



QUFA VOICES

Your Queen's University Faculty Association Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S VOICE

We Have a New Conservative Government in Ontario

Part 2: What does the Conservative government have in mind for the university sector in Ontario?

By Kayll Lake
President, QUFA

The Ontario government released its fall economic statement "A Plan for the People" on 15 November 2018.¹ Not surprisingly, its central theme is the need to create "efficiencies" to limit government spending.

However, not all news is bad—yet. As regards "Creating Efficiencies in the Pension Sector," the statement says:

The government is committed to improving the pension system for the university sector. A new JSPP [Joint-Sponsored Pension Plan] is a means of obtaining efficiencies of scale, improved investment opportunities, and savings in plan administration. The new JSPP would allow universities to focus on their core mandate of providing high-quality education for students rather than diverting resources to managing their single-employer pension plans. Based on the shared risk structure between plan members and employers, it is expected that this newly

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Honouring John Smol



Jordan Morelli

This past October, QUFA hosted a special lecture and reception to honour Professor John Smol (Biology), winner of the 2018 CAUT Lee Lorch Award for Excellence in Teaching, Research, and Service. John gave a talk entitled "A Crisis in Science Literacy and Communication: Does Reluctance to Engage the Public Make Academic Scientists Complicit?" to a receptive audience of QUFA Members and other members of the Queen's community. Congratulations, John!

established plan would be treated similarly to other broader public-sector, solvency-exempt JSPPs following a successful conversion and a request from the newly established university plan.

Key here is the "solvency-exempt" provision, a prerequisite for a healthy Queen's budget moving forward. This part of the economic statement is clear, and it appears to be good news.

However, we now descend into less clear areas, which could well pose serious issues for us. In the section titled "A Renewed Approach to Managing Compensation," the statement says:

The government values the collective bargaining process and is committed to working with public-sector employers and bargaining agents to ensure negotiated agreements support service transformation and drive

SAVE THE DATE QUFA Fall General Meeting

The QUFA fall general meeting will take place:

**Wednesday 12 December 2018
1.15 p.m.
The Auditorium, Ellis Hall**

The order of the day will be reviewing the consent process for converting to the University Pension Plan.

All Members of the QUFA bargaining unit (everyone covered by the collective agreement) are welcome to join. Only Members of the Association can vote on governance issues. Membership is free and confidential, and can be processed online, here:

<https://qufa.ca/member-services/membership-form/>

productivity improvements. Moving forward, managing compensation costs represents a key element in the government's plan to restore sustainability to the province's finances, and is an important step in making government more efficient and effective. As an initial step, provincial agencies will now be required to obtain approval of their bargaining mandates and ratification of collective agreements. This requirement will

apply to agencies with collective agreements that expire on or after 31 December 2018. This requirement will allow the government to better manage the estimated \$2.6 billion that provincial agencies spend each year on compensation, and align with broader efforts to ensure that all agencies are relevant, efficient, effective, and provide value for money. Looking ahead, the government is also exploring additional opportunities to expand collective bargaining oversight to other areas of the broader public sector.

It is not entirely clear what "provincial agencies" are, but it is entirely reasonable to suspect that universities are not in this group. It is also entirely reasonable to suspect that universities are in "the broader public sector," so stay tuned for direct government interference.

Also of interest is the section titled "Free speech on campus." Specifically, we find:

Colleges and universities should be places for open discussion and debate. This is why the government is taking immediate action to protect free speech, and respect the open exchange of ideas and opinions on every Ontario publicly funded university and college campus. Colleges and universities will have until 1 January 2019 to develop, implement, and comply with a free-speech policy that

meets a minimum standard set by the government and is based on best practices from around the world. The policy will uphold free speech while discouraging hate speech, discrimination, or speech that violates the law on campus. Starting September 2019, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) will monitor progress. Each institution will be required to prepare an annual report on its progress in complying with its free-speech policy, publish it online, and submit it to HEQCO. A college or university that does not introduce, report on, or comply with its free-speech policy may be subject to a reduction in operating grant funding. Students who contravene free-speech policy are subject to existing campus disciplinary measures.

This is not really news, except for the continued threat of funding reduction. What is not clear to me is HEQCO's mandate in general, and their ability to carry out this task.

Notes

You can read the first part of Kayll's article, which addresses Mike Harris's "Common-Sense Revolution," in the October 2018 issue of QUFA Voices.

