

MACEWAN FACULTY ASSOCIATION

**Executive Reports to the Membership
for the Month of October 2010**

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Report from the President

By the time that you read this message, there will be a proposal presented to the faculty association executive that resolves the bi-weekly payroll issue that has been a concern of our members and the executive. The solution to the issue is the result of our members communicating your concerns to the administration of the University along with the FA executive working collaboratively and cooperatively with the University Executive. This is another example that reinforces my belief that faculty at MacEwan are able to impact the decision making process at MacEwan.

It is important that the faculty members of our Academic Governance Council understand that they have the ability to influence decisions that affect the academic matters at MacEwan. At the monthly meetings of the AGC, faculty members on AGC have the ability to raise any academic issue of interest to faculty outside of what the executive committee has decided to include in the agenda. If they do not exercise this power, then are the decisions being made in AGC representing faculty interests and concerns? In a bicameral model, it is faculty and not administration that sets the agenda and decides on academic issues.

The FA executive continues to examine the governance structure that would best support the operational activities of the association. Our executive is working to fulfill the requirements of the motion passed at the 2010 Annual General Meeting (AGM) that stated “That the Executive Committee further investigate governance models and return with a specific proposal for approval by the membership at the 2011 Annual General Meeting.” We will be proposing that a sub committee made up of executive and other members of the association develop the models that will be presented at the 2011 AGM.

- ➡ I am a member of the University’s Presidential Search Committee. For updates, see the Presidential Search Committee website:
http://macewan.ca/web/Services/presidential_search/home/index.cfm?utm_source=presidentialsearch&utm_medium=redirect
- ➡ There have been further meetings of the Christenson Family Centre for Sport and Wellness Internal Review Task Team - a review committee that has been established to examine the operation of the Sports and Wellness Center (including the pool). A website has been set up and will soon be open to all faculty to review the minutes and progress of the task team.
- ➡ The Academic Governance Council (AGC) approved the terms of reference for the standing committee on titling.

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Zdril

Report from the Vice President Executive

Submitted October 20, 2010, for the period September 22 to October 19, 2010

Academic Titling

On October 12, 2010 the Ad Hoc Committee for Faculty Standards met to review departmental standards for the interim title for Assistant Professor. Eight departments in the faculty of Arts and Science developed and submitted standards for review. As a member of this committee, I reviewed each of these to ensure they were consistent with the University Wide Standards that our committee developed, and that they would be regarded with credibility outside MacEwan. The reviews were quite positive, and I'm happy to report that all eight departments had their standards approved and forwarded to the EVPA for final review. Members in those departments should be able to begin the process of applying for the title by the end of October, 2010.

Faculty Evaluation

On September 20, I attended the first meeting of the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) for the 10-11 academic year. At the meeting, the Faculty Evaluation Coordinator, Sarah Jane Flynn, presented rather substantially redesigned online course evaluation instruments, as well as a report of some analyses she'd done on the previous year's evaluation data. It was clear that her position, and that of some other FEC members, was that outside of some minor wording changes, these new instruments would be implemented in the Fall 2010 semester for all courses and faculty scheduled to be evaluated under the current policies and procedures.

I had some rather grave concerns with the fact that

1. the redesigned instruments were largely the work of one person, with little input from faculty and chairs,
2. the redesigned instruments were going to be implemented without pilot testing to demonstrate their reliability and validity, and
3. the supporting report indicated some flaws in understanding the informative value of analyses conducted on the previous year's data, which informed the redesign process.

These concerns were raised with the executive, who shared my views. I immediately drafted a letter outlining our concerns to Janet Paterson-Weir, EVPA; Susan May, Associate Vice President Academic and Research; and to Denise Roy and Debbie Styles, co-chairs of the FEC. I also had several in person consultations or meetings with chairs and faculty members (some of whom are quite well-versed in the area of survey design and evaluation) about these new developments from the FEC. It became quite clear that many chairs and faculty were also concerned about these developments, and I urged them to make their ideas and opinions known to the FA, to the FEC and to the AGC, since the FEC is an AGC standing body. Along with Jerry Zdril, we have also lobbied AGC faculty members to raise these concerns at their meetings.

