

Volume 5 Issue 3

September 2005

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*"A great university is great because of its people, its alumni and its students, and their shared vision."*

*Frits Pannekoek*

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## Message from the President



Hello AUFa members. I hope you all enjoyed a pleasant, relaxing summer and are ready to tackle the challenges of work and association business once again.

AUFa has had a busy summer, with the entire executive working hard on your behalf. I attended a meeting with Advanced Ed types early in August. The brainstorming session was focused on investing and Tuition Fee Policy consultation. Whether they listen or not is another matter! Also in attendance was Brian Stewart, our CIO, and Rory McGreal, VP Research, so AU concerns were well represented.

Dan West is planning an orientation session for new faculty at AU Central on September 13<sup>th</sup>, and AUFa has been asked to give a presentation and staff an information booth. Unfortunately, most of the executive will not be in attendance at the evening session, as we will have left for our annual retreat on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. It would be wonderful if as many members as possible could attend and highlight the many and varied benefits of AUFa membership.

Negotiation time is fast approaching. Want a really good raise? Want your workload situation improved? Want to continue to enjoy your hard won benefits? Derek Briton, our Chief Negotiator, is looking for volunteers to join both the Salaries & Benefits and Terms & Conditions negotiation teams, although when to open T & C hasn't been decided yet. No experience necessary – just a willingness to work hard and the ability to grow a thick skin! Please do not think you are not "smart" or "experienced" enough to contribute. Remember – many hands make light work.

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*AUFA President Linda Bonneville presents a \$500 cheque to Diana Shields (left), President of the daycare board, and Laura Partyka, director of the Whispering Hills Day Care Society. Both Laura and Diana express their gratitude to AUFA members for such a generous contribution to such a worthwhile cause. "We are very excited and happy to receive this money which will go a long way in purchasing much needed educational games, toys and equipment for the day care. Thanks so much AUFA!"*

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Our Fall General Meeting will be held on October 19<sup>th</sup>. This is the meeting where we approve our financial statements. We have been busy spending your money this summer – all for worthy causes. In June, the AUFA membership approved a \$30,000 donation to the Athabasca Multi-Plex Project, which will benefit all members whether they live in Athabasca or not. We also donated \$500 to the Whispering Hills Daycare Society so they could purchase educational toys and books, and another \$300 to the C.O.W. Literacy Project. All donations were gratefully received and it is very satisfying to me personally that AUFA can support these groups.

Other than that, AUFA executive and staff have been very busy with the day to day business of ensuring our members are treated fairly and maintaining a good relationship with the administration. I would like to acknowledge Colleen Powell and Carmen Sakaluk for their hard work and dedication.

Now that summer has passed and we are enjoying autumn, please take a moment to consider how you can become involved and make a contribution to YOUR association. No money – just the satisfaction of knowing you are doing something worthwhile.




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AUFA President Linda Bonneville presents a \$30,000 cheque to Athabasca Regional Multiplex representatives Trevor Martin (left) and Rob Balay.

Photo credit: Gerry Bulmer, Athabasca Advocate

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## AUFA Member Profile: Darlene Day

Darlene has worked with AU for seven years. She started off for a short period in the Call Centre in the School of Business, then worked as a Help Desk Analyst in Computing Services and now as an Instructional Media Coordinator in the School of Business. Prior to that, Darlene taught in the public school system and at Alberta Vocational College.

"My experiences at AU have been very rewarding. Every day brings something new and interesting." Darlene's current position involves working with academics, editors, and Web assistants to coordinate the production of new courses and course revisions. This involves everything from copyright to technical issues (e.g., setting up Lotus Notes course databases). Another part of her job entails training the School of Business staff on software applications. Darlene's third major role is to assist with domestic and international seminars.

Darlene enjoys being part of an organization that is committed to helping students achieve their educational goals. And she feels that AU has very dedicated staff and it is a great place to work.

On a personal note, Darlene enjoys golfing, racquetball, walking, and curling.



"My experiences at AU have been very rewarding. Every day brings something new and interesting."

*Darlene Day*

## Greetings from AU's President

Frits Pannekoek

"The last three months have been an exciting time for both Christine and myself. We very much appreciated the warm welcome we received at the various "meet and greets." A great university is great because of its people, its alumni, and its students, and their shared vision. In my first trip to the Open University of the Netherlands it was pointed out to me by its Rector that its buildings were named after world-leading open universities. One was called "Athabasca." What an honour! But this should be no real surprise given the outstanding faculty and professionals at AU. I look forward to working with AUFA and its members in the next years to continue building the vision."

Frits



The building at the Open University of the Netherlands named "Athabasca".

## Notes from the June 17th AUGC meeting

Submitted by Ruth Blakely on behalf of Rebecca Heartt

The Friday, June 17th quarterly meeting of Athabasca University Governing Council focused mainly on legislative items.

During the meeting, new bylaws, changes to the conflict of interest policy, a Code of Conduct for AUGC members, and additions and modifications to key standing committees' were addressed and approved. The majority of the alterations involved language clarification. AUGC was also given a preliminary look at the Annual Report.

Several times during the meeting, AU staff members were praised by both Public Members of AUGC and members of the AU Executive for their excellent work and dedication during the rapid growth experienced by Athabasca University.

Our next meeting is in September.

In addition to being the AUFA representative on AUGC, Rebecca has also agreed to sit on one additional committee. She is now a member of the "Governance" committee. The terms of reference for the committees will be updated at the September meeting.

