

## President's Message

David DeVidi, Philosophy

It is tempting to use my first President's Message to introduce myself to FAUW members but, hard as it is on my ego, I suspect that those members are much more interested in what my hopes and plans are for FAUW than they are in me. (For those rare members who may be wondering about me, perhaps this will suffice: I arrived at UW in 1994 as a post-doc, then landed a faculty job in the Philosophy Department in 1996. I joined the FAUW Board of Directors in 2004, and served as Treasurer in each of the past two years.) So let me talk about what I hope to see happen in my 12-month term. I think it's useful to divide things into three categories.

**Bread and Butter Issues:** These are the most visible and, for most members most of the time, most important parts of FAUW business. We are now in the final year of the current salary settlement, and negotiations will begin in the fall towards a new one. Once again this year, Metin Rensizbulut will lead our negotiating team. Even when these negotiations are relatively simple, they require a significant investment of time and effort from that team, and especially from Metin. If they become com-

plex the amount of time involved can become very large indeed, and the issues involved can come to dominate the business of the FAUW Board of Directors as well. The Association has done quite well in recent negotiations; we also think that while there are always financial challenges in the university sector, judging by the numbers of special new projects for which money shows up in the university budget, financial times are relatively good; so we are hoping for another good settlement.

The other major pocketbook issue right now is the need for continuing work on the pension plan. The three faculty representatives on the Pension and Benefits Committee poured a lot of effort into bringing things this far, but are committed to resolving continuing worries that our members, and members of other employee groups on campus, still have about the plan. This is discussed in a bit more detail elsewhere in this issue of the *Forum*, and a fuller discussion appears in the *Online Forum* [see *Editor's Message*, page 4].

**Ongoing Projects:** There are many issues that simply cannot be satisfactorily resolved in a

**BBQ for New Faculty and Partners  
Tuesday, September 4  
President Johnston's  
Chatterbox Farm**

We look forward to meeting new faculty members and their partners at the BBQ, co-sponsored by the Faculty Association, the Associate Vice-President, Academic and the Associate Provost, Academic and Student Affairs. The BBQ is part of the University's program of welcoming events for new faculty.

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single year. FAUW is currently at work on a number of such issues, but I'd like to take this chance to highlight two of them. The first is really a pair of issues: workload, and the merit review process. Last year's board put a lot of effort into a survey that gathered useful information about these matters; it is up to this year's board to decide what to do with the information and to get on with it. This is also discussed elsewhere in this *Forum*, with a longer report in the *Online Forum*.

Last year the board also struck a subcommittee to investigate what issues are of most concern to Lecturers on campus. Continuing Lecturers are in some obvious ways ill-served by some of the current language in the Memorandum of Agreement and by certain university policies. For instance, some Continuing Lectures have no opportunity to carry out research or other scholarly activity, and in fact are discouraged from doing so by their Chairs, but the M of A requires that a minimum of 20% of their annual merit increase is for scholarship. The sub-committee produced a report and some recommendations early this spring. We have already begun the process of taking these recommendations to the Administration. Since many of the Continuing Lecturers on campus are Clinical Lecturers, and since many new clinical faculty will be arriving on campus with the opening of the School of Pharmacy, the discussions will become somewhat entangled with larger issues, but this also makes the need to

consider the Lecturer issues more pressing. Lecturers on definite-term contracts have a whole other set of concerns, mostly shared with definite-term faculty at other ranks, which the board is also pursuing.

***New Initiatives:*** One important goal for the coming year is *revitalization* of FAUW. The Association has served its members very well for many years, and we don't intend to fix what ain't broke. But for historical reasons FAUW has always operated on a shoestring budget and relied on an army of volunteers. In recent years the workload for these volunteers has increased markedly, and the demands on our staff have become more complex and time consuming. Moreover, some of our key committees have been relying on the same volunteers to play a key role, sometimes for decades! The situation is simply not sustainable.

There are two strands in our efforts to set things up so that FAUW can continue to successfully play its role on behalf of its members long into the future. First, we are in the process of re-evaluating our staffing needs. Right now, FAUW has two employee positions, only one of which is occupied. The first step, recently completed, was to get the position of Administrator reclassified so that it reflects the job the incumbent *is* doing and *should be doing*, rather than what the Administrator was doing a decade ago. Pat Moore, our excellent, long-time Administrator, is now the Administrative

Officer of FAUW. (Congratulations Pat!) The new classification is overdue recognition of the crucial role she plays in FAUW. We are now considering how the vacant position needs to be reclassified, and whether there is need for a third employee to take the burden off some of the volunteer positions that are now proving very difficult to fill.

