

MACEWAN FACULTY ASSOCIATION

**Executive Reports to the Membership
for the Month of October 2009**

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Report from the President

Our association is fortunate to have a hard working group of eleven people who work on behalf of our members. This is our executive committee, professional resource officer, and administrative assistant.

This group is focused on determining the position our members have on issues and then working on how to best represent our members on these issues, attempting to create solutions that have the least negative impact on our members.

On October 24th, these eleven people attended a full day workshop and retreat. We worked to establish the Faculty Association's mandate, values, and vision that will enable us to represent and serve our members. We will be presenting the report from this workshop to our members

Our association continues to work, on your behalf, on the following issues:

1. Intellectual Property Policy – continuing to bargain as a sub-committee of the FA.
2. Titling – we support titling at MacEwan and continue to work with the current subcommittee on this issue.
3. Our FA website will be up and running by mid-November.
4. The maternity issue raised by one of our faculty members has been recognized by the University as an issue that will be renegotiated in our next round of bargaining (2011). As well, the University is determining how to address this issue in the interim between now and 2011.

As president, I attended meetings of:

- The Pandemic Planning Committee (October 8 and 29 – see www.macewan.ca/H1N1 for information on this matter)
- Executive committee meeting (October 1 and 29)
- ACIFA Presidents Council (October 17)
- FA Governance Committee (October 19)

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Zdril

Report from the Executive Vice President

I have three issues to report:

1. Intellectual Property Ownership Policy redraft. As part of an ad hoc negotiating team (Jerry, Zdril, Roy Jensen, and Sean Hillman), we have recommended a form of draft policy to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Association who endorsed that form and forwarded it to management of the University. The University has rejected that form and re-presents a

version given by them at an earlier point. The Executive Committee has moved to refer the two competing versions for an independent opinion so that the FA may conduct due diligence in protecting the IP interests of its members.

It is important to get the wording correctly stated as legal rights can turn on the formulation of the words. Moreover, it is unlikely that the policy will be re-visited once passed and placed, by reference, into the collective agreement. It is also important to show external examiners, such as AUCC, that there is a credible IP policy that protects academic freedom and promotes innovation in faculty member IP development. Almost all universities and colleges in Canada and the rest of the developed world do this by acknowledging faculty members' IP interests. This is a significant departure from the usual employment rules that the employer owns all IP created in the course of employment

2. I presented along with the University Copyright Officer, Scott Day, a seminar for the Faculty Commons on October 22, 2009 on the issue of copyright. As in previous presentations, there was full attendance and a lively discussion. The session is likely to be repeated, as demand warrants.
3. As member of the FA Executive Committee, I attended a retreat on October 24, 2009. Amongst many strategic and long term planning issues, the Executive Committee discussed at length the issue of academic titling and the process to move this issue forward in the University. Subsequently, I joined a small sub-committee to assist in the language of a communiqué on this important issue. Further developments will be forthcoming from the FA.

Respectfully submitted,
Travis Huckell

Report from the Board of Governors Representative

From the October meeting of the Board of Governors:

Approvals

- The Board approved a motion to rescind the two campus model. It endorsed a Single Sustainable Campus Project Long Range Facilities Plan for the City Centre Campus.
- The Board ratified a motion to approve the Shovel Ready Project to proceed to the construction phase and to complete the entire building by March 2011, based on an immediate contract award to Clark Builders.
- The Board approved the 2008-09 Audited Financial Statements, and restricted net assets of \$27,994,000 to support necessary projects and activities to enhance MacEwan University's mandate and mission.
- The Board approved updates to the following policies: D1620 Recruitment and Orientation (Replaces D1110) and D2092 Orientation and Pre-service Programs (New); D2000 Professional Development (New); D2010 Employee Development for Supervisory and Support Staff (Updated); D2020 Employee Access to MacEwan Learning Activities

(updated); D2030 Professional Development for Administrative Staff (Updated); D3000 Financial Management (Updated); D5020 Facilities Access and Accommodation (Together with D1120 Duty to Accommodate Employee Needs and Protected Grounds replaces D4154 Accommodation of Physically Handicapped in College Facilities) (New); D7030 Emergency Preparedness (Replaces D4152 Fire and Safety and D4158 Emergency Closure) (New).

