



## An Approach to Governance

by Lucie Lequin

**W**e often criticize the Senior Administration and the Board of Governors for not protecting our long tradition of collegiality.

Do we really value the kind of collegiality which involves faculty members and librarians taking active responsibility in university governance? Have we been, over the last few years, somewhat neglectful, perhaps too busy? Have we collectively spoken too little on important issues? Is this why it was deemed safe by the Executive of the Board to risk creating the current crisis? Were we expected to remain quiet after an initial and discrete objection to the firing of the President, in addition to mysterious departures of many others? Are we now expected to let go of our requests for better numerical representation on the Board, for more transparency in governance, for a governance style that respects our views on the mission of our University?

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## Benefits Report

by Charles Drainin

### *Flex plan design questions*

**A**t the last meeting of the Benefits Review Committee, held in early December, the administration finally stated directly that it wants a flex plan for health and dental coverage. In the flex plan being proposed there are three component plans, one of which every member must choose. The basic component plan will be the cheapest but will provide minimum coverage; the second component plan, the standard plan, is somewhat similar to our current plan; the third component plan, the buy-up plan, will provide more coverage than we currently have but the higher premium cost will be borne entirely by the employee. I have some reservations with any flex plan, even one that offers our current plan as an option. I have discussed these concerns in

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In the last few weeks, all of us understood the importance of being involved, of speaking our mind, of saying enough is enough. Collectively, we have demanded changes on the Board. We have to follow through.

Collegiality and participative governance start at the department level or at the sector level in the Library; that is where one should learn how the university functions regarding departmental issues (hiring, curriculum changes and innovations, initial workload assignments, etc.) and broader governance issues at the Faculty, Senate and Board levels. If, within a department, or a sector, a member, especially one that is tenured, does not confront, for example, injustice, incoherence, unsound decisions, or does not defend with rigorous arguments an academic matter that has long term implications either for his or her department/sector or for the Faculty, even the University at large, this member is not being as actively collegial as one might desire.

The same is true at the Faculty level where our representatives should precisely represent their unit. This function necessarily implies a level of back and forth communication between the unit of origin and discussions which occur within faculty councils that are of much broader scope. This is where the future of a faculty is being created after due consultation with chairs and departments. Again, this should be the location of sensible and passionate discussions where our representatives try to achieve the best for all of us within a faculty. Silence and lack of vision is tantamount to indifference or approval. As an example, a general call via e-mails for opinions or reactions to an academic matter as fundamental as “core competencies,” “core indicators” or a new course evaluation does not constitute active collegial consultation.

At Senate, our representatives elected by our respective faculty councils have to look after their faculties, but also the University as one academic body. The last Senate meeting was exemplary in this respect. Elected members met prior to the

meeting, collectively prepared their positions and motions regarding governance (see [http://cufa.net/gov/Motions\\_governance.pdf](http://cufa.net/gov/Motions_governance.pdf) for the motions). They empowered themselves and sent a clear message to the Executive of the Board.

In order to take back our university, this empowerment has to become reality from the bottom up. We should never ignore our own doubts regarding a decision, a situation, or our rights.

Our six representatives on the Board of Governors elected by the faculty members of their respective faculties have a somewhat different mandate as they are working, as are other members of the Board, for the good of the University as a whole. This includes, for example, approval of the budget, expansion projects, nomination of senior administrators and five year plans. This past fall, our six faculty representatives have opposed the reduction of our

representation on the Board of Governors from six to three.

They have also distanced themselves from the official line regarding the departure of the President (see the discussions on CUFORUM). They are our collective voice on the Board. We must support them as they are working for us.

## *Speak out!*

In my opinion, participation in governance is not about seeking power for oneself. Participation in governance works best when the interests of our university community are clearly explained and articulated and when there is room for discussion, challenge and even a change of course because, after all, in different ways, with different backgrounds, we are all highly trained specialists in thinking. Truth and competence do not reside only at the top of the hierarchy, but in all of us starting at the department level. Participation in governance must be both personal (watch after one's situation and future as an academic) and collective (watch after the situation and future of our university).

