

Message from the President

I officially took over the duties of AUFA President on 1 July 2008. I have many years of service to AUFA over the years, having filled the positions of Treasurer, Vice-President, Grievance Officer, Chief Negotiator, and President in the past.

I have chosen to step back into the presidency this year because we are at a crucial time in our growth as an organization and I think my experience will be useful at the helm.

First, we have to fill the position of Executive Director of the association. Under Linda's capable leadership this past year, we used our best efforts to recruit to the vacancy created by Colleen Powell's resignation. However, we have been unsuccessful so far. My main priority this year is to find a capable and competent Executive Director.

Second, many of our more senior and experienced association activists have or are moving on to other things. Luckily, we have a number of new members who have come forward to serve in recent years. A second priority this year is to provide training for executive members, existing and potential grievance handlers, and existing and potential members of joint AUFA-AUGC committees.

Third, we face two sets of negotiations this year. Terms and Conditions (contract language) negotiations are scheduled to commence in the fall and Salaries and Benefits negotiations are scheduled to commence after Christmas. We have to determine our positions and prepare for and conduct these negotiations.

Fourth, I want to work with our Social Committee to continue the great work it has been doing in bringing members together for social gatherings in Athabasca, Calgary and Edmonton.

I look forward to working with Carmen, Dezarae, the new executive, and all AUFA members during the coming year.

Jeff Taylor
AUFA President

Message from the Past President

As I leave the office of President, I have a chance to reflect on the past year and some of our accomplishments.

All of the executive and AUFA staff have had an extremely busy, sometimes frustrating, and always challenging year. As you have all heard by now, Colleen Powell is official retiring May 31, 2008. She has provided yeoman service to AUFA over the past 10 years and we owe her a debt of gratitude that we can never repay. On a personal note, her advice, counsel, amazing knowledge and recall have been invaluable to me. I will especially miss her spectacular temper tantrums! We will be giving her a suitable send off in the near future.

You have elected a new full slate of officers and I am heartened by the numbers of volunteers who have stepped up lately. When we put out the call for Salary and Benefits as well as Terms and Conditions committee members, we received around 14 expressions of interest, which translated into full committees. Bob Barnetson, Sean Fraser and Dianne Morrison recently concluded negotiations with AUGC, taking advantage of our salary re-opener in this last year of our 3 year contract. We sincerely thank them for their service, and hope they continue next year when negotiations begin again in earnest. Terms and Conditions bargaining will start shortly as well, and AUFA has been very pro-active in this regard.

I also offer sincere thanks to the leavers on the Executive. Mary Richardson, our Vice President, has been involved with AUFA for many years, and her wise counsel was appreciated by all. Cathy Conroy, who was AUFA's Secretary for a few years, and Communications Officer this past year will also be greatly missed. I also wish to thank Jan Thiessen, who was baptized by fire as our Accommodations Officer, and Vince Ambrock, who offered amazing insights, for their past service as well. A very special thanks to Margaret Anderson, who represented our interests very well on the OH&S Committee for many years. Mags, you deserve a medal. Congratulations to you all. If I have missed anybody, please forgive me and consider yourself thanked!

The executive was kept very busy with day to day operational issues, grievances – some large, some small, spats, serious accommodations issues, an arbitration, policy challenges, etc. etc. etc. Most of the executive was part of the Grievance Committee, as we did not have a Grievance Officer per se this year. Job's still open!

The newly formed, long awaited AUFA Council got off the ground and is meeting every 2nd month, right after the executive meeting. All members of AUFA/AUGC

joint and other committees, plus executive members are on the Council and we expect great things from it. Doug Kariel has kindly agreed to be the Chair.

I know I have missed many things in this report – all the little day to day deals done on handshakes and a prayer, words and notes here and there, promises made and promises kept and promises still to come – and all of it done with the best intentions and protection of our members rights. All in a days work! But there is much work ahead of us and we must always remain vigilant.