Faculty Report

- **Jerry Zdril**, Faculty Association President has offered words of congratulations to all board members, faculty, staff, administrators, and students who were part of the journey that led to our naming as **Grant MacEwan University**.
- The Association hosted an Academic Titling information session on October 7, 2009. This session provided a forum to discuss the findings of a joint committee, established by a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the University and the Faculty Association.
- Negotiations are ongoing with the University on the issue of Intellectual Property. If an agreement is concluded in the coming weeks, the policy will be brought to faculty for a vote likely at the Fall General Assembly of the Association in November.

Faculty Scholarly Activities and Achievements –Faculty of Arts and Science (Department of Anthropology, Economics, and Political Science)

- **Sen Lin, Ph.D Political Science** – Sen is now working on his research project, The Chinese Internet Coverage of Canada. He gave a presentation on the project at the Asia Pacific Institute Forum at MacEwan in April 2009. Based on some of his findings through this project Sen is now working on an article on the Chinese coverage of Canada's handling of the case of Mr. Lai Changxing, a self claimed Chinese refugee. He is planning another article on the Chinese coverage of the Canadian politics of minority governments in the recent years. In December 2008, Sen gave a presentation on Canada-China relations to a delegation of Chinese local government trainees at MacEwan. Sen participated in the Faculty of Arts Roadshow held during the Alberta Teachers Convention in February 2009.
- **Rafat Alam, Ph.D Economics** – It has been a very busy year for Rafat Alam researching in the fields of environmental and natural resource economics, urban economics and public policy. Rafat received the Faculty of Arts and Science Research Grant for 2007-09 for the project titled 'Demystifying Environment-Competitiveness Linkages' and working with Dr. Abdullah Al Mamun of University of Saskatchewan and Nusrat Aireen of MacEwan. Rafat also received MacEwan Scholarly Activity funding for the research project titled 'The Effects of Species at Risk, Knowledge of Environmental State and Issues on Willingness to Pay' and working with Dr. Brenda Tang of Environment Canada. Rafat expects to finish both the papers by December 2009. Jointly with Dr. Shahidul Islam of MacEwan, Rafat also received external funding from AACTI to conduct research on 'Impact of Edmonton Light Rail Transit on Property Values and Urban Development'. The project employed five students as research assistants over the summer. Primary data collection and compilation is completed for the project. They will continue to work on this project and apply for additional funding to collect data on the impact of South and West extensions of LRT in Edmonton. In 2007, Rafat and co-author Nguyen Van Quyen published a chapter titled 'Impact of International Trade on Biodiversity' in Andreas Kontoleon et.al edited book: 'Biodiversity

Economics: Principles, Methods and Application' from Cambridge University Press. The paper titled 'Land Conversion, Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity Conservation' was submitted to the Journal of Environment and Development Economics and is back for revision with referee's comments. Another paper titled 'Bio-Prospecting, Land Development and Biological Diversity under Free Trade' is also submitted to the Journal of Environment and Development Economics and is waiting for referee's comments. Rafat presented two papers over the summer months. The paper titled 'Impact of Edmonton Light Rail Transit on Property Values and Urban Development' was presented at the annual Canadian Economics Association Conference held in Toronto on May 28-31 and the paper titled 'Connecting the Dots: Applying Classroom Learning in Economics at Workplace' was presented at the Western Economic Association International Annual Conference held in Vancouver on June 29-July 3, 2009.