¹<https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/fallstatement/2018/contents.html>

Kayll Lake can be reached at lakek@queensu.ca.

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QUFA Voices publishes QUFA-related news and information for QUFA Members and provides QUFA Members with a forum to express their QUFA-related ideas and opinions. We want to hear from you! Please send your QUFA-related story ideas, news items, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, photographs, and other submissions to the editor.

QUFA Voices is edited by Robert G. May. He can be reached at mayr@queensu.ca.

BARGAINING ALERT

Context for Pension Conversion Negotiations

What QUFA Members should know about the jointly sponsored pension plan as bargaining for a new collective agreement begins

By **Elizabeth Hanson**
Co-Chief Negotiator, QUFA
Bargaining Term

and **Rob Hickey**
Co-Chief Negotiator, QUFA
Bargaining Team

QUFA and Queen's University have been engaged in discussions to explore solutions to the solvency payments and going-concern pressures facing the Queen's Pension Plan (QPP). For this reason, QUFA and the administration have been leading efforts to create a Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan (JSPP) designed for the postsecondary, university sector. The university has identified the financial pressures and risks of going-concern and solvency payments as a significant challenge to the institution.

The university reported that "The most significant budgetary challenge the University continues to face is the pension plan deficit" (Queen's University Budget Report 2018-2019, p. 1). Specifically, government requirements for pension solvency payments present a major cost and significant risk to the university. The creation and conversion to the University Pension Plan (UPP) provides the opportunity for the university to secure long-term solvency relief and a plan that is sustainable going forward.

Without solvency relief, the costs of special solvency payments and the impact of those payments on university operations in general, and unit budgets in particular, will be significant:

Effective 1 September 2018 (under the regulations issued in October 2016), annual special payments to fund the solvency and going concern deficits amount to \$19.0M. Annual special payments of approximately \$50M per year would be required if no solvency relief provisions were in place. (Queen's University Budget Report 2018-2019, p. 24)

It is within this context of potential special solvency payments of \$50M annually that the parties have agreed to focus the 2019 renewal of the QUFA Collective Agreement (CA) on changes to the agreement and conversion to the UPP. The parties share a mutual interest in achieving a negotiated outcome that will save the university annual special payments of \$50M. The parties also share a mutual interest in achieving long-term stabilization of pension benefits within a sustainable JSPP. The conversion to a JSPP achieves these two critical objectives. To that end, Queen's and QUFA have worked with others to design a university-sector JSPP known as the UPP.

However, the conversion to the UPP also requires certain trade-offs for QUFA Members. For example, contribution rates will increase in order to achieve a relatively equal, albeit more stable, guaranteed benefit by converting from the QPP hybrid plan to the UPP. Joint governance will provide a greater voice for QUFA Members in the plan's administration. At the same time, QUFA Members will directly assume 50% of the risk for payments of accrued benefits.

To offset the increased costs, increased risk, and other trade-offs for QUFA Members, QUFA executive and council have authorized the negotiating team to bargain a package of changes, some contingent on the formation of the UPP, some to come into effect as the next CA in May 2019. Consent of QUFA to the

ANNOUNCEMENT

Bargaining for a New Collective Agreement has Begun!

The QUFA executive committee and QUFA council have appointed a bargaining team to negotiate a new contract and offsets for QUFA Members if we agree to join the new pension, the University Pension Plan (UPP).

We've been updating you each general meeting about work on the UPP, and we are now approaching the point of deciding whether QUFA will join the plan or not.

Please monitor your e-mail inbox for announcements from QUFA, and plan to attend the general meeting on Wednesday 12 December 2018 at 1.15 p.m. in the Auditorium of Ellis Hall.

conversion to the UPP is contingent upon agreement on the conversion offsets, changes to the current CA, and ratification of these proposed offsets and changes by QUFA Members. The process for voting on negotiated changes and offsets will be reviewed at the fall general meeting on Wednesday 12 December 2018 at 1.15 p.m., in the Auditorium of Ellis Hall.

The negotiating team is composed as follows:

- **Elizabeth Hanson**, Co-Chief Negotiator
- **Rob Hickey**, Co-Chief Negotiator
- **Paul Young**, QUFA Pension Committee
- **Mike White**, JCAA
- **Melissa Houghtaling**, Council
- **Leslie Jermyn**, Staff Support
- **Micheline Waring**, Staff Support

ANNOUNCEMENT

University Pension Plan

Sign Up to Follow Process

As you may know, QUFA, USW 2010, and Queen's University have been participating, with the University of Guelph and the University of Toronto, their faculty associations and USW locals, in negotiations to create a new, jointly sponsored, multi-employer pension plan for the University sector in Ontario.

