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## From the Executive

Kelly Pitman, CCFA President

Happy new year to all of you from me and from the rest of the executive. And welcome to any members who may be joining us this winter.

The executive started the winter term by reasserting the need for an employee survey. Kathryn Laurin has stated that she can foresee (her word, not mine) a survey taking place in the 2013/2014 academic year, which is welcome news, but the CCFA executive feels that the survey should not be put off any longer. In addition, Ms. Laurin speaks of an engagement survey, which may have value, but we believe a climate survey is also necessary. More or less, an engagement survey focuses on employees' commitment to their roles, while a climate survey focuses on satisfaction with the larger climate of the workplace. An assessment of climate is a foundation for enhancing what's working and repairing what's not, so we believe the second type of survey is necessary. We will resist any attempt by the college to narrow the scope of the survey or delay it any further. One question we have is whether the membership has an interest in doing our own survey if college administration will not move forward immediately with the kind of survey we want. Please send me your thoughts on this.

Another front-burner topic is the budget process. We know that the deadline for deans to submit their proposed cuts is January 25. We'd like to hear from you whether you feel the consultation process has been adequate so far. We'd also like to hear any suggestions for budget cuts you might have, with the proviso that we believe as an association that proposing cuts directed at others can lead to an extremely negative environment. On your behalf, we have been asking administration about expenditures beyond the school level at the college. We understand that the board expressed an interest in hearing about the process as well as in hearing the final result, and we want to take this opportunity to convey our members' views. My next board report is due January 24, so please send your questions or comments to me before that.

This week, the candidates for VP Academic will be meeting with union reps and making their public presentations. Even if you cannot attend some or all of these presentations, I encourage you to watch the streamed versions, which will be available for your viewing, and to ask questions and make comments via the email address the college will provide. We do have union and faculty representation on that committee, and they can best represent your viewpoints if they know what they are. This is an important position at the college, one that has a great deal to do with how programs are created and maintained. Your feedback is necessary.

And speaking of feedback, please come to the CCFA meeting scheduled for January 25, 2013 1:30 - 3:00. This meeting will be focused on bargaining, and we need to hear from you. We will keep the meeting short!

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

CCFA Balloting:  
January 21, 2013 9 -1  
January 22, 2013 1 - 4

General Meeting:  
January 25, 2013  
1:30 - 3:00  
via Video Conference  
Locations TBA

# Contract Management: Know Your Rights!

Debbie Gascoyne, Chair Contract Management Committee



## SD (Scheduled Development)

It's that time again, so having the opportunity offered by an extension of the SD application deadlines this year, I thought it would be a good idea to address the topic in this week's *Confluence*.

The language around SD is found in Clause 10 of the Local Agreement. There's a lot there, and it's pretty dense. I don't want to simply paraphrase it here, and encourage you all to read it carefully, but I thought it might be helpful to look at some Frequently Asked Questions, from the perspective of Contract Management.

*I've just been regularized. When can I expect to get my first SD?*

The "SD" year runs from May to April for those on the semester system and April to March for those on the quarter – and those working the quarter system only get SD every second SD year, though some take one month per year by arrangement with their deans. Many of us on the semester system take SD in May/June, and it's worth remembering that May/June is the *beginning* of the SD year, which can be confusing. If you are converted to continuing status from a term position, you should receive SD during the next SD year in the semester system (so, if you were regularized in January, you could get SD as early as that same May/June). If you are hired on a probationary continuing contract, you must have worked in the preceding September in order to qualify.

*What's all this stuff about "Categories of Development Activity"? Do I have to do all three every year?*

Your development activities can be classified as Professional (keeping current in your own field, developing your expertise in your area, taking courses or upgrading or gaining a higher degree), Instructional (curriculum development, course preparation), and Organizational (work that benefits the college as a whole, college-wide committees, running workshops). You do NOT have to do all three every year; it is expected that over time, about half of your activities will be Professional. Nor do the remaining two (Instructional and Organizational) have to be evenly split. It's likely, for example, that in your first few SDs you will do a lot of Instructional Development. Later in your career, you may turn your time to more Organizational development. The idea is for them to balance out over time.

*Can my Dean or Director tell me what to do in my SD time?*

They cannot define the content of your proposal, though they can agree or disagree with it, and it is understood that your activity should be of relevance to the college, your duties or your career goals. If your proposal is turned down, you must work out a mutually agreed upon alternative.