- **Franca Boag, Ph.D Anthropology** – Franca continues to research and write in the area of cultural landscapes, policy and change. She received a Faculty of Arts and Science Research Fund grant in 2007 to undertake follow-up research in southern Italy which she presented at the 2008 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association and is currently submitting for peer reviewed publication in Social Anthropology. Franca also received grants from the Faculty of Arts and Science Research Fund and the MacEwan Faculty Research, Scholarly Activity and Creative Achievements Fund to initiate a baseline study, Testing the Persistence of a Cultural Landscape, which involves mapping known archaeological sites on interpreted 1949 aerial photographs of a cultural fire mosaic (prescribed fire) in northern Alberta. Franca combines a field school for MacEwan students in her research in the community of Tuoro sul Trasimeno, Italy on the Shifting Landscapes of Authenticity: Locality, Food and Identity. This research has resulted in a paper by that title comparing this area with her south Italy research to be presented at the 2009 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association for later submission to the peer reviewed journal Human Ecology. Among other papers, Franca continues to work on revisions to a book manuscript on Origins of an Agricultural System. In addition to her regular teaching load over the past year, Franca supervised five Individual Research Projects, two of which are being elaborated as graduate research projects, and one of which is being prepared by the student for submission to the peer-reviewed Journal of Anthropological Archaeology.
- **Hugh McKenzie, Ph.D Anthropology** – Hugh continues to investigate the origins and development of hunter-gatherer social complexity through bioarchaeological research into skeletal biology and mortuary traditions. He recently co-edited a book that was published by the Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press (Khuzhir-Nuge XIV, a Middle Holocene Hunter-Gatherer Cemetery on Lake Baikal, Siberia: archaeological materials. 2008. A. Weber, OI Goriunova, HG McKenzie, editors, and he currently has three peer-reviewed book chapters in press. This year, he received funding from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as well as the MacEwan Research, Scholarly Activity and Creative Achievements Fund to undertake research into the skeletal biology of Neolithic Hunter-Gatherers in the Russian Far East. As part of this research project he established a Memorandum of Understanding between MacEwan and the Far Eastern National University, Vladivostok, Russia that outlines research collaboration as well as potential exchange opportunities for MacEwan students. In summer 2009, he took a MacEwan undergraduate student as a research assistant to the Scientific Museum at the Far Eastern National University, Vladivostok. They are currently writing up the results of this trip.

- **Cynthia Zutter, Ph.D Anthropology** - For the second time in five years, Cynthia Zutter has been awarded a prestigious SSHRC research grant to continue her work in Northern Labrador. Entitled " Historic palaeoenvironmental landscape analysis, Okak Bay, Labrador" she will focus her work on changing environmental conditions over the last three hundred years in the Arctic. This second grant will provide funding that will facilitate and foster undergraduate research at MacEwan University by providing the opportunity for up to 3 MacEwan students to participate in fieldwork, laboratory research and professional meeting presentations. Dr. Zutter, who is recently returning from sabbatical leave, spent the last six months compiling a wealth of new archaeological data from previous field work and published recently in the well-known "Journal of the North Atlantic."
- **Constantin Colonescu, Ph.D. Economics** - Constantin has recently published an article (abstract available here: <http://eup.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/9/3/363>) in the *European Union Politics*, a reputed peer reviewed journal. He is currently co-authoring a research paper with Chaldeans Mensah, "A Quantitative Evaluation of the 39th Federal Election," which is to be submitted for review to an academic journal by the end of 2009. An early version of this paper has been presented at the Canadian Economics Association's annual conference in May 2009 in Toronto. In the teaching area, Constantin has designed two new courses: Economic Aspects of the European Union, and Applied Econometrics. Both courses have been approved by our internal Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee. Constantin has also developed an Introductory Econometrics course, which is a core course of the BA major in Economics. He is constantly improving his teaching materials and techniques, such as using dedicated computer software for teaching Econometrics, creating dedicated course websites, and working together with the MacEwan library to give students access to a wide range of information (See, for instance, the ECON 399 Econometrics website: http://library.macewan.ca/econ_399).
- **Shahid Islam, Ph.D Economics** - passionately teaches three senior level economics courses, Quantitative Methods in Economics, Economics of Project Evaluation and Resource Economics in addition to introductory courses. Aside from teaching, he is active in research. His current research projects are: Impact of Neighbourhood Characteristics on Housing Choice and House Prices, Impact of Light Rail Transit on Real Estate Values and Community Development, and Teaching Techniques in Introductory Economics Classrooms. He has recently presented a paper on teaching techniques in introductory classes at the annual conference of the Western Economics Association International and is now preparing the paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. His research project on the impact of neighbourhood characteristics on housing choice and house prices resulted a presentation in a recent joint annual meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association and Canadian Agricultural Economics Society. The paper is now in the process of being updated for submitting to a refereed journal. The project (co-investigated with Dr. Rafat Alam) on the impact of light rail transit on real estate values and community development planning has attracted funding from Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes, and has resulted in a presentation at the recent annual meeting of the Canadian Economics Association at the University of Toronto. Aside from teaching and research, Shahid is active in the University community serving various committees at various capacities including Academic Governance Council and outside of the University promoting his discipline through occasional television interviews. He is also active in the community outside of his discipline promoting social and cultural tolerance and harmony among Edmontonians.