More information can be found on the QUFA Web site, here:

<https://www.qufa.ca/member-services/pension-information>

and on the UPP Web site, here:

<http://www.universitypension.ca>

You will be hearing more about the process to convert to a new plan in the coming weeks.

Please sign up to receive updates on this process from the UPP group, here:

<http://www.universitypension.ca/contact>

And watch your e-mail inbox for further information from QUFA and from Queen's.

This round of negotiations is unique because it is combining two kinds of changes to terms and conditions of work for QUFA Members: one set related to pension benefits, and one set related to the terms of the CA that governs working conditions.

Offsets

In terms of what we are calling "offsets" to encourage QUFA Members to agree to convert from

the QPP to the UPP, we are looking to create a voluntary phased retirement process where Members can gradually reduce their work responsibilities in the lead-up to retirement. We know that many Members try to craft their own phased retirement by using the reduced-responsibility language in the CA, but this leaves each Member trying to negotiate an optional right on their own. A phased retirement process would be open to everyone.

We are asking that the new pension be open to everyone who qualifies under the Pension Benefits Act. This would include term adjuncts with sufficiently intense workloads. Extending pension benefits to precarious academic workers was part of the initial impetus to create a university sector-wide pension.

The UPP will set retirement date as the first day of the month following your qualifying birthday (which could be as young as 60 with 20 years of service in the new pension plan). The QPP does not allow Members to retire until 1 July of the year following your 65th birthday. As these terms will have to be harmonized before the UPP starts to operate (projected as July 2021), we are asking that the new retirement date (the month following your 65th birthday) be implemented if QPP members vote to convert to the UPP in early 2019. This new right could vest on 1 July 2019.

With a jointly managed pension such as the UPP individual unions will no longer bargain pension benefits. Those will be determined by a sponsor board split equally between employee and employer groups. QUFA will initially have a seat on the UPP sponsor board, which may rotate to another faculty association should more universities merge their plans with the UPP in the future. To balance this loss of an important element of contract negotiations, we are asking for the return of a dispute resolution mechanism for monetary aspects of

the CA. What this means is that if the parties (Queen's and QUFA) cannot come to agreement on compensation values during regular bargaining, they have the right to ask for an arbitrated decision. This kind of mechanism generally ensures that there are fewer risks that the parties will need to resort to job action (strike or lockout) to reach an agreement.

Finally, given that the UPP has higher contribution rates than the QPP (along with higher rates of accrued benefits), we are asking for a monetary offset in the form of an ATB at the date of inception of the new plan.

These elements form a constellation of offsets that the negotiating team, with executive-committee authority, may add to or amend during negotiations. The goal will be to achieve a package of terms that will make converting to the new plan attractive to QUFA Members.

Terms of the New Collective Agreement

The negotiating team also has a broad mandate from executive and council to seek changes to the Queen's-QUFA CA. Some of these are what we call "housekeeping," meaning that they are pieces of contract language that the parties have to amend from time to time in keeping with new legislation (employment, health and safety, human rights, etc.). "Housekeeping" also refers to amendments that make the contracted proscription of a process conform to how the parties have already agreed the process should unfold. Among the housekeeping items we hope to resolve in this round are:

- changes to human rights grounds listed in the contract,
- appropriate language for referring to Indigenous peoples,
- bringing leaves into compliance with legislation, and

- extension of conflict-of-interest language to all hiring bodies.

There are a group of proposed changes that reflect work already underway by joint committees and informal working groups, including:

- clarifying processes and rules around creating unit-level workload standards,
- exploring alternatives to USATs,
- improving access to discipline investigation reports, and
- clarifying risks for Members who engage in intimate relationships with students.

A final group of non-monetary issues includes those that QUFA believes need to be changed to remove ambiguity or unfairness for Members:

- making the general right of reappointment for adjunct members independent of having acquired a specific right of reappointment;
- clarifying library head selection processes;
- adding 11s and 13s to the merit exercise;
- making some leave provisions more inclusive of diverse family arrangements, and
- clarifying some renewal, tenure, and promotion processes that have proven problematic over the past four years.

