other scholarly activity by an individual or group at any stage of their career.

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT

For sustained outstanding contributions to the community beyond the academy through research or other scholarly activities by an individual or a group over the major portion of their career.



The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia unites the faculty associations of BC's research-intensive universities.

Since 1973, CUFA BC has worked on behalf of professors, instructors, professional librarians, and archivists to advocate for the best system of publicly-funded post-secondary education possible: one that combines high quality with broad accessibility.

CUFA BC represents over 5,400 members at Royal Roads University, Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Northern British Columbia, and the University of Victoria.

To be considered for an award, a nominee must be an academic faculty member at one of these universities.

Deadline for nominations is January 30, 2017
www.cufa.bc.ca/awards

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

REUBEN KELLEN

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS Membership Services Advisor
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Recent events have highlighted the need for some clarity around the rights and requirements associated with annual teaching assignments. The Faculty Association held a Faculty Feedback Café at the University Club on October 26 to canvass members about their experiences and any resulting concerns. A few themes emerged from the discussions, including the diversity of practice across campus, dissatisfaction with certain teaching assignment processes and practices, and unit-specific challenges. It also appeared that some members were not fully aware of their rights according to the Collective Agreement, and some of the strategies or tools available to members when they are presented with problematic or unwanted teaching assignments. Thanks to all those who attended.



CA Requirements

It will begin with a discussion of the requirements in the Collective Agreement (CA) related to annual teaching assignments. The CA contains two basic requirements with respect to the assignment of duties and responsibilities (including teaching) to faculty members. The assignments must be made in consultation with the faculty members, and they must be equitable. Both of these requirements involve concepts that merit some explanation. A consultation process should be a meaningful conversation where the interests of the relevant stakeholders (here the academic unit, usually represented by the Chair/Director and the faculty member) are identified and balanced. A consultation process does not require consensus or consent; the Chairs/Directors retain sole decision-making authority, and they need to be able to explain what balance of interests they have struck with their decision. This plays directly into the other concept, equity, which is essentially fairness in context. Equity differs from formal equality, where everyone is treated the same regardless of circumstance, by acknowledging that different individual circumstances can serve to amplify, minimize or complicate the impact or outcome of a given process, decision, or assignment.

The CA helpfully includes a list of the relevant contextual factors in determining the equity of teaching and other assignments. These include, but are not limited to, as-

signments in previous years, course-specific factors such as novelty, level, size and schedule, and where applicable a faculty member's program of research and scholarship. It is generally understood that upper-level courses with lower enrolments and a connection to a faculty member's research interests will be most desirable, and lower-level courses with high enrolments and little to no relevance to a faculty member's research (i.e. service courses) are least desirable. The requirement that teaching assignments be equitable means that all faculty members should have fair chances to teach desirable courses, and fair expectations with respect to service courses. It would be a sign of inequitable teaching assignments if some faculty are always expected to teach service courses and never get to teach upper level courses, and vice versa. There may, of course, be legitimate reasons why the apparent unfairness is not actually inequitable, and a consultation process should see those reasons explored, confirmed, and understood.



Tools for Creating Solution

There are many ways that a teaching assignment can be less than optimal, and faculty members have various tools at their disposal to address concerns that they may have with their teaching assignments. The first option to consider, if you receive a problematic assignment, is a conversation with the head of your unit. Although it is common for Chairs, Directors (and, in some cases, Deans) to delegate their authority to make teaching assignments, the authority ultimately lies with them, so you should involve them early when you have reason for concern. The Association is also worth engaging early, as we have the expertise and access to information that allows us to advise you on the assignment's apparent compliance with the CA. We also have a variety of tools available to us that may help to address any issues. At the most basic level, we can advise those responsible for teaching assignments of the requirements in the CA; sometimes, problems arise out of ignorance or misinformation, and these are often simple to fix. We can also advocate more actively and aggressively, and these efforts can range from negotiating some sort of compensation or exchange for the teaching assignment, if you are

[SEE TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS ON PAGE 16](#)



MEMBER SOUND OFF

FAST, FASTER, FASTEST: Where Research meets Accounting

FAST: I attended four lessons in FAST recently, including “Introduction to Accounting at UVic” (Sept. 14), “Introduction to FAST Finance” (Sept. 20), “Journal Entries in FAST Finance” (Sept. 20), and “Reconciling FAST Finance” (Sept. 27). These courses were nicely presented and informative, but were they useful to researchers? I’d have to say no. I heard nothing in these courses that would prevent some of the financial storms that have hit my colleagues. I mean financial meltdowns, account clawbacks and closures, and having to deal with accounts that don’t show balances. There are no courses or FAQs to help researchers avoid these generic institution-wide problems.