## CAUT – A Request for Support

David Robinson  
Associate Executive Director (Research and Advocacy)  
Canadian Association of University Teachers

Greetings,

Our colleagues with the Association of University Teachers (AUT) in the United Kingdom have requested our support concerning a very serious situation at Brunel University.

On 20th September 2004, Brunel's administration announced it was declaring 60 academic staff positions redundant. These redundancies amount to almost one in eight of the academic staff employed at Brunel University. The administration claims these staff are non-research active, and are therefore unlikely to aid the University's drive for increased research funding.

After months of attempting to reach a negotiated solution, the AUT has informed us that Brunel University management has issued dismissal notices. What is particularly troubling is that the University has dismissed the president of the AUT local at Brunel who has led the campaign against the redundancies. The AUT believes this is a direct attack on the union and has grey-listed Brunel, an action equivalent to censure.

I urge you to support the AUT's campaign to defend its members who have been unjustly targeted by the employer. You can find out more information about the dispute on the AUT web site at

[www.aut.org.uk/greylisbrunel](http://www.aut.org.uk/greylisbrunel).

In particular, I encourage you and your members to

- sign the AUT petition on the Web site;
- send a message of solidarity to AUT members at Brunel;
- send a message asking Brunel University management to change their policies and negotiate with AUT; and
- refrain from any voluntary academic links with Brunel University including withholding collaboration on research projects, journal contributions, and participation in academic conferences.

As we in Canada have discovered in difficult disputes, international expressions of support and solidarity can be very helpful. Please consider lending your association's support.

## Report from Alberta Federation of Labour Convention May 12–15, 2005

Erna Dominey

This summer, Linda Bonneville, Jeff Taylor, Alvin Finkel and Erna Dominey represented AUFA at the AFL's convention in Edmonton. The theme was "Forging our Future with Strength and Unity." Nearly 400 delegates attended the four-day event. AUFA representation doubled since we were welcomed into the House of Labour at the Convention in Calgary two years ago. AUFA's profile was also raised because delegates wore AUFA-logo polo shirts and Brother Bruce Spencer manned a booth for AU's Labour Studies program.

The convention consisted of panels (e.g., with Friends of Medicare, Public Interest Alberta, & Parkland Institute) and policy papers (e.g., on Horizon Oil Sands); and reports and resolutions from AFL committees (e.g., Women, General Resolutions, Political Action, and Education).

- Policy papers were presented on "The AFL 2005-2010," "Issues facing Building Trades Unions," and "The Assault on Pensions."
- The financial statements from 2000–3 and 2001–4 were presented.
- President Gil McGowan and Secretary-Treasurer Kerry Barrett were elected.

Some of the speakers were: Eric Musekamp of Burdett, a humble but stirring speaker who started the Alberta chapter of the National Farm Workers Union; Brian Mason, leader of the Alberta NDP; Louis Bolduc, Vice President of the Quebec Federation of Labour (with an update on Mal-Wart); Paul Moist, National President of CUPE; Jim Stanford, Chief Economist of the CAW and Peter Jany, leader of the Sudanese community of Brooks. Jany spoke of the inhuman conditions for fellow workers at Lakeside Packers in Brooks and of their struggle to unionize. He reminded delegates that some workplaces have not yet made it into the 20<sup>th</sup> century; see [terribletyson.com](http://terribletyson.com).

## Dear Aunty Union Advice Column

### Dear Aunty Union:

What gives anyway? I went to a presentation about AU's new "Health and Wellness Centre" – which turned out to be an ad for some fancy dancy machine that would give me that perfect bod in 3 easy sessions – and nothing has happened since. I am furious! I think the 20 of us that use the exercise room regularly should be given top priority for any funds available for health and wellness!

Signed,  
PO'd in Psyc

### Dear POP:

You are absolutely right! Imagine the gall. The other 200 people who don't use the room feel exactly the same way. They certainly don't need just a plain old recreation area – perhaps a pool table, or ping pong or something they could use on their breaks. They feel it is much better to just eat at their desks and continue working. Why, they don't even mind that the Cafeteria closes at will, taking away the option of eating or buying their lunch there while having a friendly game of cards. If I were you, I'd file a grievance.  
Good "Neigh" bor in Global

### Dear Aunty Union:

Daddy and I are furious! I have been told I cannot bring Daddy to work because there is no place to put him. Well, I just don't buy that! Other staff bring their cars and bikes (except at ELC), so why the prejudice against Daddy? I notice AU just donated a slug of land to some special interest group, so the argument of no place to put Daddy won't wash. Daddy is very important to me and is getting on in years. He also needs medicine every 2 hours. I am at my wits end. Not only is there a lack of common sense, there is definitely a lack of horse sense! Why can't the parking at AU accommodate my horse?

Signed

Good "Neigh" bor in Global

### Dear Horse Whisperer:

Daddy? Your horse's name is Daddy? Uh huh. Well, have you offered to invest in a super dooper pooper scooper? I think if you made this gesture, your request may receive a more favorable response. After all, there is so much horse manure around AU already, they can't possibly accommodate any more!

## Upcoming Events

<b>Faculty Orientation Day</b>	Sept 13
<b>AUFA Retreat</b>	Sept 14 -15
<b>AUGC meeting</b>	Sept 29-30
<b>Fall General Meeting</b>	Oct 19
<b>Occupational Health and Safety Workshop</b>	Oct 20 -21
<b>Salaries and Benefits Committee meeting</b>	TBA

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**“Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath ... Don’t let anyone take it away from you ever.”**

~ Holly Marie Combs

Please contact the Newsletter Editor, [psoluk@athabascau.ca](mailto:psoluk@athabascau.ca) with your newsletter comments and suggestions.

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