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FACULTY FOCUS
Elizabeth Hodgson, President

Fall term (surprise, surprise) gives the Association lots of chances to intervene on matters which matter to our UBC colleagues. I’m cautiously optimistic about several such close encounters with the senior administration recently. We’ve met twice with President Toope, the provosts on both campuses, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at UBC Okanagan. The following useful effects:

OLYMPICS & FREE SPEECH
Stephen Toope assured us that residents of UBC housing are indeed free to display signs and the like commenting on the Olympics in any way. Likewise, he was very clear that UBC is a free speech and civil action zone, even during the Olympics, even near Olympic venues. We urged him to make a public statement to the UBC community to assure us of our right to comment on events occurring on campus and to provide you with a more detailed outline of human rights and security practices on campus during the Olympics.

PAY EQUITY/HIRING EQUITY
In two recent meetings on this subject the senior administration has assured us that they take this matter very seriously and want to work on both short-term and long-term solutions to ensure that all UBC faculty, librarians and program directors are hired, promoted, paid and treated equitably. We will be meeting with the Vancouver provost before the end of November to establish two working groups so that we can arrive at specific plans, targets, and remedies which we can confirm in written Memoranda of Agreement or in the Collective Agreement itself in the spring. For more detail, see p9.

STUDY LEAVES & SABBATICALS
We have heard from some of you that you are being either discouraged from applying for leaves or being given grief when you do apply. When we raised this with the senior administration, we were pleased to hear that there is no change in policy toward study leaves. This is what we expected, as of course study leaves are in our mutual interest as an academic community and the Collective Agreement does not envision denial of leave for any reasons other than the difficulty of administratively accommodating your absence from the department. In such a case, the onus is on your unit to give you your leave as soon as it is possible. Also, if the department needs to delay or interrupt your leave for its purposes, the Collective Agreement gives you rights to have the study leave “clock” adjusted. We encourage you to apply when you’re eligible; study leave helps both you and the University as a whole.

continued on p3
UBC OKANAGAN

The senior administration at UBC Okanagan has heard our concerns on two fronts: promotion/tenure processes, and more expeditious solutions to individual member cases. They have declared their plans to implement a mentoring program for pre-tenure faculty, to complement the promotion and tenure workshops which the Association has been holding. If you would also be interested in the Association setting up a c.v. workshop for you (one-on-one help from a senior colleague from Vancouver in preparing your promotion file), please do let us know as well. Senior administration at UBC Okanagan have also agreed to our proposal to have monthly policy-meetings with us, so that we can make progress on issues of mutual concern. We’ve encouraged them to put in place a heads-and-directors’ training program like the one in Vancouver, and they appear quite keen to get this running. We hope this will help!

WORLD UNIVERSITY SERVICE OF CANADA

Glen Peterson, WUSC-UBC Faculty Advisor and Associate Professor, History

The UBC Committee of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) gratefully acknowledges the UBC Faculty Association’s recent donation of $5000.00.

As in previous years, these funds will be used to support student refugees who come to UBC in order to undertake undergraduate and graduate studies under the auspices of WUSC’s internationally acclaimed Student Refugee Program (SRP). The WUSC Student Refugee Program at UBC has so far enabled more than 60 refugee students from countries in Africa, Asia and Europe to complete their studies at UBC.

Alumni from the program include a PhD research scientist at the BC Cancer Agency; the current Director of the Immigrant Services Society of BC; a forestry researcher working with the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) in Southern Sudan; a Program Manager with the Canadian Organization for Development Through Education (CODE) in Ottawa; a PhD candidate in Fisheries at the University of Newfoundland; as well as teachers, social workers, urban planners and others working in careers across Canada and overseas.

Each year since its inception at UBC in 1981, the Student Refugee Program has received support from the university administration (which provides tuition and book allowances for the students), the student Alma Mater Society (which provides for the students’ living costs) and the UBC Faculty Association. This year, as in previous years, the Faculty Association donation will be used to purchase a computer for each student, to assist the students with the costs of their transportation from the refugee camps in their countries of asylum to UBC, and to provide tutoring and other forms of support. This year, for the first time, WUSC-UBC is proud to welcome four refugee students to UBC, up from three in previous years, thanks to renewed support from the student Alma Mater Society and the university administration.

If you would like to learn more about WUSC or to make a donation, please visit www.wusc.ca.
A well-known UBC academic once asked me whether the Association was “opposed to excellence” and therefore “in favour of mediocrity” because I expressed concern about ever-accelerating demands on faculty.

