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What Would You Do If You Were CCFA President?

What is a president supposed to do anyway? The convergence of Camosun's search for a president with my unexpectedly becoming CCFA president has me asking that question.

In some ways the presidency is the least important job in an organization. At the college, an instructor, computer technician, or janitor would be missed much more quickly than a president would. Someone other than the president is responsible for keeping just about every aspect of the college ticking. Presidents can disappear for weeks at a time without the college foundering markedly.

What's an argument for the presidency being the most important I do? Maybe it's that someone has to have an overview in order to see what's going well, what's not, and what's missing. Seeing what's missing may have the most value. What an organization does not do may be as decisive in determining its worth as what it does.

As CCFA president I am very familiar with and involved in what the CCFA does and I have lots to do, but I could use your help in learning to see what's missing.

Here's are some of mu ideas of what's missing:

- a lot of faculty members at general meetings
- compelling reasons for attending general meetings, perhaps
- a strong mentorship program for new faculty members
- a line-up of CCFA members eager to move into CCFA Committee and Executive positions

Overall what's missing for me is a clear understanding of what you are looking for from your union. I'm missing the voices I don't hear.

What would you do as president of the CCFA?

Please let me know.

Mark

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Last week, I chatted with Larry Chung. Larry, whose specialization is Marketing, has been at Camosun College for twenty years, and during the last nine of those, he has had the position of Program Leader for Recruitment and Retention, a position he now shares with Al Morrison, in the School of Business. I was interested in what this position is all about, so I decided to go straight to the source.

First, recruitment. As Larry says, “recruitment is everyone’s responsibility,” but the School of Business has a different approach in that it has provided some faculty release to address this issue. Larry points out that it’s a team effort—he and Al work with invaluable program assistants to promote programs. Having dedicated resources for recruitment seems to be working; the school has seen a steady rise in enrollment despite having a significant competition. Part of that, Larry assures me, is the result of the niche-focused programming, but having a team dedicated to this work makes a difference.

But the retention part of Larry’s portfolio is also crucial. Who among us hasn’t lost students, sometimes very promising students, as the term went by? Larry observes that retention is about student success, and here’s what is sort of brilliant about the way the School of Business has approached this issue. For nine years, first-year students in that school (and now students beyond first year) have had a single contact, a teacher who understands the classroom and learning, who knows where and how students can access the services they may need, and who can provide information and insight that will help students make informed choices about their own progress.

Now, it’s not that students don’t have other people to talk to. All instructors advise students on their choices, minor and major, and listen to them talk about the obstacles they may be facing. And our counsellors and advisors also serve students admirably. But having a point person, as it were, someone who’s been identified to students and who’s known by faculty, a sort of in-house “student-whisperer,” makes sense. Larry is quick to say that he makes clear to students that he is not a counsellor and refers them to that service if he thinks that might be helpful. In the meantime, he’s there to listen and has become, he says, “a keeper of secrets.”

When students don’t complete courses or start and abandon programs and then start new programs, perhaps to abandon those too, well, that might just be evidence of

changeable minds, but sometimes those students are in need of someone to listen to what’s going on for them, to call them on their work habits, or to help them find the path that’s right for them. That might be the difference that keeps them in school or, if school’s the wrong place for them right now, helps them to see that. I ask Larry if, in an ideal world, all the schools would designate someone to do what Larry and Al are doing. “Absolutely,” he says.

Of course, talking about recruitment and retention inevitably brings up international students. Recruitment seems to be going well, but as we all know, retention requires special attention. Besides having the same potential problems all students face, international students are far from home, in a different culture, spending a great deal of money, and trying to learn in a language in which they are less than proficient. The stakes are high. By the time you read this, Larry will have participated in a faculty panel on internationalization reporting to the Board of Governors at its special-issues meeting on December 1. Larry knows a lot about what keeps students in school and helps them succeed. His insights and ideas will be worth hearing.

As a last question, I ask Larry to comment on the best part of his job. “The students,” he says, “they keep me young. I ask myself, ‘what am I going to do when I grow up?’” He laughs, but then says in all seriousness, “We’re making a difference. We’re changing people’s lives.”

On my way out of Dunlop House, Larry invites me to pop in to see the students planning this week’s pub. He motions one student over, introduces me, and tells me that this young woman is in charge of marketing for the event. “Well,” he says to her, “give her your pitch!” And she does, most charmingly. What I remember most as I walk away, though, is the way Larry stood back and let her talk, smiling and nodding as she reeled off the salient points. He was giving her a chance to be proud of herself. That’s a retention strategy too, one that all good teachers employ.



Board of Governors Meeting on Internationalization

Mark Kunen, President

On December 2nd about 70 people, including faculty and staff members and administrators, gathered with the Board of Governors to generate ideas about international education and internationalization. VP Tom Roemer and Associate Director of International Education Diana Shields spoke of the growing number of international students at Camosun (now more than 1000 with the possibility of 1700 by 2016).

