



QUFA VOICES

Your Queen's University Faculty Association Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S VOICE

Cross-Subsidizations to Support the Academic Mission

It's time to rethink the "Hunger Games" model of university financing

By **Mary C. (Cella) Olmstead**
President, QUFA

Queen's operating budget deficit is now projected to be \$40.7 million, with the majority of this shortfall landing squarely at the feet of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). Given that FAS reserves will dry up by 2025, subventions from other faculties will increase from 1.5% to 2.0% over the next three years, resulting in an estimated \$16 million of annual transfers.

With the entire institution facing further cuts and budgetary restrictions, it is tempting to blame FAS inefficiencies or overspending for the institution's austerity measures. Even within FAS, we hear rumblings of inequitable contributions to financial sustainability, an attitude that is reinforced by a Queen's-unique approach of treating each department as an independent economic unit. No wonder activity-based budgeting is

QUFA IMAGES

OCUFA Advocacy Day



Leslie Jermyn

On 20 March 2024, QUFA participated in Advocacy Day at Queen's Park in Toronto, an event organized by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) to advocate for more robust, sustainable government investment in Ontario's public university system. Pictured (left to right): Lorne Coe (MPP Whitby and Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier), Mary C. (Cella) Olmstead (QUFA President), Marcus Harvey and Sue Wurtele (Trent University Faculty Association), Jenny Ahn (OCUFA Executive Director), Mike Eklund (Ontario Tech University Faculty Association), and Nig Narain (OCUFA President).

referred to as the "Hunger Games" model of university financing.

An activity-based budget attributes revenues to the faculties and departments that generate them,

disadvantaging FAS, which has the lowest tuition fees at Queen's. The problem has been magnified over the last two decades as tuition differentials across faculties increased and the percentage of operating funds derived from tuitions at Ontario universities moved from 30% to 40%.

To make matters worse, FAS "donated" 100 undergraduate seats to faculties with higher tuition fees when the Ford government reduced and then froze domestic tuitions. While increasing overall revenue to the institution, FAS was left with a multi-million-dollar shortfall. As we now know, the proposed remedy to offset this deficit with higher international student enrolment never materialized. Now, there is discussion of moving another 91 seats from FAS to Health Sciences and Engineering, further depleting FAS coffers. Even if the extra funds can be earmarked to flow back to FAS, these will likely be viewed as "transfer payments" to keep the faculty afloat.

To counter a narrative that the viability of a department depends on an internally balanced budget, QUFA sent an open letter to the Principal and Provost reminding them that Queen's operates as a single financial entity.¹ Principal Deane concurred, noting at an open session for alumni, supporters, and friends of Queen's that "cross-subsidizations must occur" so that program decisions are not driven by a "kind of supply and demand model" of student enrolment. Stated more emphatically,

the goal of cross-subsidization is not to keep less lucrative disciplines afloat, but to support the academic mission of an institution. At Queen's, this includes educating students to be global citizens, reflecting values that are cultivated and fostered in many FAS courses, particularly the humanities.

Alumni repeatedly made this point at the Principal's open session, describing how the broad, comprehensive education they received at Queen's provided the skills and perspectives they needed to succeed in a variety of careers. These testimonials should come as no surprise: the most creative and impactful scientists, artists, and entrepreneurs juggle many interests, especially early in their training, which allows them to form connections between seemingly disparate fields.² The benefits of a FAS education are apparent on our own campus as Law, Education, and Health Sciences draw from this student population to run their programs. Notably, the philanthropic donations to Business and Engineering were motivated by a vision that training in these disciplines should be part of a mission for global improvement, and a belief that diverse thinking and experiences are the foundation of innovation.

Administrative and political decisions, including the imposition of a "Hunger Games" budget model, populist tuition freezes, and punitive corridor funding have been made by people who do not understand or value the

ANNOUNCEMENT Spring General Meeting

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

**Friday 19 April 2024
1.00 p.m.
via Zoom**

Please RSVP to Elizabeth Polnicky (ep43@queensu.ca) for Zoom link. Watch your e-mail account for more information.

academic mission of Queen's (or any other university). These decisions created a financial challenge for FAS, and thus for Queen's as a whole. We are now left to figure out how to manage with less while struggling to preserve the integrity and quality of our teaching and research. In doing so, let's remind ourselves of the real source of these problems, and not succumb to divisive narratives and accusations that rest on a technocratic valuation of university education.