The reason is that between research – what we do – and accounting – what they do – there is the invisible hand of Research Administration. Money that comes to you from contracts or from having won grant competitions is processed by Research Admin into accounts. In contrast, FAST is run by Accounting Services, which is as the name states, a service, and I should add, a good service. I remember the systems that predated FAST: EASY (not), and the absolutely appalling one before that: just searching for entry errors saved me thousands annually. Today, the problem isn’t Accounting Services, as much as the lack of transparency in Research Admin’s management practices in relation to your accounts.

FASTER: Time is indeed relative. For example, the millisecond after a contract-based research account is set up, the overhead is removed. Then begins a glacial process during which the little pile of overhead moves across campus, with everyone from VPAC to Dean to Chair pulling off their rightful share, until many years later (!) a researcher is informed that there’s something left and it’s in an account, which.... has no balance. When FAST’s appropri-

ately named *Rocket Report* was sent by a researcher with a question about overhead to staff in accounting there was a certain amount of “Hmm. How does that happen?” This is wider problem than just overhead accounts.

Research Admin is also very quick to close accounts – often with no warning – especially when there is potential for a clawback. The types of accounts that are subject to clawbacks are neither flagged for the researcher’s convenience, nor are warnings sent out. This money, too, is vacuumed up at mach speed. The onus is on the researcher to fight for a rebate, which, I heard, is arbitrarily set at 50 % of the money that went missing. But you will have to fight for even that. When it comes to matters financial, the service provided by ORS is definitely not of the “How can I help?” kind.

“We expect faculty to conform to principles of financial integrity and accountability just as you expect to conform to principles of academic integrity.” That quote from one of our accountants brought me up short. To be frank, my PhD on the otherworldly joys of fern sex did not prepare me for running a lab, which is, to put it bluntly, a little mom-and-pop enterprise that doesn’t make money. If all goes well, the financial balance at the end of a grant gracefully hits zero. It’s bit trickier to accomplish on the accounts that do not have balances. Why are some of the FAST accounts generated for us by Research Admin not run according to the accepted norms of accounting?

FASTEST: The response to these and other problems should be addressed as soon as possible. Financial services, who know how to teach FAST, should create one or more courses specifically for research faculty that cover common problems. It might even be called *How to Avoid Common Problems in Research Accounts*. I would suggest that Accounting Services join forces with Research Admin to address the typical difficulties that researchers face in running the finances of their research programs.

I am not enjoying the sight of recent hires failing to keep up with a system because little attempt is made to explain its workings.

- Patrick von Aderkas, Member for Faculty of Science;
pvonader@uvic.ca

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS CONT. FROM PAGE 14

willing to take it, to filing a grievance and arguing a case before an arbitrator if you are not.

When dealing with teaching assignments, remember the key concepts that have to be respected: equity and consultation. Teaching assignments should be as fair as possible (understanding that you can't always get what you want, and you might sometimes get what the department needs), and where you have reason to be concerned, you must have an opportunity to voice those concerns and have them be treated seriously. In the event that you object to a teaching assignment, it is worth engaging both your Chair and the Association early. You can also work in concert with your colleagues to generate a grass-roots solution. ■

// The CA contains two basic requirements with respect to the assignment of duties and responsibilities (including teaching) to faculty members. The assignments must be made in consultation with the faculty members, and they must be equitable. //

PUBLISHING PROGRAM CONT. FROM PAGE 12

- *Assembling Understanding: Findings from the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships, 2015-2011* by Matthew Thompson & Joy Emmanuel, 2012
- *Community-University Research Partnerships: Reflections on the Canadian Social Economy Experience* by Peter Hall & Ian MacPherson, 2011
- *Crime Prevention and Community Safety for Children and Youth in Canada* by Michel Vallee and Tullio Caputo, 2011
- *The Girls' Diary Project* by Shannon McFerran & Daniel Scott, 2013

Currently In Press

- *Knowing Home: Braiding Traditional Knowledge with Western Science* by Gloria Snively and Lorna Williams- This is an open textbook funded by BC Campus.
- *Handbook of e-Health Evaluation: An Evidence-Based Approach* by Francis Lau and Craig Kuziemsky
- *The Alchemy of Astonishment: Engaging the Power of Theatre* by Will Weigler
- *Greek and Roman Studies: The Contribution of Greek and Latin to the English Language* by Peter Smith. This is an adapted open textbook funded by BC Campus

- Contact Inba Kehoe at: ikehoe@uvic.ca for more info

BEST OF THE BLOGS

By Monica Prendergast, FA Secretary

Well, here we are at the end of yet another busy term! Here are a few articles I have read and valued in recent months. Please do not hesitate to send me links for readings you think your colleagues would appreciate and enjoy.