- **Jaro Stacul, Ph.D Anthropology** – Following the publication of his monograph *The Bounded Field: Localism and Local Identity in an Italian Alpine Valley* (Berghahn, 2003) and of the edited book (edited with C. Moutsou and H. Kopnina) *Crossing European Boundaries* (Berghahn, 2006), Jaro continues to research and write in the area of Political Anthropology in Europe. He was awarded a Faculty Research, Scholarly Activity and Creative Achievements grant to conduct exploratory research in the Polish city of Gdańsk in 2008 and 2009. He has recently submitted the article *From the Mayor's Viewpoint: Notes on the "Spatialization of the State" in Northern Italy*, based on his Italian research, to the peer-reviewed journal *American Ethnologist*; an article on the changing meanings of class in contemporary Italy will be included in the book *Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class*. Jaro is a regular participant in the conferences of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA). He delivered a paper (in Italian) in a workshop on the history and anthropology of the Alps held in Mendrisio, Switzerland, in early September 2009, and expects to present the paper *Shaping the New Europe in Post-Socialist Poland* at the Annual Meetings of the AAA to be held in Philadelphia in December 2009.
- **Ergete Ferede, Ph.D Economics** – Ergete continues to work on the effects of taxes on the Canadian economy. He has published an article entitled: “Dynamic Laffer Curve in the Ramsey Growth Model” in a refereed journal. In addition, he has submitted two articles to the *Canadian Journal of Economics* for publication: “Tax Cuts, Economic Growth, and the Marginal Cost of Public Funds for Canadian Provincial Governments” (with Bev Dahlby) and “Income tax progressivity and self-employment: Evidence from Canadian Provinces”. He has also an ongoing project on the impacts of tax policies on Canadian provincial economies and government revenue in collaboration with Professor Bev Dahlby of the University of Alberta. This joint project is financially supported by the Donner-Canada Foundation. As part of this project, he is currently working on the estimation of the Marginal Cost of Funds for Canadian provincial governments. He also presented papers at the University of Alberta seminar series (September 2007), the Canadian Economic Association conferences in Vancouver (May 2008) and in Toronto (May 2009). He also served as a discussant in the latter two conferences.
- **Paul Prince, Ph.D Anthropology** – Paul has been developing a research focus on variability in Prehistoric and Historic riverine salmon fisheries in the Pacific Northwest. He presented aspects of this research at the Society for American Archaeology conference in 2007 and 2008. His latest publication is “Riverine Salmon Harvesting and Processing Technology in Northern British Columbia”, which will appear in the forthcoming book *The Archaeology of North Pacific Fisheries*, (Madonna Moss and Aubrey Cannon, editors, University of Alaska Press). Paul also launched a field project in central British Columbia at a Carrier First Nations Reserve with the support of the Faculty of Arts and Science Research Fund, and the Faculty Research, Scholarly Activity and Creative Achievements Fund. The project investigates fishing and other aspects of ancient economy and settlement and provides hands-on training for students through anthropology’s archaeology field school (ANTH 396) and independent studies courses.
- **Joseph Fong, Ph.D Economics** – In 2008, Joe taught a new fourth-year course, *International Payments* (ECON 422). This course covered both theories and important contemporary economic events. It is designed to ensure that students are well prepared to relate and apply the theories to analyze economic events in preparation for advanced studies in the field. In

research, Joe is working on the impact of changes in Chinese government policies and institutions on the positive change in production efficiency and economic growth. He is undertaking research on the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement with Hong Kong as a case of China's changing policy framework to improve production efficiency and its economic performance.