It has been my pleasure (well, mostly) and privilege to have served as your President. You will be in good hands with the new executive. Remember, an association is only as good as its membership, and we have a great one. Please consider volunteering some of your precious time for AUFA committees. Besides, it looks good on your performance assessment and resumes. I will still be around as Past President, and will be assuming the presidency of CAFA for the next two years, so I'm looking forward to the rest. Be kind to each other and be kind to yourselves.

Linda Bonneville
AUFA Past President

Message from the Grievance Officer by Winston Gereluk

Over the past year, your Faculty Association has represented an increasing number of members with complaints or concerns over appointments, position evaluations, pay, leaves, place of work, and a number of other issues related to terms and conditions of employment. Some of these were settled informally, while others proceeded to formal appeal or grievance (See Articles 8 & 9 of your *Collective Agreement* available at <http://www.athabasca.ca/agreements/aufa/0507aufaweb.pdf>)

Members will occasionally question some of the actions AUFA pursues, particularly where they have personal issues with the person being represented. This is a serious matter.

Appeals and grievance procedures are mechanisms to which your Association and Athabasca University agreed in negotiations. In fact, enlightened managers value them as problem-solving mechanisms through which complaints and problems can be dealt with effectively and in a depersonalized context. More to the point, for AU staff facing problems or differences with their supervisors or managers, these procedure are perhaps the most important articles in the collective agreement, because they provides a method for enforcing their rights under this agreement. Without them, the Agreement could be worthless.

1. AUFA must ensure that its members feel free to express concerns or complaints with no fear of reprisal or discrimination. While the employer is responsible for managing the worksite, the decisions and actions of its

managers must be fair, equitable and consistent with the law and your Agreement. Members must be confident that decisions which affect them adversely can be questioned through the appeal and grievance procedures. A proper response, in each case, is for the manager to work with the Association to correct the problem.

2. AUFA has a legal duty to represent its members. Sometimes a grievance is highly unpopular in the workplace. At such times, it is important to keep in mind that the Association is obliged to provide fair representation, no matter how unpopular the action or particular individual may be. The law imposes a very strict duty of fair representation on 'trade unions' (the legal definition for our Association), which requires that they fairly represent all employees for whom they are certified or designated. This "duty" must be satisfied as objectively and honestly as possible, with no evidence of negligence, ill-will or discrimination. We cannot treat one grievor differently than another, show hostility, become unreasonably stingy with funds, or engage in revenge, intentional deception, flagrant dishonesty or ulterior motives.

3. It would be wrong to do otherwise. It is not up to the Association - or any Representative - to play judge and jury, where rights of members are concerned. We cannot pick and choose whom we will represent or which issues we address. They must all be represented – diligently – in both the bargaining and grievance processes. Whether or not a member receives representation cannot depend on popularity. Members who question this should be reminded that if our standards were allowed to fall to this level, they could easily be the next ones to be denied representation.

In all this, it must be known that AUFA does its best to provide fair representation under a badly-flawed and incomplete piece of legislation. Not only does Alberta's *Post Secondary Learning Act* lack some of the most essential provisions, the kinds that are specifically provided in the *Post Public Service Employee Relations Act* and the *Labour Relations Code*. It also invests extraordinary powers with our employer, to an extent (some have argued) that it violates our 'freedom of association' rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

As it happens, however, most of the missing rights in our Act are implied; i.e., they are part of the 'common law' that governs the employment contract and supplements the agreement between the University and AUFA. An example is every worker's legal right to belong to a union (or 'association' - the name makes no difference), and to take part in any procedures necessary to protect their rights, and to exercise this right free from any discrimination.

I would be pleased to work with AUFA staff to answer any questions or hear any concerns. Please call the AUFA Office at 780-675-6282.

Respectfully,

Winston Gereluk
Grievance Officer

Introduction of the 2008-2009 AUFA Executive

On July 1, 2008, the new Executive took office. The people who have committed to serve you for the 2008/09 term are as follows:

President

Jeff Taylor is a Professor of Labour Studies. He is also currently serving as Chair of Work and Community Studies. He has been at AU since 1991.