I also have had or will have several meetings/communications with other members of the FEC to work towards having our concerns understood and addressed appropriately and in a timely manner.

Bi-Weekly Payroll Concerns

In September, 2010, Human Resources announced a switch from monthly to bi-weekly pay, and that this switch would involve also moving from an advance-based to an arrears-based system. This, quite obviously, has many faculty members concerned, particularly given the options for dealing with the transition proposed by HR, and the rather short notice of these options given to our members. I have met with many members to hear their concerns, and attended some of the information sessions to both hear faculty members' concerns, and raise those with Brian Pearson, the HR director.

Social Events and Planning

I had some preliminary meetings and discussions with Celine Miller, and MSA representatives, for planning a joint Children's Christmas Party on December 4, 2010. It seems that Celine and the MSA representatives are working to plan a wonderful event, so please book that day in your calendar, and stay tuned for more details!

Administrative Duties

Over the past months, I have been involved in a number of general administrative meetings or tasks, including:

- Meeting with Administration regarding long-term institutional plans and forecasts
- Regular executive meetings, and responding to member inquiries and staff requests

Respectfully submitted,
Aimee Skye

Report from the Board of Governors Representative

- The board approved the year-end audited financial statements as at June 30, 2010, and internally restricted net assets. As well, approval was given to the year-end audited financial statements of the Grant MacEwan University Foundation as at June 30, 2010. Note that members of the Audit and Finance Committee of the Board serve as the Board of Directors of the Grant MacEwan University Foundation.
- Policy E6020 (Distinguished Citizen(s)) has been updated, and was approved by the board.
- The board's standing committee membership was approved as part of the consent agenda. As your representative, I serve on the following committees: Campus Planning, Finance/Audit, Investment sub-committee, and Risk and Opportunity. I also chair the Distinguished Citizen committee.

Faculty Association Report

- The FA 19th Annual Welcome BBQ took place on September 11 at the Country Lodge, and was attended by a record number of 202 participants. **Heather MacEwan Foran** was the special guest of the FA, and entertained the group with a delightful story about her parents' pet skunks. The FA was also very pleased to welcome guests **Paul and Nancy Byrne**, and **Oryssia and Malcolm Lennie**. A popular addition to the evening was a trivia contest, which was won by the Psychology team!
- Meetings of the FA sub-committees for the Presidential Search, and the Sport Wellness Review, continue to take place. Each of these sub-committees provides feedback to the FA representatives on the respective University committees.
- Members of the FA Executive Committee participated in the academic titling forums, organized by AGC, which took place on September 23 and 24.
- The FA Negotiations Committee (FANC) met twice during September, and has organized a number of negotiations forums targeted at specific audiences (school/faculty, professional resource faculty, term faculty) within the membership. These forums will be taking place during the end of September and early in October.
- Representatives from MSA and the FA met on September 29 to discuss the possibility of collaborating on the organization of a family Christmas party. This cooperative effort will go ahead, and the 2 associations will co-host a family Christmas party on Saturday, December 4 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at City Centre Campus.
- The most recent issues identified by the FA Executive Committee for monitoring include:
 - Implementation of a bi-weekly payroll system in January.
 - Implementation of a new faculty evaluation tool.

Report on Faculty Scholarly Activities and Achievements

Department of Psychology

The Psychology Department has had yet another productive year. Our program continues to be well subscribed with over 300 students now majoring in psychology (either the BA or BSc program), along with 24 students registered in the honours program. As well, during this past year, eight of our graduating, or previously graduated students, were accepted into graduate programs (ranging from clinical psychology to audiology) and one student was accepted into law.

The Psychology Department continues to grow in size and now consists of 20 continuing faculty. This includes two new faculty who started this fall:

- **Graig Blatz** comes to us from University of Massachusetts at Amherst where he was an assistant professor and member of their Psychology of Peace and Violence program. Craig is especially interested in the psychological effects of apologies and forgiveness, especially at the group level.