Faculty members Debbie Hlady, Joyce van de Vegt, and Larry Chung explained some of the difficulties and pleasures instructors experience with international students. Inter-cultural exchange is rewarding, but language or cultural barriers can get in the way of student progress. Instructors' workloads increase through efforts to overcome these difficulties, and even then, some international students are placed in classrooms in which they cannot succeed. Tom Roemer acknowledged that the rapid increase in students has outpaced the provision of support for students and instructors.

Larry Chung reported that international students make up 12-13% of the student population in the School of Business and proposed a variety of possible support systems, including an ELD Business cohort and increased peer mentorship and tutoring. Curriculum designed with international students in mind can help, and staff from IE spoke in favour of more internationalization of the

curriculum for all students.

Two international students, one from China and one from Kazakhstan related their experiences at Camosun and one Canadian student exulted in her year as a student in Wales. The Chinese woman proclaimed her love for Camosun while the young man from Kazakhstan seemed bemused by his difficulty in forming more than superficial relationships with Canadians. Diana Shields acknowledged that more needs to be done to encourage meaningful contact between local and international students and asked for ideas.

Bruce McCormack, an ELD instructor, showed a satirical animated created for ESL students in Brazil, with voices provided in part by the heretofore undiscovered actors from the ELD Department, and instructors Elizabeth West and Robin Fast described ISW courses provided by Camosun faculty members for teachers in China.

All in all, the evening was worthwhile. I am sure the Board left with a deepened understanding of the complexity of the college's involvement in International Education. The Board is to be commended for initiating these forums. At each one there is at least a half hour for questions and comments from the floor. I encourage faculty members to attend future forums to learn and to contribute to the learning of others.

No Penalty

Kelly Pitman, English

Deadlines are part of life. They tell people whose own work depends on ours that we respect them. Meeting deadlines is in part a question of character.

In the case of student assignments, deadlines help me manage my workload. In an average semester, I will mark 600-800 essays, and I'll be screwed if the bulk of those arrive at the end of term, for my deadline won't change.



Students must also manage workloads, and staggered deadlines ensure that they don't try to complete five major assignments in, say, a week, which would probably mean failing the course. More importantly, deadlines help students to succeed because they facilitate accumulative learning. Students receive feedback on tasks and can apply that feedback to the next task.

In other words, deadlines are in place for a student's *own good*.

Is there a darker side to deadlines? Most course outlines specify penalties for late assignments—a 5% deduction per day is standard. Of course, teachers typically offer students a chance to seek extensions. We can talk for ages about what counts as a legitimate reason for an extension. Grandmother died? Got the flu? Kicked out of your apartment? Take an extra week. Went to Mexico for reading break? Never came to class and didn't even know there was an assignment due? Hmmm, not so much. In this case, the teacher is the judge of the student's work habits, which can translate to being a judge of the student's character. And that's where, for me, things get difficult.

The truth is, I don't even ask why anymore. If a student asks to hand in a paper late, I say yes. But what about those who don't ask ahead of time? Until a few years ago, when an essay appeared mysteriously under my office door or was submitted without discussion a week late, I'd mark it, deduct the late penalty, and record the resulting grade.

Why did it take me so long to acknowledge how bad this felt?

The fact is, poor planning and low commitment affect performance. What could have been a B+ essay is now a C, maybe worse. The penalty, therefore, is intrinsic. I have met many an A-grade thinker with the self-organising capability of well-fed cat in a sunny window. They don't have A grades on their transcripts. I can't give a grade for unrealized potential, so faced with a C essay, I give it a C.

But if I take that C essay and downgrade it to an F because it was four days late, well, I'm sending two messages. One is to the student, and it boils down to something like "You're not behaving admirably." The other is to the academy, and, since I can't accompany assigned grades with explanations that distinguish the quality of students' work from the quality of their work habits, or shall we say, character, the grade is interpreted as identifying the level at which the student is performing in the context of the learning outcomes, which isn't quite accurate. If I am meant to evaluate punctuality, shouldn't it be a learning outcome, and shouldn't the student who hands things in on time get a grade for that too?

Work ethic, motivation, seriousness of purpose—are these things not already reflected in the quality of work a student submits?

It strikes me as questionable to insist that students must pay a price *in addition to the inherent limitation on performance* for handing work in late. And it strikes me as problematic to tell the academy that Johnny can't write when, in fact, Johnny *can*. Johnny could probably write better if Johnny put down the beer and got busy, but that is Johnny's

problem, not mine. How about I just evaluate what Johnny gives me, and call a C a C?

This semester, as an experiment, I took all references to late penalties out of my course outline. Some students asked for extensions, and together we figured out due dates that wouldn't create a pile-up for both of us at end of term. I was honest about my own needs and we worked it out.