On my office door in my department, I have a quotation from Monique Bosco, a local poet who died a few years ago. Allow me to share a small excerpt: “*Il vaut mieux blasphémer que de se taire encore.*” which translates to “*It is better to risk blasphemy than to remain silent one more time.*”

## *Benefits Report...continued from page 1*

an earlier issue of CUFA Report and will not repeat these here except for the issue of financing. One major objection to a flex plan is that employers often take advantage of any net movement of members to the low cost option to reduce the sponsor's contribution. This is not an immediate challenge: the administration assures us that their total contributions will not be reduced, and in the proposed design this is so. However, no guarantees are being given and we cannot be sure these protections will survive beyond the first three or four years. If this plan design is adopted we must remain vigilant to ensure that the current level of benefits contribution by the employer, measured as a percentage of salary, is maintained. (A more serious financing problem, not related to flex plan design, is discussed below.)

There are still two major problems with the proposed health plan. One is in the design details of the standard plan; the second is a plan to change the financing arrangements for those over 65s. The administration has made the point that the standard plan component of the flex plan is essentially the same as our current health plan; "essentially" is the operative word: there are in fact two important differences: the introduction of indexation to the current threshold of \$2,000, above which there is 100% reimbursement of health costs and the reduction of out-of-country health coverage from 180 to 90 days. As with any insurance, only some members would be affected by these changes, but those who are could be greatly affected.

### ***Disturbing change***

The second major problem is a very disturbing change in benefits policy. For some years now, members who turn 65 (as well as all CUFA retirees) have been required to join the RAMQ drug plan since initially this cost less overall than having them remain on the drug portion of the Concordia plan. However, this entailed the over-65s having to pay the full RAMQ drug-insurance premium, which, unlike the Concordia plan premium, was not automatically shared 50-50 with the University. This issue was discussed in the Benefits Committee, and the University agreed to pay the same 50% share of the annual RAMQ drug-insurance premium

as it did for the private Concordia insurance plan. Over time the annual RAMQ premium has grown as the cost of the RAMQ plan has risen (it is now over \$600 per person). Now, despite the University's 1994 commitment to over-65s (all of whom who were required to take the RAMQ coverage), the University wants to eliminate entirely its share of RAMQ annual drug premiums. There would be a temporary three-year bridge arrangement but it in no way compensates for the proposed hundreds of dollars in increased annual health costs for all our members and retirees over the age of 65, and for their families.

This proposal from the University to eliminate entirely its share of the cost of health insurance for all members of the health plan over the age of 65 is Draconian, and one that marks a fundamental change in policy at Concordia. It will affect all of us, not just those members who work beyond age 65, since almost all CUFA members retire from Concordia and, quite reasonably, they have been counting on the benefits plans that CUFA has negotiated for us. It is clear to me and others familiar with these issues that such a radical change in benefits policy would not have been initiated by the Administration. Although it has never been discussed by the Board of Governors, it must have had the approval of some of its senior members.

### ***Unexpected news***

What I have summarized above is where things stood at the beginning of December. Just before the Christmas closing, we saw the sudden and unexpected departure of Judith Woodsworth. I don't know if there is any connection between that event and what happened next, but on Sunday, January 2, the day before the University reopened, all members of the Benefits Review Committee (the union presidents, the internal members of the Benefits Committee and the Pensioners representatives) received a letter from the Chair of the Committee, Bram Freedman, from which I quote:

*I am writing to inform you that the University has decided to suspend the Benefits Review process for the time being. This means that we will not be proceeding with selecting a new*

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*carrier and implementing a new plan design for June 2011. The review process is not "dead" as we remain committed to bringing forward a new plan design proposal and new carrier in the future. The process is merely suspended. We will, of course, notify you once the process re-starts so as to re-engage our discussions.*

I have received no further communications on this matter but we should assume that the University will resume this process in due course.

