

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

### **President's Report**

*The following report was presented at the Annual General Meeting of the StFXAUT membership on May 4, 2016.*

Welcome everyone. My report consists simply of several updates from my vantage as President, a few reminders, and a few words of thanks.

I'll start with a note about students. One of the perks of this job is to hand out the StFXAUT Book Prize Awards to two deserving graduating students. If you follow our social media feeds you will have received this update already. You nominated excellent students, and an ad hoc committee of the Executive reviewed these nominees and recommended Nathan Chiarlitti and Mariah Richard who both received these awards on Sunday.

A few weeks ago we also recognized the retirements of 21 of our members, an extraordinary event for our university. The StFXAUT was pleased to be able to partner with the AVPs office for this event and contribute funds sufficient to cover the gifts for each retiree.

With respect to ongoing business, a few files are still open.

1. An issue with the provision of benefits to members 65+ years was temporarily resolved; such members are no longer required to register for Pharmacare, but

the financial resolution of this needs to be resolved during our upcoming round of collective bargaining.

2. As was done with our Health and Dental plan, an analysis of our life insurance by HR reveals it to be a very outdated policy; the coverage is low (it is capped that way) and it declines from there as one ages. A proposal to standardize the payout ratio of 2x salary regardless of age is being discussed. I will invite the new members of our Benefits Governance committee to look this over with me prior to signing off.
3. Our own reserve fund policy document is also out of date and needs to be updated, particularly with concern for establishing an optimal level of funding, analyzing our investment policies and performance, and considering alternative uses of income generated from this fund.
4. Efforts to recognize the Dietetic Educator position within Human Nutrition as a member of the bargaining unit has been agreed upon in principle, but the language that would govern this position is still being negotiated.

A summary of reports from committees not otherwise reporting today was circulated on Monday with the reminder email for this meeting. This report shows some of the range of items and issues managed primarily at the committee level. Some

noteworthy updates include:

1. from the Joint committee, a resolution to a dispute over the Association's role in deciding upon what constitutes service to the Association, and a partial resolution to the issue of hiring members on limited term appointments well beyond the limitations within the CA (acknowledging that more work can be done on the latter); and
2. from the Occupational Health & Safety committee, an item about our involvement in escalating the importance of our members' 'right to know' about the existence of potential workplace hazards, particularly as they relate to ongoing construction projects that have an asbestos removal element.

On a more routine basis, my time has been spent preparing for, and being in, meetings with the Executive, acting as a sounding board for the Chief Grievance Officer, chairing the Communications Committee, providing input to other committees including Joint Committee and Contract & Benefits, and in meetings with Human Resources. I've also tried my best to respond to individual questions and requests from members.

Looking ahead, the most significant development will be our participation in collective bargaining for our fourth collective agreement. Our agenda indicates that I will address this point later on, so you'll have to wait a bit longer.

In terms of reminders, please remember to:

1. make use of both the conference travel

- grant (for those eligible) and the professional development fund, both of which tend to be underutilized; and
2. engage with our communications channels including Facebook, Twitter, *The Beacon* and our website to stay up-to-date and connected with one another.

I'll end with a few words of thanks to you for supporting me in this position for the past two years. I also appreciate the work of everyone who enthusiastically serves the membership in various committees; some are just starting new terms, others have terms wrapping up, and others are continuing to serve. A few specific shout-outs:

1. Your Executive Committee met bi-weekly for the whole year, and this meeting's agenda includes additional reports several folks such as Cory and Martin who performed key roles.
2. The Nominations Committee did a great job to prepare and distribute the slate of candidates a week in advance.
3. Rita was an exceptional secretary for the past two years, and
4. Charlene is a particularly skillful Chief Grievance Officer.
5. Finally, Susan manages the business of our office in a manner that is thorough and always positive. Thank you.

I will end this report and my term with these words of appreciation and invite any questions.

In solidarity,  
Brad

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## **NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE**

by Brad Long

What follows are some general points of information for our members as we head into the upcoming round of collective bargaining to conclude our *Fourth Collective Agreement*.

1. I am extremely pleased to announce that the Negotiations Team for the StFXAUT will consist of Ken MacAulay (Business Administration) as Chief Negotiator, joined by Kris Hunter (Biology Lab Instructor) and Christie Lomore (Psychology).
2. The Negotiations Team for the Administration will consist of Andrew Beckett as Chief Negotiator, joined by Jennifer Swinemar-Murray and Petra Hauf.
3. One meeting with the Executive and Chair of the Contract & Benefits Committee has taken place already; another will be scheduled to ensure our team is up to speed on the issues and proposals for addressing each.
4. The new Executive will presumably also provide, in some form, an update to the membership on the range of items with which we are heading into bargaining.
5. Another training session for the team will likely be scheduled later this month.
6. We have very capable CAUT resources on stand-by for advice and support, following upon the general bargaining workshop that we held earlier this winter.
7. I have provided formal notice of our intent to bargain the *Fourth Collective Agreement*, per the process outlined in the Trade Union Act.
8. As bargaining commences, I expect that our communications efforts will be bolstered, and the all-important Bargaining Bulletin will also be resurrected. Please take advantage of all of the means by which the Executive will seek to keep you informed over the months ahead.

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## **Dear StFXAUT, We Need to Talk About Service...**

by Rachel Hurst and Charlene Weaving



Recently, the topic of service has come up for discussion in the StFXAUT; the last issue of *The Beacon* included the article "[The Value of Service](#)," by Mathias Nilges and the recent Contract

& Benefits survey assured us that service work at StFX is not distributed inequitably. Now, if you want to talk about service, we are your gals! Between the two of us, we have served on 34 different University or Union committees at StFX – surprisingly, the only committees for which we both served terms are the Faculty Development Committee and the Hive for Feminist Research Annual Lecture Series committee! And within those committees, we have also taken on exceptionally labour- and time-intensive committees and roles, including Chief Grievance Officer (post-tenure), Secretary of Senate (pre-tenure), Search Committee for the Academic Vice-President and Provost (post-tenure), and Member of the Presidential Task Force for Sustaining the Priorities of StFX (pre-tenure!). That number does not include any departmental committees, nor does it include uncompensated and maybe-recognized-but-probably-not roles like LGBTQ Student Advisor. A troubling trend we see emerging in both the recent *Beacon* article as well as the Contract & Benefits survey is a lack of attention to the ways in which service is *gendered*; that is to say, the invisibility and devaluing of service cannot be separated from questions of gender.

