

QUFA VOICES

Voices in This Issue

- CAMPUS IMAGES:** Nobel Prize Winner Speaks to QUFA, by Ramneek Pooni . . . 1
PRESIDENT'S VOICE: Amalgamation Will Benefit All QUFA Members, by John Holmes . . . 1-2
QUFA EVENTS: Sir John Sulston Speaks on Academic Freedom, by Kelly Shoemaker . . . 2-4
QUFA EVENTS: Doing Academia Differently: the CAUT Biennial Women's Conference, by Ramneek Pooni, Joyce Davidson, Catherine Christie, and Kelly Shoemaker . . . 4-5
FYI: Workload Survey Responses Flood In, by PACC Subcommittee on Workload . . . 5-6
FYI: QUFA Comments on FIPPA, by Gillian F. Barlow . . . 6-7
QUFA PEOPLE: A Tribute to John Holmes, by Jamie Swift . . . 8-9
QUFA OPINIONS: On Comprehensive Examinations (Part 3 of 3), by Leda Raptis . . . 9-10
ANNOUNCEMENTS: The QUFA Bullhorn . . . 10-11

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

Amalgamation Will Benefit All QUFA Members

By John Holmes
President, QUFA



Last spring, when QUFA and the University were completing negotiations for a new contract for Sessional Adjuncts, the parties agreed to discuss amalgamating QUFA's two bargaining units. On 26 March 2007, QUFA and the University administration tentatively agreed to amalgamate the Faculty, Librarian, and Archivist and Sessional Adjunct bargaining units. This agreement is subject to ratification. QUFA will hold a ratification vote separately for each bargaining unit. The Principal or the Board of Trustees is expected to ratify the agreement shortly.

CAMPUS IMAGES

Nobel Prize Winner Speaks to QUFA



Ramneek Pooni

Sir John Sulston, 2002 Nobel Prize winner in Physiology or Medicine for his shared work in Genomics, gave QUFA's 2007 Annual Lecture on Academic Freedom on 19 March. Please see page 2 for a review of Sulston's lecture by Kelly Shoemaker.

Please send your own original campus images to mayr@post.queensu.ca.

For QUFA, the eventual amalgamation of the two units has always been a long-term objective. In universities across Canada, it is not unusual for contract academic staff to be in a different bargaining unit than full-time continuing academic staff. However, in most cases, and unlike the situation at Queen's, the units are represented by different unions. Also, Queen's is probably unique in having contract academic staff in both bargaining units. Currently, for the 2006-2007 academic year, there are 43 Continuing Adjuncts and 96 Term Adjuncts in the Faculty, Librarian, and Archivist bargaining unit, and 406 Sessional Adjuncts in the Sessional Adjunct bargaining unit. Some of our Members move between the two bargaining units depending on their course teaching load in a particular year.

QUFA proposed this amalgamation in order to avoid the duplication involved in bargaining and administering two separate Collective Agreements and to ensure a fair and equitable application of employment provisions to all QUFA Members. The two existing Collective Agreements have many provisions in common, covering such matters as discipline, grievance, academic freedom, harassment, conflict of interest, and non-discrimination. The differences between the two Agreements are largely in the areas of appointments and other personnel procedures, workload and working conditions, and compensation. Some of these differences are justifiable given the nature of the Member's appointments; others are arbitrary and caused by the artificial division of adjuncts into two separate bargaining units.

The current Collective Agreements for both existing bargaining units are

set to expire on 30 April 2008. If amalgamation is approved by the Members of both QUFA bargaining units, the parties intend to bargain for one Collective Agreement which would cover the Members of both existing bargaining units effective 1 May 2008. In preparation for this bargaining, QUFA will consult widely with various groups to ensure that the distinct concerns of Librarians, Archivists, Sessional Adjuncts, Term Adjuncts, Continuing Adjuncts, Tenure-Track Faculty, Tenured Faculty, and Department Heads are addressed.

The QUFA Executive believes that amalgamation will benefit Members of both bargaining units and recommends ratification of the

The amalgamation agreement will be discussed at an open meeting of the QUFA Council of Representatives' meeting on Monday 16 April 2007 from 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm in the John Orr Room in the JDUC. All QUFA Members are welcome to attend and participate in this discussion.

agreement.

The amalgamation agreement will be discussed at an open meeting of the QUFA Council of Representatives' meeting on Monday 16 April 2007 from 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm in the John Orr Room in the JDUC. All QUFA Members are welcome to attend and participate in this discussion.

A ratification vote of each bargaining unit will be conducted electronically the following week. The results will be announced at QUFA's Spring General Meeting on Monday 30 April 2007.

