

VOICES IN THIS ISSUE: October 2019

PRESIDENT'S VOICE: What's Wrong with More Accountability?, by Elizabeth Hanson . . . 1-2
QUFA PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT: Statement on the Chown Hall Incident, by Elizabeth Hanson . . . 2
GRIEVANCE CORNER: Students' Right to Record Lectures, by Peggy Smith . . . 3
ANNOUNCEMENTS . . . 4

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

What's Wrong with More Accountability?

How will government-imposed budget constraints affect the work we do at Queen's?

By Elizabeth Hanson
President, QUFA

The 2019 Ontario Budget is a gift that just keeps on giving. Last month, I wrote about its blatantly discriminatory "Ensuring a Dynamic University Workforce" provisions. This month, I put before you "Setting Incentives for Success" (also part of Chapter 1d of the Budget¹). These provisions have to do with the next round of Strategic Mandate Agreements, also known as SMA3. The SMAs were actually the brainchild of the Liberal government, an "accountability" mechanism that required (or permitted) universities to describe their "goals and objectives," and the "institution-wide" and "system-wide" metrics that would determine whether these objectives had been met.²

While some aspects of this document are a bit cringe inducing (see "Student Engagement"), and others are problematic (quantification in the assessment of research via metrics such as "citation index targets"), it is on the whole fairly anodyne, and even beneficial in some respects. "Setting

QUFA IMAGES

Taking Aim at Climate Change



Brooke Cameron

Members of the Queen's community gathered near Stauffer Library on 27 September 2019 for the Queen's Climate Strike, a call for action on climate change. Many thanks to QUFA Member Brooke Cameron (English) for submitting this photo.

Incentives for Success" proposes a much stupider and potentially harmful regime. The stupidity arises from the metrics, the potential harm from the fact that, beginning next year, 25% of provincial funding will be tied to these metrics, increasing to 60% by 2024-2025.

The metrics themselves make an ideological determination of what

universities are for: "positive economic outcomes the students and people of Ontario need, as well as training people for the jobs of the future." Accordingly, there are six "skills and job outcomes" metrics: graduate earnings, experiential learning, skills and competencies, graduate employment, institutional strength or focus, and graduation rates. There are also four "economic

QUFA PRESIDENT'S
STATEMENT

Statement on the Chown Hall Incident

This past week, a poster threatening violence against Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ students was posted on the door to a residence common room. While the poster targeted students, QUFA recognizes that incidents such as this one, and the views behind them, shape the working conditions of Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ faculty, librarians, and archivists.

QUFA is committed to working for a university culture and climate in which racism and homophobia find no purchase. Diversity and equity are integral to all of the work we do at QUFA.

We call on Queen's administration to accelerate implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Task Force and the PICRDI report recommendations. We stand in solidarity with those most affected by these recent events.

and community impact" metrics: research funding capacity, research funding from industry sources or funding from industry sources, community or local impact, and institution-specific economic impact.

I believe there is some flexibility for each institution in choosing which six metrics it will initially focus on. Moreover, institutions will compete against themselves based on their past performance rather than with other institutions, so the point is supposed to be institutional self-improvement. But the outcome for institutions that don't meet their targets is a decrease in funding, and it remains unclear whether funds captured from poorly performing institutions will be distributed to

other institutions or be simply returned to the government's coffers. Thus, the whole exercise is potentially a justification for funding cuts. This system (which also applies to the colleges) is being imposed on top of a \$700 million cut to postsecondary funding.³

The senior administration at Queen's seems sanguine that this regime will not harm it, a position shared by administrations at other research universities. And this is probably so. A moment's reflection reveals that the metrics favour universities with prominent business schools and engineering programs (graduate earnings and graduate employment), and who take few students who come with financial or preparation challenges that might depress graduation rates. Perhaps the most absurd metric, "community impact," will favour Queen's because it comes down to the ratio of the university's employees to the local population. (This one is less likely to work for the University of Toronto.) But these examples also disclose the evil in the absurdity. If you are a small institution (say, Lakehead or Nipissing), the success or failure of a couple of grant applications could make the difference to whether you get to keep your allotted provincial funding. A recession that drove down graduate employment and graduate earnings could lead to a system-wide clawback of funding, just at the point that the same economic downturn made more people think it was time to return to university for further training. The idea that graduation rates might be improved by *more* funding that would help an institution provide supports such as a Writing Centre or math tutors to marginal students can't gain any traction in the regime the PC government is rolling out.

The provost has promised to discuss the university's response to the SMA3 exercise at the October meeting of Senate. Then, he will attend the 14 November 2019 meeting of QUFA

Council, a meeting that will be open to all QUFA Members. I urge everyone to attend and bring questions. At the very least, it will be important to make sure Queen's does everything in its power to insulate itself from possible harm—and that harm would include in any way changing our institutional priorities by, for example, directing resources towards programs that will likely keep graduate earnings up at the expense of those that deliver benefits that evade the metrics.