### **Service by the numbers**

Neither one of us are seasoned senior faculty members – Charlene came to StFX as a LTA in 2005, and Rachel as a LTA in 2009; both of us landed tenure-track positions after those LTA years. Our friendship has been an enormous support for navigating the stormy seas of service work, and we often talk about how to balance our many professional obligations. Indeed, we wrote to Kevin Wamsley in November asking the Office of the AVP to support a Women Faculty Breakfast hosted by our new Chancellor, Susan Crocker and the Director of the Coady International Institute and Vice-President, June Webber. We were motivated to make this request in the context of both the September Equity Summit as well as a conversation that we had during a fall hike about the burnout and lack of recognition for service that our women colleagues frequently talk about, not to mention the reality that StFX has never undergone a pay equity audit and does not currently have an employment equity policy. Our hope was that a gathering could, at least for a little while, offer a space to feel less alone. At both the Equity Summit and the Women Faculty Breakfast, women's heavy service obligations and the failure to adequately recognize service in tenure and promotion decisions were key themes of structural inequality at StFX.

So, when we saw Mathias Nilges' recent article, "The Value of Service" in *The Beacon*, we were intrigued. However, while the article does make the salient argument that in general, StFX needs a policy on service, Mathias fails to take into account the profoundly inequitable conditions of service at StFX. These conditions cannot be separated from any policy – or collective bargaining – decisions that are made regarding service.

### **The Ivory Ceiling**

Armenti argued in 2004 that inequities exist for women academics, who:

...must adapt to the male life trajectory for the purpose of tenure and promotion, but they are expected to assume the traditionally feminine role of caregiver and nurturer towards the students. Accordingly, the obstacles that these women encounter in their career serve to delineate their outsider status (4).

In their article, "Stressing Out: Connecting Race, Gender, and Stress With Faculty Productivity," M. Kevin Eagan and Jason C. Garvey provide a synthesis of recent literature on gender and race bias in academia to contextualize their study of faculty stress. They note that

historical marginalization contributes to the overburdening of faculty of colour and women faculty, particularly in regards to service expectations where they are asked to serve as representatives (of “women” or “faculty of colour”).<sup>1</sup> These groups receive frequent requests to serve on committees and substantially greater responsibilities in mentoring students (927-9). Put into the context of tenure and promotion criteria that devalue service and privilege research, faculty of colour find their research contributions “devalued and trivialized” (Eagan and Garvey 2015, 928) and although women’s research output is equal to men, it is ignored due to persistent gender bias in academia (ibid).

Misra, Lundquist, Holmes, and Agiomavritis (2011) propose that women associate professors face an “ivory ceiling” when seeking promotion to full professor; while vague promotion criteria are one explanation, another – more significant – explanation is that associate professors spend their time differently based on gender. Misra et al. note two common themes in the research on faculty promotion amongst associate professors: first, men protect their research time and spend more time researching (though they are not more productive than women); and second, women spend more time teaching, mentoring, and doing service work, which is devalued. Compounding this is what Hirshfield and Joseph (2012) have termed “identity taxation,” a term which describes the “physical, mental, or emotional” labour “due to their membership in a historically marginalised group [e.g. based on race, gender, or sexual orientation] within their department or university, beyond that which is expect of other faculty members in the same setting” (214). They argue that it is critical for universities to acknowledge identity taxation as a barrier that sustains inequity, and that such recognition could inform tenure and promotion decisions (223). It is critical to acknowledge that differing levels of service do not emerge from individual choice; rather, this is a systemic issue of inequality that has major consequences for promotion, as Winslow and Davis summarize:

These gender differences in requests for service reflect institutional approaches to addressing diversity by emphasizing that committees must not be solely composed of white men. However, when there are few women in a discipline, this desire for representation on committees places an enormous burden on the few women who are tenured that creates major obstacles for women (2016, 410).

### **Service at StFX**

Upon reflection on our own service experiences, we have noticed that there are discrepancies on our campus. Junior women faculty are ‘recruited’ far more than junior men colleagues to participate in various committees; and further, messages that women and men receive from Deans and senior colleagues are inconsistent. And, as Mathias expresses, service is undervalued when it comes to tenure and promotion.

Findings from the recent AUT surveys in preparation for bargaining this summer indicated that members perceive inequity in terms of service. We were surprised to read the claim in the recent Contract & Benefits Survey that based on a scan of the current year's membership (presumably on from Committee on Nominations website) that this perception is incorrect. We strongly think this claim requires a more robust explanation than what has been provided, and have a number of responses. Parity of representation on committees is a newer trend in

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Eagan and Garvey further note the dearth of research on women faculty of colour, who they note are often in a “double-bind” situation facing racism and misogyny (929). See Pitt et al.’s chapter, “Black Women in Academia: The Invisible Life” in our “Further Reading” section for some insight into this “double-bind.”

recent years. This is a result of motivation by the Committee on Nominations to ensure gender parity, as well as an increased awareness by faculty of its importance. Further, equal gender representation on committees does not mean that the perception that women do more service is incorrect, given that women make up just 39% of full-time university faculty at StFX (those eligible to serve on university committees).<sup>2</sup> In addition, when surveying service work at StFX to determine whether or not service is shared equally, it is critical to also ask questions about the workload and perceived importance of the committees. We suspect, for example, that in terms of the ‘key’ committees, like Rank and Tenure, UCR, Budget, etc., some members have a vested interest and are keen to participate in these high profile service groups; in contrast, the work of important but low-profile and high workload committees like Faculty Development, Grievance, and Secretaries of Faculty and Senate often go unrecognized. And finally, one of the factors that makes service invisible is that much of it is not formally recognized on the CoN site, like faculty advising to sports teams or policy development committees. Thus, we encourage an analysis that looks beyond ‘bean counting’ the composition of committees and instead looks at the institutionalized issue of women’s extensive service participation as well as pervasive gender bias in academia.