The other strand is to find new blood for some of our committees. To take one crucial example, the *Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee* is, for those who ever have to call on its services, the most important one FAUW has. Among other things, it plays a role similar to that played by grievance committees at some other universities. That is, when faculty members have problems with an administrator or have an unfavorable tenure or promotion decision, for instance, it is a member of this committee who serves as an "academic colleague" providing advice through those difficult times. *This committee is in desperate need of volunteers. To be a successful member of the committee requires a willingness to spend some time helping a colleague, ability to deal with and listen to people who might be upset, ability to communicate things clearly and deal effectively with those colleagues currently in administrative roles, and the ability to keep confidential things confidential.* The rest can be taught! (If you are interested, please get in touch with me or with the FAUW office, and we'll put you in touch with the appropriate people.) We also have a subcommittee studying the way

that this committee does business, because as it stands the job of Chair of AF&T is simply too time-consuming for us to find people willing to take it on.

We have several other committees, some of which have not been very active in recent years but all of which it would be great to see up and running again: the Status of Women and Equity Committee, the Political Relations Committee, and several others. We'll be trying to raise the profile of all of these committees in the coming months. One thing that becomes clear once you become involved in FAUW is that the Association does an enormous amount of work for its members ... and that *all* of it is important, *most* of it is interesting, and *some* of it is even fun. Please keep an eye out for a committee that interests you, and consider getting involved. The

Memorandum of Agreement specifies that service to FAUW counts as service to the university for annual merit reviews.

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It would be serious negligence for me to miss this chance to thank Roydon Fraser for his service to FAUW as President for the past three years. Roydon has been an excellent leader of the Association, providing principled, thoughtful and effective leadership. I'm sure that the Administration has loved him as President because he is such an effective and reasonable problem-solver. Faculty members should also love him because he also has a keen sense of which lines should never be crossed. I think of him as a master of polite obstinacy—he never loses his cool, but it's also easy to tell when something is important

enough to him that everyone in the room will know that he's not moving. I am very pleased that he's still on the board as Past President, so I can count on his sage advice.

Unfortunately, this also means that Catherine Schryer is no longer a member of the board, after having spent three years as Past President in addition to her three years as President. Having been in many meetings with Catherine I've concluded that she is one of the most effective negotiators and problem solvers I've ever seen. Many times, thanks to Catherine, I've seen everybody in a meeting leave happy though nobody's leaving with exactly what s/he came in wanting. Happily, I have her extension, and intend to bother her for advice with some regularity.

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**FAUW FORUM**

*The FAUW Forum is a service for UW faculty sponsored by the Association. It seeks to inform members about current Association matters, to promote the exchange of ideas and to foster open debate on issues with a wide and balanced spectrum of views.*

*Opinions expressed in the Forum are those of the authors, and ought not to be perceived as representing the views of the Association, its Board of Directors, or of the Editorial Board of the Forum, unless so specified. Members are invited to submit letters, news items and brief articles.*

*If you do not wish to receive the Forum, please contact the Faculty Association Office and your name will be removed from the mailing list.*

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## Editor's Message

David Wang, *Electrical and Computer Engineering*

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In recent conversations that I have had, almost everyone laments about the lack of interaction amongst faculty members here at our university. This is particularly true for those senior faculty members who were here when the university was a much smaller place. The *Gazette*, which provided lively debate in addition to informing the university community about issues and events, was cancelled for budgetary reasons. In its absence, one of the only remaining print media is this *Forum* newsletter. However, with its publication schedule and limited space, there is really not sufficient ability to create any meaningful dialogue.

In response to this, I was given the mandate by the FAUW to create the FAUW *Online Forum* web page, which will be accessible by the time you receive this newsletter. Just go to the FAUW webpage (<http://www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca>) to get the link. I believe that this will be a significant evolution in how the *Forum* delivers useful content to the faculty on this campus. The site will include features such as links to interesting articles, businesses that offer discounts to faculty members and humour. We can also publish more letters to the editor as well as other features that can enhance the communication among the faculty than was possible in the print version of the

*Forum*. We are also making revisions to the print *Forum* in light of the new on-line material. There are two developments in particular that I would like to introduce because they have great potential, if the faculty members choose to use them, to increase the ability of FAUW members to communicate with each other.

The first feature is the "Questions and Suggestions for Administrators" section of the *Online Forum*. Every two months, we will feature a different administrator at our university. You send me questions and I will forward 20 of them to the administrator in question. President Johnston has already agreed to be the first to be interviewed. The responses will appear in the print version of the *Forum*. The success of this initiative depends on you, the faculty! This is an opportunity to hear directly from our administrators in response to your concerns and suggestions. It will be my job to ensure that the questions and discussion are professional and collegial. We want to have dialogue between the faculty and the administrators, and this can only be done if the questions are asked with care and without hostility.