Vice-President

Lawton Shaw started with AU as a chemistry professor in 2005. He lives in St. Albert with his wife Tanya and their three children. He enjoys going for bike rides on summer evenings, after the kids are in bed.

Secretary

Travis Burwash started working for AU December of 2006 in Computing Services as the computer desktop support guy. "When I started, the University had fifty computers that I took care of all by myself and now we have over one thousand that seven of us look after. I have seen many changes in my eleven and a half years of being here some good, some bad.

I enjoy getting outside, kayaking on our numerous lakes, and taking care of my acreage (dandelions are not my friends, but I grow them well).

AUFA has done a lot for me over the years and I feel that giving a little bit back will only help everyone."

Treasurer

James Haubrich is a Senior Systems Analyst/Programmer in Administration. He joined AU in 1999. He joined AUFA as a member-at-large in 2001 and then became Treasurer in 2004 and has served in that capacity ever since.

Past President

Linda Bonneville

I started at AU in 1985 in Facilities. Having turned that area around, I headed to the Office of the Registrar for ten years. When I left, I was the Coordinator of Registry Services looking after registrations, student finance, exams, transcripts and academic records. It took three men to take over my work there! I went to Educational Media Development in 1999, and for about three years also coordinated the Information Centre. Currently, the only AU position I hold is Manager of Course Development in EMD!

I have been involved with AUFA since 1997 or thereabouts. I was the Treasurer for a few years and then did about three stints as President. I enjoy AUFA work

very much. For the coming year, I will be involved with AUFA as the Past President, and will be assuming the Presidency of CAFA for the next two years.

I love to golf and have finally achieved a decent handicap. I sincerely hope I don't end up like Tiger Woods. He needs reconstructive knee surgery and the doctors recommend they take some skin off his buttocks to cover the scar on his knee. No thanks, I don't want a "bum knee"!

I am a brand new Granny and it's the best gig in the world!

Constituency Representatives

Jonathan Leggo

I started at AU in July of 2007 as a Course Materials Editor for EMD. I moved here from Fredericton, NB, where I was a graduate student at UNB. My wife and three children have just recently joined me at our new home in Athabasca.

Gloria Filax

Gloria Filax started working for Athabasca University as both a tutor in the undergraduate programme and as a Visiting Graduate Professor in the Master of Arts - Integrated Studies in 2003. Presently she works full time in the Master of Arts - Integrated Studies in the area of Equity/Inequality and Social Justice Studies. Gloria is a grassroots activist and has worked across diverse activist movements including animal rights, human rights (specifically sexual minority rights, women's rights, youth and children's rights), and environmental issues. Gloria has 10 cats and a dog and when not tending to their needs, she tends to the needs of her rose garden.

Qing Tan

Dr. Qing Tan started with Athabasca University as a tutor in February, 2005. He became a full time faculty member as an Academic Coordinator in the School of Computing and Information Systems in June, 2008. Dr. Tan has a broad academic background and industrial experience in Control Engineering, Robotics, and Computing and Information Technologies. He is an active and motivated teacher and researcher. He is also involved in organizing and managing numerous social and community organizations. He is a loving father and enjoys singing, music, and literature.

Anshuman Khare

I joined Athabasca University in January 2000 as an Associate Professor for Operations Management. I am now a Full Professor at the Centre for Innovative

Management. I joined AU as I believed in the idea of using modern day (information) technology to bring education to people near and far. My personal (research) interests, apart from my subject areas, is environmental sustainability and how businesses and institutions can adopt sustainable practices and be in sync with the environment conscious world today. I am passionate about teaching and maintaining high quality standards in what we do.

This is my first opportunity to serve on AUFA Executive though I have sat in on some committees as a representative of AUFA (such as on promotional appeals committees).

I am an outdoor person which compensates for the many hours in front of the computer. I like travelling, taking pictures and play Soccer and Squash quite regularly.

