Faculty Focus
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The Hidden Cost of Chasing Markets

Martin Adamson
Secretary, Executive Committee

In the last two rounds of bargaining, the general increase to our members has been strictly limited by the Public Sector Employer's Council. In fact in the last round of bargaining it was dictated to be 0% in each year covered by the agreement. In spite of this, certain faculties and departments were earmarked to receive large sums of money. The Faculty of Commerce has been the main recipient of the government's largesse but the Departments of Computer Science, Electrical and Computer Engineering and Economics have also received large increases for their members. On top of this a large part of our salary mass was committed to a discretionary fund whose dispersal was under the control of the President's office with no faculty oversight.

Benefitting departments made strong arguments for market pressure and argued that they could not retain faculty and attract new faculty without large increases to salaries. However, other groups with strong market arguments (including sessionals, nursing, law and psychology) were refused. In the past I have written articles critical of the inevitable effects of responding solely to market pressure in salary negotiations. The inequities produced by this strategy create great tension among our members many of whom see themselves and their work undervalued. Increasingly there is resentment of the benefitting departments whose members can not be distinguished from other faculty in terms of their effort, their sacrifice or the quality of their work.

Members of privileged departments and faculties cannot be blamed for seeking higher salaries. Most of us, put in their situation, would push for similar increases. We do not make the rules in this game. But the underlying assumption is that one can buy quality, that the best and brightest will chase the highest salaries. This winner-take-all atmosphere produces two sorts

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Face - To - Face Meetings

In anticipation of the 2006 round of collective bargaining, the Faculty Association will be holding a series of meetings around campus to hear your thoughts regarding salaries, benefits and other potential bargaining issues. We encourage you to attend any one of the following meetings, grouped here by Faculty only to ensure we spread meetings out around various locations. If you are unable to attend, please communicate with us by email or telephone, or send a representative to bring forward concerns in your department or unit. Faculty feedback is critical to our ability to negotiate a Collective Agreement that accurately reflects the concerns and desires of our members as a whole.

See page 8 for the Face-To-Face Meeting Schedule

Inside Focus

"Hidden Cost"
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of inefficiencies: it attracts people away from less market-driven areas where they would contribute more usefully and it creates incentives to exaggerate one's worth often at the expense of the final product. In his letter to the Provost, published in the *Faculty Focus*, 2004, Vol 37, 2-3, Professor Vatsal outlines some of the manifestations of this important source of inefficiency.

Although it might be necessary to compete for talent at some level, to compete only with monetary rewards underestimates our faculty's interest in equity and collegiality. Equitable salary distribution is not just valuable because it is the right thing to do; it has an instrumental value that has long gone unrecognized by this administration and by our provincial governments. People who are treated fairly are more productive, collegial and contented. In fact there is increasing evidence that the equity of salary distribution may be more important that the actual salary amount in this regard. In the next round of bargaining should we consider taking less money in the aggregate in order to ensure more equitable distribution, or at least more faculty control over how the salary increases are dispersed?

The best way to ensure equitable salary distribution is the general increase, but we have used other means in the past. In the settlement of 2001-2004 we bargained an allotment referred to as compression money that was meant to redress compression created by a pattern of steadily increasing starting salaries in face of a relative absence of increases for continuing members. This money was specifically protected against market claims by: limiting the amount of it available to departments and faculties that had benefitted from market increases and by distributing it on a per capita basis (rather than, for example, as a percent of salary mass). The current system of discretionary increases lacks transparency and accountability. As noted in Professor Vatsal's powerful letter, this encourages a pattern of behaviour that is degrading and destructive to our University community.

I suggest that we think hard about how much we are willing to pay in terms of equity, transparency and accountability, in order to chase market value for a small number of already privileged faculty. It may be necessary for us to buy more humane salary treatment by offering to take less in terms of total salary increase in return. The question of course is how much less in exchange for how much equity, transparency and accountability.

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President's Report

Elliott Burnell, President

Mandatory Retirement Survey

Results of the mandatory retirement (MR) survey will be of interest to members; 1056 members responded to the survey and the results can be summarized:

- 19.5% do not want MR at age 65 abandoned.
- 24.5% want to maintain a policy of MR but want to increase the age.
- 50.2% want to abolish MR completely.
- 4.5% want another option

There is support for additional periodic performance reviews as an acceptable part of a new retirement policy. Three quarters of respondents would like the Faculty Association to bargain for Scholar / Emeritus Centres and other retiree privileges for those who retire if MR is abandoned. There is very strong support (5/6 in favour) for the Faculty Association to bargain for a flexible retirement option if MR is abandoned.