- **Tara Vongpaisal** arrived here from Oxford where she was engaged in post-doctoral research. She is a developmental psychologist with a particular interest in the effects of cochlear implants on sound perception, especially music perception, in deaf children.

Virtually all of our faculty have active research programs with students heavily involved as collaborators and research assistants. Of particular note, one of our newer faculty members, **Trevor Hamilton**, was recently informed that his dissertation research has been accepted for publication in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. This journal is considered one of the top three science journals in the world, along with *Nature* and *Science*, which helps illustrate the excellent faculty we are now attracting to MacEwan these days. (In keeping with our intention to hire faculty who are both good scholars and good teachers, Trevor is also proving to be a very effective and highly popular instructor in the classroom.)

Department members have also been in the media this past year:

- **Shannon Digweed** was interviewed last October for CBC Radio's *Quirks and Quarks* concerning her research on red squirrels. Previous researchers had thought that red squirrels vary their alarm calls, with one type of call being used for aerial predators and another for ground predators, thereby alerting other squirrels to the presence of danger. But Shannon's research demonstrates that red squirrels are not that altruistic; they make the same alarm calls for any intruder, even another squirrel, the apparent purpose being to inform the intruder that it has been spotted (hence, predators shouldn't bother trying to catch them and other squirrels shouldn't try to steal anything!).
- Last spring, **Jayne Gackenbach** was flown to Los Angeles by the producer of the movie *Inception* to be interviewed along with several other top experts in the area of sleep and dreams. These interviews were used as part of a "viral marketing" campaign that played on the internet prior to the release of the movie (these interviews will also be incorporated as a special feature in the upcoming DVD release of the movie). This in turn resulted in intense media attention following the release of the movie, with about 20 news agencies interviewing Jayne about her research, along with additional coverage in several other outlets, such as *New Scientist Magazine*, *Toronto Star*, and *BBC London*. The relevance of Jayne's research to the treatment and prevention of PTSD in military personnel also resulted in contacts from the Canadian military for possible collaborative research.
- Finally, this past summer, **Sandy Jung**, one of our forensic psychologists, was twice interviewed on Access TV's *Alberta Primetime* about issues concerning the treatment and management of sex offenders, an area in which she has considerable expertise.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chaldeans Mensah

Report from the Vice President Professional Affairs

Watch for this report to be made available soon.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Zutter

Report from the Vice President Communications and Research

Watch for this report to be made available soon.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Zypchyn

Report from the Treasurer

A. Financial Evaluation - General

Continued streamlining of the Treasurer duties and a detailed list of all duties, files and dates of meetings in order to ensure a smooth transition for incoming Treasurers. Due to the recent interest and change in the Faculty Association Executive, an orientation for new members may be required in the future. By making sure that financial processes are efficient and properly recorded and maintained, transition into the position by future members will be easy and straightforward.

Continued tracking of monthly budget spending. To date we are well within the parameters of each budget line (no overspending has occurred). This spending information will be made available and distributed to the Finance Committee at our first meeting in November in the hopes of providing them the ability to see and subsequently advise myself and the Executive on budget areas that may require our attention.

B. Finance Committee - Chair

In the process of setting up a November meeting of the Finance Committee. It is essential that the committee meet at least once in the fall to discuss the structure of the budget, the appropriateness of each budget line and the reserve funds. In recent years there has not been consistency in what amounts were moved into reserve fund accounts and to what end we are 'saving' this money for. With the assistance of the Executive, Finance Committee and Celine Miller, I would like to evaluate our reserves and make sure they are meeting our needs.

The finance committee will also need to discuss potential changes to the budget that will occur if a policy based governance model is passed at the spring Annual General Meeting. We must be prepared to present various budget scenarios to the membership at that meeting.

C. Policy Based Governance

In October, the FA Executive met with consultants to discuss and review the potential for a move to a policy based governance system. I feel that this is a valuable and worthwhile move for the association and therefore plan to let my name stand for the subcommittee that will be struck in the near future. As Treasurer, I feel it is important for me to sit on this committee in order to properly advise the finance committee on any potential budgetary changes. Additionally, I have ample experience with policy based governance and hope to provide what knowledge I have to the subcommittee.