John Holmes can be reached at holmesj@post.queensu.ca

QUFA EVENTS

Sir John Sulston Speaks on Academic Freedom

**By Kelly Shoemaker
Department of Biology**



The QUFA Lecture on Academic Freedom was established to highlight current issues and debates on the topic, and to promote the values of independent thought, open expression, and the dissemination of new ideas to preserve the advancement of knowledge.

John Sulston visited Queen's on 19 March to share his views on intellectual property, and to discuss the issues that evolve when private wealth gained through scientific discovery becomes a priority over ethical pursuits. Sulston shares the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (2002) for discoveries concerning the "genetic regulation of organ development and programmed cell death," using the nematode worm, *Caenorhabditis elegans*, as a model organism. However, it was Sulston's place at the forefront of an international collaboration to sequence the human genome that led him into the fight to establish policies that keep those discoveries in the public domain. In his lecture, he addressed many of the political issues surrounding the sequencing of the human genome and the problems involved in the patenting of genes.

I was invited to interview Sulston to learn more about his academic history, his general views on life, and his opinions on academic freedom. Admittedly, I was initially intimidated by the prospect of interviewing such a scientific luminary. However, his easy-going demeanour and modesty made him extremely approachable. His relaxed attitude is obvious in one of his personal mottos: "I quite like being useful, really." Certainly, Sulston has made himself "useful" in many aspects of science, both with scientific discovery itself, as well as in his pursuits in the development of policy.

From an early age, Sulston had an interest in science. Like many people, he liked taking things apart to figure out how they worked, and for him it was only natural to pursue sciences, such as biology and chemistry, as he continued through his education. The establishment of his scientific career, in his own description, was the result of a series of accidents and opportunities, rather than a carefully developed and directed plan. For example, his work on the nematode worm began through an unpredicted series of personal connections that started and ended in Cambridge. In 1969, Sulston went to the lab of Sydney Brenner, a neurobiologist who was just beginning his investigations on the worm. It was his position with Brenner that marked the beginning of his work which would eventually lead to the Nobel Prize.

It was much later in his scientific career that Sulston began to deal with issues that would ultimately lead to his involvement with scientific policy. In 1993, after many years working on the nematode worm, Sulston became one of the leaders in an international collaboration to sequence the human genome. The human genome holds the fundamental information for human life, and the value of the

knowledge contained within it is enormous. It was during the course of sequencing the human genome that private industry saw opportunities for profit through the patenting of genes. The original idea of patents is that when something is invented, like an audio recorder, someone can own the intellectual property rights to it. The patentee does not own the *idea* of the audio recorder, but just the particular style and substance of the recorder. Because the market is competitive, people are producing new models of recorders all the time. One can design a new recorder based on a new set of principles that can be sub-licensed, and then that person owns the rights to that particular instrument. One of the problems with patents is that the only system currently available, which is not the only conceivable one, is the "exclusive rights patent," which means that if a patent is awarded for a particular

From an early age, Sulston had an interest in science. Like many people, he liked taking things apart to figure out how they worked. . . .

invention, then the patentee has exclusive rights over it for a fixed period of twenty years. In times of rapid research and development, twenty years is a long time. When the rules are "bent" so that patents are awarded not just for inventions, but for scientific discoveries like genes, then the whole process of science cannot advance freely. For example, in an especially notorious case, a private company called Myriad Genetics held two portfolios for BRCA1 and BRCA2, genes which when mutated give rise to breast cancer. Once Myriad was issued the patents for these two genes, they held exclusive control over everything that had to do with the gene, including breast cancer genetic screening, and all possible further discoveries leading to therapy. No other scientific groups could proceed with any research associated with these two genes.

Unlike an audio recorder, a gene is not something that can be invented around. Each gene is necessary and unique. The genome is the basis of life. When patents are issued too readily on scientific discoveries, it leads to an anti-competitive situation where people who "own" the gene can charge whatever they like for their products and control a whole set of results from the given gene. In Sulston's opinion, this makes for bad business, because business thrives when the market is open and everybody can compete freely. It makes for bad science as well, because science thrives by building new work on previous discoveries. If these previous discoveries are not accessible, then scientists cannot discuss, publish, or generate new ideas in that area of research, and the whole process becomes stalled.

The reason given by pharmaceutical companies for wanting to hold such strong patents on genes is based on the notion that they have to invest hundreds of millions of dollars finding therapies, and the only way to make a return on the investment is to protect the basis of the work (i.e., the gene). However, in Sulston's view, the ability to raise funds for a saleable commodity is related to the market, not to the power of the patent. He encourages the move to limit the duration of patents, and also to make them more strictly related to something that is being actively pursued (i.e., process patent) rather than patents on pieces of discovery.