These results support changes to the UBC mandatory retirement Policy. Concerns expressed in the comments section are quite enlightening. Many members insist that any change to the retirement policy should not impact in any way on those who do wish to retire at age 65. Others feel that the end of MR means the end of tenure. Another concern is that "bargaining" an end to MR will mean tradeoffs, such as accepting lower salary or benefits increases. The Faculty Association feels that the end of MR is to the benefit of both the Faculty Association and the University, and it has no intention of giving up anything that we currently have in our Collective Agreement, such as tenure. There should be no affect on those who do wish to retire at 65. Other suggestions include balancing the end of MR with early retirement packages and / or introducing incentives to retire.

Many respondents expressed concerns that the abolishment of MR would mean that "poor performers" would be the ones to continue past age 65. This should not be of concern because the University already has in place means to deal with such "poor performers."

The "Joint Committee of the UBC Faculty Association and the UBC Administration to Discuss Significant Matters of Mutual Interest" is meeting regularly and the topic of mandatory retirement is high on the list of topics being discussed. Talks are continuing and the results of our MR survey will be of interest to this committee. We shall keep you informed of progress.

Presidental Search Committee

The search for the new President of UBC is progressing. The position has been advertised in a variety of publications, both in Canada and abroad. The committee has met 10 times with additional meetings scheduled into 2006. The committee is still keen to receive input as well as suggestions as to potential candidates. Such input and suggestions will continue to be accepted up to the time that the committee makes a recommendation to the Board of Govenors on the next President of UBC (email *jwright@jwasearch.com*).

We have received input from the UBC community and more broadly, in some cases in person and in other cases in written form, with respect to the issues and challenges that are facing the University and the background, experience, and personal qualities that the Committee should be seeking in potential candidates.

The committee has developed a candidate profile that was sent to and approved by the Board. This is a public document and is published along with other publicly available material on the Board of Governors' web site, *http://www.bog.ubc.ca*. The web site includes the following:

- Presidential Search Committee Composition
- Presidential Search Committee Principles
- Terms of Reference
- Candidate Profile
- Position Advertisement

The committee is currently in the candidate evaluation process and is considering each of the more than 100 names of persons that have either applied, been nominated or suggested.

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The system is broken, let's fix it

Richard Anstee
Mathematics

The salary structure system of the Career Advancement Plan (CAP) (Career Increments Progress, Merit, Performance Salary Adjustment) as well as substantial pools of other salary increases (Retention, Minimum Scale, Market increases etc) has some major flaws that, if left intact, will rip the university apart. The official CAP is funded at 2.5% of the total salary pool. Other increases in recent collective agreements total another 1% approximately.

These kinds of increases will undoubtedly undermine cost of living increases in the future as they have done in the past. The idea when our current CAP was created in 1979 was that CAP would be no net cost to the salary budget. People retiring at higher salaries and new people hired at lower salaries, would fund the CAP. Then we could receive cost of living increases as long as UBC received inflationary increases in government funding. That situation has no reality today nor indeed for some years now. Starting salaries have dramatically increased, exceeding $80,000 in the Faculty of Science, whereas terminal retiring salaries average less than 1.5 times starting salaries. The CAP has become a large budget cost item. At the current CAP of 2.5% and 1% other increases and with a steady state model with terminal salaries only 1.5 times starting salaries, I estimated the net cost after retirements at close to 1.9%, the rate of inflation. While we would like to dream that UBC will receive sufficient funds to pay for these increases and cost of living increases, I don't expect that to be true most years. Martha Piper had substantial success getting UBC additional federal monies; can we contribute to get new sources of funds? Status quo funding plus inflation is not sufficient.

I propose that we begin to REDUCE our CAP and other salary increase pools to allow reliable cost of living increases in the future. At a total of 2.0% (say 1.5% CAP and 0.5% other amounts) the net cost would still be positive (I estimated 0.4%) but hopefully feasible.

Administration and Faculty may point out the great need for 'discretionary money.' I would point out the great need for inflationary increases for all faculty. Why should the bulk of Faculty suffer an effective salary cut each year to enrich a small group?

It can be convincingly argued, that since the number of faculty can be changed over time, one can still absorb a large CAP and continue with cost of living increases. Unfortunately this has not been the pattern of salary increases in the past and reducing the Faculty complement has other costs.

Interestingly, since starting salaries and salary profiles vary, not all units have the same problem. Will Okanagan be in the same situation? Essentially their salaries are currently at the minimum scale. The Library does not have the same problem because of the appallingly low starting salaries. Elsewhere the problem is quite large and only varies as to its intensity.

This is based on the article 'Less is More?' in the Faculty Focus, October 2002.

