



ACADEMIC VIEWS

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The search for a new University President

by M. Anne Stalker, President



There are two issues related to the departure of President Harvey Weingarten that I would like to address in this message—the Presidential Advisory Search Committee and the surveys that we conduct.

1. Presidential Advisory Search Committee

We are pleased to be able to tell you that the Board of Governors has voted to add

a Faculty Association representative to the Presidential Advisory Search Committee. They are also adding an AUPE representative and two additional members of the Board of Governors to ensure the committee is properly balanced. The Faculty Association Personnel Committee has asked that I represent the Faculty Association on the Search Committee.

For many years now, i.e. at least for the appointments of the last two Presidents at the University of Calgary, we have been making the argument that the Faculty Association should be able to appoint a representative to the Presidential Advisory Search Committee. Our arguments have been that, unlike the GFC appointees, we actually represent academic staff, and that we have an understanding of the way the campus works that no-one else does. Let me explain.

First, Representation. The Faculty Association takes its mandate as an association for academic staff very seriously, and we ensure that we have mechanisms that enable us to represent academic staff in a variety of fora. We operate with an elected Board, and with Department Representatives from across campus. We consider it our job to represent you in all of your functions, not just as employees, but also as academics, because, to be honest, there is no one else who can play that role. For instance, the members elected to the Presidential Advisory

Search Committee from GFC are enormously important; they are usually wise and experienced people, and their judgement is invaluable. But they don't really represent anyone. They are elected by GFC (which of course is only about ½ academic in any event) but GFC does not provide them with any guidance; they do not report back to GFC to see if they have missed anything, or if they have it right. As a Faculty Association representative, on the other hand, I will be able to receive guidance from my Executive and Board and, hopefully, as you will see, from you. I may not, for confidentiality reasons, be able to run specific names by everyone, but I will receive very direct input on general questions relating to what we are looking for, and what processes we should be using. I have in the past found that guidance exceedingly useful, and I am sure that I will this time as well. I will not be there as Anne Stalker, but specifically to represent our members, and I will appreciate any help I can receive in performing that function.

Second, Understanding. We have Faculty Association representatives on almost every significant governance committee on campus. We sit on GFC, GFC Steering Committee, TUBC, UPC, APC, RDPC, APT, all AARCs, FPCs and GPC. In addition, we deal with many issues that people bring to our attention that are not directly within our mandate but which affect our members – the faculty re-organization is a good example, but there are many others. Through these processes, we get an overview of what is happening on campus. This informs our understanding of what is needed, for instance in a President, along with the information that we gather from you in a variety of ways as discussed above. As a result, we have a significant amount of information when compared with anybody else on the Search Committee. We think it important that the Search Committee have that information as well. Otherwise, they are operating with blinders on. No institution of higher education should put itself in that position. We should be the leaders in making informed decisions, not in burying our heads in the sand.

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Dues are tax deductible
Assessment workshop

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Academic Plan under review

On December 2, 2008, University Vice-President (Research) Rose Goldstein met with the Faculty Association's Executive Committee to present the Administration's proposal for a revised Academic Plan. The Executive Committee noted several concerns with the Administration's approach to the Academic Plan, and outlined these in an open letter to Provost Alan Harrison and Vice-President (Research) Goldstein. The Faculty Association also invited Provost Harrison and Vice-President (Research) Goldstein to submit a response for publication in Academic Views. The unedited text of both letters can be found below.

Letter from M. Anne Stalker to the Provost and Vice-President (Research)

January 29, 2009

Drs. Harrison and Goldstein:

RE: Academic Plan

In early December 2008, you (actually Dr. Goldstein, as Dr. Harrison was understandably but regrettably absent) met with us to discuss the updating of the Academic Plan. The Executive of the Faculty Association discussed this issue following that meeting, and our Board, many of whose members had attended various of the meetings scheduled, also had an animated debate about it. They have asked me to forward their thoughts.

1. Consultation Process

While we appreciate your efforts to consult with academic staff generally on this issue, in fact the "consultations" have not so far seemed fruitful to us. They have served as a good review of what we currently have, and have provided an opportunity for people, in isolation, to express their concerns about what we currently have, or to point out what has worked. However, they have also created a strong sense that the result is largely a *fait accompli*, since only one type of success was identified – chairs and large institutes. Moreover, they have not provided the opportunity for academic staff to think through what an academic plan is for, and how best an academic plan can achieve those purposes.