### **Where do we go from here?**

While we appreciate the recent attention to the need to acknowledge and more clearly articulate service expectations and value, we were motivated to respond because of the missing gender inequity piece. Before we can begin to consider stipends for LTAs and service and make sweeping claims about the equality of service, the STFX community needs to openly investigate the service burdens that women faculty have carried for too long. The StFXAUT and the StFX administration should consider dedicating resources to hire a consultant to conduct research on matters of equity, including but not limited to service, and then use that research to inform recommendations for changes to practice. Further, we are in agreement with Misra, Lundquist, Holmes, and Agiomavritis (2011) that university administrations need to commit to changing this culture of service through maintaining or increasing tenure lines (and thus, increasing the overall number of potential faculty to participate in governance activities) as well as mentoring resources to support promotion for historically marginalized groups.

### **References and Further Reading**

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2 We thank Nancy Forestell for this information!

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## **Precarious Employment**

by Philip Girvan

*"The general consensus is that the longer you spend as a contract academic, whatever you want to call it, part-time instructor the worse off it is for you."* – Anon

The Winter 2016 issue of *The Beacon* highlighted issues raised by part-time academic instructors (PTAIs) working at StFX University. The article can be found [here](#). At that time, two information sessions had taken place that gave PTAIs space to meet, share common concerns and challenges, and begin to build solidarity and community.

*Part Time Is Real Time*, a round table discussion on part time academic work organized by the StFXAUT, and featuring keynote speaker Karen Foster, Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Rural Futures for Atlantic Canada, and Assistant Professor with the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University, was held on February 26. Dr. Foster spoke to early findings from a survey of contract instructors working in Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions that Dr. Foster, in collaboration with the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT), conducted at the end of 2015. A paper discussing findings from the survey is expected to soon be posted on the ANSUT website.

Dr. Foster in conversation with *The Beacon* noted that her research examining precarious labour led her to consider contract academic labour in that context. Though the survey's sample size makes it difficult to extrapolate conclusions specific to the StFX context, Dr. Foster did note that the rural setting and the corresponding lack of other employment opportunities make the situation more precarious for contract faculty working at StFX than those working in Halifax.

Dr. Foster noted that those surveyed emphasized the lack of job and income security, feelings of marginalization, as well as the perception that contract work is not valued by university

administrations or “well-meaning full-time faculty that just don’t get it”. An anonymous PTAI teaching at StFX (whose quotation also appears at the top of this article) echoed Dr. Foster’s observation:

Part-timers feel a significant duty to perform services that fall outside of their contracts so they’ll do things like serve on departmental committees when they’re not really obligated to do so; they’ll perform administrative duties; they’ll work over the summer when they’re not paid; they’ll supervise and edit honours theses...all sorts of things for which they’re not recognized or remunerated. They want to ensure that they get the next contract. Those kinds of things are framed by faculty members, by department chairs, as “I understand that this is not strictly part of your duties; on the other hand, this is good for the department and, without the department, you don’t have a job”.

Anon suggests that the precarious employment “is a longstanding problem at StFX [which] hasn’t been addressed because part-timers are ...dispersed all over campus and given really no opportunity to get together as we have been recently so we’re basically an invisible sort of quantity. It makes it easier for the university to exploit this underclass”.

If nothing else, the forums and Part Time is Real Time have helped to reduce the part-timers’ invisibility and heretofore scattered nature. A working group has been formed, concerns raised during the forums have been synthesized, other collective bargaining agreements have been examined, and a paper has been produced that is designed to keep the needs of contract faculty front and centre as the StFXAUT begins contract negotiations. Collective bargaining priorities include strengthening the PTAI’s income and job security. One specific proposal shared with me is to formalize part-time staff as contract faculty in the new collective bargaining agreement. As Anon puts it, “we want to emphasize that we’re faculty and limited precisely by how the university limits us which is by contract”.

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## **ON (SOME OF) THE PROBLEMS WITH MERIT PAY**

by Brad Long

Academic excellence lives within our ranks; although the Administration can provide the conditions that enable excellence to flourish, the realization of excellence rests with members of the StFXAUT who are on the front lines of delivering the academic mission of this university. Such a reality begs the following question: Would a system of merit pay for Faculty (one could imagine its application spreading further, but I’ll narrow my gaze for now) promote academic excellence, were such a system to replace the automatic annual step pay increase currently in place? Both administrators and some of our own members have raised this question in recent months, and so heading into a round of collective bargaining, it would make sense for us to engage seriously with it.

One of the first questions that arises when considering performance-based pay is, what may be the desired recipe upon which performance is measured? Even if the average balance of responsibilities for teaching, research and service approached the ratio of 40/40/20, there are significant variances from one person to the next. Can an over-contribution in one area be offset by an under-contribution in another? My ratio for the academic year just ending is likely closer to 15/15/70. Would I have been penalized (denied a pay increment) for assuming a significant service load? If not, and if such variations are permitted, then would this defeat



the purpose of such a system which is purportedly designed to ensure we are all filling the full range of our prescribed duties?

Who then decides whether one's performance has in fact been satisfactory and sufficient to earn the merit pay (certainly not another peer-review committee)? What is the evidence required to warrant it? The reduction of Faculty work to a series of performance metrics may lead to 'checking the box' whereby efforts will be geared toward meeting the criteria for teaching, research and service, devoid of the passion for wanting our contributions to count. Quantity becomes valued over quality. Moreover, what then would be the remedy process for unjust denials of the merit pay increase - more grievances?

Lets examine teaching and research a bit further. An evaluation of teaching effectiveness requires a thorough DEC assessment (including class visits, review of teaching materials, etc.). DEC assessments are only performed throughout one's probationary appointment, and then again to assist in the determination of tenure and promotion. For any other year, the only way teaching is measured annually is through student evaluations. The attachment of a financial incentive to the production of elevated student opinions is a total perversion of this assessment instrument – the final move away from these having any formative purpose. Our business will be to increase student happiness, not educate them. Moreover, the resource allocation decisions made by Administration do not achieve the levelling of teaching loads amongst members within their departments and Faculties that allows our 'scores' to be comparable.