Although the working draft of the human genome sequence was published in 2001, new discoveries about the genome are still coming to light, which means that the issues surrounding intellectual property are not over. For example, in 2006, discoveries in "copy number variation" have added new complexity to the understanding of genomic

variability, and may provide information regarding the variation between individuals, including differences such as disease resistance. If science can understand the genomes of individuals, then physicians could, for example, tailor medical treatments for individuals for the diseases that their genes predict they will develop. However, what laws will protect the genetic privacy of individuals? How will we protect ourselves from private companies looking to exploit our genetic information for personal gain? Once we truly understand the genome, how do we prevent its manipulation to make "better" individuals? The responsibility is with all of us to ensure that the scientific process is motivated by the quest for knowledge and understanding, with the ultimate goal of improving life for everyone and not just for those who have the means to buy or the access to that knowledge and understanding.

Sulston is currently involved with several groups, one of which is a committee of the International Council for Science. The mandate of this organization is to provide support for those scientists whose freedoms have been abused, and to facilitate collaborations and the open exchange of ideas between scientists of all backgrounds and nationalities. The international pursuit of scientific knowledge has the potential to be extremely productive. In his personal life, it seems that Sulston will always be active in a wide variety of things. He says, "The more you know, the more you realize you don't know, and the same is true for seeing things and experiencing things. Exploring, seeing, and trying to understand ... you can never complete it. There is always a lot to do. The notion of ever being bored seems to me impossible."

Kelly Shoemaker can be reached at shoemakk@biology.queensu.ca.

QUFA EVENTS

Doing Academia Differently: the CAUT Biennial Women's Conference

By Ramneek Pooni
Member Services Officer, QUFA

Joyce Davidson
Department of Geography

Catherine Christie
Faculty of Education

Kelly Shoemaker
Department of Biology



What an exciting way to recharge one's batteries.

Four of us attended the CAUT Biennial Women's Conference in Ottawa from 22 February to 24 February. The conference explored three themes: Work-Life Balance, Pay Equity, and Activism in the Academy. Attention was paid to intersections--Aboriginal, colour, LGBTQ, ability, and so on--and on differential impact.

We learned what some universities are already doing, and the discussions generated new ideas that might be pursued. To share the excitement, here are some of the ideas we found particularly interesting and which we hope to implement at Queen's.

Work-Life Balance

Statistics are quite clear that women are under-represented in academic

positions, and on average, they earn less than their male counterparts. Much of this inequity could possibly be explained by how men and women achieve their work-life balance. Women may feel that accepting less pay for work, or by accepting part-time work, removes some of the performance pressure from the job, pressures that include constant evaluation by peers and a culture that glorifies and rewards over-work. Women can then continue to invest time and energy into other important aspects of life, including caring for their family. It is becoming increasingly clear that male academic staff, and particularly younger ones, are now also very concerned about achieving work-life balance and actually take advantage of such opportunities as parental leave.

Many questions arose out of this presentation during the break-out sessions: Can there be public policy on work-life balance? What are the demographics of high-risk work-life balance issues? (For example, how is work-life balance different for single-income families than for double-income families, for people with low vs. high job security, and for those with low vs. high number of dependent family members?) How can we get workload language into Collective Agreements? What kind of new standards can we set to improve the balance?

Obvious solutions are shorter work hours each day, better quality of child and elder care, support for upgrading skills, better employment security, and better parental leave conditions. The goal is to create more support, control, and predictability. QUFA would love to hear from you if you have suggestions that would be helpful to consider when bargaining for the new Collective Agreement which will take effect on 1 May 2008.

Pay Equity

There are a variety of ways that pay can vary for people in academia. For continuing faculty, whether tenure-track or adjunct, it starts with salary negotiations at hire. Then there are discretionary increases in salary, such as anomaly adjustments and merit pay, with the starting salary as the base for calculation. The startling fact is that, combined with changes in the market, returns on investment, and the age at first hire, an arguably minor difference in starting salary of \$1000 can yield a \$280,000 difference in career earnings. It is important, therefore, for new faculty to get in touch with their faculty association (if there is one at the university) before finalizing the offer to get a sense of a reasonable starting point for salary negotiation.