*Do I have to go to department meetings during SD?*

Technically, no. The contract calls for a period of time free from regular duties. However, many of us use SD time to serve on committees that there is no time for during the teaching term – this could count as Organizational or Instructional development.

*I'm a Chair. Do I still get SD?*

Absolutely! And remember the bit about "free from regular duties" – that means that you should not be doing Chair's duties during your SD unless you choose to. If you can't escape those duties, you should apply to defer your SD.

*Can I defer my SD?*

You may apply to do so, but you must be able to work out something that does not interfere with the smooth running of the department.

*I was sick for quite a while during SD. Can I make up the time lost?*

Sadly, no.

*What happens if I don't get my application in on time?*

Well, technically you could lose your entitlement. The approval process is one agreed upon by the Joint Committee on Scheduled Development, and is there for a reason. It may be a pain writing up the proposal at a busy time of the term, but consider how much more of a pain it would be if you didn't have SD at all.

I'm sure that there are many other questions that I haven't covered here – it's a complicated topic! As always, feel free to contact me or any of the Contract Management team (Judith Hunt, Mark Kunen, Robin McQueen, Kelly Pitman or Saeed Shahni).

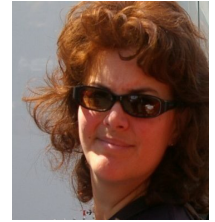
## Professional Development News

First things first: please join me in welcoming David Greig to the committee. Bogdan Verjinschi, our active Access faculty representative, has a teaching conflict with our bi-weekly meetings this term, and David has stepped up to fill his spot and ensure that the Access viewpoint enters our conversations and rare debate. Thanks, David: I look forward to your input!

With the new year upon us, the applications for the 2013-14 fiscal year are now being reviewed. I am told this will be a very busy term for the PD committee, as long-term applications come in alongside the bulk of short-term applications for that busiest SD period: May-June: we have already looked at and approved 8 applications for the May 2013 Teaching Professor conference I highlighted a couple months ago in my Confluence article!

A long-term PD blitz meeting is being organized for one of our February meetings. Each year the PD committee schedules a special, extra-long meeting to look at the long-term applications. These are the only applications that are reviewed all at the same time; the Chairs and Deans must

*Kathy Lokhorst, PD Committee Chair*



approve faculty long-term requests by the end of January in anticipation of this meeting. I'm not really sure what I thought would occur, actually, and now I have the opportunity to experience it first-hand.

One thing I do know is that those applications must contain all the information we need to make our decision. There is no opportunity for us to go back to faculty for more details on the rationale or to approve HST after the fact. For this reason, we are holding two information sessions, one on each campus, to answer any questions you may have.

Unfortunately, the VP interview presentations are being held concurrently, so we may need to reschedule. Please contact me if you have any questions as you are preparing your application packages, especially if you are unable to attend the sessions this week.

I'll let you know how it all goes! Happy 2013!

## Negotiating Corner

'Tis the season for bargaining, and many of you have heard that because these are hard economic times, public workers must share in the collective economic pain. Many in the public suggest that faculty should be willing to temporarily forego pay increases for the sake of the common good. The economic data tells a very different story.

Yes, there was a recession in the province in 2009, and it has been over since then. Statistics Canada reports that the BC economy grew by 6.5% in 2010 and 4.3% in 2011, unadjusted for inflation, just as the "0% wage increase" during those years is unadjusted for inflation. Adjusting for inflation yields 3.2% and 2.8% economic growth respectively, as the value of your paycheque fell by 3.7%. The provincial budget reports that in this same time frame, corporate profits rose 21.5% and 10.6% respectively. Thus we can dispense with the argument that the province is in economic pain, and with it the pain-sharing.

Statistics Canada reports that wages and salaries earned in the province increased by 2% in 2010 and by 5% in 2011, while the provincial budget reported that labour

*Submitted by Becky Mason, School of Business*

income rose by 4.0% and 4.8%, and the Conference Board of Canada's Compensation Outlook reports that its 401 survey respondents plan "modest" wage increases for their workers of 3% this year, following an average increase of 3% last year as well. So arguing that public sector workers are asking for more than their private sector counterparts or asking for more than others is wrong. In fact, by accepting a real wage cut over the last three years, we have already made our donation to a healthier British Columbia public treasury.