With respect to research, there are real and under-appreciated differences in research output amongst Faculty and between disciplines due to the variable probability of success in research funding by the granting agencies, length of peer-review and publication processes, time to gather data, sheer length of manuscripts, potential for collaborators, opportunity to leverage research assistants and students, and more. Also, research that is more mainstream has an easier time to make it through this process because of a more receptive publisher base; research that is critical or about the marginalized may itself be marginalized when seeking publication. The conclusion that must be reached is that there are no standard templates that could be used across Faculties, departments and even amongst researchers.

I'll turn my attention to the existing stepped pay scale which is based upon the principle of lifetime earnings. Faculty salaries make sense over a career; Faculty salaries begin rather low relative to our qualifications and work responsibilities, but over time we work toward a salary commensurate with both. When a member is fortunate enough to retire from a career at StFX and retirement from same, then the lifetime earnings of this person is decent. The effect of missing a step, if one were to not qualify for a merit pay increase, would be compounding; one would lose not just the value of the step (~\$2500) for that year, but that person's salary would be less this amount every year thereafter. There is no way to catch back up. From the perspective of lifetime earnings, this is a significant penalty.

Finally, merit pay leads to inequities. A recent report by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations ([January 2016, p.3](#)) concluded that merit pay, along with lower starting salaries, "may be a key driver of the persistence of the gender wage gap among university faculty." One way (amongst others) this could happen can be found in Article 1.9.6: 3.2 of the *Third Collective Agreement* which ensures that even members on pregnancy, adoptive or parental leave can count the time spent on leave toward advancement through the

salary grid. Under a merit-based system of pay, a member on such a leave would scarcely be able to, nor should be expected to, have performed the work necessary to warrant the performance increment. Over time, therefore, the salaries of Faculty can diverge significantly based on factors completely unrelated to performance, again contrary to what a merit-based system of pay is purportedly designed to achieve.

In sum, meritocracies function where all individuals have the same work and opportunities to succeed. This does not accurately describe the university workplace.

In advocating for a merit-based system of compensation, one must ultimately ask, what is the problem that such a system is trying to solve? Are Faculty under performing and lacking the motivation to do so? If so, what kinds of better management and support could be offered to such people? If the problem is not widespread, then why implement a widespread solution when a specific one would do? More broadly, what is the experience at other institutions where merit pay does exist? Did academic excellence increase after it was implemented? Did people start doing their jobs better? What happens to those who fail to meet the bar, that is, what is the human impact of such a system? Do Faculty elsewhere sense their dispensability and live in greater anxiety?

Anyone who wants to make a serious case for advancing merit pay must be able to provide satisfactory answers to the many questions and problems that arise from such a system. I for one am not interested. So whereas all members of the StFXAUT should get behind a mission that promotes academic excellence, merit pay is not a means toward this end.

*Postscript: After drafting this article, I came across an admittedly superior article from [Paul Handford in the CAUT Bulletin from March 2002](#). Paul's article is well worth a read for anyone interested. It stands in stark contrast to, and rebuke of, [this article published a few years earlier by the Fraser Institute](#).*

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## 2016 StFXAUT Book Prize Award

by Susan MacKay

The StFXAUT would like to congratulate the 2016 Book Prize recipients Mariah Richard (Development Studies) and Nathan Chiarlitti (Human Kinetics).



*StFXAUT President Brad Long (left) with  
2016 StFXAUT Book Prize Award Winner  
Nathan Chiarlitti*



*StFXAUT President Brad Long (left) with  
2016 StFXAUT Book Prize Award Winner  
Mariah Richard*

Photos by Susan MacKay

Each student was presented with cash award of \$200 and a book.

MARIAH received [\*Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism\*](#) (2016) by John Borrows.

NATHAN received [\*Sport for Development, Peace, and Social Justice\*](#) (2012) by Robert J. Schinke (Editor), Stephanie J. Hanrahan (Editor).

The Book Prize is awarded at Spring convocation to two graduating students who demonstrate a commitment to social justice advocacy and community development on campus or in the community.

Congratulations Mariah and Nathan! We wish you the very best in your future endeavours!

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## StFX for SAFE



SAFE Committee member and Senior Lab Instructor Cindy Murphy standing by a display she and Tareq Hadhad from Hadhad Chocolates set up to promote StFX for SAFE at the StFXAUT AGM on Wednesday, May 4.  
PHOTO BY SUSAN MACKAY

StFX for SAFE raised \$395.00 at the AGM through Hadhad Chocolate sales (nicely packaged for the upcoming Mother's Day celebrations). This initiative was undertaken for the 2016 StFX Farewell Graduate

Convocation event on April 30th where \$650 was raised and nicely continued through to the AUT general meeting.

To donate to the StFX for SAFE effort, you may either send an e-transfer from your online banking site to [safamiliesembrace@gmail.com](mailto:safamiliesembrace@gmail.com) or send a cheque made out to StFX for SAFE, 204 Kirk Place, 219 Main Street, Antigonish, NS B2G 2C1. Please note that donations are tax deductible and a 2016 receipt will be issued.



On March 22, StFXAUT Executive Committee member Kris Hunter presented a cheque to SAFE committee member and Senior Lab Instructor, Cindy Murphy for \$1,740, the second installment of the StFXAUT's \$3,480 donation.  
PHOTO BY SUSAN MACKAY

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## ALUMNI SHOUT-OUT

by Philip Girvan

Over the past few issues, *The Beacon* has featured interviews with StFX University alumni on the topic of STFXAUT members who challenged, inspired, or helped in some way.



This issue's interview is with Lewis MacKinnon (BA '92, MA '11), Executive Director of Gaelic Affairs for the Province of Nova Scotia.

***The Beacon:*** *Tell us a little bit about yourself.*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** Born in Cape Breton and raised in Antigonish County. Moved to Dunmore, Lower South River, Antigonish County when I was three. Grew up on a farm and knew the life of someone raised in the country. Had wonderful memories of neighbours and the connections that we had growing up. Most of my immediate neighbours were farming families as well. So that was a big part of my early days and, of course, was involved in various aspects in the community: the church, 4H, Scouts, and minor hockey.