To get an idea where we are going, it is worthwhile first to look back. Characterizing the last nine months of discussions, I can say that the Administration has made some accommodation on specifics. However, on the major issues including the adoption of a flex plan, the elimination of its share of health insurance premium costs for those over 65 as well as the choice of insurance carrier, the process for which we and others have been quite unhappy with, they have made up their minds. They listen to our objections, but they have stated that they are not open to considering alternatives. Such a position makes discussion very difficult. The administration has made it clear that it would like to have agreement among the concerned groups, the Benefits Committee (on which CUFA is represented), the unions (including CUFA) and the Pensioners Association. However, given where we are, this may be difficult. When it initiated the review process in May, the administration made a commitment to "a full and frank review and discussion with the three [concerned] groups" It was looking for a consensus, but failing this, "[it] will then make a determination as to how best to proceed given the relevant legal and collective agreement provisions." As I have reported, CUFA has serious concerns with what was being proposed when the benefits review process was suspended. If the administration intends to pick this up again from where they left it, they will not achieve their consensus, certainly insofar as CUFA is concerned. A legal battle is one possible outcome, but it would be preferable to convince the administration that it is in the interest of both sides to bring these discussions into our collective agreement negotiations that will be starting very soon.

## **Core Indicators: A Call to Arms for Faculty Members**

*by Francesca Scala*

Performance measures and core indicators have become a hotly debated issue on university campuses, both in Canada and abroad. Increasingly, university administrators are adopting business-management techniques to monitor their institution's progress in achieving their organizational objectives. In May 2010, the Office of the Provost circulated a document containing a set of core indicators for Concordia's academic faculties. Said to have been developed in consultation with the Deans, the University Librarian, the Vice-Provosts, the Executive Director, Academic Planning and Budgeting, and the Director of Institutional Planning, this document outlines 14 indicators to be used to measure the performance of faculties and departments in achieving excellence in its teaching and research activities. While setting benchmarks for success is an important exercise to undertake for all organizations, the use of corporate-style performance indicators in a university setting is extremely problematic for a number of reasons.

First, the effectiveness of performance indicators as the actual judge of performance in a publicly-funded organization has long been disputed. Performance indicators are said to be less effective measurement tools for public sector organizations that provide human services, like education and welfare because of complex measurement and cause and effect issues (Bullen, 1991). For example, using a performance indicator to measure the employment rate of graduating students does not take into account forces out of the university's control, including economic downturns, the availability of jobs in their field, the skills set of the individual student, and the number of students pursuing further training and education.

Secondly, if performance indicators are used to reward and punish programs and departments accordingly, individuals and organizations will start to "fudge the figures to obtain the rewards irrespective of performance. The larger the rewards the greater the pressures to fudge the figures" (Bullen,

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### *Core Indicators...continued from page 4*

1991). The information asymmetry that exists between senior administrators and individual academic units is significant and undermines any real evaluation of 'performance'. Moreover, by focusing on quantifiable, results-oriented indicators, quality in teaching and research will not necessarily be rewarded. For example, if departments are being evaluated in terms of the number of students that graduate from their program, course instructors may feel compelled to give passing marks to students who do not deserve them. Departments with large student enrolments may have to consider increasing their admission requirements in order to attract 'high performance' students that are expected to graduate in a timely fashion. The revenue generated for the university by departments committed to open and accessible higher education will be jeopardized by the Provost's commitment to using the core indicators to determine budget allocation across academic sectors.

Thirdly, the implementation of these performance measurements and core indicators requires faculty members and academic heads to dedicate increasingly more time on data collection and reporting activities rather than to their research and teaching activities, two other areas that are also being measured for 'excellence'. According to Beaton (1999), the growing emphasis on performance measurements and the intensive data collection that it requires, negatively impacts academic life. The teaching and research duties of faculty members will be supplanted by tasks related to "the management-defined quality assurance processes of strategic planning, continuous quality improvement and customer follow-up" (Beaton, 1999). Moreover, research and teaching priorities, which were once determined by individual scholars in conjunction with their departments, will now be shaped by the organizational goals of university administrators. Consequently, administrators rather than the researcher or teacher will play a greater role in setting the academic mission of the university.