Notes

¹<https://qufa.ca/02-26-open-letter/>

²David Epstein. *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*. Riverhead, 2019.

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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.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S VOICE

New Voluntary Retirement Program

QUFA Members should apprise themselves of all the rules of this new program before signing on the dotted line

By Leslie Jermyn
Executive Director, QUFA

The University launched a new retirement incentive program on 20 March 2024. All eligibility and application information can be found on the Provost's Web site.¹ Please be sure to expand all the accordion headers and read the material carefully so that you're fully informed before you make a decision to apply to the program. Also note that the Provost's office will be holding some virtual information sessions so you can raise your questions there before submitting an application.

Please understand that QUFA did not negotiate this plan: we cannot amend it or grant exceptions to its rules. If you think the rules are not being fairly applied to you or procedures are not being followed, please be in touch with me, but I ask that you also raise points of information or clarification with Queen's.

I want to review some of the features of this program that I think Members should understand and pay very close attention to before choosing to enrol:

- Participation in this program is voluntary. You cannot be coerced into applying.
- Retiring and taking your pension are separate things. You can retire and not trigger pension payouts. Leaving Queen's service will mean an end to University Pension Plan contributions.
- Once your application is accepted (16 August of this year), your

commitment to retire is irrevocable, regardless of what may change in your life.

- This program is more flexible in terms of age at retirement than the three-year Voluntary Phased Retirement Program,² and this one can be combined with an Early Unreduced Pension (age 60 to 64). Early Pension terms are controlled by the UPP, not by Queen's or QUFA, so are not flexible. You must be at least age 60, and your age plus years of service added together must total 80 (Factor 80) to qualify for an early unreduced pension.
- You can apply to this program if you are already taking your pension and continue to work in a continuing position at Queen's. It is worth noting that folks in this situation can also apply to the Voluntary Phased Program, but they do not qualify for the retiring incentive payment included with that program.
- Drawing your pension before age 60 and without Factor 80 will result in financial penalties to your pension. Use the pension calculator to determine what your pension will be at various points in time to see what those penalties are and how much your pension accrues for each additional year of service. You can find the calculator on the Queen's HR Intranet, Employees, Retirement and Pension page under the tab "Pension Self Service."
- The incentive payment (equivalent to one year's regular salary) is not itself salary and will not be subject to salary deductions like pension contributions or union dues. It will be taxed at a minimum rate of 30% at source. Depending on how you take the payment and

other factors, you may want to arrange to have more tax withheld and/or to put the money into a tax-sheltered instrument. QUFA cannot advise on what would be best for you, but most banks have advisors who can work with you on this if you don't have your own financial planner.

- There is no monetary value for any unused credits towards academic leave or any unused vacation time.

If you have been accepted to the three-year Voluntary Phased Retirement Program but haven't yet started Year 1 of the phased period, you can withdraw from that program and apply to this one. If you have already entered the three-year phased period, you may not switch programs. If you have indicated your intention to retire but the Provost has not issued an acknowledgement of your retirement date—a dated letter addressed to you—you can withdraw that indication and apply to this program if you are willing to retire on one or both of the dates allowed in the program.

There are a lot of resources available through Queen's HR and the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) that are designed to help you to make a decision as big as this one, and I recommend you avail yourself of them before signing on the dotted line.

Notes

¹<https://www.queensu.ca/provost/voluntary-retirement-plan-faculty>

²<https://qufa.ca/pension-and-retirement/#vol>

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

QUFA ALBUM

Action Against Austerity

Some photos from Action Against Austerity Week hosted by Queen's Coalition Against Austerity

By Queen's Coalition Against Austerity

The Queen's Coalition Against Austerity (QCAA) hosted Action Against Austerity on 4-8 March 2024, a week-long series of events protesting recent budgetary measures taken at Queen's. Many thanks to QUFA Political Action and Communications Committee (PACC) Chair Rebecca Hall, QCAA Member Francine Berish, as well as other members and organizers of QCAA, for furnishing QUFA with these great photos.



GET INVOLVED!

