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# THE UWFA NEWS

## 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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### Celebration and Reflection

By Tracy Whalen, Secretary

This final UWFA newsletter of the 2010-2011 year is one of both celebration and reflection. As many Members know, this February marked the thirtieth anniversary of the certification of our Association by the Manitoba Labour Board. Sandra Zuk, who was a negotiator for the UWFA team, communicated this memory to me:

One memory I have from the weekend marathon negotiations that resulted in agreement on all outstanding articles was everyone's appreciation for the buffet of food set out at midnight Sunday by Gerry Sweet. She dashed out to buy food and had the negotiation table laid out with juice, donuts, fruit, etc. when the teams returned from a caucus. The gesture lifted all our spirits and gave us the energy to continue negotiating through the night, concluding around 7:30 a.m. Monday. We all watched the sunrise over Wesley Hall, where then President Robin Farquhar was camped out in his office to provide any direction as required by the Board team. Quite a night to remember!

Thirty years later, we can also celebrate the tenacity and unity that characterized an intense time of negotiations. In my ten years at this institution, I had not before felt such solidarity amongst Main Unit Members, Members of other units both on and off campus, and our supportive students, organized with such energy and success by the UWSA.

It seemed appropriate—especially given our shared goal to take back our university—to invite submissions for this newsletter from different people across campus. In the spirit of reflection, we have photos of our first negotiating teams from Sandra Zuk and pieces from Job Action Coordinator Allen Mills and Picket Coordinator Pauline Pearson in which each reflects on their memorable moments last month. Jim Christie traces the labour and funding history of this institution and Mike McIntyre considers our chronic underfunding and where we might go from here. This year we began running a regular feature in this newsletter, “The University as one might like it.” In this issue, faculty members from Theology, Science, Education, and Arts have offered their thoughts (or rants) on this theme. The perspectives of our Association Members are diverse, as they should be. I'd like to think that the dialogue here will prompt other Members to respond and to contribute to this publication. We cannot rely on the intensity of threatened job action to motivate active discussion and debate.

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The UWFA News is also available  
online at [www.uwfa.ca/uwfa-news](http://www.uwfa.ca/uwfa-news).

## Taking a Look Back at the First Agreement

Thirty years ago, the Association was certified by the Manitoba Labour Board. On 16 September 1982, the first agreement between UWFA and the Employer was signed. When one looks at the first agreement and the one signed just last month, the similarities are striking. Though there have been substantial changes in the intervening years, the first negotiating team set the foundation for the strong Collective Agreement we have today. Sandra Zuk, who was one of the negotiators at the time, provided us with these photos of the bargaining teams.



### UWFA Team

Front (from left): Sandra Zuk (Library), Claudia Wright (Chief Negotiator, Political Science), Geraldine Sweet (Geography)

Back (from left): John Cote (Psychology), John Ryan (Geography), H. Vincent Rutherford (History)

### Employer Team

Front (from left): Robert Dyck (Chief Negotiator), Stephen Coppinger, Michael McIntyre

Back (from left): Larry Didow, A. Ross McCormack, John Clarke, David Dyck



## Marching to Strike Headquarters

By Allen Mills, Vice-President

That march to strike headquarters on the Monday before the strike deadline was something I will not soon forget. It was easy to worry about its possible success. Had it been too hastily organized? Had the message gotten out in time and had the messengers gotten the word out to everyone?

We needn't have worried. It was likely that all that needed to be done had indeed been expertly done by all the messengers. But even so, there was a sense of the existence of a galvanizing resolve among the Members who in their respective ways had decided that the issues were big enough to take a stand upon. They needed no encouragement. They were ready to go. Everyone was one and the planets were aligned. Even the police cooperated. They hurried to make the permit for the march an immediate reality and even though we had trained everyone to respect the traffic lights crossing Portage Avenue there were the police cruisers, unannounced and unrequested, stopping the traffic at the intersection. That long line of people made an even stronger statement as we walked without interruption.

I like to think that in the midst of it all there was a conviction that this university is worth preserving as a place of liberal arts and critical values. Maybe we have had our view of knowledge pragmatized to death by those who govern us. Maybe amidst the snow-muffled, marching feet they heard some refrain about free knowledge for free knowledge's sake. I like to think so.



## Memories of a Picket Coordinator

By Pauline Pearson, Psychology

What was my experience as picket coordinator? In a word, outstanding. The adventure began midday on Sunday, February 27, when a call on my cell interrupted my out-of-town lunch. I knew trouble was brewing as soon as I heard that familiar British voice asking, "Is this Pawleen?" I signaled to the waiter to bring another beer. During my flight back to Winnipeg, I read the CAUT strike manual and tried to draw up as many documents as I could based upon the advice that I found there—picket passes, attendance sheets, incident reports, proposed picket locations and shift times. How was there ever going to be enough time to get the work done?