There is a strong sense that, if consultation is to be seen as useful by academic staff, some specific options need to be developed and circulated for comment. These options need to be creative and diverse, in order to give us the best opportunity to discover what would make the University of Calgary a special place, and to generate significant feedback. Once they have been developed, perhaps Faculty Councils (or at least academic staff in Faculty or departmental meetings, since many Faculty Councils are very large, involve a large number of non-academics, and meet rarely) could be asked to provide commentary. This would engage people in their units and generate discussion in a way that large and diverse meetings like the ones held so far do not. It is important that an opportunity be given for academic staff to give feedback other than through their Deans in Deans' Council, and the kind of meeting suggested above would do that without requiring you to attend numerous additional meetings.

If you want academic staff to support the Academic Plan, it is essential that you take these or similar steps. Otherwise, the current cynicism about the process and the Plan will undermine it.

2. Inappropriate Focus on Strategic Areas and Institutes

The current Plan and the comments that you have made about its successes have also led to cynicism. The focus on specific areas of academic strength and, in particular, the message that the way to prove strength is through an institute rather than through normal faculties and departments, has led large numbers of Faculties and academic staff to feel unsupported in their endeavours, even though many are hugely successful by any measure. Moreover, the way in which these institutes have been created has further distanced those already working in many of these fields, and has led them to feel uninvolved in what is called our research success. An example is the disconnect between the School of Policy Studies and the Departments of Economics and Political Science. Rather than building on strength, the way this has been handled has created hard feelings and detachment, and ultimately will lead to underutilization of those who are already here and have much to contribute to this area.

Any academic plan at a university must be open to new ideas and respect academic freedom, as otherwise it undermines the creativity of research and fails to support the necessary broad range of educational pursuits by encouraging units and people to adhere rigidly to predetermined strategic research areas established without appropriate consultation. Broad creativity and education are, after all, what distinguish a university from other research entities, and it would be inappropriate to have an academic plan that moved us away from those aims. The Academic Plan should not pick winners and create losers, however broadly, for those "losers" are the very people whose research interests might otherwise seed an emerging strength of the University. Instead, the Plan should set out processes that will make us more successful at what we are here to do.

At the moment, the behind-closed-doors processes undermine people's efforts rather than support them. I have already given an example relating to the creation of an institute. We have also heard stories that raise concerns about how these decision-making processes affect obtaining matching grants, and achieving the goals in EPE funding that our members have worked long and hard to generate. All of this discourages activity rather than encouraging it. The Academic Plan should not be developed in a way that allows it to be used to create these kinds of results.

3. Purpose and Measure of Success of Academic Plan

It is important not to confuse an academic plan with a business plan. One gets the impression that the reason that institutes are

viewed as indicators of success is because of the way they allow the University to deploy and raise money, without the restrictions that normally apply in the more traditional structures of a university. This is not a proper assessment of success under an “academic plan.” Again, we need to be clear on what the purpose of having an academic plan is, and focus on those goals when creating it, rather than confusing business purposes. Then, it should be used in the development of the business plan, where the other factors can be brought in. This confusion of purpose is also a major problem with the discussion about the Academic Plan. Creation of an institute is only a success from an academic perspective if it furthers our research and educational goals more than would be possible through the normal (Faculty and department) processes. That has never been shown.

We hope that these ideas are useful for you. In order to disseminate them more broadly, we are proposing to publish this letter in our newsletter in the near future. However, we wanted to give you the opportunity to respond to these ideas, so that we could publish that response at the same time. In order to accomplish this in a timely manner, we would appreciate hearing from you within the next two weeks.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,

M. Anne Stalker
President

Response from Drs. Harrison and Goldstein

February 9, 2009

Dear Professor Stalker:

Thank you for your letter dated January 29, 2009, about the Academic Plan. We appreciated learning about the Faculty Association Executive’s continued discussion of the plan following Dr. Goldstein’s consultation with your group. We welcome the opportunity to have our letter of reply published in your newsletter, therefore we have replied within the suggested timeframe of two weeks.

We should like to respond to your comments in the order presented in your letter.

1. Consultation Process

We have found the consultative meetings to be a very fruitful effort: many students, faculty and support staff are passionate about the principles in the academic plan, and have been free with their opinions on how the plan should guide the academic direction and resource allocation of our university.

Please find enclosed a summary of the consultation, revision, review and approvals process pertaining to the academic plan as it has unfolded to date, and how we had envisioned it unfolding further.* The feedback that we have gathered to date has been very useful both for our review and for how we might go about drafting the renewed plan.