The second feature is the *Online Forum* Discussion Boards. This will be a password-

protected section of the webpage. On this page will be various discussion forums such as "Teaching Tips," "Coping Tips," and "FAUW issues," among others. The idea is that this will be a place where faculty members can engage in discussions relevant to their academic life here at UW. For example, if you have an unruly class and need some suggestions, then this would be the place to post a "help wanted" request. If you are finding the stress of balancing work and research too much, then this would also be the place to seek some suggestions from faculty members who have already been there. Obviously, these boards will only be successful if faculty members use them.

You will be getting an email from us in a few weeks inviting you to check out the website. There will also be a call for Questions and Suggestions for Administrators as well as a call for any interesting media that you create as a hobby (e.g., music, paintings, videos). I hope you will all take the opportunity to explore, interact and let us know how you like it.

## Letter to the Editor

*This letter was written in response to the editorial in the December 2006 issue of the Forum (www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca).*

Wed, 27 Dec 2006

Dear Editor:

For me, not wishing someone a "Merry Christmas" has nothing to do with "political correctness." For me, it is just a matter of politeness.

Let me explain. Although not Jewish myself, I grew up in a suburb of Philadelphia that was predominantly Jewish. Many lost members of their family in the Holocaust at the hands of Christian Germans, Poles, and Russians. (And please, do not object with a version of the "No True Scotsman" fallacy. Their murderers often called themselves Christians, and the long history of Christian anti-Semitism cannot be denied.) These Jews did not celebrate Christmas, and many objected strongly to the

presumption that everyone did.

In such an environment, if you did not know what people celebrated, it was simply rude to assume one way or another. Thus, I grew up wishing people "Happy Holidays" unless I was sure. Most people I knew did the same.

When I moved to Canada, I was surprised by the number of people who wished me "Merry Christmas" even though I am not a Christian. To me this seemed, and still seems, quite impolite. My usual response is to smile and say, "You, too," although occasionally I am annoyed to the point of saying "Thanks, but I don't celebrate Christmas." This usually leaves the greeter open-mouthed.

It is important to recognize that the idea of a "War on Christ-

mas" is a fiction being promoted by the most reactionary members of American society, such as Bill O'Reilly. I would guess that most people who use an alternative greeting, such as "Happy Holidays," are merely trying to be polite.

I'd also like to address your discussion of "pro-abortion" and "pro-choice." Those who favour legal access to abortions may, in fact, be opposed to abortion personally, yet favour the right of others to decide for themselves. To claim they are "pro-abortion," then, is simply incorrect. If the goal is accuracy and not demagoguery, then "pro-choice" is appropriate characterization.

*Jeffrey Shallit  
Computer Science*

## In Memoriam



*Joanne Kuhn  
1942 - 2007*

FAUW recently received the sad news that a long-time friend and contributor to our organization, Joanne Kuhn, had passed away. Though she retired from the Library in 1996, Joanne was only 64 when she passed away the morning of May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007 after a brief but intense and courageous battle with cancer.

Joanne served on the FAUW Forum editorial board from its inception in 1988, taking over as chief editor from 1991 to 1996.

During this same time period, she was elected to serve on the FAUW Board of Directors. Joanne also served on the FAUW negotiating team for librarian representation.

The FAUW would like to offer our condolences to the Kuhn family as well as all her colleagues at the University of Waterloo who will miss her dearly. A brief obituary by Christine Jewell of the Library appears in the *Online Forum*.

# Workload and Merit Survey Completed

David DeVidi, President

Over the past year the FAUW Board of Directors has carried out a survey to gather information about two related issues that are of serious concern to many members: workload and the annual merit review process. We tried to design questions that would give us useful information about how things vary across campus and about what members regard as the most important concerns about how things are operating. We approached two people in each academic unit, one a Chair or Associate Chair, the other a member not currently in such an administrative role. Here are a few highlights of the results.

The variation in teaching loads across campus is quite dramatic. In some departments the normal load is three courses *per year*, while in some others it is three *per term*. This disparity is even more dramatic when you consider that it is often easier to get a release from teaching a course (because of an administrative role, or because of course preparation duties, or a role on a federal granting agency panel, for instance) in the departments with lower teaching loads. There is also dramatic variation in the criteria according to which faculty members get TA support for their courses. At the extremes, one respondent said that any course with nine students gets TA support while several departments in Arts require an enroll-

ment of 100 students before a TA is provided.

Of course, it is a gross oversimplification to equate workload with course load. The impression that workloads are very heavy and steadily increasing is very general, and this is thought to cause problems in various ways—for instance, increasing undergraduate teaching loads make it much more difficult to keep up a research profile that will attract the grants that will fund all the extra graduate students the University wants to admit, and increasing time commitments at work make it very difficult to keep a sensible work-home balance.