A senior UBC HR manager said that the problem with UBC is that we’re “not all stars.”

A member of the Board of Governors was heard to mutter audibly, “If I hear the words “world-class” again, I think I’ll throw up.”

A VP Academic couldn’t answer the question: “why do we value excellence?”

This suggests to me, as a literary critic, that “excellence” (and its cognate “world-class”) has become a super-saturated term (like “patriot” or “family values”), a word that means both everything and nothing. This word “excellence” seems to have both an indefinable and yet profound value to UBC administrators, as if they know what it means and what it looks like, as if its value is immeasurable and its attainment all-important, and as if anything or anyone not “excellent” is therefore worthless.

Aside from the obvious “either-or” fallacy implicit in this last judgement, this desperate or unthinking use of “excellence” is a patently absurd refusal to recognize that any group of people will include an entirely normal and healthy range of abilities, levels of commitment, and measureable success-rates (an econometrics professor once whispered to me, “Do you think they know that someone has to be in the bottom decile?!”).

We have heard “excellence” used more perniciously to justify excluding Canadian academics from short-lists; to privilege graduate over undergraduate teaching; to degrade faculty in certain disciplines; to berate or penalize individual faculty who are learning, who are new, who are struggling, or who are simply pouring at least some of their energies into something besides the particularly prestigious aspects of their academic work.

Further, when any voiced critique of the term “excellence” is read as a sign that we must be mediocre ourselves or in favour of lacklustre performance, it clear that the term has become not a compliment at all but rather an instrument of social control, more useful because it is so vague, so impossible to define.

This bullying use of “excellence” also makes me wonder: Is it the administration’s job to urge faculty to perform according to some vaguely excellent level? What image of the scholar does this narrative suggest? That we will all be above-average? That nobody will be acceptable unless they are? That faculty require urging, coaxing, bribery or threats to want to do well at their jobs? The reason “excellence” has such traction in a university is that academics are already high achievers, competitive, accustomed to praise, self-driven, jealous of their reputations. This is precisely, however, the reason this attempt at social control isn’t needed. We are already our own self-motivators.

We are far more likely to need, in fact, as UBC’s People Plan suggests, a productive balance of work and life, a collective approach to achievement and skills, support for people’s ambitions, and a healthy and encouraging work-environment. You don’t make a pig fatter by weighing it; you feed it. “Excellence,” despite its fine sound, has no nutritional value.

“Oh excellent, excellent, and again most excellent!”

William Shakespeare, As You Like it.
All of us at UBC have to live under a head, director, principal or the like. Many of us at UBC either have been, are, or can imagine some day being in one of these roles. Imagine your dismay, then, when you find almost nothing in the Collective Agreement defining how that role works. We’re sorry we haven’t tackled this issue in the past; we will this time.

Heads, directors, associate deans, associate principals, supervising librarians and program directors are all members of the Faculty Association. We want to make sure that the rules of the road are clear for all of you who are, or work with, an administrator colleague:

1. What is your role vis-à-vis your department and vis-à-vis the dean, especially when the two disagree?
2. What governs your responsibility to protect privacy and confidentiality?
3. What terms of employment apply: study and administrative leaves, teaching release, administrative stipend, travel expenses, fiduciary indemnification, research funds, lab support, graduate/postdoc supervision, merit/PSA eligibility?
4. What procedures govern your initial appointment/election?
5. What protections and procedures are in place if your leadership is challenged, undermined, or revoked?
6. What are your options, and what is best practice, if you find yourself in conflict?
7. What is your role in resolving disputes, investigating a colleague or a student, or enforcing discipline? What protections are in place for both you and your colleagues in such a situation?

You have the right to have clear-language answers to all of these questions. Many universities already have such terms spelled out, so we are confident that we can provide tried and true standards for the work of faculty and librarians with administrative responsibilities.