By Wednesday afternoon, we had news that the strike vote had passed with huge support. Now, I was terrified, as it was rapidly becoming apparent that we may be going on strike within a week! However, my fear was rapidly allayed by the willingness of my colleagues to volunteer. Within several hours of

sending out a request, twenty people had agreed to serve as picket captains. I didn't even have to send out a second e-mail! Almost 100% of those individuals I contacted consented. In rapid response to my request, James Hanley agreed to share the responsibilities of picket coordinator. He later admitted that he had misread my e-mail and didn't realize what he had agreed to take on, but we had everyone in place and still a week to go!

Serving as picket coordinator allowed me to reconnect with members of faculty and connect with members I had not previously known. It was fantastic to see how everyone came together to work for a common purpose. Despite long hard days and sleep-deprived nights in the week and a half running up to the strike (Was it really only a week and a half?), the mood of everyone at strike headquarters and at meetings remained positive and supportive. Thanks to everyone for making it such fun and making me look so good!

## Historic Underfunding, Redressment, and a Sense of Ourselves

By Mike McIntyre, *Psychology*

The University has struggled, since shortly after its transformation from United College, with a funding base more suited to a college within a university than to an independent university. This under-funding has restricted the budgetary freedom of the University to bring our salaries in line with similarly sized and mandated universities. It is very much in the interest of the administration to have salaries for faculty and staff that are distributively just. Just salaries enhance recruitment and retention and foster morale. The monies available to redress injustice, however, are limited. Grant and tuition increases typically allow us barely to keep pace with inflationary pressures and provide very little room for discretionary improvements. The main source of funds beyond the percentage growth provided by changes to the grant and tuition monies is provided by fall-in from the existing budget. For example, the retirement or resignation of a senior professor who is replaced by a junior professor may save as much as \$75K in salary and benefits. This type of fall-in constitutes the major source of funds for the University to make progress—perhaps, tediously slow progress—toward institutional goals. What is required is a commitment by the University to establish a distributively just salary structure and to make reaching this goal an institutional priority. The more senior amongst us may remember that Dr. Duckworth made such a commitment and that it motivated the 12% increase in the first Collective Agreement. Every nook and cranny in the University's budget was searched to secure adequate resources. Essentially, all the fall-in for a period of years was devoted to making the salary structure of the first Collective Agreement possible.

Monies from fall-in and revenue increases fund, beyond salary improvements, many changes to the budget base. Increases in the administrative complement, the top-up of positions that are partially funded by external monies, operating expenses associated with new capital projects,

increased financial aid, and expenses for innovation all depend on fall-in revenues. That the Employer accepted the University of Manitoba salary structure in the most recent Collective Agreement is hugely important. It would be very difficult to mount an administrative argument that asserts that this is a distributively just salary structure, but we are not prepared to place actual salaries on the structure. In addition to establishing a foundation for future negotiation and making progress, however slight, toward catch-up the bargaining process revealed several significant strengths.

The relationship that emerged with our students was absolutely extraordinary. Their palpable support, despite the possibility for hardship, contributed to the strength we felt. Salary inequities reflect historic under-funding, but so too does the fact that our students pay a higher percentage of the costs of their education than students elsewhere. They often deal with facilities and services that do not compare well with those that exist elsewhere. A career and employment centre comes immediately to mind. Our student body has one of the highest proportions of students who are of the first generation of their families to attend university. We also have one of the highest proportions of part-time students in the nation. Such students are likely to need more academic and financial support than the more economically advantaged. The political influence of the united voices of students and faculty will be greater than either in isolation. It is in the interest of both the students and the faculty to nurture the community that emerged during bargaining.

Perhaps the most significant strength to emerge was a sense of ourselves. I recall vividly the reaction in the ratification meeting when it was observed that the Collective Agreement was a first step in reclaiming our university. This recognition must be much more than a pleasant moment. It should be a prescription for change. Perhaps reaffirming the role of the Senate in governance and development would be a place to start. Nothing prevents the faculty and student

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## "The Sphere of the Sun," or, The University I Would Like To See

By Jane Barter Moulaison, *Theology*

In the past dozen years or so, I have grown accustomed to the patterns of life as scholar and mother. Days pass before me through the regular vistas of mini-van and computer screen. Increasingly, however, I am compelled to turn my view to my mobile device, with its hazard lights ever flashing: "Be always on guard!" Life is full and life is good, but, lately, there is one ball that is dropped in this, my frenetic act.