The survey asked people, in both the workload and merit sections, to list up to three concerns they think FAUW should address. Questions of this sort will, of course, draw out aspects of work life at UW that rankle, even among those basically content with their jobs. But the wording (and the handwriting!) in some of the responses made clear that many people are really bothered by some of these issues. Beyond worries about the steadily increasing workload, I think it's fair enough to classify the commonest complaints as falling into two categories.

**Lack of fairness.** Many people perceive the work distribution within their academic units as unfair in one way or another. A

common complaint was that the same people end up getting stuck with service duties in the department all the time. Others worry that service duties are undervalued (so no wonder nobody wants to do them). Several complained that they end up doing work (such as advising students) for colleagues who are seldom in their offices. Some felt that merit scores were based only on quantity rather than quality of work, and a number thought that basing the teaching component of the merit score only on undergraduate student ratings is problematic. Some felt that their heavy graduate supervision responsibilities do not get taken into account at merit time. And so on.

**Lack of transparency /arbitrariness.** There were a striking number of cases where respondents simply *did not know* the answers to some straightforward questions, such as whether graduate supervision counted towards their teaching or their research scores (something that varies across campus). Perhaps, then, it is no wonder that in the opinion of a number of respondents the distribution of workloads and the merit review process are, at best, done according to criteria known only to the decision makers and at worst at their whim. One former Dean was described by one respondent as treating the merit review process “as though it were some ancient, mystical event.”

It's reasonable to suppose that both these problems can be tackled at once. If the processes for workload distribution and merit evaluation are more transparent, then one of two things will happen. If, as is sometimes suggested, many of the worries about fairness are based on a failure to understand all the factors that went into a decision, many of those perceptions will disappear. On the other hand, if there are some cases where decisions are genuinely unfair, making the

grounds for future decisions open to scrutiny will soon make it stop. On the other hand (and speaking just for myself), when it comes to performance reviews, while the criteria should be transparent they should not be formulaic. If the rules about what counts are made too specific, it would open the prospect of people gaming the system (and so be contrary to the often expressed concern that quality of work needs to be taken into account, not just quantity, even in matters like service). It also could encourage people to become

“lawyerly” in disputing their evaluations. I think there needs to be room for considered judgment in the worth of a service or research or teaching contribution, but this is quite compatible with the notion that it should be clear to everyone what counts and how much it counts for.

A longer story that includes much more information about the survey results can be found in the FAUW News section of the *Online Forum* at [www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca).

## Pension Notice

*David DeVidi, President*

As most UW employees, including faculty, know by now, some important revisions to the UW Pension Plan have recently been approved by the Pension and Benefits Committee.

In the spring, FAUW held a meeting, to which we invited the presidents and P&B representa-

tives of the various employee groups on campus, to discuss the state of the plan. In the end, there was general agreement at the meeting that the changes enacted should be regarded as provisional ones, and that further changes will be necessary if the plan is to meet its stated goals in the future.

Further information is included in a memo from the FAUW President to FAUW members, reproduced in the FAUW News section of the *Online Forum*.

## FAUW Board of Directors 2007-2008

**President:** David DeVidi,  
Philosophy

**Past President:** Roydon Fraser,  
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Metin Renksizbulut, Mechanical &  
Mechatronics Engineering

Nikolaj Zunic, Philosophy, St.  
Jerome's University (President,  
SJU Faculty Association)

## OCUFA Status of Women Committee Workshop

### Reorganizing Our Reality

*A better work environment for university women*  
Friday, October 26, 2007, Delta Chelsea Hotel, Toronto

**This OCUFA Status of Women Committee's workshop will:**

- Provide a forum for analyzing obstacles to full equality
- Define a model working environment for university women
- Help participants formulate realistic action plans

**Keynote speaker:** Professor Linda Briskin, Social Sciences Department and School of Women's Studies, York University

More information is available at [www.ocufa.on.ca](http://www.ocufa.on.ca). To ensure representation from all sectors of the university community, the Status of Women Committee encourages the attendance of participants from equity-seeking groups.

## CAUT Harry Crowe Conference

### Protecting the Integrity of Academic Work

2-4 November 2007, Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel, Ottawa

*The second conference of the Harry Crowe Foundation will revolve around four primary themes: academia's production-driven research culture, the pressures exerted by external research sponsors, outside pressures on academic discourse, and the unbundling of faculty work. The conference will not be limited to situations facing Canadian academics, but will instead explore issues from a multinational perspective. Presenters have been drawn from institutions in Canada, the United States, England, and Wales.*

More information is available at  
<http://www.crowefoundation.ca/Conferences/2007/>

## Member Benefits

Part of your deductions for the Faculty Association goes towards membership in the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). These organizations offer various affinity programs for members including insurance, car rentals, mortgages and Goodlife Fitness Club memberships. Information about these programs can be accessed from the FAUW homepage ([www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca)).