Strong arguments were also made for the abolishment of merit pay regimes because of how gender differences are amplified by starting salary and merit differences. Interestingly, wage inequity (vs. pay equity) could be greatly reduced if there were fewer bands in the salary system, if bandwidths with a base and ceiling salary were defined, and if merit were eliminated altogether. The anomalies approach helps identify and rectify past injustices, but it does not look to nor remedy the source of the problem to help create a more equitable salary regime. Then there are the questions surrounding the value of academic work itself, and what the salaries and merit expectations are for tenure-track faculty as against adjunct faculty, between disciplines, for certain areas or types of scholarship, and so on. None of these issues are easy to resolve, as we are so invested in the regimes we currently have, but as other universities have abolished merit, for example, it is clearly not impossible to change.

Activism in the Academy

Many suggestions emerged from this strand of the conference that were potentially valuable. One idea that seemed to be particularly helpful was the idea of organizing workshops for newer women faculty and staff. Workshops on negotiation skills, for example, might be very valuable for QUFA Members (especially pre-tenured, and not just women) when discussing the following year's teaching load or service requirements with colleagues or unit heads.

The flip side is that QUFA would likely come into closer contact with more and different Members, encouraging and enabling involvement with a faculty association that exists to help faculty, but which might seem mysterious or intimidating to those who do not really grasp the full extent of how it can support faculty. It is important for QUFA to communicate with its Membership about the work that the association does--perhaps especially around bargaining time. We could all benefit from the chance to learn more about what might be expected of us, and what we might expect of others. Moreover, a faculty association that actively involves as well as helps and informs its newer Members will be better placed to keep up to date with and respond to their concerns.

CAUT has pledged to deliver a Women's Conference every other year. The last one was five years ago, so let us hope they hold to that promise. Addressing women's issues is in and of itself important, but it is also important because more fairness for women often helps lead the way to more fairness for all.

Ramneek Pooni can be reached at poonir@post.queensu.ca.

FYI

Workload Survey Responses Flood In

By the Political Action and Communication Committee (PACC) Subcommittee on Workload



As many of you will be aware, the Workload Subcommittee has begun the process of conducting surveys in

preparation for the next round of bargaining. Response rates to the first survey have been very high. Among faculty Members, we received 274 responses out of a potential 770, or 36%, matching exactly the response rate for surveys conducted with Adjuncts (50/139). Among librarians and archivists, the rate was even higher, at 29 responses out of 45, or 64%.

The results of all surveys can be found on the QUFA Web site at http://www.qufa.ca/workload/flabu_wl_2007/workload.php, and we encourage you to take a look.

The process of survey analysis is currently in the very early stages. There are many more pages of extensive written comments than we could have hoped for, and it will take time to do them justice. We aim to present more detailed reports of survey results to our Members in the coming weeks and months, and for the time being, merely to offer some brief and preliminary reflections on some of the more immediately striking responses to the first and largest survey completed to date.

It is clear at a glance that many QUFA Members are working at--or even beyond--full capacity. They are stretched to the limit and struggling to maintain a pace that is clearly unsustainable. Faculty responses to

question 6 reveal that 45% work more than 56 hours per week, and that almost 1 in 5 of us work 66 hours per week or more. Fully 1 in 5 (21.4%) have sought professional help for stress, and a further 17.7% have thought about doing so (question 20). More than half (55%) of respondents report experiencing workload stress that is "high" or "very high" during the first half of this term (question 19). This statistic raises serious concerns about the working lives and conditions of our Members, many of whom report struggling to negotiate increased expectations in relation to teaching, service and research (questions 7, 8, 9, and especially 21).

While actual time spent engaged in teaching and service-related activities has increased markedly for most Members, time spent engaged in research has not increased for the majority (question 10). In fact, research time has *decreased* for 1 in 4 faculty Members, which perhaps speaks to the increasing demands placed on our time by teaching and service commitments. It is worthy of note that half of respondents spend more than the generally assumed "20%" of their work time on service requirements (question 16). It seems that the downloading of administrative duties, lack of administrative support, and increased reporting requirements represent an increasing drain on faculty time and resources (questions 13 and 21).

A second round of brief follow-up surveys is now available for completion, and we hope to receive similarly high responses. These results will also be posted on the QUFA Web site as soon as they are available.

Please contact us with any questions, queries or concerns about workload issues, and thank you for your support with these surveys.

PACC can be reached at qufa@post.queensu.ca.

FYI

QUFA Comments on FIPPA

By Gillian F. Barlow
University Records Manager
Queen's University Archives



As of 10 June 2006, Ontario universities have been subject to the Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). (<http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca>). The legislation already covered municipalities, community colleges, school boards, along with government ministries and other publicly funded bodies.

