

# QUFA VOICES

## Special Bargaining Issue

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### PRESIDENT'S VOICE

## QUFA Continues to Bargain for a New Collective Agreement

By Peter Dacin  
 President, QUFA



As we report in our *Bargaining Alert!* notices, our bargaining team continues to propose new or revised articles for the Collective Agreement

targeted at issues of quality, both quality in the workplace and the quality of the education we deliver.

While the Administration does not always feel as enthusiastic about our proposals, QUFA stands firmly behind these proposals as an important way of countering any deterioration in the quality of education and our working conditions.

In this issue of *QUFA Voices*, we

report on the issue of quality and the role it must play in the current negotiations for a new Collective Agreement.

As you know, *QUFA Voices* is also an important vehicle for Members to express their views on various issues that are important to the Queen's community. In a recent *Bargaining Alert!*, we reported on the Administration's rejection of QUFA's proposed article relating to accommodations of faculty with disabilities. As a follow-up, in this issue of *QUFA Voices*, we publish the responses of two of our Members to this news. Accommodation to ensure equitable working conditions must be an important part of any discussion about standing up for quality at Queen's.

On 27 March 2008, our Chief Negotiator, Marvin Baer, is convening a Special General Meeting to update all Members on what is happening in the current round of collective bargaining. Details about the location and time appear in this issue of *QUFA Voices*.

We hope to see everyone there.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

## SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING



Marvin Baer, our Chief Negotiator, will be convening a Special General meeting to update

you about the progress in bargaining on the priority issues that will have been brought to the table by that time: workload, equity, accommodation, and adjuncts.

Please drop in to listen and to raise your questions and concerns.

Sandwiches and cold beverages will be provided.

Here is the time and location of the Special General Meeting:

Thursday 27 March 2008  
 12.00 p.m. – 1.30 p.m.  
 Robert Sutherland Room, JDUC

QUFA OPINIONS

## Barriers to Accommodation Limit Productivity

By Audrey Kobayashi  
Department of Geography



QUFA is bargaining to strengthen Members' rights to accommodation for disability. This is

important, since it recognizes that disability can happen to anyone and is often acquired over our working years. Accommodation is not special treatment; it is just creating the conditions so that all people can work at their full potential. This is in the best interest of everyone at the university.

Accommodation for disability is about removing barriers that prevent employees from working at their optimal productivity. When I experienced disability and needed accommodation, I spent a tremendous number of hours doing the research and making requests for adaptive tools so that I could simply do my job. The time I invested in developing my own accommodation did not maximize my time or my potential. This burden should not be on the employee, since most people don't know what their maximum accommodation is and what tools could help them achieve it. I want the university to grapple with this issue of optimum accommodation, since I believe it is in all of our best interests to maximize our productivity. This means providing professional expertise, like an occupational therapist, to identify barriers and ensure an optimal accommodation takes place. QUFA's accommodation proposals make the principle of accommodation standardized and transparent.

Barriers to accommodation are often as much attitudinal as they are physical. A statement in the collective agreement tells everyone that there is commitment to removing *all* these barriers. It serves an informative and educative function if there is better understanding of what constitutes a disability and what accommodation means. The agreement can spell out the process and criteria for evaluating the need for accommodation and, in this way, reduce confusion and actually prevent disagreements and grievances.

The Administration has publicly expressed its support for the principles of accessibility and accommodation. I am mystified that they are hesitant to express these principles transparently in the collective agreement. We need to standardize communication so that everyone understands the process by which we arrive at optimal accommodation. Every accommodation is personalized to an individual's own disability, so the collective agreement can only standardize so much. But language in the collective agreement can help ensure that every faculty member has a fair, transparent process. These proposals are in the self-interest of everyone at Queen's.



**Audrey Kobayashi (above) and Linda Campbell wish to see clearer language in the new collective agreement about accommodation for disability.**

QUFA OPINIONS

## A Clearer Process Will Improve Accommodation

By Linda Campbell  
Departments of Environmental Studies and Biology



It is important that we address accommodation of disability in the collective agreement.

Queen's has made strides towards improving this process, but more work is needed. Each employee should not have to reinvent the wheel. We each lose productive time with our students, our teaching, and our research as we try to navigate the system, learning about available resources through the grapevine rather than through a clear system.