Bargaining 2006

The current collective agreement expires 30 June 2006, and we are preparing for negotiations, which we expect will commence in the spring. We will be conducting a series of meetings on campus, trying to visit as many faculties and departments as possible in order to find out more about what you would like to see discussed at the bargaining table (see page eight for the Face-To-Face Meeting schedule). Also, we'll be conducting an electronic survey in the spring to help determine what the priorities will be at the bargaining table.

We invite you to contact us with your ideas -- your feedback is essential.
E: faculty@interchange.ubc.ca *T: 604.822.3883*

YOUR CONTRACT - READING BETWEEN THE LINES

This column examines various provisions of the Collective Agreement, expanding on member rights and terms and conditions of employment. Over the next year, each newsletter will explore what a given provision or set of provisions means for you as a Faculty Association member. Please send us your questions, comments and suggestions. Your feedback will help inform our priorities in the upcoming 2006 round of collective bargaining.

This month, instead of commenting on provisions of the Collective Agreement, we run instead a letter from a faculty member regarding her experience with UBC's benefits carrier. As you may recall, a few years ago the university moved its contract for benefits carriage from the non-profit Pacific Blue Cross to the for-profit Sun Life. The move was made over the objections of all campus bargaining units, and with no clearly-articulated explanation. Since the changeover, the Association has received countless complaints from members regarding changes in coverage, difficulties processing benefits claims, and other frustrations. The Association is collecting a file of all such complaints, and does regularly express its concerns to the university administration. As we enter a new round of bargaining in 2006, we invite members to submit to us any feedback on the benefits provider, benefits plans or gaps in coverage. This months "Between the Lines," we hope, will help initiate a broader discussion, and we thank the author, Karen Needham, for sharing her experience with us all.

Are Our Benefits User-Friendly?

Karen M. Needham
Zoology

After 14 years of working at UBC, I recently had occasion to make my first extended health care claim. Because the claim was unusual, I spent a bit of time researching both the extended health care claim procedure in general and the specifics of my claim.

Once I thought I had it figured out, I called Sun Life to see if I had interpreted things correctly. I spoke with an agent who assured me that I was on the right track, so off I went to make my purchases. When I had all my receipts in order and was ready to make my claim, I called Sun Life again to make sure that I had all the required documentation. Once again I was assured that it was safe to proceed. Imagine my surprise, then, when I opened the envelope from Sun Life that arrived a few weeks later to find that my claim had been denied!

The problem appeared to be with my receipts. After several more phone calls to Sun Life, being passed from person to person and awaiting callbacks that never occurred, I discovered that I needed a special type of receipt – a handwritten, personalized, signed bill of sale instead of the standard bills of sale I had submitted.

Now, whether or not I should need such esoteric receipts is a subject for another discussion, but what I would like to point out here is that had someone, anyone, mentioned that I needed such receipts, or if the information had been in the Sun Life booklet (which I had consulted when doing my initial research), then I would have obtained these special receipts when making my purchases.

Now I had a choice. I could re-visit three stores scattered across Vancouver almost a month after these purchases had been made and secure the required receipts, or I could fold my claim. Because I'm stubborn, I expended time, effort, and energy I did not have tracking down these special receipts and resubmitting my claim. Eventually, a reimbursement cheque arrived in the mail from Sun Life.

The purpose of this article is not to unburden myself (although I have done that and it feels great, thank you very much), but rather to suggest that perhaps our health care premiums could be better spent on a company less inefficient and incompetent than Sun Life.

Now I know my conclusions are based on a sample size of one, but I'm pretty sure that more data to support my hypothesis exists out there. So I'm asking you to send in stories of your experiences with Sun Life. They will be compiled and summarized (in confidence) in order to make a case for switching health care providers here at UBC. Please email information to the Faculty Association office (*faculty@interchange.ubc.ca*) or phone 604.822.3883 with any questions you might have.

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BARGAINING 2006: YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Petra Ganzenmueller,
Chair, Sessional Faculty Committee

With our Collective Agreement expiring in June 2006, the Faculty Association has made intensive preparations for bargaining this term. In order to accommodate a host of issues – new and old – specialized committees have been formed, such as the Salaries and Economic Benefits Committee and the Bargaining Preparation Coordination Team. Serving on these committees has provided me with a broadened understanding of both the mechanics and the challenges of bargaining. Parallel to these preparations, the Sessional Faculty Committee has spent the past months on actively pursuing its bargaining agenda. This article will outline the progress already made and the efforts still to be taken.