We are left, then, with the argument that the province's actual goal is to tap public worker salaries to make the payments on the public debt, or at least the deficit. The province's 25% debt-to-GDP ratio (like our mortgage-to-salary ratios) is a very healthy level of debt. If it is this provincial government's point that public workers should accept continued real wage cuts to pay down the debt, then we should have this debate in the open. We can also debate publicly why our segment of the economy should not share in the economic gains of the province. The point is, we should have a real debate about the issues.

## Executive Motions on Strike Pay

At the General Meeting held in December, two Executive motions were presented to the membership. Balloting on these motions is being scheduled for January 21 from 9 – 1 and January 22 from 1 – 4. I have not received any additional ‘arguments against’ the motions, but thought I’d provide the gist of what happened at the GM for folks who weren’t there:

1. “Where the CCFA members lose pay as the result of honouring a picket line resulting from a labour dispute, the CCFA will pay those members \$50 per day from the second day of lost pay until FPSE strike pay begins.”

Discussion Questions that arose:

**Where would the money come from?** We have savings to draw from.

**How was the dollar amount arrived at?** A sub-committee met and discussed what we should do with savings.

**Did CUPE folks get strike pay?** We aren’t sure about that, discussed it and decided that their internal processes were theirs, and shouldn’t inform ours.

**How does the fund get replenished?** At this point we don’t have a vehicle for replenishing the fund.

**Do we want to make this specific to labour disputes at Camosun College?** The Executive chose language from the Collective Agreement.

**Does the clock start back at “0” if there is more labour action?** Yes, that would be considered a separate action.

## The Union Reel

*The Godfather*

1972 Dir. Francis Ford Coppola

Let’s get one thing straight from the beginning. I love gangster films, and, in fact, most films about crime. Not because I love crime—what kind of girl do you think I am?—but because I feel that when we look at crime, we become more aware of the values and limits, legal and otherwise, of our culture.

And speaking of culture, nothing has proved so intractable as the American dream, or rather, The American Dream. You know it, I’m sure. America is that place where the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free can lift themselves up, fulfill their best potential, and be anything, anything they want to be. It’s a hymn to self-determination and social freedom. It’s what people all over the world are seeking, the freedom to be.

Enter capitalism. Of course, The American Dream and capitalism are uneasy partners. While the former promises unbridled freedom, the latter depends for its existence on a slave class, or, if that term offends you, on economic strata. Wealth is relative—we have it or we don’t primarily in comparison to others. For there to be a top, there must be a

**How fast would it break the bank if we instigate this?** We would only pay two days for any strike action. However, each incident could cost around \$30,000 and our savings is at around \$350,000.

Arguments for the motion:

Support for the pay starting at the 2nd day: there should be some sacrifice for the purpose of a strike.

Decision to cross or not cross a picket line creates tension between two strong principles. Decision to offer the strike pay is meant to acknowledge the sacrifice.

Recognize and communicate to the membership the interconnections among all public sector labour disputes.

\$50 is a symbolic extension of the advice to honour the picket line.

2. The CCFA Executive moves that the CCFA pay \$50 to members who lost two days pay as the result of honouring the picket line resulting from the CUPE labour dispute in November 2012.

Arguments for:

In this case, it is a one time thing, irrelevant of the bylaw change.

Arguments against:

Not comfortable with the notion of allowing the second motion to pass without the first motion passing.

By Kelly Pitman



bottom. Yes, you can get to the top with hard work, but if everyone did that, then the whole thing would fall apart. Your slave class may be right in front of you or carefully sequestered across the sea, but it's there (chances are, it's a different colour from you as well). *The Godfather* lays bare the dark side of capitalism unchecked by a unified and empowered workforce.

It's a great film. The art direction, the casting, the acting, the dialogue—everything works. Coppola is working here in the forefront of the 1970s realists. The scene of Michael Corleone and a nurse moving the godfather, Vito Corleone, from one hospital room to another as assassins approach is painfully real and almost unbearably suspenseful. Or there's the scene in a restaurant in which Michael Corleone meets with the men he is planning to kill, and the squeaking sound as the waiter removes a cork from a bottle of wine plays upon the watcher's nerves (David Lynch uses sound in similar ways—perhaps he learned something from this film?). Within its gritty aesthetic and through masterful pacing, the film demonstrates what Aristotle told us: tragedy is plot, the layering of event upon event until the crisis comes. And someone always bares, and often loses, his soul. In this film, it is the youngest son, Michael Corleone, who survives, but at a cost.