Like other Ontario universities, Queen's had had voluntary guidelines in place since 1994, based on a Council of Ontario Universities format, with provisions for access to information and protection of privacy similar to those of the legislation. Commitment from the universities to the principles of access and privacy proved to be limited when tested in 2004 by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (see OCUFA, *"Restricted Entry: Access to Information at Ontario Universities,"* Toronto: 2004). Demands for inclusion of universities under the Act increased not only from this organization, but from politicians, media, and student associations alike. Public expectations tended to rise with each high-profile breach of privacy reported in the media, and these breaches are on the increase.

Now, university administrations and faculty alike will be required to comply with the standards and practices set out in the Act, regulations, and policies of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. The legislation is twofold in intent and broad in scope, based on principles

of accountability and transparency. On the one hand, it covers the right of the public to access information under the custody or control of the University. At the same time, the Act provides for the right of individuals, whose personal information is collected and used by the University, to control their own information and to expect protection of their privacy.

There are some notable exclusions from the Act. The faculty associations' own records are not subject to FIPPA. Personal information older than thirty years after the death of an individual is also excluded. Most importantly, information pertaining to employee relationships and labour relations records collected and used by the University as a designated body, in which the institution would have an interest, had at one time been covered by the legislation, but most of this coverage was withdrawn under the Harris government.

FIPPA controls all "university records" in any media including e-mail, videos, recorded voice messages, as well as paper and electronic documents. All information recorded in the course of carrying out any university business is considered a university record. However, most information pertaining to the faculty Members' own academic research and teaching materials is exempt, although the legislation does allow the disclosure of the subject matter of research and the amount of funding received by a researcher:

This Act does not apply,

(a) to a record respecting or associated with research conducted or proposed by an employee of an educational institution or by a person associated with an educational institution; or

(b) to a record of teaching materials collected, prepared or

maintained by an employee of an educational institution or by a person associated with an educational institution for use at the educational institution.

Aside from the exclusions, there are also certain exemptions to access to information under the Act, and these exemptions fall into two main categories--mandatory and discretionary. The main mandatory exemption, of course, is that of disclosure of personal information. Sections 12-20 provide for the Principal (or a delegate) to exercise discretion, under certain specific circumstances, to deny access to records in part or in whole. For instance, the Act stipulates that the University may refuse requests for

information relating to specific tests or testing procedures ... that are to be used for an educational purpose, if disclosure could reasonably be expected to prejudice the use or results of the tests or testing procedures.

Regarding the definition of what constitutes personal information, information such as name, telephone number, e-mail address, or location can be considered as business information when disclosed for business purposes or as part of conditions of employment. Similarly, opinions (which are normally considered personal information under the control of an individual), when given as part of a routine business activity--at a committee meeting, for instance--are not considered the personal property of the individual, and therefore are subject to disclosure.

All information that potentially may be used to identify an individual or breach the privacy of that individual is considered "personal information" under FIPPA. The list is long and includes much besides name and address, age, race, gender, religion, marks, etc. The basic privacy principles on which the Act is based require that personal information be collected and used openly and fairly and with the knowledge and consent of the individual. The purpose or purposes for the collection of personal information must be clearly defined on collection forms and the individual informed of its use and retention.

The implications and requirements of

The implications and requirements of the new access and privacy regime will demand greater care in information use and practices of all university employees. For instance, when personal information is being faxed, e-mailed, or carried on memory sticks, security precautions now need to be taken.

the new access and privacy regime will demand greater care in information use and practices of all university employees. For instance, when personal information is being faxed, e-mailed, or carried on memory sticks, security precautions now need to be taken. Care must also be taken when providing references to students, and a consent form must be completed and held by the faculty Member.

University records that document a decision about an individual must be retained for a minimum of one year:

Personal information that has been used by an institution shall be retained by the institution for

at least one year after use unless the individual to whom the information relates consents to its earlier disposal.

The destruction of records also needs to be controlled and documented:

Where personal information is in the custody or under the control of an institution, no person shall destroy it without the authorization of the head.

Formal requests for access to information are made in writing through the FIPPA coordinator at the University (<http://www.queensu.ca/accessandprivacy/index.php>). Individual faculty

Members may make requests for records held by the University. The identity of requestors will be kept in confidence. Requests have a thirty-day time limit for response, and exceptions are limited. Faculty, as generators or keepers of records, need to be prepared to provide information under such constraints.

Appeals regarding responses to access requests and complaints about breaches of privacy are made to the Information Privacy Commissioner (IPC) of Ontario. Orders and judicial reviews made regarding such appeals are available on the IPC's Web site (<http://www.ipc.on.ca/>), and that of the Access and Privacy Office of the Ministry of Government Services (<http://www.accessandprivacy.gov.on.ca/english/act/>), as are a number of definitions, guides, pamphlets, explanatory and educational materials.

Gillian F. Barlow can be reached at gfb@post.queensu.ca.