We wholeheartedly agree with you that it is extremely important that academic staff have multiple opportunities to give feedback. To this end, and as intended, we will share the draft plan online and invite the university community by email to submit their reviews of the draft. Further to your suggestion, in that email we will invite faculty, and others, to convene their own self-organized group discussions about the draft plan and forward their comments to us. This will include suggestions to Deans and Heads to convene appropriately sized groups to discuss, and then put forward, suggestions for improvements to the draft.

2. Focus on Strategic Areas and Institutes

We are in complete support of your commentary in paragraph two of this section, which refers to the guiding purpose of an academic plan. Indeed, those are words that could go directly into the draft plan.

We also heard from many others at the consultation meetings who share your view about how a future academic plan might better guide us by more clearly linking our principles and priorities. We heard that the plan needs to offer, and elaborate on, processes to support those priorities. It was also suggested that the plan should acknowledge the fundamental importance of the core disciplines if there is to be a strong foundation for interdisciplinary initiatives to be successful.

3. Purpose and Measure of Success of Academic Plan

The academic plan will not be a business plan in spirit or intent. We are striving, on behalf of the university community, to make the academic plan a touchstone for the business planning process and other strategic efforts. We will make every effort going forward to clarify the purpose of the academic plan.

We remain committed to a transparent, participatory process as the university develops a refreshed academic plan. The Faculty Association’s contribution to the process is important to the integrity of the plan, and we welcome your comments at any time.

Yours sincerely

Alan Harrison
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Rose Goldstein
Vice-President (Research)

* visit www.ucalgary.ca/tucfa to read the Administration’s summary of Academic Plan consultations

Inspired Service Awards Ceremony

Academic staff and community members gathered on March 3, 2009, to celebrate the recipients of the 2009 Faculty Association Inspired Service Awards. The Faculty Association Awards have been presented since 2000, and honour the unique relationship between academic work and community improvement.

Professor Cathy Ryan (Geoscience/Environmental Science Program) was presented with the Community Service Award, which recognizes a member of the Faculty Association who has provided exceptional service to the community. Awards Committee Chair Donna Coates said that in a field with a demanding degree of research intensity, "Professor Ryan has established that empirical research results are both the byproduct of, and the catalyst for, community-based activities. Professor Ryan's advocacy on watershed issues has encouraged active participation by progressively expanding circles of collaborators."



Community Service Award recipient Professor Cathy Ryan with family and colleagues



Professor Cathy Ryan and Faculty Association President Anne Stalker



Professors Leslie Reid and Larry Lines



Social Sciences Dean Kevin McQuillan and Professor Jim Frideres

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

The winner of the 2009 Recognition Award was Ms. Rachel Ermineskin. The Recognition Award acknowledges a community member whose actions have inspired or supported the scholarly work of academic staff at the University of Calgary. Ms. Ermineskin, a native speaker of Siksika Blackfoot, has been a patient mentor of undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty members, in the Department of Linguistics. Her commitment to an endangered language and to cultural diversity were noted in a letter from a former student, who wrote that "I have asked Rachel to repeat a small set of sentences over and over (and over) while holding an ultrasound transducer to her chin - all in the attempt to see the shape of her tongue on an ultrasound. Crazy things like this are just some of the examples of the work Rachel has done with me."

President Anne Stalker said that the Faculty Association always looks forward to commemorating "such exemplary ambassadors for the pursuit of knowledge, the sharing of discoveries, and the collaborative innovations of academic staff and the community. These values are at the core of the Faculty Association's membership, and I hope that our exposure to the two Inspired Service Award winners will help to inspire other similarly successful endeavors."



Grievance Advisor Eileen Lohka and U of C Senator Marlene LaMontagne



Awards Committee Chair Donna Coates, Recognition Award recipient Ms. Rachel Ermineskin, and Faculty Association President Anne Stalker



Rachel Ermineskin with Sara Johansson and Professors Elizabeth Ritter, John Archibald and Darrin Flynn



U of C presidential matters

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So we are pleased with the decision of the Board of Governors. They have shown themselves to be enlightened and thoughtful in their approach to this issue, an issue of lasting significance to the University of Calgary. We thank them for their willingness to be open to new approaches to these matters.