Language in the collective agreement can ensure that accommodation is effectively implemented. We need a clear process so that everyone understands Queen's policy and who is responsible for instituting it. We need accountability in this process so that the burden does not fall on individual employees.

Language in the collective agreement will lay out expectations for attitude and cooperation. It will create a welcome dialogue. My being deaf is not the problem. My biggest barrier is other people's attitude towards my deafness and their willingness to work together to accommodate it. I have been very fortunate in the accommodation I've received at Queen's. But there is much we can do to raise awareness and improve the efficiency of the process, so that disability accommodation can be meaningful and effective. This starts with negotiating language in our collective agreement.

QUFA OPINIONS

## Quality Matters to Faculty

By Roberta Lamb  
Department of Music



As we negotiate our collective agreement with the Administration, we need to simultaneously stand

up for quality at Queen's and to pressure the province to increase funding it provides to universities.

The 2008 provincial budget is fast approaching. It is time once again for Ontario's faculty and academic librarians to come together and voice their concerns to government about threats to quality education, like growing student-faculty ratios, workload, and increasing class sizes.

Our provincial organization, OCUFA, has launched a Quality Matters campaign to ensure funding for universities is a priority in the 2008 provincial budget. *Your participation is critical* if we are to influence the government to provide the financial resources we need to give Ontario students the quality education they deserve.

Governments sometimes move on the basis of doing what is right and what is good for the long-term benefit of the province. However, in most instances, governments respond to what they see as public demand. It is time to let the government and opposition know that providing universities with the operating and capital funding that they require is not only the right thing to do, but also the politically wise course of action.

One thing that you can do today is visit the Quality Matters Web site:

[www.quality-matters.ca](http://www.quality-matters.ca)

The Quality Matters Web site includes background information and research. But perhaps most importantly, it has an action centre that will automatically put you in contact with your local MPP. You will find a draft letter asking your MPP to support post-secondary education. You are encouraged to amend this letter to reflect your own experience here at Queen's.

The success of the Quality Matters campaign depends on your involvement. Certainly there is strength in numbers. With faculty across the province voicing their concerns together, we can use our collective strength to advocate for improved higher education funding.

QUFA OPINIONS

## Standing Up for Quality

By Mary Louise Adams  
School of Kinesiology and Health Studies

and Susan Fitzgibbon  
QUFA Member Services Officer



Student-faculty ratios at Queen's have risen by over 18% during the past ten years (weighted, excluding

bridges).<sup>1</sup> Faculty members are teaching more students in bigger lectures and bigger seminars. It is no longer unusual at this university for "small" seminars and tutorials to have thirty or more students.

Larger classes mean more of the administrative work associated with teaching—more e-mails, more requests for reference letters, more forms and requests for accommodation—and less attention for individual students. Many students graduate without having the chance

to engage on a personal level with a member of faculty. This is not a mark of the high quality undergraduate education for which Queen's is known.

Graduate students have also experienced the effects of increasing student-faculty ratios. Over the past ten years, the population of graduate students at Queen's has grown by 40.9%, to 2,943 in 2006-2007. The number of graduate students will continue to grow as part of the university's commitment to meet provincial growth targets.

Without a corresponding increase in the number of faculty members available to supervise, the quality of supervision our students receive will inevitably suffer. They will learn in larger classes, they will have less access to equipment and other facilities. They will have less opportunity for the one-on-one discussions that are the basis of careful, effective supervision.

QUFA Members are concerned about the quality of education we are able to offer our students. Faculty members have worked hard over recent years to maintain Queen's educational standards despite steady increases in workload that have arisen from an inadequate faculty complement. But this situation cannot continue. QUFA's bargaining proposals offer concrete ways to improve the quality of education at Queen's.

Join us at a Special General Meeting on 27 March 2008 at 12.00 p.m. in the Robert Sutherland Room of the JDUC to hear from QUFA's Chief Negotiator about the progress of bargaining and what QUFA has proposed to stand up for quality at Queen's. A light lunch will be provided.

<sup>1</sup>Queen's University, *Report on the Annual Budget 2007-2008*.