In this role, Al Pacino is as good as he gets. Even in *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), where he is stellar, he never again achieved the subtle characterization he does here, portraying a man whose emotions are almost entirely internal. Later, Pacino would become a caricature of the thespian, proclaiming his way through the scenery (of course, in *Glengarry Glenn Ross*, where he plays a cutthroat boor, it worked). In *The Godfather*, he is subdued but electric, a storm cloud in a suit, a volcano with lowered eyes.

Young Michael Corleone is not initially meant to be part of the family business. He has other plans. Just returned from heroic service in WW II, he is America the Brave, the immigrant's kid made good and home to claim his due. His due turns out to be a bloody battle for survival among the criminal families of New York. That's how you make it in the USA.

*The Godfather* is set in the period directly after WWII, a time of economic prosperity and, more or less, peace for the states. However, it was released in 1972, as inflation soared, violence in Ireland and Israel raged, the oil crisis took centre stage, and the Vietnam War (yes, war, not “conflict”) revealed its futility and barbarity more clearly than ever. The 1970s, deemed “the me decade” by Tom Wolfe, showed us the draft version, I suppose, of the America we have now, wild with power and increasingly disenchanted. The USA of 1946 might have believed in the efficacy of capitalist dreaming, but the USA of 1972 was troubled by poverty, political unrest, and a crescendo of aggression against countries most Americans had never paid much attention to. In another decade or two, those countries would be producing a considerable quantity of American consumer goods in the latest iteration of capitalist imperialism.

And what is the gangster film but a symbolic confrontation with the real costs of unchecked capitalism? The much touted free man cannot rely on a civil and just society, so he reverts to bloodlines, oppression, and ruthless self-promotion to achieve success. Party politics will not help and, in fact, exclude most people. A scene in which one character beats a man into unconsciousness in front of a Thomas Dewey campaign poster suggests that politics, that democracy, is irrelevant in the dog-eat-dog world of American greed. What is that expression we use: to make a killing? *The Godfather* simply takes that way of thinking and makes it literal.

Another way to look at it is this: the godfather is the boss. Sometimes he's kind, sometimes he's not. His choice. I guess this is what you call a meritocracy. Most of us are in favor of meritocracy—of course people should be rewarded for effort and raised to the performance level of which they are capable! But who decides? The boss. To be at the whim of forces accountable to no one is not an easy situation. You might get a trip to Vegas, you might get a bloody horse's head in your bed. I guess it depends on how you comported yourself in the workplace yesterday.

Those gangsters needed a union. Then there'd be rules. A benefits plan, for instance, so when you get garroted in your car, at least there's insurance for the wife and kids. Early retirement incentives so you're not forced to make a buck in old age by selling your brother to the highest bidder. A professional development fund to allow you to expand your skills: you might study up on the art of dismemberment, for example, and feel more engaged with your work. I would certainly hope they'd get paid bereavement time, cause man, these guys go to a lot of funerals.

I'll take the union every time. It's not perfect—what is? But the every-man-for-himself approach is a constant battle. As Billie Holiday sang, “The strong get more while the weak ones fade.” Make a killing or get killed. In such a world, there's not much room for rights or due process. So you're forced to try to align yourself with the powers that be. You'll have to. They'll make you an offer you can't refuse.

Tweet! Tweet!

Probably, like many people, if you've thought about Twitter at all you've thought it was pretty silly: a bunch of bored and boring celebrities "tweeting" their latest meal or romantic exploits. After all, how much can be said in 140 characters? What's the point?

Last year, when Dominic Bergeron (a fellow techie person) and I got together to give a seminar on social networks for the A&S Spring exchange, we agreed that Twitter was one of our favourites. Dominic went on record then that it was his #1 favourite platform. It's certainly one of my top three: I use it regularly, checking in on it several times a day. For me, Twitter is a one-stop search-engine, news bulletin, professional network and source of articles of interest.