QUFA PEOPLE

A Tribute to John Holmes

By Jamie Swift
School of Business



Union boss. A rather derogatory term often used to refer to the leaders of labour organizations. The

local daily here in Kingston recently used it twice in a story about the company union at the Invista nylon plant.

No matter that labour leaders are elected. For the press, it is still “boss,” with all its bare-knuckle, authoritarian associations. Are we likely to see a “Queen’s boss cuts ribbon” headline over a *Whig-Standard* story about Principal Hitchcock opening a new campus facility?

That is what came to mind when I was asked to write a profile of QUFA leader John Holmes. I knew that the veteran Geography professor had served two terms as department head, so I asked one of the people who really *did* call him boss about the man. What was he like to work for?

“Fabulous and fair,” said Joan Knox, who has twenty-eight years in the Geography office where she and three other administrators keep things going. “He gave you all the time in the world even when you knew he didn’t have all the time in the world.” Fairness is an important principle for Holmes, who was serving as Geography head when QUFA became the certified bargaining unit for full-time faculty, librarians, and archivists in 1995. For him, a union is

not just about solving individual problems. It is a matter of being a voice for the Membership at large. “Certification has made an enormous difference at Queen’s. It’s made things much fairer and more transparent.”

Holmes arrived in Kingston from the English midland county of Derbyshire, a wellspring of Luddite protests by skilled textile artisans that the historian Eric Hobsbawm famously called “collective bargaining by riot.” His mother was a cotton spinner, his father a framework knitter. He was the first in his family to attend university--part of the first generation of English working-class children to do so in any numbers. Having completed his undergraduate

Fairness is an important principle for Holmes, who was serving as Geography head when QUFA became the certified bargaining unit for full-time faculty, librarians, and archivists in 1995. For him, a union is not just about solving individual problems. It is a matter of being a voice for the Membership at large.

and Masters work at Sheffield, Holmes and his wife Angharad moved to the American midwest, to Ohio State University, a football school and a hotbed of discontent during the turbulent 1960s. That and the Vietnam war were enough to attract the couple to Kingston at a time when, he recalls, “there were still political choices and the sense that you could influence them in Canada.”

A spatial economic modeller who was spending his time crunching the numbers on urban transportation patterns, Holmes arrived at Queen’s in 1971, towards the end of the growth spurt in faculty hiring. It took over ten years to get tenure during those informal days, even though contract faculty like him were

shouldering much of the burden of departmental administration. Indeed, by 1980, a third of the Geography Department was on contract. By the time he did get tenure, John and Angharad were the parents of three boys, all born in Kingston and raised in the semi-rural precincts of what was then Pittsburgh Township. The English geographer, appropriately enough, had gained a strong sense of place. He got involved in the co-operative housing movement and the first Ph.D. Thesis he supervised was a study of 1960s social movements in local politics. It resulted in the monograph *Democracy in Kingston* by Richard Harris.

By the 1980s, Holmes’s research interests had changed as he became increasingly interested in political economy, particularly industrial innovation and the role of labour in the automotive sector. Always keenly interested in his students, in 1991 he received the Frank Knox award for teaching excellence, the highest teaching award given by Queen’s students.

Having studied union activity in the Canadian auto sector and grown up in a union household, Holmes may be aware of a the tried-and-true management strategy, “You make ‘em, we take ‘em.” That is when bosses (the real kind) who watch the union local carefully spot an up-and-coming shop steward, someone who knows his or her way around the contract and is being groomed for labour leadership. Savvy managers quickly move to hire such activists because they make great supervisors.

Holmes’s career pattern at Queen’s turned this logic around. He had put in two terms running the Geography

Department before he became President of QUFA--immediately after he stepped down as Geography head in 2004. He had long believed that the old faculty association should bargain collectively with the university. "I had always had a strong interest in QUFA," he recalls. "Back in the 1980s, I was part of a group interested in having it become a union."

Since assuming office, Holmes has continued to press his belief that a union has to be much more than a grievance processing machine. "Of course, our first job is to protect and represent our Members in the face of any unfair practices," he explains. "But we always have to keep pressing the administration to improve the conditions under which the Members work."

Homes is a slow-talking fellow, much given to long pauses before he responds to questions. Without sounding at all pompous, he manages to use words like "penultimate."

Angharad, his life partner, feels that this measured and articulate form of expression springs from his upbringing. He did not come from a family of intellectuals. He did come from people who did a lot of thinking. Not, perhaps, bad preparation for the academy. "He's not a shoot-from-the-hip type," she says. "The educational system we grew up with taught us to think and reflect and write carefully." Joan Knox, his longtime assistant, agrees. Her insight also speaks to an enviable ideal: "Holmes is very open-minded and never pre-judges things. I was always talking to a man who listened to every word I said."