In terms of monetary gains, we are looking for a modest across-the-board (ATB) increase to salaries, and the option of adding a small research component to the responsibilities of continuing adjuncts who have been promoted to associate professor. We are also asking that Queen's preserve the Bill-148 improvement to vacation pay (6% instead of 4%) for term adjuncts with five or more years of experience. We are proposing a three-year term in view of the current provincial government's threats to intervene in the near future in

QUFA IMAGES \$15 and Fairness



Jordan Morelli

On 25 October 2018, QUFA participated in a \$15 and Fairness rally in Kingston, protesting the Ontario government's introduction of Bill 47, which repeals many worker protections and rolls back the minimum-wage increase introduced in Bill 148. Continuing Adjunct Representative Anya Hageman and PACC Chair Jordan Morelli were present, waving the QUFA flag and marching alongside other concerned members of the Kingston and Queen's communities.

bargaining in the broader public sector.

Timeline

The consent process to authorize conversion to the UPP has been set to take place in the first six months of 2019. The Queen's-QUFA CA is set to expire on 30 April 2019. In order to hold the appropriate referenda with Members in early 2019, we are attempting to negotiate the full package (offsets plus CA) by the fall general meeting (on Wednesday 12 December 2018) so that we can bring you the proposed changes for consideration and begin an intensive campaign to inform QUFA Members about the issues at stake with the

pension conversion and the changes to the CA. We expect this outreach to occur through the end of December and into January. It will culminate with an electronic vote, likely in early February.

Please contact QUFA (qufa@queensu.ca) if you have any questions or comments. We will be establishing an FAQ page soon on the QUFA Web site to address your concerns.

Elizabeth Hanson can be reached at hansone@queensu.ca.

Rob Hickey can be reached at hickeyr@queensu.ca.

FYI

Socializing with Students in the Twenty-First Century

Be aware that norms and expectations regarding social interactions with students are changing rapidly in today's world

By Leslie Jermyn
Executive Director, QUFA

Faculty and librarians who interact directly with students need to be mindful that rules, norms, and expectations conditioning these relationships are changing quickly. Not only are students' expectations with respect to technologically mediated communications and modes of information delivery changing, but so is the way students understand interactions with faculty or librarians outside the classroom, laboratory, or library. The shifting social context leaves many faculty and librarians wondering if socializing with students is desirable, and if so, is it possible and under what conditions.

First, with respect to socializing with students at all, there are compelling arguments for continuing to do so. Graduate students, for example, are often in training to become professors, librarians, scientists, and business leaders. Part of that training is an unspoken apprenticeship in the professional comportment those roles entail. That is not classroom work but happens when students have opportunities to be with their teachers across a variety of contexts, including social events. Undergraduate students similarly benefit from these kinds of interactions, though their access is usually circumscribed until they are in the last years of study. More generally, social occasions with students help to build academic community.

How, then, can we manage social events so that they are positive and



Robert G. May

By following a few easy guidelines, you can help ensure that social events involving students are positive and safe for all participants. For example, if a social event involves alcohol or other intoxicating substances, advise and exercise moderation, and alert the appropriate people if you see a student consuming in excess.

safe for all participants? Here are a few guidelines and tests to keep in mind when planning an event with students.

Place and Time

Keeping things close to or on campus during regular work hours is the best combination. Moving away from campus or away from Kingston means you need to think about how people will get home safely or how they will leave when they wish to. Socializing in the early evening is fine, but creating situations where people have to get home late at night or where they are reliant on someone else to leave is not recommended.

Public vs Private

If you decide to have a social event at your home, be aware that this makes you responsible for the well-being of the students who attend. If alcohol or other substances are consumed, you have to be mindful of students' ability to walk, bike, or drive themselves home. Public venues take care of that responsibility for you, and have the added advantage that you can leave at your own discretion.

Number

It is always recommended that there be more than one student plus one faculty present. Beyond being

inclusive, having larger numbers reduces the chances that a student will experience pressure from a faculty member to behave in a particular way, and protects the faculty member should there be miscommunication or misunderstanding about what happened.

Gender

We need to be mindful of gender differences and how they can play in the perception of power and safety.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Many academic traditions include drinking alcohol. While these kinds of events will continue to play a role in our campus lives, we also should supplement these with ones that are meaningfully inclusive of traditions that do not include alcohol and which are comfortable for people who do not wish to be around it. As cannabis consumption becomes normalized, we'll have to find the right balance with it, too. Generally, if intoxicating substances are available at an event that includes students, you are strongly advised to exercise moderation and to alert the appropriate people if you see a student consuming to excess.