In the eleventh Canto of the *Paradiso*, Dante and Beatrice travel to the fourth sphere of the heavens, the sphere of the Sun. The Sun, a little higher than Venus, the sphere of lovers, is where the scholars reside. Above the Sun is Mars, the sphere of the glorious martyrs.

Basking in the Sun's illuminating light, Thomas Aquinas, the *summa* of philosophers, receives Dante and Beatrice as "guests of heaven." Through his well-crafted speech, he turns intellects to contemplate the good life, a life personified by Thomas in that good-for-nothing wolf whisperer, Francis of Assisi.

The university I would like to inhabit resembles the Sphere of the Sun. It is a realm where pilgrim students are free to grow in wisdom and in virtue and so direct their gaze away from themselves and toward a life worth living.

Yet, increasingly, the modern university has come to resemble not this, but the fifth sphere, Mars—the place where the martyrs do not perceive the light, but are consumed by it.

The contemporary university demands that scholars become martyrs. It asks its inhabitants to sacrifice their time and their talents for the supposedly noble ends of sustainability and efficiency. And it hands over our young and our eager scholars to the promise of a citizenship in heaven, a citizenship that is perennially withheld. Its slogan has become, "It's better to burn out than to gaze away," to paraphrase that great medieval poet, Neil Young, only slightly.

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## Historic Underfunding (continued)

members of Senate from insisting that Senate approve all academic development. There is nothing preventing student and faculty members of the Board elected from Senate to insist that the costs to existing programs of new positions, programs and capital development be made explicit. There is nothing to prevent all of the academic departments and interdisciplinary programs from insisting that we be known and that our priorities be included in planning.

The government is not likely to provide the University with an unrestricted redressment grant. It is much more likely to fund specific new projects that are needed. The university's Writing Program (now the Department of Rhetoric, Writing and Communications) was initially funded as part of a redressment initiative. Only when all sectors of the University are involved in planning and development will we be able to approach the government with proposals that can reinstate the redressment process. Many of the new capital initiatives have been badly needed. Perhaps we could argue that the University has secured unprecedented levels of private funding to make these facilities possible and that maintenance and replacement funding should match these successes. There is nothing that would prevent the administration adding its voice to an approach calling for redressment of historic under-funding. Successful targeted funding will increase the degrees of freedom within the budget and move us closer to distributively just conditions for the entire University of Winnipeg community.

## Get Involved!

The Association needs the help of its Members to capitalize on the energy and momentum developed during the job action preparations. There are vacancies on many of UWFA's committees and there will be other opportunities for Members to help out in the coming months. If you're interesting in volunteering for the Association, contact the UWFA Office.

# Pondering the Word *Untenable*

By Margaret Sweatman, English

I've heard the argument in diverse contexts that Canadian universities are "untenable." It's a canny choice, the word "untenable," in the company of professors, tenured and otherwise.

Doubt is necessary, unless it's insinuated into a workplace with the intention of making people frightened. Or unless the people in the workplace let themselves be frightened.

I'm writing this at night after a long day of mostly pleasurable work. I've still got work to do tonight for tomorrow. The roof is leaking and my car is broken. My entire working life has been untenable, though I come from a generation of five-hundred dollar yearly tuition, of bursaries given to students from rural areas, of bursaries even for the offspring of the middle class. That economic situation made my untenable career – and the careers of many of my contemporaries of many disciplines – possible.

Our students' working lives are now untenable.

Yesterday, I was speaking with a student, a Science student taking a Literature course for which she has to read two novels a month. She's working four days a week at a store and going to school the other three days a week, taking five courses with a focus on Biology. Last summer, to prepare for our course, she read Robert Fitzgerald's beautiful translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, a secondary text for the course. She applies diligence, honesty, humility and imagination to her work. She came to see me about a comparison of Jose Saramago's novel *Blindness* with Homer's *Odyssey*. When I told her that her thesis is strong and viable, her eyes ran with tears of exhaustion, although she was also rational and clear-headed.

People who need to study are often bullied one way or another, here and in all the nations of the world: one's love of the variability of knowledge brings out the bully in "sensitive" people.

I recently heard on the radio the elegant voice of Prince Hassan of Jordan, as he argued that his country's "most important asset" is the people's "ability to think" – this in a response to a youth-driven fight for the humanitarian ideals of individual freedoms.

What do I hope for this place where I now work? It's obvious. And difficult to achieve. Trust and good will. And the long view. Information. And reason. Despite how tired we might feel.

