



QUFA VOICES

Your Queen's University Faculty Association Newsletter

VOICES IN THIS ISSUE: November 2019

PRESIDENT'S VOICE: Performance-Based Funding: Just a Performance?, by Elizabeth Hanson . . . 1-2

FYI: News from Queen's Park, by Kayll Lake . . . 3

GRIEVANCE CORNER: Navigating the Tenure Process, by Peggy Smith . . . 4

INFOGRAPHIC: On Work-Life Balance, by Lonnie Aarssen . . . 5-6

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

Performance-Based Funding: Just a Performance?

The Ford government's performance-based funding initiative for Ontario universities is more of a nuisance than an existential threat, but we should still remain vigilant

**By Elizabeth Hanson
President, QUFA**

Last month, I wrote about "Setting Incentives for Success," the provisions in the 2019 Ontario budget that greatly expanded the portion of the provincial operating grant to universities based on performance. You will recall that the operating grant will now be conditioned on performance with respect to ten metrics set by the province, with the specific weight to be accorded each metric to be decided by each university. These decisions about weighting will constitute the Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMA3) that Queen's and other universities are now formulating. Since writing last month, I have had the benefit of presentations by OCUFA and our provost about both the specifics of the how performance-based funding will operate at the provincial level and at Queen's via the SMA3.

YOU ARE INVITED

The QUFA Fall General Meeting

The QUFA Fall General Meeting will take place at the following date, time, and location:

Thursday 19 December 2019

1.15 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.

The Auditorium, Ellis Hall

At this meeting, we will provide updates on the development of the University Pension Plan (UPP), and on transferring our benefits plan to Manulife in Spring 2020.

All Members of the QUFA bargaining unit (everyone covered by the CA) 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/>

In this column, I will pass on some of those specifics. But let me give the punchline up front: while there is proverbially a devil lurking in the details, in this case, I think it's more an ideological clown. If the definition of "success" implied in the metrics treat universities, including major research universities such as Queen's, as high-level trade schools, the "incentives" in this exercise are scarcely capable of motivating much distortion. This weakness doesn't mean we should be inattentive, but it is important to distinguish posturing from real threats in order to know where to put our energy.

The metrics, which are intended to express the priorities of the government (i.e., "skills and outcomes," and "economic and community impact") are:

- graduate employment rate,
- institutional strength and focus,
- graduation rate,
- graduation earnings,
- experiential learning,
- skills and competencies,
- community and local impact,
- tri-council research funding and capacity,
- innovation (understood as research revenue from private sector), and

- an institution-specific metric pertaining to economic impact to be established between each institution and the MTCU.

The first fact to bear in mind is that these metrics apply to the *operating grant* from the provincial government, which at Queen’s makes up 32.5% of the total operating budget (this year, \$595.5 million). When “Setting Incentives” is fully rolled out in 2025, it will apply to 60% of the operating grant, or 19.5% of the Queen’s budget. Second, institutions themselves weight each of these metrics, albeit within limits set by the province, which means that they can play to their strengths among the kinds of performance acknowledged by the metrics. Thus, an institution such as the University of Waterloo, with its well-established co-op programs, will weight “experiential learning” more heavily than Queen’s might. Third, institutions are to measure their performance against their previous performance as established at the beginning of this regime. Institutions are not competing with one another, but there are no carrots for institutions who significantly improve in relation to themselves. Fourth, there is a 3% band of tolerance, so that if an institution’s performance slips by 2.5%, it will be considered inconsequential. Fifth, when an institution slips by more than 3%, its funding will be clawed back by that percentage only from the weighted category.

In other words, say that in 2025 when the regime is fully rolled out and 60% of operating grants are determined by performance-based funding, Queen’s performance on experiential learning slips by 5% because placements have become scarcer. Queen’s has hypothetically weighted this metric at 10%. Let’s assume it has done fine on the other metrics. The funding it will lose will be 2% of 10% of 60% of 32%, or about .04% of its total operating

funding. Any loss to the operating budget is concerning, and a greater change in a more heavily weighted metric could yield a loss in the millions. Nevertheless, when we see how this regime is to be implemented, it looks more like a nuisance to be managed by careful judgement about how to weight the metrics than a threat capable of substantially changing the direction or practices of at least this university.

At this point, I see no reason to believe that, in developing its SMA3, the Queen’s administration will seek to bend the university’s operation to the metrics as opposed to finding ways to render them inconsequential. I provide links below to slide decks from Provost Tom Harris¹ and OCUFA² about how performance-based funding will work; I urge you to read through them and, especially if you arrive at a more alarmed conclusion than I do, to offer QUFA your thoughts.