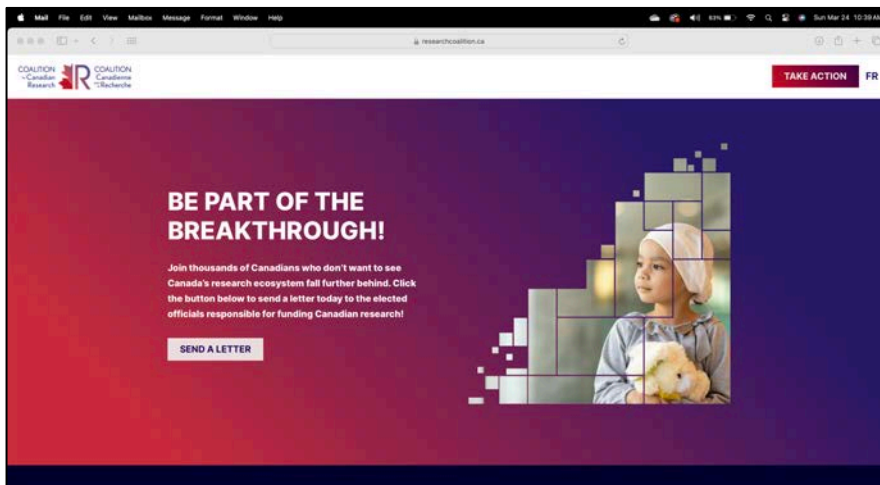
CAUT Federal Budget Campaign

Join the Canadian Association of University Teachers in telling the federal government to prioritize postsecondary education funding in the upcoming Budget 2024

By the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

The federal government will table the federal budget on 16 April 2024. Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) members and staff have been meeting with parliamentarians and government officials, encouraging them to adopt the recommendations contained in the *Know More: Invest in Canadian Research, Science and Postsecondary Education* pre-budget consultation document.¹ One of our recommendations, the proposed changes to the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA), is poised to pass into law. On the call for more research funding, there is a need for extra support from our members as the budget is in the final stages of preparation.

CAUT has joined the Coalition for Canadian Research to call for two key items in Budget 2024:



QUFA Members can visit the Coalition for Canadian Research Web site (www.researchcoalition.ca) to send a letter to the federal government telling them to make postsecondary education funding a priority in the upcoming 2024 Budget.

- boosting granting council budgets for core programming by at least ten percent, or \$400 million annually for five years; and
- increasing the number and value of graduate student scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships by \$200 million over two years.

A strong push from CAUT members across the country will go a long way to make sure these asks are in the 2024 federal budget.

What Can You Do to Help?

- Visit the campaign Web site (<https://researchcoalition.ca>).
- Click "Take Action" at the top right-hand corner of the homepage.
- Click "Send a Letter," and an e-mail message will be generated in your default e-mail application.

There is no data collection happening as part of this campaign.

About the Coalition for Canadian Research

The Coalition for Canadian Research brings together the combined voices

of postsecondary institutions, research hospitals, leading life-sciences companies, university and hospital-based researchers, university faculty, health charities, student leaders, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and early-career researchers across Canada.

Members of the coalition are Canadian Association of University Teachers, Association of Faculty of Medicines of Canada, Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, Evidence for Democracy, Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, HealthCareCAN, Health Charities Coalition of Canada, Research Canada, Support our Science, U15 Canada, and Universities Canada.

Note

¹https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/pre-budget_submission_2024-en.pdf

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) can be accessed at www.caut.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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Rhymes with “Trust”

Will the results of the Nous Service Effectiveness Survey be made available in their entirety to the Queen’s community?

**By Michael Greenspan
Department of Electrical and
Computer Engineering**

The Editor:

In the February 2024 issue of *QUFA Voices*, I enjoyed reading Leslie Jermyn’s article “Consultants to the University Sector,” which listed a number of potential pitfalls that may occur when university administration hires outside consultants such as Nous.

One point I could add to the list is that these consultancies typically launch surveys among the university community without committing to subsequently disclosing the collected data. In the recent Service Effectiveness Survey, for example, Nous committed only to provide “a briefing on the results” (whatever that might mean). I asked for more detail, such as whether the answer rankings for each question would be distributed, for which I have so far received an acknowledgement receipt e-mail, promising more detail at some later time.

Personally, I’m not very motivated to participate in a survey where the data is kept hidden, which can lead to conclusions being promoted that are at best misinterpreted and at worst ideologically skewed.

I find it puzzling that the administration would agree to such a process, which seems to exhibit less than full transparency with the very community with which it seeks to engage.

**Michael Greenspan can be reached at
greenspan.michael@queensu.ca.**

GET INVOLVED!

Become a QUFA Executive Member!