Finally, the Provost's decision to measure excellence only in terms of output places the responsibility for achieving success squarely on faculty. This is disingenuous given the Administration's recent attempts to reduce faculty representation on the University's decision-making bodies. Faculty are

being asked to do more with less as evident in recent attempts to cut travel grants for faculty and a salary structure that continues to lag behind that of other universities. Excellence requires an organization to put its money where its mouth is: Academic success is achieved by providing competitive salaries to keep and attract top researchers and teachers at Concordia; it requires an administration that dedicates resources to recruit the best and brightest undergraduate and graduate students; it requires serious investment in research facilities and libraries; and it entails a smaller faculty-student ratio. Not surprisingly, the Provost's core indicators document is reticent to use the faculty-student ratio as one of the core indicators for success, stating that "it is not included in the core set because considerable work remains to be done before a truly satisfactory indicator can be chosen". It is interesting that the merits of one of the most widely used and quantifiable measure for ranking universities, the student/faculty ratio is the only one the administration finds problematic.

In conclusion, faculty members should be aware of the potential misuse of performance measurements as presented in the Provost's May 2010 document and the negative impact they will have on the academic life and mission of the University. From an administrative standpoint, they are ineffective management tools for improving performance given they don't capture the diversity of academic fields and they produce an incentive scheme that is counterproductive to providing quality education. Moreover, they will require faculty members to divert their energies away from teaching and research to the time-consuming and inherently political task of collecting and reporting data. Finally, they will be used by the University administration to reward and punish academic units based on performance indicator scores rather than on the quality of teaching and research. Several departments, including Accountancy, Economics, and Sociology & Anthropology, have written and submitted response documents that are highly critical of the core indicators. CUFA shares the concerns raised by these documents and calls on all departments and faculty members to carefully study the proposed initiatives and their implications for students, faculty and the academic mission of the university.

# Engineering Professor Salary Comparison

by Marius Paraschivoiu

In preparation for the upcoming negotiations, CUFA compared the salaries of engineering professors at Concordia University with *École Polytechnique* de Montreal and *Université de Sherbrooke*. For this comparison, six full time professors from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science were selected so that they would represent different categories: probationary member, recent associate professor, several years in the rank of associate professor and full professor on the grid. These members were also selected from different engineering departments excluding computer science as this discipline is not part of *École Polytechnique* or the Faculty of Engineering at *Université de Sherbrooke*.

Each selected member completed a simple questionnaire and recorded the year of completion for their B.Eng., M.Eng., PhD and, if applicable, the number of years as a Post-Doctoral Fellow and/or other related work experience. When the questionnaires arrived at the CUFA office, they were assigned a number and the names were removed to preserve anonymity. The responses to the questionnaires were then sent to the union presidents of our sister universities. Their salaries were placed on the sister universities' salary grids as if each colleague were a member of that institution.

The table below shows the salary of the same individual at the three different universities. Note that the salary calculated by the *Université de Sherbrooke* union (AIPSA) was effective as of June 1, 2009, as they are presently negotiating their collective agreement.

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6
<b>Concordia</b>	\$122,134	\$116,668	\$88,652	\$96,428	\$107,145	\$107,418
<b>Sherbrooke</b>	\$131,718	\$134,745	\$95,794	\$119,028	\$116,826	\$115,724
<b>Polytechnique</b>	\$134,374	\$140,634	\$97,362	\$121,212	\$118,895	\$117,731

As is evident from the table, it can be seen that in all cases the salary at Concordia University is the lowest. On the other hand, the salaries at *École Polytechnique* and *Université de Sherbrooke* are comparable. The average difference between Concordia and Sherbrooke is \$12,565; the range of difference is \$7,142 to \$22,600. For completeness, the details of the composition of the Concordia Salary are presented in the table below:

Components of salary	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6
Grid salary	\$117,184	\$104,487	\$73,652	\$86,348	\$99,045	\$95,418
Market Supplement	\$4,950	\$7,650	\$15,000	\$10,080	\$8,100	\$12,000
Individual Supplement		\$4,531				
Permanent Supplement						
Total	\$122,134	\$116,668	\$88,652	\$96,428	\$107,145	\$107,418