In characterizing performance-based funding as a nuisance rather than an immediate threat, however, my point is not to discourage attention to the Ford government’s university funding policy or to Ontario funding policy more generally. If you look at the provost’s helpful pie chart of the operating budget, you will see that where 32.5% comes from provincial grant, 61% of operating funds comes from student tuition. This balance is itself problematic and exposes the much more serious effect of the Ford government’s 10% tuition cut. While performance-based funding shifts the government away from the previous enrolment-based determination for most of the operating grant, the ongoing reliance on tuition to provide the majority of funding to universities ensures that enrolment is still the single most important determinant of budget health, and that a 10% tuition cut will encourage all universities to increase enrolment as best they can. The differential tuition rates that make some students worth more than

others (but not necessarily more expensive to educate) underpins the university’s budget model that has produced not just transparency about where money comes from, but real but undeliberated transformation in the mission of the university. The unregulated tuition that foreign students pay drives ethically questionable recruitment of such students and imposes pedagogical burdens on our Members. The ethical and mission-related problems of a public university’s heavy reliance on tuition is matter for another column.

For now, let me say that while performance-based funding derives from ideas about the university and its place in society that are, in my view, mean-spirited and anti-intellectual, it is important to distinguish between a political performance and instrumental evil. Performance-based funding is, at this stage, mostly just a performance.

Notes

¹<https://www.qufa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SMA3-Handout-Provost-for-QUFA.pdf>

²<https://www.qufa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/OCUFA-Board-PBF-presentation.pdf>

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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



September 2016

PRESIDENT'S VOICES: Welcome Back to the New Academic Year! by Lynne Dutton ... 2-3
 2016 Faculty 100: Recognizing the Outstanding Faculty Members ... 4-6
 2016 Graduate Student Awards: Celebrating the Best of Our Graduate Students ... 7-8
 GRANTING US OUR RIGHTS: Re-examining the Role of the Student Union ... 9-10
 CAMPUS POLICE: Understanding the Role of Campus Security ... 11-12
 EDITOR'S VOICES: Welcome to the Newly Rebranded QUFA Voices! by Robert G. May ... 13
 ABOUT: Labour Day Parade, the Acad Challenge ... 14

PRESIDENT'S VOICES
Welcome Back to the
New Academic Year!

QUFA VOICES
Labour Day Parade

FYI News from Queen's Park

An update on Bill 100 and the quashing of the "Student Choice Initiative"

By **Kayll Lake**
Past President QUFA,
OCUFA Director

Bill 100

The following is an excerpt from a communication by Michael Conlon, Executive Director of OCUFA, regarding Bill 100:

On 6 November 2019, as part of the annual Advocacy Day, OCUFA officials met with Laurie Leblanc, the new Deputy Minister of Colleges and Universities. In the course of the meeting, OCUFA asked for an update on Bill 100. Leblanc replied by saying that the Ministry is focusing on voluntary initiatives to encourage faculty renewal, and that the Ministry had no plans at this time to implement the more punitive aspects of the powers afforded the Minister under Bill 100. This is the clearest indication we have yet that the Ministry is backing off the idea of arbitrarily reducing the salary of our senior members.

While this is a very encouraging development, we should remember that the Minister still has access to the powers under Bill 100. However,

OCUFA is confident that there are no imminent plans to bring forward these regulations. OCUFA will monitor the situation moving forward and check in with the Ministry on a regular basis. That said, as per the motion passed at the most recent OCUFA Board meeting, we will move swiftly to challenge the regulations in the unlikely event the Ministry changes its mind and chooses to move forward.

"Student Choice Initiative"

In a related development, on 21 November 2019, in a unanimous decision, three judges of the Ontario Divisional Court upheld a judicial review challenge brought by the Canadian Federation of Students and the York Federation of Students, and quashed the Ford Government's so-called "Student Choice Initiative."

This relates to the developments as regards Bill 100 since the judgement contains some explicit language affirming the legal autonomy of universities. For example, the judgement confirms the central role of academic freedom and institutional autonomy in ensuring universities are able to operate effectively, free of political interference from the government. The court references these as being "bedrock principles on which Ontario universities have been governed for more than 100 years."

The decision is available,¹ as is an analysis by Goldblatt Partners,² on their Web site. The OCUFA statement

QUFA VOICES Spread the Word!

QUFA invites you to post a copy of *QUFA Voices* in a visible place in your department or unit.