Do you long to meet once a month with a group of colleagues who, like you, are invested in Queen’s, and want to help shape our university and make it the place we dream of?

If so, please consider running for our Executive Committee. Nominations or self-nominations for any open position are welcome, but we are particularly eager to find someone interested in running for Health and Safety Representative.

Please see the January issue of *QUFA Voices* for more information on open positions:

<https://qufa.ca/voices/>

Please contact QUFA Vice President and Nominations Chair Karen Rudie (karen.rudie@queensu.ca) if you have any questions.

GET INVOLVED!

Looking for Volunteers!

We are looking for volunteers for 2024-2025 on the following Joint and Safety Committees (JHSCs):

- **Administrative Services** (which includes the Faculty of Law), and
- **Smith School of Engineering**

The QUFA position of Health and Safety Representative is up for election at the QUFA Spring meeting. The terms of reference for the position are available on the QUFA Web site:

<https://qufa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Health-Safety-Representative-2024.docx>.

If you have any questions related to these positions, please contact QUFA Health and Safety Representative Nicolas Hudon (nicolas.hudon@queensu.ca).

QUFA VOICES

The Budget Issue and Member Rights Issue

QUFA Members who missed the special Budget Issue (Jan. 2024) and Member Rights Issue (Feb. 2024) of *QUFA Voices* can download them from the QUFA Web site!

www.qufa.ca/voices



MEMBER RIGHTS ISSUE

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GRIEVANCE CORNER

QUFA's Role in Peripheral Agreements

QUFA has an important consultative function Members can avail themselves of if they elect to enter into a peripheral agreement with the University

**By Karen Sisson
Grievance Officer, QUFA**

QUFA has received some enquiries from the Membership in recent months that are related to peripheral agreements or commitments they have made with the University.

I have previously written about a distinction between QUFA's representative role to Members for work performed as faculty and the absence of that representative role for work performed pursuant to an administrative appointment that is excluded from the bargaining unit. In a nutshell, because those positions are explicitly excluded from QUFA's rights of representation, QUFA is not a party and has no legal interest in contracts or agreements that concern positions outside of the bargaining unit. When such agreements are being negotiated or when there is a concern that such an agreement has been breached, any resulting dispute is a civil claim that may require advice from a civil lawyer practising in employment law.

With that said, QUFA plays an important role in providing advice and advocacy when Members are seeking to access rights pursuant to the Collective Agreement (CA). For example, processes applicable when a Member requires leave are addressed in Article 33, including "negotiated leave" pursuant to Article 33.6 and "personal leave" pursuant to Article 33.2.2. Accessing those forms of leave will most often require some form of agreement between the University and the Member respecting the specified terms. A Member's interest

in other rights, such as the right to receive compensation for additional duties pursuant to Appendix Q or a request to access a reduced responsibility appointment pursuant to Article 26, may also benefit from QUFA involvement via the provision of advice and/or advocacy for the Member.

The inherent power dynamic between an employer and an employee inevitably colour an employee's experience when entering such negotiations. It is reasonable to assume that some Members may feel they are compelled to accept any and all terms as proposed by the University, either because one would assume the employer is adhering to required policies in good faith and/or because the Member does not believe the request will be approved otherwise. Unfortunately, that has at times resulted in Members agreeing to terms that QUFA may have advised against, including the imposition of restrictive covenants in exchange for approval of leave requests.

Holding such requirements as conditional to the approval of a request to access a CA right effectively reads-in additional burdens that were not contemplated or agreed to during bargaining. That practice risks inconsistent, unreasonable, or otherwise unfair outcomes for QUFA Members and may also risk severely undermining related CA protections.

In light of this observation, I take this opportunity to remind the Membership that it is always a good idea to seek a consultation with QUFA if one is required to enter into an agreement with the University concerning terms applicable to their work as a faculty member. If there is a role for QUFA, consulting early in the process will assist in reducing the risk of a Member's CA rights and protections being unreasonably impeded. On the other hand, if it turns out that there is no need for

SOCIAL MEDIA

Access QUFA Online

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

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

QUFA Web Site



www.qufa.ca

QUFA on Facebook



www.facebook.com/qufapage

QUFA on Twitter



www.twitter.com/qufatweet

QUFA on Instagram



www.instagram.com/qufagram

QUFA involvement, there is no harm done and the Member can move forward with clarity and confidence that the integrity of existing CA protections will not be undermined.

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