If you think Twitter is boring or silly, you may not be following the right people. Don't confuse Twitter with Facebook – it's seldom useful or even necessary that the people you follow are people you know. Of the 260 people I follow, only about 10% (max) are friends. I follow various journals and newspapers, getting updates on breaking news and recent articles. I follow lots of writers and teachers of writing and teachers of literature, who share tips on writing and links about writing and links to other interesting writers. And yes, I follow Margaret Atwood, who is one of Twitter's power users. I follow quite a few ed-tech people, though fewer than I used to. I follow some select celebrities, mostly those, like Neil Gaiman and Will Wheaton, who feed my geeky cravings. I follow "Geoffrey Chaucer," who is hilarious, and "the Beowulf poet" (less so), and, believe it or not, The Outer Hebrides (I've always wanted to go there). I get gardening tips, book recommendations, and inspiration for my photography. I don't have cable TV, but can check awards results or hockey scores or election returns just as well if not better on Twitter. I was among the many who saw the news of Osama Bin Laden's

## Updates from FPSE

### Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee of FPSE

*Submitted by Larry Hannant*

Among the several committees that work under the umbrella of the Federation of Post Secondary Educators (FPSE) is the Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee (HRISC).

With a long-standing interest in both human rights

execution on Twitter 20 minutes before it was announced on network news.



Through the power of hashtags (a search term with the symbol # in front of it), Twitter is a very powerful search engine, often outdoing Google. It's a great way to bring people together for a cause. Many teachers, for example, use Twitter as a way to connect students outside of class. Simply create a unique hashtag for your class and everyone can post and retrieve information without having to follow one another, or even you. Didn't make it to a conference? Likely people Tweeted from it. Last week, my Twitter feed was dominated by the tag #mla13 as my humanities colleagues from across North America reported from the MLA conference. Last night (yes, I admit it) I used the hashtag #goldenglobes to get a look at what people were wearing, who won and who made outrageous speeches.

And, honestly, all this doesn't really take much time. I browse Twitter in spare moments at breakfast or lunch or while waiting at the doctor's office. It's the perfect platform for mobile devices – quick and uncluttered. I try to post a few things every day just to keep my followers happy, but I don't obsess over it. Twitter is such a one-stop service that I think it saves time that I might spend waiting for something to happen on TV or wading through a newspaper or magazine website.

So check it out! You never know, you might meet some colleagues and find a lot of useful and fun information. Now, you'll have to excuse me – I have to check my Twitter feed.

If you'd like more information, the London School of Economics has published a guide to using Twitter in an academic setting, available here: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/09/29/twitter-guide/>

and international solidarity, I became the CCFA representative on the committee in 2012 and plan to continue in that role this year.

Since the 19th century, unions have recognized the importance of international solidarity among working people. This solidarity is founded on the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. That focus has been expanded in recent decades as union members have been drawn increasingly to human rights issues on the national and international scene.

In 2001 FPSE reorganized and adopted new terms of reference for its human rights committee and created the HRISC. Among the new tasks the HRISC took on was, in 2006, to set up and administer an international solidarity fund.

Like every FPSE member, you contribute one cent per working day per member to that fund. FPSE aggregates all the contributions to come up with a yearly amount of about \$37,000.

Each year, grants under the fund will be allocated to FPSE members to take on projects that build partnerships between FPSE and people in the disadvantaged world. In 2009, for instance, the fund helped Camosun College instructor Francis Abu-Febiri to aid a project involving using computers to encourage education in Ghana. Other grants have gone to projects aiming to strengthen literacy, improve health and bolster union membership (among other issues) in several countries in the developing world. (Two grants have also been made to aid people in the regressing world – the USA.)

The 2013 call for project proposals for grants by the fund has been issued, with a deadline of Friday February 15, 2013. Full details about the fund and background documents can be found on the FPSE website: <http://fpse.ca/committees/hrisc/isf>.

If you have an idea about an appropriate project, please learn more about the fund and consider applying.

In other work, the HRISC takes on a variety of assignments closer to home. One of the current issues we're examining, for example, is the academic freedom protections provided by contracts among the 22 FSPE locals. The goal is to try to achieve a high level of protection for members, allowing them, for instance, to be able to comment publically about their own institutions without fear of being disciplined for it.

In recent years the HRISC has also taken on the work of organizing a speaking tour promoting an aspect of human rights. The most recent tour, in the fall of 2012, brought Quebec student leader Eliane Laberge to several colleges in BC. A speaking tour on the theme of water as a human right is planned for 2013.