Thank you!



"Faculty applaud court ruling that strikes down Ford government's unlawful Student Choice Initiative" is available on OCUFA's Web site.³

Notes

¹<https://www.goldblattpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/Cdn-Fed-Students-v-Ontario.pdf>

²<https://www.goldblattpartners.com/news-events/news/post/student-associations-win-in-divisional-court/>

³<https://www.ocufa.on.ca/press-releases/faculty-applaud-court-ruling-that-strikes-down-ford-governments-unlawful-student-choice-initiative/>

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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.

GRIEVANCE CORNER

Navigating the Tenure Process

Criteria, expectations, and how QUFA can help you

By Peggy Smith
Grievance Officer, QUFA

The Collective Agreement

Articles 30 and 31 of the Collective Agreement (CA) set out the application procedures for QUFA Members in the Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) process, and the Renewal, Continuing Appointment, and Promotion (RCAP) process. Members should review these provisions carefully, to ensure they have a clear understanding of both the timeline for when documents must be submitted, and how those documents will be assessed in the evaluation of the application. The criteria for success should not be a surprise.

Speak With Your Colleagues

In addition to reviewing the provisions of the CA, QUFA suggests you seek out a respected colleague who has recently served on an RTP or RCAP committee, or is a few years ahead of you in the process, to discuss both their experiences and understanding of the expectations in your department. For example, you could ask what would typically meet the standard of “clear evidence of high quality scholarly or creative work” referenced in article 30.6.1 in your department. If your field of research means you don’t meet those expectations, is there a reason for this that you should share with the committee?

QUFA Can Help

The intent of the tenure process is to ensure an objective review and assessment of the material you provide, and to allow you the

ANNOUNCEMENT

QUFA Council Meeting

QUFA Council will meet at the following date and time:

Tuesday 14 January 2020
3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Location TBA

Principal Deane will attend to address questions raised by QUFA Council representatives.

This meeting is open to all QUFA Members.

opportunity to demonstrate you have met the required standards. Feedback and comments received at the committee level should be read carefully for indicators of concerns that should be addressed at the next level. You will have the opportunity to add material and comments at each further stage in the process: to the department head (if applicable), the dean, and the principal.

QUFA can play an active role in assisting you throughout the application process.

- QUFA has developed a summary timeline chart to help you plan your application in advance, including considering referees and compiling materials;
- QUFA holds an information session open to all Members each spring, where CA processes are explained;
- QUFA can advise you on how and when to request an extension to your tenure clock, or how to address a previously approved extension in the application process;
- QUFA cannot edit your submissions, write letters

ANNOUNCEMENT

Queen’s Mandatory Ethics Training

Following consultation with the University and QUFA through the Joint Committee on the Administration of the Collective Agreement (JCAA) for the Queen’s-QUFA Collective Agreement, the Office of Research Ethics Compliance will be implementing mandatory research ethics training for all research team members, including faculty, librarians, and archivists.

Please see the QUFA Web site for complete information:

<https://www.qufa.ca/announcements/1-month-notification-mandatory-ethics-training/>

responding to the file, assess the validity of referees’ assessments, or advise Members as to the academic norms of their discipline. However, QUFA can assist you if you think there may be flaws in the process, or if you have identified any conflicts of interest with regards to RTP and/or RCAP committees;

QUFA cannot change the final decision through the grievance process. The only possible remedy is a rerun of the process to give the university the opportunity to correct any procedural errors. Therefore, if you have concerns about process and CA provisions, notify QUFA as soon as possible, as we may be able to help remediate those errors in a timely way, ensuring you receive the objective, full, and fair review of your application you are entitled to.

Peggy Smith can be reached at smithpe@queensu.ca.

INFOGRAPHIC

On Work-Life Balance

An Infographic for academics

By **Lonnie Aarssen**
Department of Biology

The Infographic on p. 6 first appeared on Lonnie Aarssen's Blog, MusingsOne, which can be accessed at <http://www.musingsone.com/>.

For almost four decades, I have (mostly) enjoyed spending, on average, about fifty hours per week employed as an academic at one of the finest universities in Canada. I couldn't have expected a better job; I love it. My Infographic here lists the many interesting and rewarding expectations, obligations, and opportunities typical of a career like mine.