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## Sphere of the Sun (continued)

To become a scholar, it seems to me, you need to avert your gaze from the urgent and the necessary. At the very least, you need the kind of space to make intellectual and moral judgments about the ends for which you are prepared to lay down your life or your livelihood. In order to discern this, you need to waste away your time in thought. You must not ever, according to the counsel of Thomas to Dante, be "too swift to judge."

Yet the university of today counts on its workers being so harried by the hazard lights of necessity that they will judge swiftly and nobly to sacrifice themselves for its sake. It counts on the endless armies of martyrs who willingly take on precarious and soul-destroying work in hope that they might gaze one day again upon something more stable and more worthy.

The university I long for is not like this—it is the sphere of the Sun. There, scholars are trained to desist from being too swift to judge. There, its pilgrims are treated like heavenly guests. There, personal sacrifice is not compelled from on high. And there, its citizens have taken the time to discern that sacrifice is only intelligible when it is free.

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## Membership Committee Thanks

The Membership Committee would like to thank all our Members who came out to the 30th Birthday Bash at the King's Head Pub on March 10th. With your support, we raised \$525.00 for the University of Winnipeg Faculty Association Scholarship and Bursary Fund.

## A Steep Price for a Miracle

By James Christie, Theology

Story is to religion as mathematics is to science: foundational. Trust me on this.

The story of The University of Winnipeg is the story of a miracle – and the price that miracles can exact.

Once upon a time, there was a little college that could . . .

United College was born in 1938, a “church” college, the consequence of the establishment of The United Church of Canada in 1925. Its *alumni* register reads like a who’s who of great Canadians: Ted Scott, Lois Wilson and Lloyd Axworthy. United College was the successor of two great pioneer schools: Manitoba College, Presbyterian, established in 1871 and memorialized in Manitoba Hall; and Wesley College, Methodist, established in 1888. *Alumni* and graduates were, if possible, even greater, including J.S. Woodsworth and Salem Bland.

By the 1950s the pressure was on United College to abandon the downtown and move south to the suburbs with University of Manitoba. There was much to recommend the idea: a growing campus in Fort Garry; a unified *locus* for post-secondary education, an idyllic retreat from the hurley-burley of downtown life.

But United College, under Principal Lockhart, held firm for a downtown university. Against all odds, we have one. That is directly due to the forbearers of today’s Faculty of Theology and The United Church of Canada. In 1967, every brick that rested one atop another was a gift from The United Church to The University of Winnipeg. All that was asked in return was the maintenance of a Faculty of Theology and the right of appointment of six Regents by The United Church.

But there were hidden costs.

The first was “the Crowe Affair.” Far too complex to rehearse here, the Crowe affair concerned the dismissal of History Professor Harry Crowe by Principal Lockhart in 1958 for Crowe’s perceived

“disloyalty” to the Church in expressing a desire for United College to become a public, secular university.

The bitter divisions engendered remained unhealed for half a century until the late Dr. Tom Faulkner’s historic 2008 address *Head, Hand and Heart: The Crowe Affair as Tragedy* achieved some catharsis and began a process of reconciliation. The case, settled ultimately by the Fowkes-Laskin report, was a benchmark in defining academic freedom in Canada, gave CAUT new credibility, and paved the way for The United Church to see the wisdom of relinquishing its confessional hold on United College.

The second was incurred by Principal Lockhart when, in promoting to the Province the idea that church schools could be transformed into public universities, funding for the Faculty of Theology would be sacrificed so as to avoid any perception of sectarianism.

The third, and still most pressing, was Dr. Lockhart’s acceptance of a funding formula whereby the new University of Winnipeg would be funded at then-established levels. Put crudely, our “A” base funding was established in 1967 as the lowest in the province, and so it remains. It was part of the price for our very existence.

As a former Dean of the Faculty of Theology, I can attest to the Herculean efforts of President Axworthy to move the Province to revisit the base funding for the University of Winnipeg, thus far to no avail.

In March we came close to the first strike in our university’s history. Funding was the key issue.

With two years left in our new collective agreement, surely it is time for UWFA, UWSA and Administration to develop a united front to tackle the Province together.

It would certainly be in the tradition of United College, and it is certainly an idea whose time has come.

## Examining Privilege and Power

By Lee Anne Block, Education

*At the center of the work to transform knowledge ought to be all of those who have been on the margins...*

*-Elizabeth Minnich*

“Transformative” is a word I have used in describing my experience as an Arts student at the University of Winnipeg in the 1970s. It is not a word I use lightly. Despite a somewhat privileged background and education, I found that the transition to the university was a shift in perspective, a glimpse of wisdom and an incitement for change. There was so much to learn and it was a great time to be in university as the social changes of the 60s were manifest. Feminism was not part of that experience, although I had two of the handful of female faculty members of the time. When we discussed representation in classes, it was literary or in government.