D. Other Duties

As an Executive member I have been involved in several meetings over the last month;

1. Attended FA Executive meeting in October.
2. Attended policy based governance meeting in October.
3. Attended meeting with the Professional Resource Faculty in October.
4. Ongoing meetings with Celine Miller for financial updates and cheque signing.
5. Aided Aimee Skye in drafting a letter to the Faculty Evaluation Committee outlining the FA Executive's concerns with the new evaluation tool.
6. Will be meeting with designer in the next few months to help establish new Faculty Association logo.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon Digweed

Report from the Vice President Negotiations

Dear All,

The Negotiations Committee is continuing its preparations for collective bargaining. Since my last report, all faculty forums have now taken place. These forums served as information-gathering opportunities to ensure that FANC have a firm grasp on the key issues affecting faculty.

I would like to thank all those who attended the forums for the issues they raised and the insights they provided. There were many vibrant discussions and I was particularly pleased to hear from a broad cross-section of people covered by our collective agreement. These included ESL, professional resource faculty, term instructors and university prep. Whilst FANC has some excellent information to move forward with, it was somewhat disappointing to note that only forty faculty members attended the forums, with almost half of these from the Faculty of Arts.

FANC has used the information from these forums to help shape an online survey that was sent out to all faculty members on October 27th 2010. Please be aware that this is a dynamic survey: you will be taken to a different question set depending on which faculty classification you fall

under (term, instructor, IA, professional resource, etc.). This will allow FANC to pinpoint the key issues for these diverse groups; many of which may otherwise be lost in the “statistics.” The online survey is intended to help FANC prioritize the issues of significance from the faculty forums.

At the outset, it appears that many of the key issues – those which came-up at multiple forums – can be unified under the general theme of *transparency and accountability*. Whether it be workload calculations, reporting on annual achievements and duties, chair selection or faculty evaluation, there is a strong desire that these processes are conducted fairly and openly. For instructional faculty there are several questions in the survey regarding tripartite workloads – how they are assigned and how they are accounted for. Surrounding the general issue of salary, several grids need work; both on the horizontal and vertical steps. Parental leave benefits need improving; professional, personal development and research funding need close scrutiny. Term instructors need more recognition, access to benefits and better job security. Professional resource faculty need more language describing their workloads.

Please take the time to complete the online survey and ensure that FANC moves forward with a clear mandate from all of its members. Your opinions are truly valued.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Withey

Report from the Vice President Dispute Resolution

The Grievance Committee had its meeting for this semester on October 15, 2010. All members, David Grant, Sean Hillman, Tiina Hohn, Shahidul Islam, Paul Prince, and Jonathan Withey were in attendance. The members reviewed the steps and procedures of filing a formal grievance. The vast majority of issues are resolved before going to a formal grievance. Sean, as the first line of communication, gets to hear issues and takes care of most as they arise. There were three potential cases discussed in the meeting, which may proceed toward a formal grievance. One affecting an individual faculty member and the other two are common – the soon-to-be implemented bi-weekly pay issue and the faculty evaluation issue.

The FA representative on the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) sought input from the FA Executive and general members. At this time, it looks like a formal grievance may not be necessary, as the FEC is trying to work out an acceptable solution. Should an acceptable solution not be generated, the FA will look at its options.

As you all may be aware by now, the proposed process of implementing bi-weekly pay calls for a switch from pay-in-advance to pay-in-arrears, which means our members will only be paid for two weeks in January 2011. According to the proposed implementation plan, on January 25, 2011, our members will be paid for the work they have done during the first two weeks of January (the 2nd to 15th). They will be receiving payment for the last two weeks of January on February 8. This will not allow us to be paid for the entire amount that we are entitled to be paid for the year. Also from the first payment (January 25 payment), the entire health and dental benefits for the month will be deducted. We all know how important it is to receive a full

payment in January after the Christmas break. In addition, the January payment will already be reduced due to the beginning of deductions that were not necessary in December (CPP and EI, for example). What is more, this process of implementation clearly violates our Collective Agreement, which states that we should be paid our full salary according to the salary table (Article 16.1.1). The University should also give six months notice of any change of payment (Article 16.10). The University's letter to the FA of January 2010, notifies of only the transition from monthly to bi-weekly payment. It does not indicate any switches from pay-in-advance to pay-in-arrears. The FA Executive, at its meeting on October 20, found that this is a violation of our Collective Agreement and is a matter for grievance. Accordingly, the Grievance Committee will be meeting again on November 1 to examine possible options, and will forward its recommendation to the FA Executive. If a satisfactory resolution does not occur by our next General Assembly, the FA will consider filing a formal grievance.