But it has been busy, and getting busier. Stress and anxiety are now reaching critical levels at postsecondary institutions everywhere,¹ for both students² and faculty.³ Academics at every career stage are searching for ways to improve their quality of life.⁴

Thankfully, though, "health and wellness" has become the new slogan demanding increasing attention in virtually every segment of society—including where I work. Earlier this year, my university principal added his signature to the "Okanagan Charter,"⁵ a formal commitment to embedding health and wellness in campus culture.⁶

It seems to me that this represents de facto endorsement for some sensible adjustments in academia for scaling down conventional work hours—to something perhaps more typical of the "standard" work week: 40 hours (including the "lunch hour").

For now, at least, my colleagues at work are probably more likely than in

ANNOUNCEMENT

Lunch and Learn

QUFA Members are invited to participate in the final Lunch and Learn event this term:

Facilitating Effective Communication
Thursday 12 December 2019
12.00 noon – 1.00 p.m.

Lunch and Learn events take place in the conference room at the University Club. A light lunch of soup and beverages will be served. Please RSVP to Elizabeth Polnicky (ep43@queensu.ca) by 28 November 2019 to ensure sufficient food.

the past to hear me say, "Sounds good, and I'd like to be involved with that, but—sorry—there just aren't enough hours in the day!"

Notes

¹<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01914-z>

²<https://www.theconversation.com/university-student-mental-health-care-is-at-the-tipping-point-122743>

³<https://www.theconversation.com/more-academics-and-students-have-mental-health-problems-than-ever-before-90339>

⁴<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/how-academics-can-improve-their-quality-life>

⁵<https://www.queensu.ca/campuswellnessproject/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.qcswwww/files/files/Queens%20University%20Okanagan%20Charter%20Adoption%20Commitments.pdf>

⁶<https://www.queensu.ca/campuswellnessproject/okanagan-charter-0>

Lonnie Aarssen can be reached at aarssenl@queensu.ca.

ON THE WEB

Access QUFA Online

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

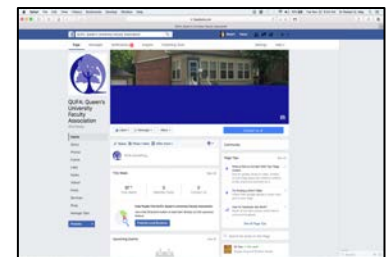
QUFA's online resources contain a wealth of information about your faculty association, including upcoming events, information about the collective agreement, news items of interest, and more!

1. QUFA Web Site



www.qufa.ca

2. QUFA on Facebook



www.facebook.com/qufapage

3. QUFA on Twitter



www.twitter.com/qufatweet

24 HOURS IN A DAY

© Lonnie Aarssen

WORK (JOB)

- curriculum development and revision
- preparation & presentation of undergraduate lectures
- development & preparation of lab / tutorial / field exercises
- lab / tutorial / field instruction
- preparing and conducting undergraduate examinations
- evaluation (grading examinations, assignments, seminars)
- supervision of undergraduate thesis research projects
- preparation & presentation of graduate course instruction
- independent student consultation (essay / project planning)
- responding to student enquiries/concerns/reference requests
- supervision of teaching and academic assistants
- course coordinating (budgeting, student dispensations, etc.)
- supervision of graduate students & post-doctoral fellows
- preparation for and attendance at lab group meetings
- preparation for and attendance at journal club meetings
- serving on graduate supervisory committees
- preparation for and attendance at graduate thesis defenses
- preparation for and attendance at PhD comprehensive exams
- web site, blog, social media, and email communications
- supervision of lab technicians and student volunteers
- development of research proposals & grant applications
- designing research apparatus and methodology
- data collection, analyses and interpretation
- collaboration / coordination with research teams
- searching and reading the scholarly literature
- development of theory and modelling
- writing / editing scholarly manuscripts / books
- writing / editing instructional textbooks & popular literature
- planning and attending campus seminars and workshops
- seminar presentations at conferences and other universities
- administration of research budgets / grant accounts
- manuscript reviewing for journals, colleagues and students
- public outreach / activism; responding to media enquiries
- serving on departmental / faculty / university committees
- serving as a journal editor or editorial board member
- serving on government committees or company boards
- serving on grant / scholarship / fellowship review panels
- holding office in professional societies

SLEEP

LIFE

- parenting
- family relationships
- food preparation
- eating
- housework / cleaning
- pet care
- shopping / purchases
- property maintenance/repair
- transportation / travel
- financial affairs / investments
- paying bills
- 'life-long learning' / reading
- gardening
- staying informed re 'the news'
- appointments
- correspondence / email
- social media / texting
- legal affairs
- socializing
- friendships
- exercise / fitness
- rest / meditation
- healthcare
- community service
- hobbies
- play / entertainment
- worrying