The foremost item on our list was rewriting the Sessional Faculty Bargaining Survey of 2002. Back then, Sessional academics with less than a 50% course load had just been incorporated into the Faculty Association and were able to voice their concerns for the first time. Based on the gains made at the last round of bargaining, some problem areas have successfully been dealt with, others remain critical. Suggestions, comments and queries received from members in the past have helped us to sharpen our focus. As a result, the Sessional Bargaining Survey was amended and updated with a number of new topics being introduced. You will soon be asked to respond to questions online covering the following issues: Office Space and Working Conditions, Workload, Service and Departmental Governance, Appointment/ Reappointment Procedures, Evaluation, Career Advancement.

This survey is our single most important tool in assessing the everyday reality of your employment situation, allowing us to identify bargaining priorities. It provides the crucial information needed to direct our bargaining strategy along with the numbers to back up our arguments. For these reasons, the importance of your participation cannot be stressed enough. This survey will be sent to you in January and we request that you make every effort to give us your feedback. Your answers will be anonymous with only the raw data reaching us. YOUR VOICE MATTERS! – now more than ever! Whatever improvements to the conditions of your appointment you may be seeking, bargaining is the only time these can be materially and lastingly achieved.

The next step for our bargaining preparation is face-to-face meetings scheduled for January (see page eight for the Face-To-Face Meeting schedule). Listening to the experiences of sessional members campus-wide will further consolidate the bargaining issues most relevant to you. This will go hand in hand with the results of our survey and equip us with an acute image of the deficiencies and irregularities in place.

Concurrent with these meetings, the Sessional Faculty Committee will implement step three on our list – a review of the Collective Agreement language. Following the analysis of surveyed information, we will scan the Agreement for areas of inequity, inadequacy and neglect relative to your priorities and with reference to other faculty associations' contractual achievements. Coming from diverse academic backgrounds, the members of the Sessional Faculty Committee bring a wide variety of professional expertise to their tasks. Productive bargaining requires two-way communication and we would like to solicit your input: What issues are most important to you? What experiences have prompted you to take action or seek help? What solutions to present problems could you suggest?

We are looking forward to an eventful 2006 that will permit us to further address serious inequities while giving the University the opportunity to improve its public image by advancing the conditions of employment faced by sessional academics.

For comments, please contact: Petra Ganzenmueller at *pegacom@interchange.ubc.ca* or 604.822.2169.

CAUT Benefit Plan for Retirees

One effect of retirement is that UBC no longer contributes towards benefits such as those covered under dental and extended medical plans. The Associate Executive Director (Administration & Finance), Gordon Piche, reported that CAUT had successfully negotiated a retiree benefits plan with Manulife Financial to provide existing and future retired members of CAUT with continued health and dental coverage. He noted that the plan would allow retirees to move to the new plan without evidence of insurability (medical exam) provided that application is made within 60 days from the retirement date.

CAUT is also willing to set up a Pension Plan for Contract Staff --this may be of interest to Sessional Faculty who have less than a 50% load. Contact the Faculty Association office if you are interested in the FA pursuing this.

For more information, visit *http://www.caut.ca/en/membership/benefits.asp*.

(left) Members enjoy the End of Term celebration at Green College, UBC Vancouver Campus.

(right) From left to right, Elliott Burnell, President, UBCFA, Michael Isaacson, Dean, Faculty of Applied Science, & Jim Johnson, Chair, Okanagan Faculty Committee, enjoy the the End Of Term Celebration hosted by the Faculty Association in early December 2005 in Vancouver.

Face - To - Face Meeting Schedule

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January 2006

S	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 **SESSIONALS (ED)** 12:30pm – 130pm SCARFE 2415	10 **FORESTRY & FOOD & LAND SYSTEM** 12pm – 1pm FSC 1611 **EDUCATION** 3:30pm – 4:30pm SCARFE 310	11 **COMMERCE** 12pm – 1pm ANGU 417 **SCIENCE** 3:30pm – 4:30pm CEME 1206	12 **ARTS** 12:30pm- 1:30pm BUCH B324 **SESSIONALS** 3:30pm – 4:30pm ANGU 215	13	14
15	16 **ARTS & GRADUATE STUDIES** 12pm – 1pm LASR 211 **LAW** 3:30pm – 4:30pm CURTIS 318	17 **SCIENCE** 12pm – 1pm FLEX 409 **APPLIED SCIENCE** 3:30pm – 4:30pm CEME 1206	18 **ARTS** 3:30pm – 4:30pm BUCH B220	19 **MEDICINE** 3:30pm – 4:30pm Woodward 305, IRC 317	20	21
22	23 **PROGRAM DIRECTORS** 12pm – 1pm UBCFA Office **LIBRARIANS** 3:30pm – 4:30pm Woodward Library, Sherrington Room	24 **UBC OKANAGAN** 3:30pm – 4:30pm TBD	25 **UBCO OKANAGAN** 12pm – 1pm TBD	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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