*Photo of Lewis  
MacKinnon courtesy  
Communication Nova  
Scotia*

***The Beacon:*** *And you attended StFX University?*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** I graduated from Dr. John Hugh Gillis and I guess, StFX, in a sense it was there. A number of my friends were going and I didn't really think about going anywhere else. StFX just seemed like the next logical progression for me.

***The Beacon:*** *During your time at X was there any instructor, or possibly a research librarian, or a lab instructor... someone who was particularly inspiring or helpful and helped you choose a major or lessons you've learned that have helped you in your career?*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** I think in the early days a lot of it for me was sort of figuring it out as I went. And, interestingly enough, I now work full time in Gaelic language, culture and identity in the province. At the time I took Gaelic as a course at StFX through the Celtic Studies Department.

***The Beacon:*** *You weren't a speaker prior to this?*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** I was very much a learner. Gaelic was spoken in my family and I took an interest as a teenager. I had that particular, I suppose, identity interest. I was very much interested in my Gaelic identity and drawn to it and I was also very interested in politics. I did an Advanced Major in politics and a minor in Celtic Studies.

I think the profs that stand out for me, because I also had theology and English courses and history courses included in my undergraduate: Dr. Pat Walsh, Dr. [George] Sanderson, Dr. Will Sweet, Dr. Jim Bickerton, Dr. Ken Neilson, and also Katrina Parsons who taught in the Celtic Studies Department. I think those individuals, in their own way, inspired me, challenged me, and I think created the environment in which I felt that I wanted to learn more, that I wanted to pursue more in terms of my own learning journey. I think back on those individuals, in particular, and the contributions that they made and [they] certainly made me to feel that my commitment was valued and was important.

***The Beacon:*** *What in particular have you taken from those experiences and been able to apply to your professional career?*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** I went on after StFX and I went abroad. I lived in Mexico for a year. I did an undergraduate, a post degree exchange. Technically it was supposed to be a junior year, third year, exchange with Ibero Mericano, which is a small private, I don't know if it's a Jesuit run school still, but I think it was certainly influenced by the Jesuit Order in Mexico City.

I should add Dr. David Lawless was instrumental in supporting that particular part of my academic development. I ended up doing the exchange after I did my undergrad and it was one of the best experiences I ever had. I did all my academic work, the year that I was in Mexico, through the medium of Spanish and still speak Spanish to this day. I did that and then I came back and I had a political run and that didn't work out.

***The Beacon:*** *I wasn't aware of that!*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** You weren't aware of that? No, yeah, I ran for the federal parliament in 1993. And following that, sort of thinking, you know, what was the next step and, again, looked to higher learning to further my own knowledge and skills and so ended up doing a qualifying year for a Masters in Economic Development at Dalhousie. I believe Dr. Neilson and Dr. Lawless wrote letters of support at the time to Dalhousie. That wasn't the career path for me, economic development, but I think I'm doing economic development in some ways now, which is quite interesting. I ended up completing my qualifying year and then I went into the private sector for ten years. I was the manager of the corporate office of Zep Manufacturing for Atlantic Canada.

Somewhere in the process at Zep I realized that... and I continued to stay very closely connected to the Gaelic community in the province and was very active on a volunteer basis. Served with the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia for a number of years. Worked to advocate for Gaelic language and cultural development and somehow I felt that I needed to do more to develop my own linguistic and cultural skills. I sought and I got support to do a Masters in Celtic Studies on a part-time basis while I was working full-time. That was a very challenging number of years for me, but at the same time, I was so fortunate to be able to do that. It was between 2003 and 2005 when I did my coursework. So I would travel twice a week to Antigonish from Halifax and do coursework, any follow up research that was required, and drive back, work, and go back whatever the next day in the schedule was. I graduated in 2011 when I finally got my thesis completed. Having that was really significant in my view in being considered for, as an advisor I guess initially, and then eventually for the position of Executive Director for Gaelic Affairs which really I had no sense would ever be an entity that

government would establish in the province. So that sort of all laid the foundational work for moving from the corporate sector into government in 2006.

**The Beacon:** *It's a bit of a transition, I would think.*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** Yeah, it was a transition. It is a different culture but I think in a lot of ways, government, business, corporations: ultimately it's about personal relationships, it's about working to the best of your ability, thinking strategically, thinking to the best of your ability; again, some of us are much more competent and function and able to complete tasks and some of us are, very much, sort of strategic. And so I think there's all of that within, whether you're in business or you're in government, but, ultimately, it's about working with individuals within those organizations that, ultimately, is the most important element in how you're able to work with others and recognize the contributions of others and build consensus and work to build partnerships. So all of that's really foundational stuff in terms of developing whatever it is that you're trying to develop.

**The Beacon:** *You mentioned the fact that two of your professors at X were good enough to write you a letter of recommendation and you listed another one that helped you enroll in the Mexican school. Was there anything else that was particularly inspiring and/or helpful?*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** I think one of the things that you quickly become aware of at StFX is that there's a sense of service that people carry with them. I experienced that with all of the professors that I had the good fortune to work with over my years at StFX. There's a greater sense of purpose, I think, in terms of how the educators that touched my life looked at their own lives and their own immediate communities, and beyond, and felt that it was important to be engaged outside of their immediate work responsibilities in a spirit of giving and a spirit of supporting and having a sense of, I don't want to say a moral compass, but a sense of duty, I think, based upon a sense of values that they sort of collectively carried. Which was: the most important thing is to serve others and to help better the wellbeing of others.

**The Beacon:** *Well, I think, that's plenty, Lewis, unless there's something you want to add.*

**Lewis MacKinnon:** I think there's a lot of other connecting points. I look at the university built primarily by Gaelic speaking clergy: both priests and nuns were engaged. I think that in some ways I've always felt connected into that tradition of the university and have gained inspiration and one other figure that I recall is Father Malcolm MacDonnell, Monsignor MacDonnell, who had retired from active work at the university by my time but I remember him stopping me in the SUB, and this would be around the period when I was doing my Masters in Celtic Studies, and he said, "I'm so proud of you. You've come to fluency in Gaelic". I was sort of self-critical and told him that I'm not that proficient yet, father. "I won't hear any of that," he said. "You've done really exceptional". And it's those kinds of things, I think, along with that greater sense of purpose and duty, there's also those moments when many educators at StFX took the time to recognize the small things that were done.