Nature of the Event

Certain kinds of social activities are more appropriate for students and academic staff to attend together than others. Context is key here, so it is nearly impossible to proscribe anything. However, common sense suggests that attending student-hosted parties late into the night is riskier than going to a matinee performance of the play you're studying in class. Risk is heightened when the context encourages participants to put aside their formal roles as faculty and student. Reputational risk to the faculty member is heightened when it's not clear what professional benefit is

conveyed by co-attendance at an event.

Technologically Mediated Communications

While not related to social events per se, the question of using newer and less formal channels of communication with students has been raised and has sometimes created problems for faculty and librarians. Texting, Tweeting, and Facebook-friending with students can be aspects of a positive and responsive learning environment. Unfortunately, these media, with apologies to Marshall McLuhan, are sometimes themselves the message. Slang, informality, emojis, and after-hours communications are all features of these types of media, and make misinterpretation much more likely. A casual text from a professor to a student at 11.00 p.m. with a winky-face emoji can very easily be misunderstood. The rule of thumb here is to keep things as formal as possible, and confined to conversations about teaching and learning as much as possible.

This is changing terrain, so once taken-for-granted understandings about what is okay between faculty and students no longer hold true. One way to gauge appropriateness is to imagine explaining to a neutral, non-academic observer what you and your students are planning to do. Imagining a non-academic point of view can correct for our reliance on insider traditions as rationales for outmoded ways of managing our relationships with students.

If you're still in doubt, talk about it with your head or at a unit meeting. If you're not comfortable raising it there, don't do it at all.

Leslie Jermyn can be reached at jermynl@queensu.ca.

ON THE WEB

QUFA Online

QUFA Members can interact online with QUFA in many different ways!

QUFA's online resources contain a wealth of information about your faculty association, including upcoming events, information about the Collective Agreement, news items of interest, and more!

1. QUFA Web Site



www.qufa.ca

2. QUFA on Facebook



www.facebook.com/qufapage

3. QUFA on Twitter



www.twitter.com/qufatweet

IN SOLIDARITY
**Who Serves
 Our Food?**

Members of CUPE Local 922 are now bargaining with Sodexo for better wages and conditions for food-service workers at Queen’s

**By Matthew Cronin
 National Service Representative,
 CUPE**

Queen’s University’s food services and cafeteria rely on over 400 full- and part-time workers, employed by Sodexo, to serve over 30,000 students, faculty, staff, and administration. But many of Queen’s food service workers are among the most precarious and lowest-paid workers in the community.

As Sodexo pushes harsher and harsher terms on its employees, it undermines the success of Queen’s food services, with high turnover and less experienced employees.

“Race to the bottom” for food service workers

Members of CUPE Local 922 are bargaining with Sodexo for wage improvements and against concessions that seek to divide and fracture the membership. Sodexo has pushed for yet another tier of employment with lower wages and removal of retirement payouts. There already exists differences in compensation between full-time and part-time employees, currently an illegal practice in the province. The new tier will be an even lower tier for future hires.

This “race to the bottom” is hurting not only its already struggling employees, but the entire Queen’s community. Lowered wages for one group are used to justify wage freezes or rollbacks for another, a common employer tactic.



Robert G. May

CUPE is now promoting a “dine-in” option, where food services are brought back in house so that people with good jobs are serving great food to the Queen’s community.

Hand-in-hand: Campaigning for better food and better jobs

Sodexo’s contract with Queen’s expires in 2020. This is an opportunity for the Queen’s community to make a choice for good jobs, more local and more diverse food choices by opting out of renewing with Sodexo.

CUPE is promoting a “dine-in” option, where food services are brought back in house so that people with good

jobs are serving great food to the Queen’s community.

Now is the time to support the dine-in campaign. Watch for dine-in materials coming to our community, take action, and support our campaign for better food and better jobs at Queen’s.

Matthew Cronin can be reached at mcronin@cupe.ca.

QUFA VOICES
Voice Your Views!

If you have an opinion about anything you read in *QUFA Voices*, send us a letter to the editor!

mayr@queensu.ca



QUFA VOICES
Spread the Word!

QUFA invites you to print out and post this issue of *QUFA Voices* in a visible place in your department or unit. Thank-you!