Please contact me at [hannant@camosun.bc.ca](mailto:hannant@camosun.bc.ca) or local 3389 if you have questions about the HRISC or any of its activities.

## Your Turn

### Career Exploration Group for Students

Do you know students who are feeling lost or undecided about their career?

At the Counselling Centre, we want these students to know that they're not alone, and to help them gain clarity about their career and life goals. We offer students a 4-week Career Exploration group and are currently putting out a call to determine student interest for this semester. Please share this information with your students!

Participation in the group will help students to recognize their interests, values, and strengths and will include 2 personal assessments (Myers-Briggs Type and Strong Interest Inventory). Students will also learn about useful information sources to map their educational and career path. There is a \$40 fee for students, which is to cover the cost of assessments.

Benefits of career exploration in a group setting include:

- o realizing that you're not alone in your career indecision; and
- o learning from others' experiences and insights.

Students who would like to take part in a Career Exploration group are asked to go to the Counselling Office (Dawson 202 at Lansdowne and in the Student Services area at Interurban) and fill out a timetable availability sheet.

For further information, please contact Sarah Lefebure, Counsellor, at [lefebures@camosun.ca](mailto:lefebures@camosun.ca).

## Biking with Beaker

By Erin Waugh

Lately, biking has been sporadic at best - what with the icy, rainy, windy weather. So, I thought I'd change things up for this article.

I like wine and have, over the past couple of years, managed to create a nice little cellar. I sat down to write this article and realized that while I know what I like, I don't really know a lot about wine. So, I started to do some reading and I've learned a few things. For example: French wines are less fruity (more earthy) than Californian wines because the growing season is longer in California and the grapes ripen more fully. French wines also need to be a bit older to enjoy - you want to be drinking 2009 vintages or older now, whereas I've found a few 2010s from California that are outstanding.

While I already knew that red wine is red because the wine is fermented with skins on, I did not know that makers of white wine crush the grapes and then ferment the juice while makers of red wine only gently break the skins, ferment the grapes and then crush them. This small detail might seem trivial and perhaps it is, but in my imagination it looked a LOT different.

I also learned that "legs" or the beautiful languid wine flowing down the inside of your glass does not necessarily a superior wine make...some people (my beloved among them) often wax poetic about how the wine they are enjoying has "legs." As it turns out, legs simply represent the wine's viscosity and usually indicates a higher alcohol level - has nothing to do with quality. So, great legs doesn't make great wine, but if you like full bodied wine, you're likely to notice its legs.

This past weekend, as part of my wine education I hosted a beginner wine tasting. This tasting was 'tutored': I had instructions from the Wine Spectator Wine School and it involved tasting three different red varietals: a Pinot Noir from Oregon, a Shiraz from Australia and a Cabernet Sauvignon from California.

The instructions were simple: buy three similarly priced wines of similar vintages and then go through the 4s method of wine tasting: See, Sniff, Sip and Summarize.

Now you have to imagine that when I read about it, I got quite excited. "Oooh, a tutored wine tasting", thought I. "Oooh, learning about different wines with friends... won't it be FUN", thought I. My beloved and I invited some friends for dinner and I made (as instructed) copies of tasting instructions, wine notes, worksheets...the whole

deal. As the allotted time approached, I started to feel like a nerd...that our friends would think I was a nerd...that the evening would be a tragic, tragic waste of time and money. LUCKILY for me, it wasn't.



The whole exercise took about 3 hours and what we discovered was that taking the time to savour the tastes and aromas, colour and quality of the wines, discuss them, and craft a statement about each made us appreciate them on a different level and, even (dare I say?) like wines we didn't think we liked (read here Pinot Noir).

We had agreed that at the end, each of us would craft a statement about one of the wines using terminology we would use at our jobs, a little like what you would read about on the wine label. (As an aside, we all gained a new appreciation of these descriptions that we had hitherto laughed about). Tom works in construction, Barb works in a

law office, Dave is an accountant and, well, you all know what I do. This was a really fun exercise and something we'll do more of, even when we're just enjoying a single bottle. I have a little database of my wine, so it will be an interesting addition (YES, I am officially a NERD).