# Motion to Increase Union Dues

by William Sims

**A**t the last CUFA Council meeting (January 31, 2011) a motion recommended by the executive was brought forward regarding union due increases. It was tabled until the next Council meeting in order to give Councillors a chance to get input from the CUFA members they represent. The motion called for union dues to be increased from the current level of 0.8% to 0.9% of gross pay effective June 1, 2011, with a further increase to 1.0% of gross pay on June 1, 2012. This represents a 0.1% absolute increase at June 1, 2011 and a further 0.1% increase at June 1, 2012, for an overall absolute increase relative to the current rate of 0.2%. There are several justifications for these increases:

- The first justification has to do with rising operating costs (see the most recent budget on CUFA.net). In particular, the length of the last round of negotiations resulted in much larger expenses (mainly in terms of course remissions to the negotiating team) than expected and we are about to begin negotiations again. While these costs will hopefully not be duplicated this time, there is another worrying trend that may be more difficult to avoid: the planned legal and arbitration expenses in next year's budget have been doubled (from \$45,000 in 2010-11 to \$90,000 in 2011-12) and that might still be insufficient. This is an expense that CUFA has very little control over. It is dependent on the number of appeals and arbitrations undertaken in a given year and this is itself a function, it would seem, of a more adversarial approach adopted by the University's current Administration.
- A survey of union dues (see [http://cuфа.net/CAUT/Union\\_dues\\_other\\_universities.pdf](http://cuфа.net/CAUT/Union_dues_other_universities.pdf)) at other Universities in Canada shows that our current mil rate (of 8, which is equivalent to 0.8% of gross salary) is below the average for other Universities that are members of their provincial associations, CAUT, CAUT Defence Fund and NUCAUT. Indeed from the table even 1.0% appears below average for all universities,

independent of their affiliations.

- The cost to a faculty member X with a salary of \$100,000 would be \$3.85 per biweekly pay (before taxes) for every increase in dues of 0.1%. After taxes, this faculty member's cost would likely be under \$2. The gain to CUFA would be (assuming current faculty size and payroll) about \$87,550 per annum for every increase in dues of 0.1%. Thus after June 1, 2012 (i.e. after both recommended increases) faculty member X's bi-weekly net pay reduction, as a result of these increases in dues, would likely be no more than \$4.00 and the union would be receiving upwards of an additional \$175,000 per annum.
- Finally, we hope that much of this increased revenue can be invested. This would mean upwards of an additional \$175,000 per year after June 1, 2012 deposited to our investment account each year. Currently CUFA has a well diversified investment portfolio of just above \$2 million. This is not much of a cushion in the event of labour unrest. For each of our nearly 1000 members this translates into a one-time payment of only about \$2000. These increases will of course have no immediate significant impact, since that will take time. A monthly deposit to an investment account of \$14,583 ( $\$175,000/12$ )<sup>1</sup> over 15 years at an average return of 6.75% per annum (the annualized real return of the S&P 500 (CAGR) from 1950-2009 was about 7%), on top of our current portfolio of about \$2.1 million, would yield a portfolio of slightly more than \$10 million. Of course just because a certain rate of return occurred in the past does not mean it will occur in the future. So none of this is guaranteed. But one way or the other, whether the actual annualized return is higher or lower, this increase would ultimately increase the bargaining power of CUFA. Of course this would primarily be a gain realized by our junior (and our as yet unhired) colleagues.

Please speak to your CUFA Council representative prior to the next meeting and make sure your views are represented.

<sup>1</sup>Of course this is just the increase in dues recommended in the motion. The actual contribution to the investment account could be larger in years in which expenses are low

# Mark Your Calendar

## Council Meeting

When: February 14, 2011

Where: SGW Campus H763

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

## Council Meeting

When: March 14, 2011

Where: SGW Campus H763

Time: 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

## General Meeting

When: Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Where: SGW Campus H765-767

Time: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

*A buffet lunch will be served starting at noon prior to the General Meeting*

## Contacting the Executive

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