I'll just finish with this: I think what I was referencing when I said I did a qualifying year for a Masters in Economic Development and it turned out that that wasn't the professional path for me. However, what I do think, and believe firmly, is the work that I'm about today is all about community development in the sense of language, culture and identity being absolutely central points in a community in terms of helping, supporting individuals and groups in

feeling good about their own identity and their own place in their community. That's the starting point for innovation; that's the starting point for change; that's the starting point for great things. I think that's really the work that we're engaged in in terms of supporting Nova Scotians in reconnecting, reclaiming, regenerating their Gaelic identity and so I think that StFX has, maybe not in a direct path, but in a roundabout way, has been part of that journey of having those influencers and those positive kinds of messages and examples and experiences that have influenced me and have helped me sort of come to a point where I see the work that I'm doing as part of a broader community development piece.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note the members of the 2016-2017 [Collective Agreement Committees](#) and [Constitution Committees](#) on the members-only sections of the StFXAUT website.

To log in to the [StFXAUT website](#), enter your "Username", which is your first and last name not your email username: "First Last". If you have forgotten your password, click "Lost Password" and a reset link will then be sent to your email address.

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## REMINDERS

- 1) The deadline to submit the [StFXAUT Sponsorship Application Form](#) is October 1<sup>st</sup>. The StFXAUT invites sponsorship requests from organizations committed to education, labour, social justice, and community development.
- 2) The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) offers [Health and Dental Benefits for Retirees](#). To learn more about monthly premiums for residents of Nova Scotia, please [click here](#).
- 3) Remember to access your [Professional Development Fund \(PDF\)](#). **Article 1.22** of the *Third Collective Agreement* entitles each member to an expense account, against which you can submit a [PDF Expense Claim Form](#) for reimbursement of expenses such as travel, iPads, laptops, software, professional registration fees, conference fees; and graduation robes.
- 4) Please remember to send your event notices and campus updates to the StFXAUT list serve to keep all members informed.

## Committee Reports:

### ANSUT (Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers)

by Bruce Sparks

As the AUT's representative to the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT) I attended the three regular meetings held during the academic year 2015-2016. Unlike last year (the year of Bill 100) there were no obviously dramatic issues. Meetings continued to be very useful forums to exchange information about conditions and concerns at other Nova Scotia universities.



All of us are experiencing some degree of financial pressure and this is being passed on to academic staff, sometimes egregiously, as in the attempt to open the lay-off clause at CBU. The association was able to limit the damage there when an independent audit of CBU's finances showed that the administration's austerity measures were not supported by the financial status of the university. NSCAD will face extraordinary challenges of another kind when the downtown campus is sold in the next three years and the school moves to a yet-to-be-determined location. Through the grievance procedure, St. Mary's was able to prevent the attempt to establish closed searches for senior administration positions.

More generally, contract gains in recent settlements for ANSUT unions have been very modest, and maintaining the status quo sometime seems to qualify as a victory. ANSUT also continued its lobbying efforts with government on a variety of issues, and was involved in a "Get Science Right" forum in Halifax.

As a result of increased costs resulting from the hiring of a full-time communications officer for ANSUT, the mil rate for individual association dues was raised. Currently that position is vacant and has been advertised. ANSUT also supported a research project conducted by Dr. Karen Foster of Dalhousie on the casualization of academic work; her final report is imminent.

(Peter McInnis also served on ANSUT Board during 2015-2016 as ANSUT elected member-at-large.)

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## **CHIEF GRIEVANCE OFFICER**

by Charlene Weaving

The Executive has asked me to provide some context to the workings of the Grievance Committee in this report. Working on the Grievance Committee (CG) has involved the most challenging and emotionally taxing work I have experienced. For example, cases that involve denial of tenure, and program redundancy are extremely difficult and complex. However, work with the GC has also resulted in some of the most rewarding committee experiences, for instance, when we are able to really help members improve their various situations. This year, in particular, the GC spent significant time identifying problematic language in the *Collective Agreement*, in order to revise and improve language in the upcoming negotiations. Before working on the CG, I never realized the word 'or' had so many interpretations and missuses!

Each fall we organize a Grievance Workshop through CAUT, and seeing that so many of the committee members had previously taken the workshop, we wanted to offer something different. We worked with CAUT and a modified workshop was organized that involved a higher level of analysis and was considered to be quite effective. CAUT will now offer an advanced Grievance Workshop.

Interestingly, the bulk of the GC work does not involve formal grievances (Step 1, Step 2, etc.). In many cases, we assist members navigate various University policies, like sick leaves. We help clarify situations and work with our members to improve working conditions, whether it be helping members who are in buildings which were undergoing major construction and asbestos removal or assisting members with the threat of cancelling courses because of low

numbers.

This year, we went through the formal grievance process and argued program redundancy, denial of promotions, and discipline notifications cases. We have noted that the University has been proceeding with numerous investigations for discipline. The language in the CA needs to be modified to allow for informal discussions/inquiry between a Dean and a member to occur. The current read of the CA, indicates that a member receives a formal letter that they are being investigated and may face disciplinary action. We have been working with HR to revise the language, however, this will be finalized during negotiations.

Another aspect of the GC is that many cases require confidentiality and as such, the GC doesn't report or even describe in broad terms those cases. We adhere to this process in order to protect our members.

I wish to extend thanks to GC members Denton Anthony, Daphne Connolly, Andrew Foran, and Kathleen MacKenzie. A very special thanks and congratulations on the occasion of Elaine MacLean's retirement who has been a key member of the committee and will be truly missed. Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank Brad Long for his tremendous support and insight in the workings of the GC.

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## **COMMUNICATIONS**

by Brad Long

In September 2015, the Communications Committee launched our infographic poster campaign in collaboration with the other StFX labour unions and the Students' Union. Through this campaign, we illustrated some of the many ways in which StFX students routinely engage with and are served by union members. Four variants of these posters were made available electronically and distributed across campus. Work remains underway with the Student's Union to create video vignettes to highlight these same kinds of interactions using a different medium.