The tasting looked a little like this: 3 glasses per person, water to cleanse the palette, coffee beans to cleanse the smeller, paper, pens, good friends and a sense of humour. It didn't hurt to have a little dark chocolate on hand, some bread, a little cheese, you know, for in between sips. I will say that Tom was disappointed at the wait to actually DRINK the wine - seeing and sniffing took a LONG time, but was well worth it. I think one of the things I'll do as a matter of practise after this exercise is open my wine a lot earlier (at least an hour or so) and really let it breathe before I serve it. I think this made a huge difference to how much we enjoyed it.

So, here are our impressions:

### The PINOT NOIR

Let me start by saying that we had asked Tom and Barb to bring the Pinot Noir. They weren't exactly clear about what we were doing and despite their general disdain for Pinot Noir were good enough to buy this \$33.00 bottle. Truth be told, had it not been for this little project, I wouldn't buy Pinot Noir either - it's too light for my taste and neither Dave nor I have had more than maybe one glass of Pinot we've enjoyed.



Cloudline Pinot Noir, 2009 Oregon. Alcohol: 13.5%  
(\$32.99 Everything Wine).

We all ended up liking this wine – taking the time to savour the aromas and flavours gave all 4 of us a different perspective.

Cloudline is a nice, ruby red Pinot Noir with pale intensity. We got notes of leather and oak with a hint of smoke. This light bodied, crisp Pinot has a moderate to long finish. A weekend or special occasion Pinot (if you like Pinot Noir...) to be sure, even the most die-hard Pinot hater among us opted for a second glass.

Barb's take: *The media waited outside the old oak and leather court room. The jury was out on the Pinot Noir. Good arguments by both plaintiff and defense. The judge was no-nonsense. Witnesses were sharp...crisp if you will. The jury deliberated for longer than expected and came back with their verdict, on a weekend no less!*

### THE SHIRAZ:

There was great discussion about shiraz, good and bad. We all agreed that a good shiraz can be a lovely sip, but a bad one can turn you off the varietal for good. Luckily we were not disappointed. Of interest, this was the most intense colour wise, and had the highest alcohol level. It definitely had great "legs".

Heartland Shiraz, 2008, South Australia Alcohol: 14.5%  
(\$22.99 BC Liquor Stores)

Intense, purple and great legs! At first sniff, this wine hits you with strong plum and oak and then hints of black pepper, smoke and vanilla as it opens up. Fruit forward, full bodied with moderate acidity and suede tannins. Heartland has moderate finish and, priced at \$22.99, we thought it could be enjoyed every day or on the weekend.

My take: *Heartland Shiraz is a great negotiator, apt to please both sides of the table: big fruit, black pepper, smoke, oak and vanilla come together in collective agreement.*



### THE CAB

Of the 4 of us, 3 are fans of Cabernet Sauvignon, which, assuming a decent winery and vintage, rarely disappoints. We did this one last, so it had the longest to open up in our glasses, although we did end up comparing the three again at the end.



Liberty School Cabernet Sauvignon, 2009 Paso Robles CA Alcohol: 13.5%  
(\$22.99 BC Liquor Stores)

Strong blackberry with hints of cherry, tobacco and vanilla greet your senses with this ruby red, full bodied cabernet sauvignon. Low acid, silky tannins and a long finish make this a well priced wine to enjoy every day or for a special occasion.

Dave's Take: *This cab has a lot assets, fixed with rich fruitiness. This is a wine that will not depreciate over time, a balanced ledger of silky tannins with a moderate finish. Full, with a healthy gross margin.*

Tom's Take: *This cab sauv has a great foundation of fruits like cherry and blackberry, all the while studded with some woody vanilla and oak, topped (roofed, if you will) by a full bodied, silky finish that caps off the experience. It can easily be enjoyed sitting on your patio on a weekend evening, or take to a special occasion house warming for that good friend or neighbor.*

Well, that's it. If you want more specifics, feel free to email me at the usual place. Comments and suggestions are welcome...and I'll keep you posted on my "wine education."

## PD Spotlight:

# ISW va a Tlaxcala, México

November, 2011

By Elizabeth West, Linda Edmond, and Mavis Smith

At the end of November 2011, we flew to the beautiful city of Tlaxcala, Mexico to facilitate an ISW at the Polytechnic University of Tlaxcala. We were very excited about this opportunity to collaborate in peer based workshops beyond the College. It turned out to be a truly inspiring experience which would not have been possible without the on-the-ground support of Aída Hernández Hernández (UPT) and a number of individuals across the college.