2. Surveys

Enclosed as an insert in this newsletter are the quantitative results of the survey that we conducted on President Weingarten. I should tell you that this is probably the last Presidential survey of this type that we will be conducting. The reason is that this particular survey engaged the Faculty Association in intense consideration of whether these surveys of the central senior administration were achieving all that we expected of them. The reason for our concern was twofold.

First, we have been told, and our experience confirms this, that many of our members do not really know what is done by the various central senior administrators. Unlike the decanal surveys, in the Presidential and Vice-Presidential surveys, our members may be reporting a general sense of what is happening at the University of Calgary rather than their understanding of the specific job done by the person to whom the survey relates. Of course, to some extent, the President is responsible generally for what goes on at the U of C, so that is not treating him unfairly. However, we also know that this fact prevents many of our members from participating in the survey. They feel they cannot fairly judge whether the President specifically is doing a good job, even though they have strong opinions on the state of the university.

Second, while the quantitative results of these surveys are reported to the membership, the qualitative results under our policy could be seen only by the Executive Director (who saw them only to ensure that the results did not enable identification of any particular respondent or other person), the person the survey related to, and the supervisor of that person. When there is a review committee, the qualitative results are also seen by that committee, but of course in the case of President Weingarten, his appointment was renewed (inappropriately in our view) without

going through such a committee, thereby avoiding this scrutiny. This time, our Executive Director reported to us that she was uncomfortable with that, because there was a significant amount of useful information, ideas and commentary contained in the qualitative results that we should be able to use. However, because the survey pertained to an individual and because of our policy, no one on the Executive or Board of the Association can even see it, let alone use it.

As a result of these concerns, the Board of the Faculty Association recently changed our policies. The decanal surveys will continue essentially unchanged (although there may be more sharing of the results than in the past in order to ensure that we are able to make appropriate use of the information that you are sending to us). However, we have added much more flexibility to the process of conducting other surveys. The idea is to allow us to do general surveys, for instance on the state of the university, rather than requiring us to do surveys relating to specific members of the central administration. This will hopefully encourage more of our members to participate, and will allow us to distribute and otherwise use the results more freely. Where appropriate, we can still survey about individual people and individual issues if we want, with appropriate distribution for the circumstances.

Our thought is that we will want to do one of these surveys quickly, in order to gather your input on the presidential search process. We are hoping that, if you provided us with commentary on President Weingarten that would be relevant to the search process, commentary that I cannot see, you will feel comfortable providing us with similar thoughts, plus anything else you think relevant, in the context of searching for a new President. And, even though the participation in the President's survey was very strong, we are hoping that even more people will participate in order to help inform the selection of a new President. Therefore, this is to warn you that the Faculty Association Executive will be considering how best to get your feedback shortly (probably either this spring or early in the fall) and that we are hoping that you will see the utility of participating in the process so that we can represent your views, and provide needed background to the Presidential Advisory Search Committee. ▲

Admissions suspensions raise concerns about proper process

We have become aware of situations on campus where administrators, without going through the proper collegial processes, have suspended admittance of students to approved programmes. This kind of action will obviously have implications for the long-term viability of the programme and thus has the potential to have a negative impact on the careers of our members and on their control over academic decisions at the U of C. In our view, this is contrary to GFC and governmental procedures, and is likely grievable. At this time of fiscal restraint, we are concerned that this might be seen as a way of controlling costs, and therefore become more widespread. We would ask that you be on the lookout for such ventures.

Is the Faculty Association a “trade union?”

An open letter from the Faculty Association to University Provost Alan Harrison:

February 12, 2009

Dr. Alan Harrison
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Dear Dr. Harrison:

Re: Faculty Association as a “Trade Union”

In some recent discussions and correspondence with your office and others in the Executive Suite, we have heard reference to the Faculty Association as a “trade union.” We thought it would be useful to clarify with you that the Faculty Association is not, in fact, a trade union.

As you are likely aware, we are the exclusive bargaining agent for academic staff at the University, but this status does not come to us from the Labour Act and thus we are not established as a “union.” We are established, as is the University, through the provisions of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*. Our creation is very much linked with the creation of the University, as it comes from the same source.

While some of the powers, duties, and requirements given to the Faculty Association by the Act are similar to those of a union, we believe we have a much broader role and mandate. This role has been shaped by the Act, as well as by the General Faculties Council, the Collective Agreement, and through practices over many years at the University of Calgary. Our role is not merely that of a trade union, but of a representative of the interests of academic staff.