*The Beacon* continues to be the signature quarterly publication of the StFXAUT. The Communications Committee mapped out the content and distributed the writing assignments necessary to deliver this newsletter to our members. The invitation remains open to all members to contact Susan MacKay with your suggestions, feedback and offers to contribute.

Our part-time Communications Officer, Philip Girvan, continues to manage our social media presence. As a result, our Facebook and Twitter accounts remain an updated source of information for our members, and more, while Susan MacKay maintains our website with equal attentiveness.

Looking ahead, additional non-routine publications will be a key element of our communications strategy, largely in the form of Bargaining Bulletins as we enter into a period of collective bargaining.

StFXAUT communications in all forms are designed to help members stay informed and connected. We encourage you all to read, react and follow along.

Communications Committee membership 2015-2016: Adela Sandness; Brad Long; Mathias Nilges; Philip Girvan StFXAUT Communications Officer; Russell Wyeth; and Susan MacKay, StFXAUT Executive Assistant

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## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

by Shah Razul

Over the last year, there have been no meetings with the Administration. This was partially due to the appointment of a new Dean of Science and Gerry Marangoni leaving StFX. However, during the previous year there were 4 meetings (these meetings were considered informal) where Gerry and I provided information of what language other institutions have used to address their Whistleblower clause and suggested that we agree on drafting some language (per LOU#3 of the *Collective Agreement*). We asked the Administration (Robert van den Hoogen and Richard Nemesvari at that time) to propose language based on the provided templates from other universities and our discussions.

However, we have yet to meet. I did speak to Richard Isnor a few weeks ago and we decided to meet after the end of term. David Risk and I are also going to meet to review our status prior to any further meetings with the Administration.

Intellectual Property Committee StFXAUT membership 2015-2016: Dave Risk and Shah Razul

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## **JOINT COMMITTEE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT REPORT**

by Rachel Hurst and Denton Anthony

The *Joint Committee for the Administration of the Third Collective Agreement* is comprised of 2 members appointed by the StFXAUT (Rachel Hurst and Denton Anthony) and 2 members appointed by the StFX Administration (Tim Hynes and Randy Peters). This year, JC has met 7 times, with a possibility of a May meeting. We are pleased to report that this year, we have been able to meet regularly (last year the members from the administration frequently double-booked our time slot). We have discussed a number of issues this year; a brief summary is below.

### Retirement language changes

- After years of work, we are pleased to report that this work is complete, and that the StFXAUT and the StFX Administration will sign an MOU that will update our CA to remove all mandatory retirement language.

### Ongoing use of LTAs

- AUT continued (from last year, 2014-15) to raise concerns about long-term use of LTAs.
- LTAs are to be appointed for no more than 4 years in a row; after that, the Administration needs to evaluate this ongoing need and the possibility of a tenure-track position.

- The Union is in a tough position because we will not disagree to the extension of a member's LTA beyond 4 years, but this violates the spirit of the *Collective Agreement*.
- We indicated that we would like conversion considered.
- This year, the Administration responded and a process was designed to interview and evaluate two long-serving LTAs for tenure-track positions.

#### Service to the Association

- In 2014-15, the AUT sought confirmation from Administration that a) the Administration does not vet what constitutes "service to the Association" and b) that service might require members to leave campus and reschedule commitments. This is in relation to a concern where a member was denied permission by their supervisor to leave campus on CAUT business. The former AVP was unwilling to confirm this interpretation.
- In February 2016, the StFXAUT and the StFX Administration co-signed a Letter of Agreement which confirms that  

*The parties recognize that service to the Association shall count as University service where the latter is relevant to the evaluation of Members for promotion, tenure, performance, or any other form of job performance.*

*Whereas service to the Association is equal to service to the University, the parties affirm that what counts as service to the Association is determined by the Association and does not need to be directly related to the affairs of the University. The University does not have a role in either approving or denying any one kind of service that is deemed necessary by the association.*

#### Professional Development Fund (PDF)

- Members have access to up to \$600 per year in 2014-15 and 2015-16.
- JC would like to remind members that you can roll funds over for one year only. Thus, if you haven't used your PDF for 2014-15 or 2015-16, you can claim up to \$1,200 until June 30, 2016. If you don't spend your PDF for 2014-2015, it is gone!
- Currently, out of a possible \$332,000 (over 2 years), only \$130,648 has been spent.
- Deans will be sending out an email encouraging members to use their PDF, and will provide support (through administrative assistants) for member inquiries about their PDF (how much they have available, etc.).
- Members are strongly encouraged to use this fund!

#### Travel fund

- There will be \$61,962 rolling over into next year's travel fund.
- The average amount claimed per member is \$1,376.
- Something that might be considered if we end up with a continued surplus is raising the maximum amount. Another possibility is to raise the current per diem rates, or to widen eligibility for the travel fund (e.g. for LTAs).
- Don't forget to apply for this too! (\$1,650 per year)

#### Leave of Absence with Salary Deferral language

- In March, the StFXAUT President made us aware of an outstanding issue in Appendix I: Benefits for Nurse Educators, Lab Instructors, Coady and Extension Program Staff

And Writing Centre Instructors, the Leave of Absence with a Salary Deferral Option (1.14, 2.0 in Appendix I).

- The CA states that as of September 1, 2013, a deferred salary option will be made to any Member who requests it as a means of providing salary continuation while on a leave of absence,” and further that Joint Committee will “agree to the language necessary to bring this deferred salary option into existence.” (p. 237).
- The CA states that Joint Committee “will model the language of the Salary Deferral Option Plan from St. Mary’s University” (p. 237).
- This item slipped through the cracks. Currently, the SMU language is being reviewed by Human Resources.

#### Course evaluations for Lab Instructors

- As a result of the new system, lab instructors did not receive course evaluations in 2014-15. This was attributed to the inability of the new electronic system to process lab instructor evaluations.
- This year, the Ad-Hoc Committee on Course Evaluations decided that the lab instructors would continue to use the paper evaluations that they have used in the past few years.