I do not believe the current administration of this university shares the ideology that drives the current government, nor is it insensible to the absurdity of the regime the government is instantiating. But it is hard to imagine that any university can operate under the constraints of a government so profoundly stupid without that stupidity infecting our culture, so we had all better pay attention.

One More Thing

QUFA Members may be interested in this video, from TVO's *The Agenda*, about performance-based funding:

<https://www.tvo.org/theagenda>

Notes

¹<http://budget.ontario.ca/2019/chapter-1d.html#section-4>

²For example, the SMA2 for Queen's can be found here: <https://www.queensu.ca/sites/default/files/assets/pages/strategicframework/Queens-University-SMA.pdf>

³See OCUFA's response here: <https://www.ocufa.on.ca/press-releases/ontario-faculty-staff-and-students-oppose-ford-governments-performance-funding-for-postsecondary-institutions/>

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

GRIEVANCE CORNER Students' Right to Record Lectures

QUFA is working to ensure a fair balance between students' right to record lectures and instructors' right to protect their intellectual property

**By Peggy Smith
Grievance Officer, QUFA**

Students with disabilities that restrict their ability to take or read notes have the right to record class lectures as an accommodation. You have the right to protect copyright and privacy when appropriate.

Instructors' right to protect copyright

Your right to privacy or concerns about copyright do not override the student's right to accommodation. However, it is the responsibility of the Student Accommodation Office to ensure that you and the student have signed a detailed agreement addressing the limited use of the recordings and how those recordings will be disposed of once the purpose of the recordings has been exhausted. A sample agreement will include the following:

- a statement acknowledging the recordings are for personal use only;
- a statement acknowledging the lectures as recorded are the intellectual property of the

professor, and the comments of classmates are their own intellectual property;

- an agreement not to share, copy, or transfer the recordings for any purpose without consent, and without giving proper identity and credit to the source;
- an agreement with respect to how the recordings will be disposed of; and
- a statement acknowledging the consequences of breaching the agreement.

Instructors' right to ensure a free sharing of ideas through self-disclosure of students

You may also be concerned that the use of a recording device in class will restrict the free sharing of student's self-disclosure and reflection in the classroom. This is a concern that should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. If the discussion is relevant to core material and key learning outcomes that will be assessed for the final academic grade, then, in general, the principles above would apply. In the alternative, as the purpose of the recording device is to replace the need to take notes, it may be reasonable to enforce a ban on both note-taking and recording of these discussions, and to invite the student to participate through Skype if they are not present in the classroom.

You should always seek guidance and confirm any limitations on the accommodation by raising your concerns with the Student



Students with disabilities have the right to record your lectures as an accommodation, but instructors have the right to protect their copyright and the free exchange of ideas in their classes.

Accommodation Office and the QUFA Office.

QUFA is currently working to ensure an appropriate accommodation agreement is in use for students seeking the right to record lectures.

We have also established a working committee to review questions and workload issues QUFA staff are facing with respect to the need to facilitate accommodations of students in the classroom. If you have a story to tell, or a question you would like answered, please contact QUFA Secretary Anya Hageman (hagemana@econ.queensu.ca) or QUFA Term Adjunct Representative Shane Pinder (shane.pinder@queensu.ca).

Peggy Smith can be reached at smithpe@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.

SAVE THE DATE Dr Mustafa Bahran

Yemeni Physicist Dr Mustafa Bahran, who is currently hosted by Carleton through their Scholars-at-Risk program, will speak at Queen's this term:

13 November 2019, 4.00 p.m.
Location and Details TBA

Faced with persecution and war, Dr Bahran was forced to flee Yemen in 2015. He now faces an uncertain future as a scholar at risk. You can read a recent interview with Dr Bahran in *Physics Today*:



<https://physicstoday.scitation.org/doi/10.1063/PT.6.4.20180330a/full/>

ANNOUNCEMENT Benefit Deadlines Approaching Tuition Support Plan

The deadline for submitting an application to the QUFA Tuition Support Plan is

1 November 2019

More information and the amended application form can be found on the Human Resources Web site:



<http://www.queensu.ca/humanresources/wellness-accessibility/employee-benefits/tuition-support-plan/>

ANNOUNCEMENT Lunch and Learn with QUFA

QUFA Members are invited to participate in this fall's Lunch and Learn events:

**Having Difficult
Discussions**

**Monday 11 November 2019
12.00 noon - 1.00 p.m.**

**Facilitating Effective
Communication**

**Thursday 12 December 2019
12.00 noon – 1.00 p.m.**

All 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 Polnick (ep43@queensu.ca) to ensure sufficient food.

ANNOUNCEMENT CAUT Librarians and Archivists Conference October 2019, Ottawa



Academic libraries and archives across Canada face reorganization and restructuring, initiatives that can threaten the positions and work of librarians and archivists, and undermine traditions of collegial governance.

This trend is the focus of the CAUT Librarians and Archivists Conference 2019.

25-26 October 2019
Delta Hotel
Ottawa City Centre

More information, including the program, can be found here:



<https://www.caut.ca/event/librarians-and-archivists-conference/>