My perspective has shifted further in thirty years. When I look back on that time, I am aware of who was *not* there, who was *not* represented. Now, I encounter the presence of multiple differences in the students and faculty and in the curriculum. What I question as I work with pre-service teachers is whether and how they are able to inspect their differences and their privilege. Has the university, have the Faculty, have I, made that a core element of their education, to understand power and their position in relation to it?

Does that understanding become agency? Do their experiences here connect them to the world sustainably ?

At a town hall on January 26, 2011, the Campus Sustainability Office opened a conversation among students, staff and faculty to help the University move into the next phase of its sustainability initiative. The conversation was cross-generational, cross-disciplinary and complex. This process required a collective examination of privilege and power.

## And Another Thing... A Rant

By Andy Park, Biology

There’s an old saying about changing what you can, but having the grace to accept the things that you cannot. Fair enough. But that’s no reason not to have a good old therapeutic rant about some of those (apparently) unchangeable but annoying aspects of university life.

In the wake of our recent near-strike experience, however, a bit of blue sky thinking may also be in order. Of course, our administration is not immune to blue sky thinking. Consider the recent Academic Renewal Exercise (remember that?), which established strategic goals across the University of Winnipeg. There was tons of stuff in there about increasing diversity, maintaining our (presumptively) high teaching standards, encouraging non-traditional students, and community learning (whatever that is).

What was absent was any indication about how these objectives would be realized. Blue sky thinking has to be followed up with concrete, realizable actions. Contrast my home department, Biology, for example. Here, our concerns tend to revolve around maintaining program commitments in the face of retirements, coping with non-traditional students (many of whom may be woefully unprepared for university), and dealing with pressure to increase course caps. Not a lot of blue sky there. In fact, there seems to be a clear disconnect between our ambitions (many of which are not “ours” as such, but have come from elsewhere) and the means to achieve them.

So what should we do to match ambitions and resources more closely? Here are a few of my thoughts, which have nothing to do with any policy, real or implied, that may emanate from the Biology Department:

We have “broadened our standards” of admission, but what about attracting the very best students? The super-bright also add to our diversity and enhance the university’s reputation, as well as raising the bar for other students.

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## And Another Thing... (Continued)

Professors and instructors need pedagogical support to deal with underprepared and educationally challenged students. These students are admitted under permissive standards, and once admitted some struggle. (See CBC's *Sunday Edition* for Sunday April 9, 2011 (<http://www.cbc.ca/thesundayedition/>), in which award-winning University of Toronto English Professor Nick Mount addresses exactly this issue of the explosion in the student population.)

To assure academic excellence, we need to shake up our teaching. It isn't enough to just tell ourselves that we are good at teaching (which we did quite a lot of in the Academic Renewal meetings), when we may really only be leveraging the advantages of small classes. All over Canada, universities are taking advantage of educational research to reform teaching practices – we should learn from these examples.

Of course, to reform teaching we need help and time. I have missed numerous teaching workshops because I was either double-booked with committee work, catching up on lecture prep, or other such activities. Maybe we need more free slots to pursue professional development.

Institute a university-wide written English test after the pattern of the University of Waterloo. When Waterloo started their standard test they were shocked at the results – and not in a nice way. About 30 percent failed, and those included Canadian-born students. Let's institute the test – if we dare!

If “you” really matter most at “You of W”, then why does it take our students so long to graduate? A lot of students may never finish. I know that there are quite a few part-time students, but that does not explain the poor return rates of first-year students. Shouldn't we be concerned and try to do something about these problems?

And while we are at it, why have we so little idea of what the fate of our graduates is after they leave? At the very least, you would think that we would dedicate a qualified university employee to

tracking the fate of a selection of graduates. Otherwise the often-repeated axioms about the value of university education (versus the alternatives) hold little water.

I've realized that I could go on and on all day, but I think you get the point. There are many things that we could do better (that's the blue sky for you), but for the most part we seem not to be dedicating the time or personnel to making sure that we do so. To sum up my blue sky thinking: universities excel at generating knowledge and ideas, so shouldn't we use those capacities to improve the way we do things?

## About the UWFA News

UWFA is proud to present the thirtieth anniversary edition of the UWFA News. UWFA turned 30 on February 11, 2011.

The UWFA News is compiled and published by the UWFA Communications Committee.

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Images in this issue of the UWFA News were provided by Sandra Zuk and Peter Ives.

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*The UWFA News accepts submissions from University of Winnipeg Faculty Association members on issues of interest. Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily of the Association or its Executive Council.*