- **Gaelan Murphy, Ph.D Political Science** – Gaelan received funding from the Faculty Research, Scholarly Activity and Creative Achievements to help fund the presentation of his research at academic conferences. He contributed a chapter titled “Cosmopolitan Justice and Global Politics,” to an edited volume on the problem of cosmopolitanism called *The Citizen and the World* that is currently under review at the University of Kentucky Press. A version of this chapter was presented at the 2009 Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago. At that same meeting, Gaelan presented a paper titled, “The Lost Souls of Liberalism: Hegel and the Irrationality of Freedom” which was later submitted for peer review at the *Review of Politics*. This summer he prepared an article titled: “Tocqueville and Low Liberalism: Politics is not Economics” that was presented as part of a panel on “Alexis de Tocqueville and the Democratic mind,” at the 2009 American Political Association meeting in Toronto in September of 2009. Finally, Gaelan is serving as a reviewer for McGraw-Hill's preparation of their first Canadian edition of *Power & Choice: An Introduction to Political Science* by W. Phillips Shively.
- **Kohn Soroski, Ph.D Political Science** – John's research interests include the areas of religion and politics, contemporary liberalism, and Canadian politics. His most recent work includes a book chapter on shari'a law in the Canadian context in *Faith in Democracy: Religion and Politics in Canada* (Cambridge Scholars, 2008), a conference presentation entitled “Ronald Dworkin's Defence of Affirmative Action and the Function(s) of a University” at the “Affirmative Action: Requiem or Renaissance” conference at Washburn University in September 2009, and a paper on Catholicism and liberalism currently in revision for the peer-reviewed journal *Politics and Religion*
- **Chaldeans Mensah, Ph.D Political Science** – Chaldeans attended the Advanced Leadership Training and Development in Banff (June 21-24, 2009). He has been elected as the Prairie Representative on the National board of the United Nations Association in Canada for 2009-2011. He is currently the Treasurer of the National Collegiate Conference Association, which organizes the National Model United Nations in New York. Chaldeans is also a member of the politics panel for Alberta PrimeTime – a public affairs program on ACCESS TV. On the research front, Chaldeans is working with Constantin Colonescu on a quantitative evaluation of the 39th Canadian federal election

Faculty Scholarly Activities and Achievements – Therapist Assistant Program (Faculty of Health and Community Studies)

- **Brenda Heffernan** continues to sit on the Canadian Occupational and Physical Therapist Assistant Educators Council. This group is developing an accreditation process for college programs that deliver Therapist Assistant education.
- **Jody Marshall** presented at the 2008 Alberta College of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists conference regarding the education of Speech Language Pathologists Assistants and their assimilation into practice.

- **Cassie Prochnau** (full-time instructor) is a participating member of the curriculum committee for the interdisciplinary Health Education Partnership. This is a joint collaborative effort involving members from the University of Alberta, NorQuest College, NAIT, Capital Health, and MacEwan. The final project will be a series of simulation-based interdisciplinary education modules founded on the Canadian Patient Safety Institute's competencies.

Centre for the Arts

- **Agnieszka Matejko** and **Bob Lysay** completed an art installation about teens with disabilities. It was opened for viewing on August 31 (3:00 to 8:00 p.m.) and September 1 (3:00 to 8:00 p.m.)

School of Business

- **William Wei**, Chair of Asia Pacific Management program, and his colleagues from the School of Business welcomed 80 participants, including Alberta business leaders, MacEwan faculty, staff and students, and 30 academic scholars from India, China, Russia, Israel, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Colombia, the US, and Canada to the first international business conference on the theme: Competition or Cooperation – East versus West.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chaldeans Mensah

Report from the Vice President Professional Affairs

Faculty Development Committee

- Faculty Development met on 14 October. The summer PD activities and the workplan for the upcoming year were discussed. Supplemental and term funding guidelines were discussed, with the intent to implement changes to make the process fairer.
- A training session for future 'peer reviewers' and 'peer consultation' personnel was held on 24 October. A notice to the faculty of this service will be forthcoming.
- Term Funding applications will be reviewed on 03 November.