#### Course cancellations

- In October, the StFXAUT raised concerns about the new administrative practice of cancelling courses with less than 8 students, as well as the timing of these cancellations, which happened close to the start of classes in September. We noted that the minimum and ‘break-even’ numbers seem arbitrary, and change.
- The ‘break even’ number of 45 students is based on a full professor salary with a regular teaching load, according to the Administration. This number is used for “context,” according to the Administration, to tackle and bring awareness to work equity and financial issues.

Once collective bargaining begins, the current Joint Committee dissolves and we will no longer meet. We may have a May meeting to discuss the Leave of Absence With Salary Deferral option, if the SMU language is deemed unacceptable to either party. We would like to thank Brad Long, President, and Charlene Weaving, Chief Grievance Officer, for their support!

Joint Committee for the Administration of the Collective Agreement StFXAUT Membership 2015-2016: Denton Anthony and Rachel Hurst

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## **JOINT EQUITY**

Dr. Elizabeth McGibbon joined the AUT JEC this past year. Since our equity survey last year the JEC has not met. At this time we do not know who has replaced Dr. Richard Nemesvari from the Administration.

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## **JOINT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

by Colleen Cameron

The JOHSC is mandated under the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations. The purpose of the JOHSC is to work cooperatively with the employer in identifying and resolving safety and health issues. The JOHSC is an advisory group made up of representatives from management and employees. This is an active committee that meets for an hour, once a month, ten times a year.

With restructuring at the university, JOHSC falls under the larger scope of Risk Management. A major focus of the JOHSC has been the Occupational Health and Safety Manual which was revised in Oct 2014 and updated in Feb 2015. It has yet to be official adopted by the President's Council.

Part of the responsibilities of the JOHSC and Occupational Health Advisor (Janet Beaton) is to ensure every building on campus has a team of people who will take responsibility during a fire and any other emergency. It is required by law that every building goes through a fire drill each year. This has not been happening on a regular basis except for a few buildings and the residences. Establishing a team for each building will be a priority.

Another initiative is the development of the Emergency and Lockdown Procedures by Facilities Management and Security. The three essential components to Emergency Procedures are to:

- Be Prepared: Create awareness
- Evacuation: How to evacuate a building safely when encountering an emergency
- Persons with Disabilities: Building occupants must know how to provide assistance during evacuations. Security must also create a central file of persons who need assistance.

The establishment of building teams responsible for hazards, drills and emergency evacuations will be done in coordination with the Emergency and Lockdown Procedures. It is expected that this will happen once PC approves the procedures in the next couple of months.

Another initiative being developed by a university sub-committee is the Risk Management Travel Policy with the goal to have a central registry all people (staff and students) who travel on university business and their relevant information so that Security can address concerns or notify individuals as required.

An issue which arose recently pertains to "Right to Know – every employee has the right to know what hazards and potential hazards exist in the workplace and how to protect themselves from these hazards." It has been acknowledged by the Occupational Health advisor, senior management and the project management personnel that communication failed to inform all people about the potential hazards from the construction in MSB. A communication strategy will be developed to avoid such failures in the future.

The next meeting of JOHSC will be May 25<sup>th</sup> and there will likely be another one in June. I will be attending the next two meetings of this committee and then my terms come to an end.

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## **PENSION PLAN**

by Mikael Heller

The Committee has only met once in the past year and it has been a transition year as Reid Estey was replaced by Jennifer Swinemar-Murray in Human Resources. We had an exploratory meeting in January 2016 where we talked about implementing target retirement funds and looking at adding Vanguard funds to the Sun Life offerings. We have our next meeting planned for May 9, 2016.

Pension Plan Committee StFXAUT membership 2015-2016: Jacques Boucher; Mike Haller; and Ping Wang

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## **SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

by Charlie Ten Brinke

The social affairs committee, consisting of Deb Graham, Bhavik Parikh and Charlie ten Brinke, planned several gatherings for AUT members this academic year. The first, and by the far the most popular, was the annual fall meet and greet at Crystal Cliffs on the 11th of September, 2015. This event was well attended and offered a delicious meal and live music by our jazz students. This is always a great opportunity for new AUT members to meet their colleagues.

On the 1st of December we held an end of term social with a bar, hors d'oeuvres and board games. It was a fairly small crowd, but those who joined us had a fun evening and many participated in some pretty competitive games. We apparently have some serious Jenga players in our midst.

On the 11th of March 2016 we hosted a social following the town hall meeting with a bar and hors d'oeuvres. It was a small crowd, but members who managed to join in had a pleasurable evening.

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## **STATUS OF WOMEN AND EQUITY**

Membership in the SOWE has changed significantly over the past year. At a fall meeting we created a set of action plans for moving forward with our work. However, we did not move forward with our actions plans. We have not met since that fall meeting.

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## **U4 FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS MEETING**

by Bruce Sparks

Recently, representatives from the executives of the U4 faculty associations met for the first time to see whether we had any common concerns. Not surprisingly, we do. Issues regarding governance, bargaining, administrative salaries, and funding seem to be universal challenges. Particular to the U4 though, is the idea that courses at one institution might be available electronically to students at another. Good in theory, we all agreed, but what if this pooling of

resources leads to reductions in faculty complements? Happily, we found enough of mutual interest to commit to regular meetings in the future.

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## KEY DATES

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

### June:

- Various clauses relating to the commercialization of Intellectual Property contain a June 30 deadline (**Article 2.11**).

### July:

- Step increases in the salary grid take effect on July 1 for several groups; check the *Collective Agreement* to see if this applies to you.

### August:

- Sabbatical Leave applications are due to the Dean/University Librarian August 1.
  - No changes to a Faculty member's teaching assignment may be made after August 1, without mutual consent.
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## YOUR 2016-2017 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

[Mary Oxner](#), President  
[Brad Long](#), Past President  
[Bruce Sparks](#), Vice President  
[Clare Fawcett](#), Secretary  
[Martin van Bommel](#), Treasurer  
[Charlene Weaving](#), Chief Grievance Officer  
[Kris Hunter](#), Member at Large  
[Martin Sastri](#), Member at Large  
[Monica Diochon](#), Member at Large  
[Wendy Panagopoulos](#), Member at Large

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

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