

Conference of Faculty Association Staff
 Report
 Fairmont Hotel Newfoundland
 St. John's, Newfoundland
 31 May – 3 June 2001

	Thursday 31 May 2001
1.	Registration and Reception
	Held at the Court Garden, Fairmont Hotel. Warm welcome extended to all participants. MUNFA graciously donated \$1,500.00 to cover expenses. Entertainment, atmosphere, food all excellent.
	Friday 1 June 2001
2.	Introductions
3.	Planning for Change (<i>assuring continuity when the staff moves on</i>)
	Kitty Gustafson (SFU), Lori Morinville (CAFA), Anne Feilden (AAS:UA)
	Kitty Gustafson energized the room with a session on the “C” in change:
	1. concrete items to maintain/organize – procedures/files/training/job descriptions;
	2. capability, compatibility and companionship;
	3. communication and co-operation;
	4. camouflage or cover.
	Kitty ended her session by reminding people who are found in a changing environment to keep a sense of humour and to “go with the flow”.
	Anne Feilden drew from her personal experience of participating in the transition process when Gordon Unger retired after 27 years. Anne noted that during a staff change, the key staff members set the tone and are responsible for the continuity. Anne commented that it is important the staff exhibits to the Association members a “seamless business as usual” confidence during the transition. Anne is of the opinion that all continuing staff should be made part of all phases of the transition process (including being on the selection committee, even if only as observers). Anne stressed the importance of (1) all positions being covered by job descriptions, (2) maintaining good reference material, (3) holding weekly staff meetings and (4) taking care of “self” during the transition – responsibilities may be redefined.
	Lori Morinville ended this session by also drawing from her personal experience of participating in the “Allan Meech” replacement process. Lori reported on the balancing act involved in the hiring process of protecting the privacy of candidates while making the staff part of the process. Lori noted that there may be a tendency on the part of the people at the centre of the process to assume (incorrectly) that everyone on staff knows “what is going on” and “what to do”. Even simple tasks (e.g., who runs the fax

	machine) can be sources of stress in the new relationships after the hiring.
4.	The Effective Faculty Association – Part I – Governance and Administration – <i>(Some examples of different board and committee structures in faculty associations. Strategies to increase participation and get members involved!)</i>
	Sylvia Jansen (UMFA)
	Sylvia Jansen will be leaving UMFA and agreed to speak on “governance and administration” at her last COFAS meeting. Sylvia asked the participants to think of answers for the following questions as applied to each person’s Association: (1) who makes decisions; (2) who opposes the decisions; (3) who implements; and (4) who decides what is to be implemented? To answer these questions, Sylvia asked each person to visualize its Association as a vehicle and to answer (1) what type of vehicle comes to mind and (2) who is driving the vehicle? Then, the participants were asked to consider if the visualized type of vehicle “matches” the Constitution and how the Faculty Association is supposed to work. This exercise gave rise to an interesting discussion.
	Sylvia talked about leadership, visioning and knowing why things are done the way they are done in various Associations. Sylvia noted the various groups that develop in any organization and asked the participants to answer the following questions re their Association: (1) Who gets to know what? (2) To whom is the staff responsible? (3) To whom is the President responsible? She noted that every Association should have the provision in its Constitution for removing an Executive Committee member from the board, if necessary. Sylvia talked about a book she found inspirational - the Lance Armstrong book, “It Is Not About The Bike” - and asked everyone to keep in mind that, when working at an Association “ <u>it is not</u> about today’s crisis, but <u>it is</u> about why the Faculty Association is there”.
5.	How Distance Education Compliments Campus Based Education <i>(Distance education from the perspective of one of the world’s best providers)</i>
	Rick Powell, Institutional Studies, Athabasca University
	Some statistics on Athabasca University: (1) has been providing distance education for 26 years; (2) grants approximately 250 undergraduate degrees per year; (3) provides courses for program students and for non-credential students (students enrolled at other institutions); (4) 90% of courses are print based versus 10% on-line; (5) there are 210 full and part-time faculty members and 170 tutors, who are not members of the Association; (6) students from across Canada enroll – top two: 40.4% from Alberta, 27.7% from Ontario – bottom two: .3% from PEI and .07% from NWT; (7) average age – less than 25 50.2%; 25-34 29.4%; 35-44 14.3%; 45-54