Academic bullying is a topic we may wish to ignore or avoid, whether we play the role of bully, victim or bystander. Denial of the issue can be a comfortable place for some, a painful place for others. The creation and maintenance of a positive working environment is vital to a strong academic community. The Faculty Association will be working on a project on this important topic in 2017. Please let me know if you would like to be involved. ***Cruelty and Kindness in Academia*** from *Vitae*, a blog of *The Chronicle in Higher Education*.

Pre-tenure colleagues are under a lot of pressure to "perform...or else." In an increasingly precarious academic

work world, many PhD graduates are suffering from the stresses of long-term sessional appointments. ***When Tenure Never Comes*** from *The Walrus*.

Related to these topics, but flipping the script, is this article that reminds us how fortunate we are to do the work that we do. ***Finding Pleasure in Academe*** from *Inside Higher Education*

And in a final (slightly immodest) selection, here is a piece that reminds us of the value to our work lives of being in a unionized workplace. ***The way to a better work-life balance? Unions, not self-help*** from *The Guardian*.

This column offers a selection of online articles that address issues of interest to those who work in higher education. I welcome suggestions for future newsletters. Please send a link to the item and a one or two sentence description to: secretaryfa@uvic.ca.

CAUT PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE SPIRIT OF CONSULTATION

'Tis the season of consultations. Justin Trudeau's Liberal government wants to know what people think about a great many things. A recent count, taken from the government's Consulting with Canadians website, puts the number of official consultations in progress at 85. In early June the site listed more than 120 consultations, ranging from national security to the safety of self-care products.

The summer consultations for basic science — what the government chooses to call fundamental science — came to a close on Sept. 30, 2016. That was the deadline for public submissions to the expert panel on fundamental research appointed by Science Minister Kirsty Duncan. The panel is charged with a sweeping review of the work of the tri-council agencies, including "whether their approach, governance and operations have kept pace with an ever-changing domestic and global research landscape."

The review is a welcome turn of events, following almost 10 years of science policy that insisted academic researchers should collaborate with industry partners to produce research outcomes that could be monetized. Now, there is nothing wrong with applied science. We all benefit from things like safer and more energy efficient vehicles and homes, for instance. But there is a huge problem when government puts its finger on one side of the scale to insist that money should flow to research that disproportionately benefits the short-term interests of industry, over broader public interests. This was at the heart of criticisms against the Harper government's so-called "war on science" in which government scientists were muzzled and funding was cut for research deemed politically inconvenient — climate change comes to mind.

A striking irony of the former government's mandate was that policy claiming to support innovation worked instead to stifle it. Real creativity in the sciences and arts and humanities requires that academics be free to pursue basic research, or "blue-sky" questions, that don't have immediate functional applications and which may prove politically uncomfortable to the government of the day. As Robert K. Merton memorably put it more than 60 years ago: "The communism of the scientific ethos is incompatible with the definition of technology as 'private property' in a capitalistic economy."

Merton was writing during the Cold War, but he was not speaking politically. He was using the word communism as one might use the word Catholic today, to mean all-embracing or widely inclusive. The fact is that there is an enduring tension in the academy between knowledge produced to be shared broadly for public benefit and knowledge produced as technology and expertise that can be marketed as intellectual property. The latter position was clearly favoured by the previous Conservative government, while the former claim on knowledge is the basis of how public funding has historically been justified in liberal democracies.

This tension remains today, despite the Liberal government's welcome consultations, and the removal of research grants from the oversight of the former Industry Canada ministry. Today, Canada has two science ministers. Kirsty Duncan is responsible for overseeing fundamental science and Navdeep Bains is Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. The separation of the basic science portfolio from industry is to be applauded. However, it's important to note that Bains is the senior minister to Duncan and the role of fundamental science is, according to the government's consultation website, only one of six "areas of action" that form "Canada's Innovation Agenda" which is overseen by Minister Bains. The innovation agenda's other five areas of action seek to foster entrepreneurialism, encourage economic clusters and partnerships, accelerate business growth, and help Canadian companies do business and compete in a digital world.

So, five of the six areas of action designated by the government are linked directly to the goals of "innovation," business growth and entrepreneurialism. In other words, it means goals that are measured quantitatively, not qualitatively and which serve to meet predetermined utilitarian needs.

In the spirit of consultation, let me suggest that the Trudeau government would do well to remember Merton's maxim about the scientific ethos. Processes of refutation and correction, or what Merton called "organized skepticism," are at the heart of academic inquiry. When scholarly incentives to pursue the truth as a public good are challenged or replaced with the economic incentives of private gain we are entering very dangerous territory.

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CAUT President, James Compton



*Fish drying in the classroom at T'elemia.
Working on traditional foods is a favourite language immersion activity.
- Trish Rosborough*

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