The few others (about the same percentage as usual) who said and did nothing as deadlines passed, those I prodded (by email if they were never in class). A couple subsequently submitted work that, while less effective than what they might have produced with due attention, is what it is. The others faded away and will likely fail because missing assignments, like poorly executed ones, affect grades.

I am no longer comfortable calling a C paper an F paper. And for what it's worth, my repeated imprecations to students to do their work in a certain time frame for the purpose of learning seem to be working. I urge students to make the most of my feedback because it's supposed to help them improve. If they don't care or don't believe me, their finished (or unfinished) products reflect that.

So, no late penalties in my classes for now. I still have to manage my workload, and I let students know that I am within my rights not to provide the same level of feedback on a late essay. In the meantime, I talk with them. I say, look, you're just not going to do well if you don't husband your time. If this is true, the grades take care of themselves. If it's not, I may need to rethink the learning potential of laddered learning. For now, I will just mark what's in front of me.

President's Report

Executive News

Nancy Sly, the faculty member on the Board of Governors, and a member of the selection committee for the next Camosun president, was a guest at the November 28th meeting. Nancy recommended that the CCFA work with HR to develop a joint approach to orientation of new faculty members. The Executive responded positively to that idea and to Nancy's assurances that she would be receptive to receiving suggestions from faculty members relating to the search for a president and would help make the selection process as transparent as possible. Encouraged by that information, the Executive decided not to formally object to the lack of a CCFA-appointed representative on the selection committee but to let the Board Chair know that in principle the CCFA believes in formal union representation.

Aided by the perspective and ideas of long-serving Administrative Assistant Erin Waugh, the Executive decided to undertake an examination of the focus and priorities of the CCFA. Through short surveys and other communications with members, we will seek a better understanding of what the members seek from the CCFA and will try to provide pathways that will be effective in attracting more members to union positions.

Other news

I met with Interim President Peter Lockie on November 18th. Peter was enthusiastic about initiatives to increase open discussion and exchange of ideas at the Board and senior management levels. He's in his job for just a year and wants to

make a difference. He also assured me that the presidential search committee was committed to a transparent process which would include extensive consultation with the college community at many stages.

FPSE President's Council, November 20th and 21st

Matters of some consequence to the CCFA

PC approved this motion:

“That FPSE lobby the WCB and the BC Government, in cooperation with efforts at the BC Fedto review the regulations, policies, and procedures regarding mental disorders to improves access to compensation for affected workers.”

Apparently, new WCB regulations are leading to reduced coverage for mental disorders.

FPSE approved \$2000 dollars to partially support the costs of a tour promoting academic freedom, with expenses to be shared with locals. Greatest costs would be borne by island institutions. The idea for the Academic Freedom Road Show arose from Capilano University's destruction of a satirical sculpture by CapU faculty member George Rammell of the University president which had been placed on the Capilano's grounds in protest that funding cuts had been conducted without due process. The tour will highlight issues of academic freedom prompted by the demolition of the sculpture and the discipline of faculty members who criticized that action for violating CapU's respectful workplace policy. George plans to appear with the reassembled statue. At its next meeting, the Executive will consider hosting this presentation.

Questions or comments? Kunen@camosun.bc.ca (Local 3594)

The Latest from FPSE

From the Canadian Labour Congress:

By clicking on the web site embedded in the message, you can add your name to those calling on party leaders to commit to a nationally broadcast debate on issues and policies that effect women's lives.

Dear Cindy,

We are proud to share with you that today, alongside over 100 women's organizations and their allies, we launched [Up for Debate](#) – a campaign calling on all federal political parties to make meaningful commitments to change women's lives for the better, at home and around the world.

Women in Canada have questions; Up for Debate challenges our leaders to answer them.

Help build a Canada that works for women – support Up For Debate!

When it comes time to elect our next government in 2015, we want to see party leaders explain how they plan to build a more equal Canada for us all. This must start by committing to participate in a nationally broadcast leaders' debate focused on policies and issues that impact women's lives.

Join the call for a federal leaders' debate – support Up For Debate!

In Canada, women continue to earn 20% less than their male peers for the same full-time work, are more likely to

be poor, and do twice as much unpaid work at home. Since 1980, over a thousand Aboriginal women and girls have been murdered, and each day more than 8,000 women and children seek protection through a shelter.

Around the world, women face economic exclusion and marginalization. Violence against women is endemic, and sexual violence continues to be used as a weapon in armed conflict. Every year, 14 million girls are married against their will before they turn 18. Women still account for only nine per cent of the police, 20 per cent of parliamentarians, and 27 per cent of all judges worldwide.

The struggle to realize equal rights for women and girls is far from over.

Women can determine the outcome of the next federal election. Women vote in greater numbers – over a half million more women than men voted in the last federal election. We want proof that the candidates for Prime Minister understand the diverse needs and realities of women.