Tlaxcala is lovely colonial-era city in the highlands south east of Mexico City. People were friendly, helpful, and very proud of their culture. The central historic district was a great place to explore and enjoy the delicious and inexpensive local food such as mixiote de carnero (mutton with herbs), barbacoa de hoyo (goat cooked in a clay oven), mole de guajolote (turkey with rich, spicy sauce), and Tollocan or Calpulalpan-style chicken. A special highlight was enjoying Placido Domingo at the Stadium Tlahuicole of Tlaxcala, compliments of the university president. Sitting under the stars as part of an audience of

more than 10,000, we were treated to everything from Puccini arias to traditional ranchero ballads.



Enjoying some bebida de chocolate made by Eduardo

While we were able to enjoy the delicious food and the culture of the city, most of our time was spent in the ISW workshops. The faculty participants came from the Polytechnic University of Tlaxcala, which serves the city of Tlaxcala and the surrounding rural area. Many of their 2200 students come from rural families and are the first in their generation to receive a post-secondary education. The university is predominantly an engineering school, offering a number of related programs.



From the opening moments of the workshops, we were all struck by the immediate and enthusiastic engagement of the participants. Throughout, they passionately discussed their students, teaching methods, and their disciplines.

Although most of them had a solid foundation of good teaching practice, they were hungry for more teaching, classroom management, and assessment techniques. We quickly developed a sense of community spirit with this intellectual group. During the workshops, the participants offered each other unwavering peer support, even though they were not all well-acquainted with each other. Of special note is that we were most

impressed by the great risk taken by some participants to present in English despite limited English skills.

Some participant comments:

- Congratulations to all of you. You have different ways of being but one thing is common your interest to make us learn. Thank you!
- I'm glad, because I had the opportunity to practice my English and to know new concepts and put them into practice. Congratulations.

An international venture like this doesn't happen without a good deal of planning and coordination. The request for the ISW came only 10 weeks before it actually happened. When Nancy Sly received the request from Maria Elena Froese, a Camosun faculty member and ISW facilitator, and her sister, Aída Hernández Hernández, an engineering faculty member at UPT, Nancy acted very quickly to assemble us, the facilitator team.



With the commitment, energy, and desire to make this happen from a number of people across the college, we were able to organize, develop, and facilitate a highly successful international ISW within 6 weeks. We'd especially like to thank Nancy Sly and Carrie Charlesworth (CETL), Marc Bavin and Jim Paulson (Camosun International), the CCFA PD Committee (In-House Funds), John Boraas and Sarah Loewen (School of Access), and Maria Elena Froese (Camosun).



Mavis, Elizabeth, and Linda with gifts of traditional wall hangings from the participants

Linda's reflections:

"For a girl who "doesn't get out much", going to Tlaxcala was an experience of a life time. What inspired me most was the hospitality and caring of our host, Aida, the Mexican learners, the president (director) of the University and his crew. I was touched by the director's offering for all three of us to attend the Placido Domingo concert. What a gift! I could go on and on. I will never forget Tlaxcala. So, thank you Camosun College for giving me the heads up to go and for supporting this venture. Special thanks, always to Nancy Sly, John Boraas and Sarah Loewen—a few of my fearless leaders. And to my travelling buddies, Elizabeth and Mavis.

Mavis' reflections:

I am really very grateful to the School of Access, CETL, and the CCFA for their support in making this opportunity possible. Working with the faculty at UPT was a joy, and Linda and Elizabeth were great co-facilitators and terrific traveling pals. And to see Placido Domingo was a true highlight of the trip. My only regret was not planning more time to explore the beautiful city of Tlaxcala.

Elizabeth West

The opportunity to offer an ISW in Tlaxcala was a terrific and enriching experience, and I feel privileged to have been able to participate. For me, this was education working at its best. From the vision of Aida Hernández Hernández for an ISW in Tlaxcala to the end-of-workshop ceremony, everything worked smoothly because of the collaboration, organization, energy and support involved: Nancy Sly, John Boraas and Sarah Loewen, the team in CCI, the CCFA and all at UPT from the University President to the enthusiastic and intellectually engaged workshop participants made this happen. It was a pleasure working with such a group, and of course, my fellow ISW facilitators, Mavis and Linda, greatly added to the experience. Thanks to all!

Muchas gracias a Camosun y Tlaxcala y UPT

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