For example, the Faculty Association is involved in many of the decision making processes of the University, which is a function

that is distinct from the role of a traditional trade union. GFC has recognized the important role of the Faculty Association with the APT processes, on the Academic Program Committee, RDPC, on the GFC Steering Committee, and on GFC itself. We have operated as partners within the academic community when serving within the collegial governance processes. The interests of the Association go beyond terms and conditions of employment to include issues of collegial governance, research support, fairness and due process, scholarly integrity, and so on.

We believe that this broader mandate is consistent with the desire of the Legislature in establishing the Association as something other than a union. The system in Alberta generally, and in Calgary in particular, is unique. This is not to diminish the role of any of our sister Faculty Associations in any way, but it is important for the U of C administration to understand the ways in which our unique legal status and the history of our development within the institution has shaped the relationship between the Association and other parts of the University.

I hope this information is useful to you. I encourage you to pass it along to anyone who you feel may benefit from this explanation.

Yours sincerely,

M. Anne Stalker
President

cc. Harvey Weingarten, President
Gail Stephens, Vice-President (Finance and Services)
Rose Goldstein, Vice-President (Research)
Charlene Anderson, General Counsel
Sandy Repic, Assoc. Vice-President (Human Resources)

Paul F. Miller Memorial Bursary

The Faculty Association office has been deeply saddened by the tragic death of the husband of our Executive Director, Sheila Miller. Paul Miller was killed in a car accident on March 5. Paul was a strong supporter of post-secondary education, both through Sheila’s work and in his pride in the accomplishments of their daughter Marisa, who will be graduating with a double degree from the University of Calgary this Spring.

In remembrance of Paul, and with the support of Sheila and Marisa, the Faculty Association’s Board of Directors established the Paul F. Miller Memorial Bursary. For those who wish to make memorial tributes in Paul’s memory, we invite you to send contributions as follows:

By cheque: Cheques made out to “University of Calgary, Paul F. Miller Memorial Bursary”
c/o University of Calgary Central Development Office, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, AB T2N 1N4

By phone: (403) 220-3716

Online: netcommunity.ucalgary.ca/PaulFMiller

The Faculty Association will be matching contributions. Contributions may also be eligible for further matching through the Alberta government’s endowment matching program. ▲

GAZETTE

Board of Directors acclamations

After the February 9, 2009 deadline for nominations to the Board of Directors, three acclamations were declared: a one-year renewal of the term of President Anne Stalker (Law), and three-year terms on the Board of Directors for Professors Eileen Lohka (French, Italian & Spanish) and Liza McCoy (Sociology). As the number of nominations received was less than the number of available seats, the remaining vacancies on the Board of Directors will be filled by one-year *pro-tem* positions.

Dues tax deductible

When preparing your tax returns for 2008, don't forget: the Faculty Association dues and CAUT dues deducted from your pay stubs are tax deductible!

The Faculty Association welcomes the submission of letters to the editor to Faculty.Association@ucalgary.ca. Pieces are selected for publication according to relevance, clarity and available space. Accordingly, the Faculty Association reserves the right whether to publish or edit submissions. Letters and columns must be accompanied by the author's name and telephone number or email address. Unsigned submissions will not be published.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP Thursday, April 30, 2009, 1 - 3 pm

This workshop is open to any Continuing, Initial Term, Limited Term or Contingent Term member of the academic staff. All such individuals are required to prepare a report for consideration by the Department Head (or equivalent), Faculty Promotion Committee, Dean (or equivalent) and General Promotion Committee. This workshop reviews the process of filling out the report, how the report is reviewed by the various individuals and committees, and how to appeal at the various levels.

To register for this workshop, please contact the office by email, Faculty.Association@ucalgary.ca, or by phone, (403) 220-5722. As materials are prepared in advance for use in the workshops, only those who register prior to the date of the workshop will be permitted to attend. While we make every effort to accommodate all individuals, we are constrained by room sizes and encourage you to book early to ensure your spot.

Faculty Association Board of Directors

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Non-Voting Members

John A. Baker Philosophy

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Jennifer Krygier Professional Officer (currently on maternity leave)

Confidentiality Commitment: When an academic staff member contacts the Faculty Association office, they will reach a Faculty Association staff member who will treat the call with the utmost

confidentiality. The elected officers of the Association are not informed of any confidential personal information without the Member's consent.

Office: Education Tower 1436 (403) 220-5722 Faculty.Association@ucalgary.ca www.ucalgary.ca/tucfa