Aside from the specific responsibility of dispute resolution and attending Executive and other meetings, I attend regular monthly meetings of MacEwan's 40th Anniversary Celebration Committee on behalf of the FA. The October meeting was on 20th. The committee decided to offer 40 scholarships to 40 outstanding students at the University. This will be a one-time award and divided among Schools/Faculties depending on full-time equivalent students. Details of selection process are still being worked out. There will be 40th Anniversary celebration kits (electronic format) and a logo to be used by any faculty for any event during the Academic Year 2011-12. There will also be a banner to borrow for occasions during the same Academic Year. As more details come in, I'll pass those on to you. At this time, if you have any questions or concerns or comments, please pass them on to me by any means (e-mail islams@macewan.ca or phone 780-497-4792 or drop by 7-368C at City Centre). You may also contact our PRO, Sean Hillman by any means (e-mail hillmans2@macewan.ca or phone 780-633-3594).

Respectfully submitted,
Shahidul Islam

Report from the Professional Resource Officer

Dear members,

Here are the activities in which I have participated since my last report:

Bargaining

FANC has been busy this past month. For the first time, we hosted a number of forums so faculty could meet with FANC members in smaller groups, and within their own faculty/school or job position. Although attendance at the forums was not huge, we received a lot of great feedback from the members regarding what issues they think are important for the 2011 round of negotiations. Since the forums, FANC has put together a survey on these and other potential issues. We will use the results of this survey to begin putting together our initial bargaining package.

FANC will also host a meeting for all faculty on November 25 to go through the results of the survey.

Disputes and Grievances

The grievance committee met on October 15. Although we have no grievances on the books right now, Shahid Islam, VP Dispute Resolution, wanted to get the committee together so the new members could learn how the grievance process works and what the role of the grievance committee is within that process.

Jerry Zdril and I have been meeting regularly with university administration in an attempt to resolve the issues that have arisen surrounding the university's decision to move to bi-weekly pay in January 2011. We feel that we are very close to a resolution that should resolve the issues that our members have with the university's plan and its proposed options for dealing with the shift to a pay-in-arrears system. This resolution could not have happened without the outpouring of dissent from the faculty members. Many thanks to those of you who attended the university's information sessions, or emailed HR and the university administration directly with your concerns. The collective actions of our members ensured that the administration recognized that their options were not acceptable and are coming up with a solution that we think will resolve your issues.

We were finally able to achieve success in our dispute with the university over access to benefits for term faculty in the ESL and Preparation for University and College programs. Those term faculty who are eligible for benefits (those who teach at least 60% of a full-time workload) were given the opportunity to join the plan at the end of September.

Benefits Committee

The Joint Benefits Committee met on October 13. We are currently investigating a number of potential changes to the extended health plan. These include a direct-pay prescription drug card, a low-cost alternative prescription drug plan, and providing health benefits to MacEwan employees over the age of 65. The Benefits Committee will meet again in January to determine if we can make any of these changes. We will let you know of any changes to the plan, and if those changes will affect the benefits premiums you currently pay.

Other Activities

Most of the executive and I attended a meeting with the Professional Resource Faculty on October 6. This was a great opportunity to meet with an often overlooked portion of our membership. We were able to hear their issues and let them know what the executive is working on right now. I encourage other constituencies within the FA to set up similar meetings. I am sure the executive members would be happy to meet with any group of members.

Jerry and I met with Terry Sway, ACIFA Labour Relations Officer, on October 26. We discussed a number of issues that are going on at other institutions around the province, as well as updating him on the issues here at MacEwan.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Hillman