We’ll be hosting a lunch for current heads/directors on December 8th, to get a sense of best practices and other issues to consider, but any of you can also contact us any time with your ideas, from any perspective. Have you been a head? Had struggles with your own director? Seen good models at other universities? Tell us about it (faculty@interchange.ubc.ca).
Our Collective Agreement provides for three types of salary increases: non-discretionary, discretionary, and market. Non-discretionary salary increases are those that go to everyone in a particular category. Across-the-board increases, career-progress increments, and step increases on the sessional faculty minimum salary grid fall into this category. Discretionary salary increases, on the other hand, are those where the Association negotiates and agrees to the total amount to be disbursed, but the specific individuals who get them, and how much they get, differs amongst individuals within an given employment category, based on decisions by committees, heads, deans, and even provosts. Merit, Performance Salary Adjustments (PSA) and Retention awards fall into this category. Market increases, the third category, likewise must be negotiated centrally (by the Association or approved Subsidiary groups) but are distributed not across the whole campus but to members in specific departments, units, or programs.

One of the things we heard repeatedly in our face-to-face meetings with all of you was your real concern that the systems for allocating discretionary money appear to be arbitrary and unclear. This concern was confirmed by the results of the bargaining survey.

For example, the Collective Agreement requires that all members receive annually a list of those members who receive Merit, a list of those who receive PSA, and a list of those who receive Retention. Yet when polled, only 70% of respondents reported receiving the Merit list, only 65% reported receiving the PSA list, and only 21% reported receiving the Retention list.

The Collective Agreement requires that a “description of the procedures used within a unit” for the recommendation of Merit and PSA be distributed to all members of the unit. However, when asked how transparent the procedures for allocating Merit and PSA were, only 41% said the procedures for Merit were either transparent or very transparent and only 23% said the procedures for PSA were either transparent or very transparent.

Retention is an informational black hole. An astonishing 68% of respondents didn’t even know that a Retention fund existed! Of the 32% who were aware of the fund’s existence only 29% knew how it was distributed and only 16% thought the current procedures for distributing the Retention fund were either fair or very fair. In fact only 33% of members who have received Retention funds thought the current procedures for distributing it were either fair or very fair.
The perceived fairness of Merit is better than that of Retention. 48% of respondents felt that Merit allocations were either fair or very fair, compared to 18% who thought they were unfair or very unfair. PSA awards which, like Merit awards, are based on departmental recommendations, were not so well regarded. Only 34% of respondents felt that PSA allocations were either fair or very fair, compared to 20% who thought they were unfair or very unfair.

PSA appears to be especially problematic at UBC Okanagan where in each of the two largest faculties, the Barber School and the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies, more members felt PSA allocations were either unfair or very unfair (38% in both Faculties) than felt PSA allocations were fair or very fair (35% in the Barber School and 31% in FCCS). The Faculties with the highest percentage of respondents who felt PSA was either fair or very fair were the Sauder School (49%) and the Faculty of Science (46%).

The point is clear: most of us don’t feel that we know how or why these monies are being distributed. We don’t know who gets them, who decides, or what rules are being used. We feel, not surprisingly, that the system is quite possibly both arbitrary and lacking in accountability; the transparency or lack thereof in these decisions is also a worry to many of us.

In bargaining, we will work hard to address these concerns. Nobody should fear that the way their salary is determined could be arbitrary, random, or unfair. We will fight to ensure that your salary increases are implemented in a transparent, fair, and accountable manner.

TALKback: Merit & PSA
What’s good about how your unit handles Merit/PSA awards? Let us know what works, so we can bargain for best practices at UBC. Send us your thoughts: faculty@interchange.ubc.ca.
MAKING UBC WORK FOR FEMALE FACULTY

Join us to share and discuss important information on male/female faculty pay equity and other gender related issues at UBC and other academic institutions across Canada. Come and network with other female faculty members, meet potential mentors/mentees, and obtain resources to take back to your own faculty, school or department.

Thursday, January 14, 2010 12pm - 1:30pm

UBC: Art 115
UBCV: Multipurpose Rm, Liu Centre (6476 NW Marine Drive)

LUNCH PROVIDED | LIMITED SEATING | REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Please register by emailing faculty@interchange.ubc.ca before 5pm on January 7, 2010.

SPEAKERS

PAY EQUITY AT UBC: PAST TRENDS & CURRENT DATA
LARA BOYD (ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PHYSICAL THERAPY, CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR IN NEUROLOGY OF MOTOR LEARNING, MICHAEL SMITH FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH RESEARCH SCHOLAR)

DIVERSITY & CAUT: REFORMS FOR A EQUITY PLATFORM
JENNIFER CHAN (UBCV CAUT REPRESENTATIVE & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, EDUCATIONAL STUDIES)

FACULTY OF SCIENCE WORKING CLIMATE INITIATIVE/UBC'S EQUITY & DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN
ANNE CONDON (PROFESSOR, COMPUTER SCIENCE)

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: HOW MEN & WOMEN ARE PERCEIVED DIFFERENTLY
NANCY LANGTON (UBCFA VICE PRESIDENT & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SAUNDER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS)

PRESENTED BY: UBCFA STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE,
KAREN BAKKER, CHAIR & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, GEOGRAPHY
In the September newsletter, we summarized UBC’s recent pay equity studies.