Jamie Swift is an adjunct professor in the School of Business. His most recent book is Hydro: The Decline and Fall of Ontario's Electric Empire. He can be reached at jswift6@sympatico.ca.

QUFA OPINIONS

On Comprehensive Examinations

(Part 3 of 3)

By Leda Raptis
Department of Microbiology and Immunology
Department of Pathology



In the first part of her article on comprehensive examinations, published in the

December 2006 number of QUFA Voices, Leda Raptis presented her view of the general philosophy behind comprehensive examinations. In the second part, published in the January-February 2007 number of QUFA Voices, she outlined and challenged several rationales for keeping comprehensive examinations as part of Ph.D. programs. In the final instalment of her article, Raptis offers some final observations and suggestions about comprehensive examinations in general.

Some Suggestions

I would like to outline some suggestions based on what I have read. Different departments and universities have very different regulations governing comprehensive examinations. At some universities, students have to write essays that they defend orally, but often it is an expanded version of their projects. Andy Leger of the Centre for Teaching and Learning suggested that when a student's committee meets to decide whether he or she may take a "mini Masters" degree, at that time they can define the field and set appropriate boundaries. In the Humanities especially, examiners often give students a reading list of books that they have to know. In the

case of the sciences, they often tell students to review the material of a course (or several courses) they have taken.

At Princeton, the exam is eighteen months after students begin their degree. The first part is like our "mini Masters," where students present whatever results they have, discuss their importance, and answer questions about their project and what they are planning to do. For the second part, they are given a paper related to their project and they are asked questions about it. I spoke with Dr Jane Flint, who was graduate coordinator (and my old post-doctoral supervisor), and she said that out of the last twenty students who took it, three failed the first part (which is like our "mini Masters) and had to do it again. She said that sometimes students fail both parts, but it is rare. I think the reason that they may fail the part on their project might be because, at Princeton, students have to do rotations: for the first year, they go from lab to lab, they take courses, and they are not sure of their project yet. Therefore, there is not enough time at eighteen months to get acquainted with their project and to produce some results.

In the Biology department at McGill, the examination is not called *comprehensive* in that it does not attempt to examine all areas of Biology. The examination is called *qualifying* because its purpose is to see if the student can qualify for a Ph.D. It is taken at sixteen months into the Ph.D. program, at the latest. Students who have done a Masters at the same lab have to take it eight months into the Ph.D. The exam is oral, but if the student fails, then the second time it is a written, three-hour, supervised examination.

I also got the booklet with instructions about the MacMaster comprehensive examinations, but they are now overhauling their examinations too.

There is some literature advocating the abolition of comprehensive examinations. However, I think we should keep them, but mainly to provide a genuine learning experience for students, since as a screening tool they are almost useless. The two are not the same thing. A screening tool is considered poor if it does not screen (i.e., if it does not differentiate between good and weak students and does not weed out anybody). However, even if everybody passes, it can be a valuable learning experience. Comprehensive examinations can be an opportunity for the student to review and integrate material from many courses. However, the student must be given clear-cut instructions and the areas should be defined clearly.

Finally, I would like to say that I sincerely think that the Centre for Teaching and Learning can help examiners a lot in formulating the comprehensive examinations. In the past, I consulted them many times for all sorts of teaching questions, and I have found them to be very helpful. They do not necessarily know every departments' material inside-out, of course, but they can help departments a lot on how to teach it by asking the right questions to get examiners thinking--to bring out the *teacher* in them. To formulate an exam, of course, it is important to know the material, but this is far from enough; there is a lot of thinking and soul-searching required on top of it.

Remember, a good Olympic athlete does not necessarily make a good Olympic coach!

Leda Raptis can be reached at raptisl@post.queensu.ca.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The QUFA Bullhorn



Help QUFA Make a Difference for You and for Queen's!

In the process, make new friends, expand your University networks, and learn about how the University works!

The Queen's University Faculty Association (QUFA) invites you to become a QUFA volunteer during the 2007-2008 academic year.

Help QUFA make a difference for you and for Queen's. In the process, make new friends, expand your University networks, and learn about how the University works! QUFA invites you to become a QUFA volunteer during the 2007-2008 academic year. . . . Service to QUFA counts as Service to the University on your annual report to your Dean.

FLABU

Service to QUFA counts as Service to the University on your annual report to your Dean (see Article 7.5.4 in the FLABU agreement).