Patricia Hughes-Fuller

Unfortunately, Patricia was not able to provide a short bio in time for inclusion in this issue.

Corey Coates

Corey began work with AU in 2004 and became an Assistant Professor with the Centre for Language and Literature in 2007. He coordinates courses in areas such as Shakespeare, 19th and 20th-century British literature, Canadian, and Children's literature. He likes the prose of Austen and the poetry of Hardy. He likes cooking, running, and unsplitting infinitives.

Linda McCloud-Bondoc

I started at AU in 2005 on a part-time contract and have held a full-time, permanent academic position since July, 2007. I coordinate the Write Site, AU's online writing center, which takes in everything from coaching students on their writing, to assessing online resources for the Write Site, to supporting good writing across the university through various initiatives. I'm not sure what kind of personal tidbits you want, but I'm based in Calgary, where my favorite leisure (ha!) activities are biking, hiking, canoeing, playing the piano, singing in my church choir, and, of course, writing.

Paul Nonnekes

Paul Nonnekes started at AU full-time in the MAIS program, after having taught undergraduate sociology at Red Deer College for 15 years. He teaches graduate courses in the MAIS program, mainly in the areas of social theory and cultural studies. He loves listening to jazz and sitting in pubs with a pint debating ideas.

Adien Dubbelboer

I grew up as the only daughter among my parents' four children. These same parents also handed me the uncommon middle name I have come to be known by, but which causes gender confusion at least three times a week. My father's unfortunate last name, which, in its English pronunciation, makes me sound like a double bore, brands me Dutch and it was in the Netherlands that I spent a big part of my life. I obtained a diploma in social work and a Master's degree in English from a Dutch college and university, respectively, before moving to Canada to work towards a PhD in Comparative Literature at the U of A.

My relationship with Athabasca University began in November, 2003. I would have begun earlier, but I did not receive my landed immigrant status soon enough. I started as a tutor on two Comparative (Canadian) Literature courses, but soon added two writing courses to increase my workload. After applying several times for various faculty positions, I secured the function of Academic Coordinator in August of 2007. I am now responsible for a course that instructs around 1600 students every year and I am, because of the high enrolment, heavily tutor-dependent. This year, I looked after the annual appraisals of about twenty fine academic instructors.

In my tutor days, I became increasingly disgruntled with the university's long distance and remote relationship with the people who work most directly and most frequently with the majority of the increasing number of students the university attracts. To compensate and change, I ended up serving two terms as the co-chair for CUPE local 3911. The time spent on CUPE committees, and as a CUPE representative on various AU committees, was the most educational time I have had during the five years I have worked for AU. I hope that working with AUFA will prove as much of a learning experience as my CUPE years have been. Of course, I also hope to apply what I learn in an effective and productive way.

AUFA Staff

Carmen Sakaluk, Administrative Officer

I started with AUFA in 2005 and am enjoying the challenges of working with a constantly changing executive and membership. Before moving to Athabasca, I enjoyed a successful 12-year career as a paralegal. Outside of the office, I enjoy bellydancing, taekwondo, writing, spending time with my son, and studying (my degree is almost finished!).

Dezarae Stinson, Administrative Assistant

I started at AU on June 11, 2007 in the Office of the Registrar. Shortly thereafter, I applied for the Administrative Assistant position with AUFA and was awarded

the position. So far, I have enjoyed being with AUFA and the experiences that has brought me.

My family has been in the County of Athabasca since 1994. I have two small children, one who is entering into grade one and the other into kindergarten this year.

Dear Aunty Union Advice Column

It is with regrets that we must announce Aunty Union is currently on sick leave. We wish her well and hope for a speedy recovery and a quick return to work.

Please send your advice inquiries via email to [Dear Aunty Union](mailto:dear_aunty_union@athabasca.ca) (dear_aunty_union@athabasca.ca)

Please contact Carmen Sakaluk (csakaluk@athabascau.ca) with your newsletter comments and suggestions.

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