The Association has since conducted an independent analysis and confirmed the striking gender-gap in professorial pay. The data demonstrate that women faculty at UBC are paid on average $14,827 a year less than men (2009 data).

What might account for this difference? First, women tend to be concentrated in units and faculties with lower average salaries. These variances are not necessarily solely market-driven, as suggested by the relatively low salaries for Nursing despite the significant shortages of nursing faculty. A second factor is years of experience; on average, female faculty have completed their doctorates more recently (the proportion of women in faculty ranks has increased only recently). After accounting for these two factors, the remaining annual pay gap is still $4,924.

Another important aspect of pay inequity is the differential in starting salaries. At “time zero” at UBC there is a pay gap of $1,667 (after controlling for experience and different departmental pay levels). Over a 35-year career, the average woman professor will have made $267,000 less than her male contemporary and lost commensurate ground in her pension fund.

Discretionary pay is an additional issue. Over the past six years, male faculty received over 70% of retention pay, although 44% of faculty members are women. Average awards for male faculty were 10% higher. Extensive research on unconscious bias suggests that gender bias significantly influences perceptions of academic productivity (rewarded through merit/PSA monies). Universities like Stanford and MIT have taken steps to address unconscious bias. At UBC, the Faculty of Science now trains all of its hiring committees and department heads on unconscious bias, as part of a broader initiative on working climate.

Pay inequity at UBC is a symptom of a broader pattern of inequities. Women are 10% less likely to achieve the rank of full professor at UBC (and only 13% of women do so as compared to 46% of men) and this accomplishment takes longer (13 years for women versus 10 years for men). Women represent 44% of the faculty but are only 17% of heads and directors, 13% of Tier I Canada Research Chairs, 28% of Tier II Canada Research Chairs, 4% of Royal Society of Canada fellows. Only 1 woman is a vice-president. Pay inequity is thus only part of a broader, systemic pattern of gender disparities at UBC.

Unfortunately, gender disparities are a long-standing issue at UBC and at other universities. But many other universities have developed comprehensive, concrete, and sustained programs to address these issues, whereas UBC has not. At UBC this issue was first identified in 1973 and confirmed in 1984, 1989, 1990, and again in 2006, 2007, and 2009 data. Aside from one small pay-out in 1989, no action has been taken by UBC. In contrast, universities like Harvard, McGill, MIT, Stanford, and the University of Wisconsin have identified pay inequity and taken the necessary steps to 1) resolve pay inequities and 2) institute preventive practices and regular audits.

The Faculty Association is working with senior administration at UBC to address these issues. Time will tell if UBC is finally ready to face up to this issue and take the constructive, comprehensive, sustained actions that other universities have adopted to foster true gender equity within the professoriate.

VOLUNTEER!
The UBC Faculty Association is seeking members to serve on its Status of Women Committee. The role of the committee is to mentor/network, develop policy, and advocate gender equity issues, including pay equity, discrimination (particularly in recruitment, retention, and promotion), working climate, and work life balance. If you are interested, please email Karen Bakker, SWC Chair, at karen.bakker@ubc.ca.
Christopher Shaw, Professor, Ophthalmology, Experimental Medicine & Graduate Program in Neuroscience

In November 1997, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit came to UBC. In the course of a few hours, students and journalists were pepper-sprayed by RCMP officers determined to keep protesters out of the sight of dictators, a Tibetan flag was ripped from an upstairs window of the Student Union Building to avoid embarrassing the Chinese government, and a student at Green College was taken down by the police for holding up a sign (behind a chain link fence) that simply said “democracy”. The Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, made his infamous comment about pepper being something to “put on my plate”.

UBC’s and Vancouver’s reputations were tarnished that day, not only by the actions of RCMP Staff Sergeant Hugh Stewart, later dubbed “Sgt. Pepper”. The Prime Minister’s comments symbolized an apparently cavalier attitude toward civil liberties.