We're up for the debate. The question is, are the party leaders?

The Alliance for Women's Rights is a network of over 100 women's organizations and allies from across Canada united in raising awareness about women's rights in the lead up to the next federal election.

You can follow the Up For Debate campaign on twitter at [@UpForDebate2015](#) and on [Facebook](#).

From the Canadian Labour Congress regarding: Report on results of National Survey on the Impact of Domestic Violence on Workers and Workplaces

Sisters and Brothers,

Attached please find a copy of the report of our National Survey on the Impact of Domestic Violence. We are releasing the report to the media this morning at 10am at concurrent press conferences on Parliament Hill and Western University. We have also produced a promotional video which is available along with the report at www.domesticviolenceatwork.ca

As we heard at Canadian Council, the results are quite powerful and represent an opportunity for us to redouble our efforts to ensure our workplaces are safe and workers receive the support they need. We have requested a meeting with Kellie Leitch and have asked her to consider holding a roundtable of employers, unions and government to discuss the survey results.

We have also included a list of key messages. Many unions and federations will be participating in December 6 events, and we encourage you to incorporate this messaging into your speeches, social media and member communications.

We will be working in the coming months to develop a list of promising practices on domestic violence in the workplace. We are aware of some great initiatives in collective bargaining, member education and public awareness, but your locals may be doing things we are not aware of. We will put together a package of resources and educational materials and would like to point to specific success stories, so please share any materials or language with our women's and human rights department at womens-hrights@clc-ctc.ca

Questions about the survey and next steps can be directed to Vicky Smallman, National Director, at vsmallman@clc-ctc.ca

From the Canadian Centre of Policy Alternatives.

Sent: November-19-14 3:45 PM

In case you missed it last week, our National Office of the CCPA released an insightful report on the costs of rushing to balance the federal budget last week.

At What Cost? The Impacts of Rushing to Balance the Budget documents the extent of federal government cuts

(larger than most people think!) and provides tangible examples of how these cuts have negatively impacted important public services. While undermining Canada's economic recovery, the government's austerity measures have also impacted federally delivered services, with the biggest cuts made in areas where Canadians most heavily rely on the federal government.

- See more [here](#)

From CAUT this message urging support for Bill C-279 which would add to the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code protection for gender identity. The November 20th call-in day has passed, but there is still time to lesupport passage of the Bill by contacting a Senator.

November 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance. This day provides an important moment for us to reflect on the past and present violence and discrimination faced by the trans members of our communities. It also serves as a reminder that our fight against transphobia must be ongoing, and that it must manifest in all the work we do: in our defense of academic freedom, in our promotion and practice of equity, and in negotiating rights and protections for trans academic staff.

We must also stand for trans rights in the political realm. In this spirit, CAUT – in partnership with Amnesty International, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Gender Mosaic, and many other organizations – has been working to lobby for the passage of Bill C-279, which would add protection for gender identity into the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code. In addition to the social justice allies with whom we have collaborated, law enforcement officials have advocated for this bill, stating that it would give them greater power to protect trans people and to prosecute their aggressors.

Bill C-279 is currently in the Senate awaiting a final committee hearing and, subsequently, 3rd (and final) reading. In honour of the Transgender Day of Remembrance, a call-in has been organized for November 20 in support of Bill C-279. We urge all CAUT member associations to participate, and to ensure that this message reaches your individual members.

To participate, please call one of the Senators on the Senate Committee reviewing the Bill, and say the following, or your version of the following:

- * My name is _____ and I am calling from _____ to urge you to support the swift passage of Bill C-279 on Gender Identity as it is currently drafted.
- * Canada's transgender communities have long suffered discrimination and violence and this legislation is part of the solution to protecting the human rights of transgender individuals.
- * I would like you to know that I am not afraid of sharing public spaces including bathrooms with transgender people.
- * But I am afraid that unless C-279 passes unamended, transgender people will continue to live in fear each and every time they enter a public space.
- * Delays in passing legislation cost lives. This bill is as perfect as it's going to get. Please do the right thing and support Bill C-279 as drafted. Let this be your legacy for this Parliamentary session.
- * Thank you for your time.

You can find contact information for the Senate committee members, and additional information about the bill, on the PSAC website [here](#).

CCFA PD Opportunities

The PD committee has been reviewing New forms and PD application guidelines will be available mid-December. Please watch your email for when new forms go live, as there are substantive changes and the committee asks that you use the new forms for the 2015/16 fiscal year.

Click [here](#) for information on upcoming PD opportunities offered through CETL.

Call for Submissions

Please consider submitting an article to the Confluence - email Erin Waugh (waughe@camosun.bc.ca) with your feedback article, or your idea for an article. Don't forget that we want to hear about your SD project, your vacation, or really anything you'd like to share with your colleagues.