Choices range from ongoing committees to special caucuses:

- Become an observer on the Board of Trustees or a Senate Committee
- Join the Political Action and Communications or Grievance Committee
- Explore Executive Committee positions (e.g., Vice President)
- Take a turn as your unit's Council Representative.

- Get involved with Bargaining Activities
 - FLABU Bargaining Team
 - FLABU Advisory Committees for Compensation and Benefits; for Non-Economic Issues
 - FLABU Workgroups on Workload; Intellectual Property; Research Ethics; Accommodation for Disabilities
 - FLABU caucuses for Adjuncts; Non-Renewable Appointees; Junior Faculty; Family-Friendly Provisions; Equity-Seeking Groups

SABU

Service to QUFA counts as Service to the University (see Article 7.3.1 in the SABU agreement).

Choices range from ongoing committees to special caucuses:

- Become an observer on the Board of Trustees or a Senate Committee
- Join the Political Action and Communications or Grievance Committee
- Explore Executive Committee positions (e.g., Co-Chair of the SA JCAA)
- Take a turn as the Sessional Council Representative
- Get involved with Bargaining Activities
 - SABU Bargaining Team
 - SABU Advisory Committees and Caucuses for Compensation and Benefits; for Non-Economic Benefits;

Appointment Issues;
Workload; Equity Issues;
Accommodation of
Disabilities.

In 2007-2008 we will be recruiting interested Members from both bargaining units to serve on special committees or caucuses to help with negotiations for new collective agreements the Sessional Adjunct Bargaining Unit (SABU) and the Faculty, Librarian and Archivist Bargaining Unit (FLABU) - as both current collective agreements expire on April 30, 2008.

The length and frequency of meetings for each position varies between a few meetings a year to higher levels of intensity for Executive Committee or Bargaining Team Members.

The choice is yours.

Please do not hesitate to contact Elaine Berman (qufa@post.queensu.ca) or Ramneek Pooni (poonir@post.queensu.ca) for more information.

Come Out and Socialise at QUFA Pub Evenings!



Every second week, Members of QUFA get together in the Henderson Lounge at the Grad Club from

4.30 pm to 6.00 pm for QUFA Pub evenings.

Come on out for a drink, something to eat, and some stimulating conversation with your fellow QUFA Members!

QUFA Pub evenings will now take place on different evenings of the week to enable even more people to participate.

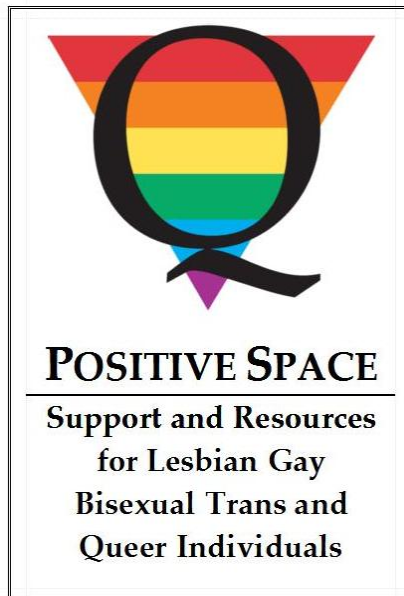
Here are the tentative dates for QUFA Pub evenings this term:

- Thursday 11 January 2007
- Friday 26 January 2007
- Monday 12 February 2007
- Tuesday 27 February 2007
- Wednesday 14 March 2007
- Thursday 29 March 2007
- Friday 13 April 2007

The first 20 QUFA Members to show up get a free drink on QUFA! Look for your host wearing a QUFA button.

For more information about QUFA Pubs, please contact QUFA at qufa@post.queensu.ca.

Get Involved with the Positive Space Program!



Have you seen these stickers round campus? Have you been wondering about the Positive Space Program and what it does?

The purpose of the Positive Space Program is to identify and encourage the development of positive spaces within the Queen's community.

Positive spaces are locations in which sexual and gender identity is affirmed and individuals can receive support and information on lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) issues.

Would you like to participate in the Program? Come to an Information Session! Information Sessions are scheduled for the following date this term:

**Wednesday 16 May 2007
12.00 pm - 2.00 pm.**

To attend an Information Session, just complete the online questionnaire at: <http://www.queensu.ca/humanrights/questionnaire.htm>. Further details about the Session will then be forwarded to you.

Positive Space does make a difference!

For more information about the Positive Space Program, please contact Julie Darke at jd29@post.queensu.ca.

Contribute to the Next Number of QUFA Voices!



The deadline for submissions to the next number of QUFA Voices is:

31 May 2007

Let your QUFA voice be heard!

Please send your submissions to mayr@post.queensu.ca.

Please send your QUFA-related announcements to mayr@post.queensu.ca.