The Hughes Commission investigated and issued guidelines to prevent future police abuses. President Martha Piper accepted some blame for how poorly the university had handled the event. We hoped that lessons had been learned.

But twelve years later, the lessons of APEC appear forgotten. The Olympic Games are coming to UBC this time. With little or no consultation, the Board of Governors backed the initial Olympic Bid, promising to deliver ice surfaces for hockey practice. After winning the Games, Vancouver signed the Host City Agreement with the International Olympic Committee, committing itself to preventing “ambush marketing” and “propaganda”. And, as a final irony, one of the officers who fired pepper spray at demonstrators at APEC is Bud Mercer, now the head of the $1 billion Integrated Security Unit (ISU).

In July 2009, the City of Vancouver passed a municipal bylaw, “Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games”. The bylaw contains a number of provisions that effectively limit freedom of speech and assembly while implying that the only issue is “ambush marketing”. Bill 13 (“Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment”), now in final reading in the legislature, gives Vancouver, Whistler, and Richmond extraordinary powers to enter private property to remove signs and levy fines of up to $10,000 and 6 months in jail. Recently, the Lieutenant Governor gave royal assent to Bill 18 (“Assistance to Shelter”), to allow police to take the homeless, even against their will, to shelters.

These moves show the extent to which the city, province, and police seem to be going down the same tired path that led to civil rights violations in 1997. UBC had earlier issued administrative instructions to remove “offensive” signage during the Games from dormitory windows. All of this comes in the context of the largest peacetime security operation in Canadian history.

How will the security preparations for 2010 impact the UBC community? First, UBC can expect a significant security presence. Second, an infringement on civil liberties on and off campus for those planning to protest the Games is likely to be a reality. Finally, the shutdowns of streets and areas around venues and the extensive use of “Olympic” lanes are certain to make transportation to and from campus a daunting challenge.

There will be those at UBC who welcome the Olympics and UBC’s part in the 2010 Games. There will also be those who plan to show their displeasure with the damage — financial, social, and environmental — wrought by the Games. Ten years from now few will remember who won the hockey games played in Thunderbird Stadium. But we will remember what happened to the civil rights of the university community. Unlike in 1997, this time let’s get it right.

Faculty Focus accepts submissions from UBC Faculty Association members on issues of interest. Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the Association or its Executive Committee.
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END-OF-TERM CELEBRATIONS: 4 & 10 December 2009
Join the UBC Faculty Association for our annual End-Of-Term Celebration on: Thursday, December 10, 2009 at 3pm in the Arts Atrium (UBCO) and Friday, December 4, 2009 3:30pm at Sage Bistro (UBCV). RSVP to faculty@interchange.ubc.ca.

OFFICE CLOSURE: 23 December 2009 - 4 January 2010
The UBC Faculty Association office will close for the holiday season on Wednesday, December 23, 2009 & will re-open on Monday, January 4, 2010. Staff will continue to monitor voice mail & email.

MAKING UBC WORK FOR WOMEN FACULTY: 14 January 2010
Join us to share and discuss important information on male/female faculty pay equity and other gender related issues at UBC and other academic institutions across Canada. Come and network with other female faculty members, meet potential mentors/mentees, and obtain resources to take back to your own faculty, school or department. UBCO: Art 115; UBCV: Multipurpose Rm, Liu Centre (6476 NW Marine Drive). Lunch provided. Please register by emailing faculty@interchange.ubc.ca before 5pm on January 7, 2010. For details on the event and its speakers, go to page x or visit www.facultyassociation.ubc.ca.

THE PRIVILEGES OF UBCFA MEMBERSHIP: THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CLUBS
The Association of College and University Clubs (ACUC) is a network of university clubs (like UBC’s former Faculty Club) that offers a variety of services to travelling members which include members of the UBC Faculty Association. To take advantage of your membership in ACUC, you require a membership card which can be obtained simply by contacting the UBC FA. For more information on the ACUC including services, locations, and bookings, visit their website at: www.acuclubs.org

WANTED! PHOTOS OF UBC CAMPUS LIFE
The UBC Faculty Association invites members to submit photographs for our use in our publications including newsletters and website. Photos can cover any aspect of campus (both Vancouver and Okanagan) life including buildings, landscapes, people, whatever catches your eye! The UBCFA will decide at its discretion whether or not to publish a photo. Published photos will include a credit to the photographer. If you have photos to submit, please send them to Ranjit Sundur at faculty@interchange.ubc.ca.

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