	5.3%; 55-64 .5%; 65+ .2%; (8) students who pass courses – 60%; (9) courses taken at the 300 or 400 level – 60%.
	Rick Powell noted some advantages (e.g., flexibility for people with time/place issues) and some disadvantages (e.g., socialization both personally and in terms of academic disciplines very limited). He concluded that, in his opinion, he does not see distance education as becoming a threat or major competitor to traditional methods of teaching, but does see it as a minor, but integral, part of the education system in Canada.
6.	Ergonomics – designing a comfortable work layout (<i>Exercises to relieve the computer slump!</i>)
	Sharon Horan, Fit for Work
	Sharon Horan explained that ergonomics is the science of fitting the job site to the worker, instead of fitting the worker to the job site. Among the difficulties experienced by people when the job site is not compatible to the person are (1) decreased productivity; (2) increased injury risk and (3) lost time and increased WCB claims. The risk factors to be considered include (1) duration of sustained positioning; (2) awkward posture; (3) repetition; (4) metabolic factors, including inherent individual risk factors such as age and medication. Sharon Horan had many suggestions for improving a work site including (1) adjusting seating and posture; (2) providing ergonomic equipment and (3) advocating early reporting of symptoms. Sharon Horan demonstrated the correct seating position for working at a desk with a keyboard and showed the group stress-relieving exercises. Sharon noted that a worker should take rest and stretch breaks at least every hour.
	Saturday 2 June 2001
7.	Improving Communications with Website Technology
	Frank Madden (U of T)
	Frank Madden began by noting that in 1901 on Signal Hill, Marconi received the first trans-Atlantic wireless message (the letter “S” in Morse Code from Cornwall, England) and that 12 years ago at a COFAS meeting, Frank had given a session on “word processing”. Frank remarked that, in these 12 years, all the participating Faculty Associations had become “computer literate” and all had websites. Frank addressed (1) the purposes for a website; (2) the website’s audiences; (3) designing a website; (4) some practical considerations (including site creation tools, site features, maintenance, internal or external site hosting, security, insurance). Frank noted the top six categories of information most commonly posted on Faculty Association websites are (1) contact information and hyperlinks 100%; (2) committee lists and membership 92%; (3) Constitution and Bylaws 89%; (4) agreements and settlements

	86%; (5) related links 86%; and (6) newsletters 76%.
8.	The Effective Faculty Association Part II – Service to Our Members Grievance Procedures (<i>Practical and political aspects of handling grievances</i>)
	Richard McGaw, Chair, AUNBT Grievance Committee
	With Deans in mind, Richard McGaw began with a quote from A. Lincoln, “Anyone can stand adversity. If you really want to test someone, give them power.”
	Richard noted that the goal for any grievance committee would be to achieve full regress for its members, but he noted this rarely happens (sometimes because the solution sought by the member changes during the grievance process). Richard reported on the progression of a typical case, with (1) the member coming to the office with a dispute on an issue covered in the Collective Agreement, (2) the Grievance Committee member identifying the problem (must have extensive knowledge of Collective Agreement), (3) the collecting of documentation and (4) establishing timelines. He noted that in all incidences, it is imperative to remember that the person is the most important aspect of the grievance. The Grievance Officer at all times must be credible, articulate and consistent, and must keep the member’s expectations reasonable and realistic. Richard reported that, at AUNBT, no case has gone to arbitration in sixteen years. Richard noted that he meets with the VP, Human Resources at the University of New Brunswick at least three times a week, to review and discuss the active files.
9.	Liability: Decisions and Paper Flow (<i>Defining liability and developing strategies to manage it. Practical examples will be provided and discussed.</i>)
	Bill Gaudette (CAFA), Howard Welch (AAS:UA)
	Bill Gaudette noted several reasons for the changing environment surrounding liability and the rise in incidences of litigation, including (1) the increased awareness of legal rights; (2) a change in attitude (someone else is responsible); (3) the large judgments (settlements) made against some defendants; (4) the presence of insurance and the willingness of the insurance companies to settle; (5) the increase in the actual number of lawyers; and (6) the complexity of the modern world. Bill explained the basics of liability under a contract and what would constitute a breach of contract.
	Howard Welch noted that “a short pencil is better than a long memory” when in discussions with anyone (member, Admin representative, etc.) who may be involved in a grievance case. Howard reported that it is a good idea to develop a contact sheet for a potential grievance, noting on the sheet (1) timelines for action; (2) updates to status of case and; (3) who is responsible for what duties re the case. Howard noted the advisability of

	developing an information brochure for members (re rights, etc.) and of having the brochure also on the website. Howard noted Faculty Associations may want to consider having a disclaimer on the websites.
10.	Regional Networking Session (Regional Coordinators)
	Discussion groups.
	Sunday 3 June 2001
11.	COFAS Annual Business Meeting
	Pat Finn (CUASA) called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
	Pat Finn reminded COFAS members that the salary and benefit information is confidential and is for the use of members only. Noting that members may use excerpts from the report relevant to their own cases when seeking salary adjustments, Pat emphasized that the report in its entirety must not be given to an Executive Committee member.
	Brigitte Schotch (DFA) distributed and reviewed the salary and benefits report. Brigitte reminded members to complete the survey yearly, regardless of plans to attend the conference. Any member completing the survey and not attending COFAS will be mailed the report. Discussion followed. Brigitte agreed to conduct next year's survey.
	Pat Finn read a "good bye" letter from Audrey Leeman.
	Anne Feilden presented the Treasurer's Report.
	Niagara-on-the-Lake was chosen as the 2003 conference site. Kimberley Benoit (BUFA) and Lauren Tremblay (UWOFA) agreed to serve as site co-ordinators. Outstanding item – agenda co-ordinators.
	It was agreed the members would be polled via email regarding (1) the site for the 2004 conference (Charlottetown, Halifax or Cape Breton) and (2) moving the conference date in future to mid June.
	Election of officers: Lori Morinville (CAFA) President 2-year term, unanimous Anne Feilden (AAS:UA) Treasurer 2-year term, unanimous
	Pat Finn thanked everyone who worked to make the conference a success, with a special "thank you" to MUNFA for the \$1,500 donation.
	The meeting adjourned.