Intellectual Property (Copyright) Negotiations

- We are waiting for a response from Administration regarding the FA's latest offer.

ACIFA Liaison

- Two faculty associations at other institutions have undertaken reviews of administrators by faculty (much like students reviewing faculty, faculty reviewing administrators). I am proposing that the FA conduct a similar evaluation at MacEwan.

- I will be attending the semiannual ACIFA meeting on 07 November. I have been requested to give a presentation on MacEwan's developing IP policy

Additional Activities

- I attended the Faculty Association retreat on 23 October. This retreat focussed on developing the direction of the Faculty Association for the next few years and the immediate issue of academic titling.
- I attended the FECC on 26 October for Travis Huckell. The peer reviewer qualifications and the Terms of Reference were discussed, working towards final documents.
- I am working with Karen Zypchyn and the website committee to move the new FA website to a Canadian ISP.
- A white paper is in development to argue that the change to term administrative appointments at MacEwan is beneficial for students, staff, and MacEwan as a whole.
- A survey is being developed to assess the successes of new workload assignment process and areas where improvement is needed.
- An administration evaluation is being developed for FA members to evaluate their administration (similar to the students' evaluation of faculty).

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Roy Jensen

Report from the Vice President Communications

Here are the following activities I have participated in this past month:

- Like several other executive members, I attended the University's information session on October 7 where the academic titling committee presented recommendations for a new titling system for faculty members. I continue to become well informed about this complex issue in an effort to prepare myself to develop a communications plan for the Faculty Association on this pressing issue. Communication with our members will be critical to explain the relationship between academic titling changes and our collective bargaining process. Changing academic titling at the University is a process, which will require time to ensure our members' terms and conditions of employment are protected in regards to this issue.
- I have attended meetings of the FA website subcommittee to ensure the project is running on schedule. In light of recent developments concerning academic titling, I have requested that our website files be transferred to a Canadian hosting service provider in order to prepare for the launch of the site. I am preparing to edit content that is being posted to the site and will soon be gathering images that can be used on the site.
- I attended an all-day retreat session for the Faculty Association Executive Committee on October 24, where I focused much of my energy on communication strategies/planning for the FA over the next three years. The launch of the FA website will change dramatically how

the FA communicates with its members; it presents many good opportunities for engaging our membership and making the work of FA more transparent to its members.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Zypchyn

Report from the Treasurer

The Finance Committee met with Richard Godwin, FCGA (VP Negotiations) to discuss his observations and recommendations. These suggestions related to three areas. First, Rick suggested several changes to our process to strengthen the financial controls of the FA with which the Committee agreed. Second, Rick suggested that we might want to reorganize our accounts to better reflect important budgeting decisions. The Finance Committee decided to explore this at a future meeting. Third, Rick offered the opinion that the FA continue to use a “cash” system of accounting. We were interested in this issue after comments that were made at the last Annual General Meeting. Rick thought that either system would work, but that the cost of using an “accrual” system would not lead to better results. His investigation indicated that the difficulties encountered with the system last year would have occurred regardless of the system the FA used. As a result, the Finance Committee supported his recommendation to continue with current “cash” system.

At the June meeting, the Executive voted to establish a petty cash account. This fund is now in place.

Celine and I conducted a review of the actual expenses relative to budget for the first six months of the accounting year. This review did not raise any issues that were not discussed in last month’s report.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Graves

Report from the Vice President Negotiations

Currently there is nothing to report to the membership as negotiations have not commenced for the next contract. The only item of significance is that both Sean Hillman and I will be attending the upcoming ACIFA NAC (Negotiations Advisory Committee) meeting on November 7, 2009. At this time, we anticipate some reports from the other members on their negotiations, and we will include any significant information in our next report

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Godwin

Report from the Vice President Faculty Welfare

At this time, I do not have much to report from the portfolio. As an executive and as the past Treasurer, I attended all the Executive Committee meetings and the Finance Committee meeting held this month. I also attended the full-day retreat of the FA. Among a multitude of issues the FA is currently facing, academic titling, maternity leave, intellectual property rights, confidentiality agreement and its role in the current changing situation at MacEwan stand out. These will be included in reports of several of our Executive members.

I am in continuous communication with the PRO, Sean Hillman, regarding any possible situation that may result in a potential grievance. I'll continue to be vigilant and monitor and study situations as they arise. At this time, for any concern or comment, please do not hesitate to contact me at 497-4792 (islams@macewan.ca) or Sean Hillman (HillmanS2@macewan.ca).

Respectfully submitted,
Shahidul Islam

Report from the Professional Resource Officer

Here are the activities in which I have participated this month:

College Benefits

I met with representatives from Human Resources to finalize the language in our new Supplementary Employment Insurance Benefits (SEIB) plan, which provides salary top-up to maternity leave EI benefits. Many of you also responded to the email we sent out on behalf of a member with concerns about the new plan and other changes the university made to the previous plan. Thanks again for your input on this issue.

In addition to the SEIB plan, Jerry Zdril and I met with HR representatives on updating the Early Retirement Bridge (ERB). This is another item arising from a Letter of Understanding in the collective agreement. The previous ERB only addressed instructional faculty, although all continuing faculty are eligible for the bridge. We are close to finalizing language that will provide clear guidelines and procedures for all continuing faculty who would like to take part in the ERB. In addition, we need to clarify how the bridge works for instructional faculty, given the new workload arrangements in the new collective agreement. We will have the new rules in place in time for members to apply for the bridge in February 2010.

Grievances and Other Issues

Again, we have no formal grievances on the table at this time. I continue to assist members on other issues that are not yet grievances. Generally, we are able to resolve most of these issues before they evolve into formal grievances. For example, I am assisting a member with a vacation leave issue that we are close to resolving in favour of our member. Also, two different members have been dealing with separate issues arising from the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP).

Both these members are currently working with the university to resolve their issues, and I am hopeful that both will receive a favourable resolution without resorting to grievance.

Titling

Like many of you, I attended the information session on October 7 where the academic titling committee presented their recommendations for a new titling system for faculty members. The FA exec has spent significant time discussing the issue of titling over the past couple of months. We expect to be able to present more information to the members in the very near future. In the meantime, it is important to remember that changes to the titling system are changes to the terms and conditions of the employment of our members, and our members must ratify these changes.

Meetings with Faculty

Jerry Zdril and I have begun meeting with sub-groups of faculty members. We are holding these meetings to ensure that we are adequately representing all of our diverse membership. So far, we have met with the chairs at Centre for the Arts, and with our counselors. We are also intending to meet with our members in Writing and Learning Services next month, and hoping to set up meetings at South Campus and in the Robbins Centre for the near future.

English as a Second Language and Preparation for University and College Instructors

As mentioned in my last report, we have been working with these instructors and the university to have these instructors re-designated by the Board of Governors as members of the FA. I am happy to report that the Board did agree to this re-designation. As of November 1, these instructors will transition into the FA. This is a significant step in the evolution of the FA towards our stated goal of representing all academic staff at the university.

FA Website

We are working on a complete overhaul of our website. We hope to have the new site up and running within the next week, although there will be future additions and changes to the site as we complete the overhaul.

Joint Benefits Committee

I attended a meeting of the Joint Benefits Committee on October 19. We received updates on usage rates for the disability plans at MacEwan, as well as information that will allow us to decide on potential improvements to some of our existing benefits plans. Because these issues are merely in the discussion stage, we cannot share them with you at this time.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on October 13. This meeting followed a review of our financial system by Richard Godwin, FCGA (and our VP Negotiations), as requested by the Finance Committee earlier in the year. See the Treasurer's report for further updates.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Hillman