

May 2011 Newsletter



Presidents report

This year, so far, there have been no problems involving the STP processes that any of our members have brought forward. There were several concerns before hand that were addressed, but none emerged as procedures proceeded. An important factor in this has been the information sessions on STP procedures in the Handbook attended by many faculty members, STP Committee members, and several of the Deans – I note especially the efforts of two members of the ULFA Executive Committee, Kate Chiste and John Usher, who provided the heavy lifting for these key sessions.

On a different matter I had previously reported that President Mahon had offered assurances about confidentiality of faculty submissions to appointment and search committees involving administrators – specifically around FOIPP.

Unfortunately several problems emerged in a recent appointment process involving confidentiality, albeit not involving FOIPP, but other matters as well. The key problems persist, are serious, and will affect faculty input to committees for some time to come. I do not see solutions in the offing.

ULFA has participated in attempting to resolve some of the emergent problems as they may relate to the Handbook. Much of the difficulty resides in problems within GFC and not with Handbook issue. As I have mentioned before, the interests of faculty members and professional librarians interests may not be effectively represented in that body. Certainly the outcomes are far from the kind of protection available to us through collectively negotiating articles in our Handbook. GFC does not appear to represent an effective avenue for faculty governance.

As a result of our last Handbook negotiations we agreed to participate in a joint Working Group to generate language for an improved article on Term appointments. Trevor Harrison and John Usher are representing us in those continuing discussions.

We continue to face difficulties in the Library. I note that very similar problems are emerging across Canada where University Librarians are taking steps to reduce or eliminate participation by Professional Librarians in the direction of the library. We continue to support our Members exercising their right to participate in governance in the library, but this remains as a very challenging situation.

We completed the survey of Members’ opinions on the ULFA Annual Picnic. There was less than 10% return, very limp support, and many critical points were raised (for a full report see overleaf). The Executive has decided to retire this annual event. On the other hand the ULFA socials that were organized on 3 occasions this semester were promising. The Executive has decided to continue these with a series in the fall and incorporate a social event to introduce our new ULFA members

Last month ULFA moved into our new permanent headquarters D620, where the old Vice President Research offices were located in University Hall. This will be a more central and accessible location.

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When we are settled in we will have an open house in this new space.

I have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with individual ULFA members about their situations and concerns and I hope that more of you will take the opportunity to do so with me.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the ULFA Executive Committee, John Usher, Kate Chiste, Bryson Brown, Trevor Harrison, Ed Jurkowski, and David Kaminski, as well as our Executive Director Brenda Rennie. A President could not ask for better support than what these competent, conscientious, and exceptionally well motivated people can provide. We are very fortunate indeed to have people like them volunteering their services to us. I would also like express the Association's appreciation for the efforts of Geoffrey Hale on pension matters and as AGM speaker and of Sue Edwards in providing us with excellent administrative assistance.

I hope that all of our Members will have a safe and productive summer. I look forward to working with you again next semester.

Rob Sutherland

ULFA President

ULFA ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC SURVEY 2011

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Background:

The ULFA Annual Family Picnic has been held for the past 26 years as an informal way of introducing new faculty members and their families to the University and existing members. Traditionally held in September, (usually at the John Martin Recreation Area, Pavan Park, North Lethbridge), the event has always proved popular and well attended, however in 2010 for the first time in the Annual Picnic's history, the event was met with a distinct lack of interest which resulted in the picnic being cancelled a few days before it was supposed to be held. In view of this, the ULFA Executive Committee agreed that a survey should be conducted in order to ascertain whether the ULFA Annual Family Picnic should be held this year.

Survey & Results:

The survey was conducted at the end of March 2011, giving 625 ULFA Members the chance to respond to 14 questions on the survey. The survey was set up in both PDF and electronic format. Of the 625 members, only 62 responded (8 on paper, 54 electronically). **An overall response of only 10%.**

Summary of Responses:

Questions 1& 2:

The general consensus was that September was not a good month to hold the picnic, as this was a busy time for members, not just at the UofL, but also at home with children returning to school/college etc. The suggestion of an August date was met with a mixed response, some saying it was a good idea (late August preferred), but others saying that this was a time when members were generally away on their summer vacation. It was felt holding the picnic later; say at the end of September/beginning of October was also problematic due to unpredictable weather.

There were also concerns about what day of the week the picnic was held on. It was generally felt that the picnic should be held at the latter end of the week and not the beginning. There was a suggestion that the picnic be held to coincide with either Student Orientation week or Fall Convocation in order to allow members based at both the Edmonton and Calgary campuses to attend.

Questions 3 & 4:

Most respondents had attended the ULFA Annual Picnic, of those who had not attended the reasons were due either to timing or being a new member (when picnic was cancelled).

Questions 5 & 6:

Of those who responded just over half said they would attend the picnic if held this year, the remainder said no, with one possible maybe. Suggestions for alternative events included; A welcome back reception (to be held on campus); a Christmas event; a more formal event (semi-formal attire required, no children in attendance) with proceeds going to a charitable cause. Mention was also given to the continuations of Social Get-togethers currently organized, which were working well. Another suggestion included a more structured organized event, especially with activities for children being arranged, with the help of students.

Questions 7 & 8

Of those who had attended the picnic before, most felt that the venue was suitable with a small minority who felt that it wasn't. Suggestions for alternative venues seem to centre round campus with the following being suggested: Markin Hall; Running Track; Near the Lake or on the grass behind Markin Hall. It was also suggested that more centralized venues be considered i.e. Galt Gardens or Indian Battle Park, which would allow (to a certain extent), those without their own vehicles access to the picnic.

Questions 9 & 10:

Most respondents felt that the food and entertainment were appropriate for the picnic. Alternative suggestions for food included more canapé/cocktail fare; better vegetarian selection; burger and salads. Musical entertainment was generally felt to be appropriate, but could be loud on occasion to hinder conversation. It was felt that more structured entertainment should be organized, especially for children, as well as more interactive games that would allow people to mingle.

Questions 11 & 12:

$\frac{3}{4}$ of those who responded felt that the picnic was good value for money, while the remainder felt that it was expensive, generally when paying for a whole family. There was some concern too over the quality of the food, which some felt did not warrant the cost charged. A suggestion was made that members bring their own food or contribute to a POT LUCK Supper.

Questions 13 & 14:

Again $\frac{3}{4}$ of those who responded felt that the picnic achieved its objective of meeting and greeting new faculty members. The remainder felt that this was not achieved, due to various reasons, which included: members sticking to their same groups and not mingling (this was felt to be a major factor); A suggestion that smaller events be held with the focus on introducing new members; The need for Chairs/Deans to attend the picnic in order to introduce new faculty members properly to existing faculty members, as it was felt that often the introductions were brief & sketchy; The event being too big. It was also felt that hiring freeze had had a detrimental effect with fewer new members being hired, which does not motivate departments to attend.

The Executive would like to thank all those who responded to the survey for both their time and feedback/suggestions.



**DATE FOR YOUR CALENDARS:
A WELCOME BACK FACULTY
CHEESE & WINE SOCIAL**

Will be held this year on

***Thursday 22nd September 2011 from 4pm to 6pm
in Andy's Place, AH-100, Anderson Hall***

Further details will be available beginning of September.



FACULTY GET TOGETHER - FUTURE DATES

Due to the success of the get-togethers held between January and March, the following 'get-togethers' have been arranged for:

***Thursday 20th October (3pm—5pm), WE2034 (Seminar Room) & WE2046 (Foyer/Lounge Area)
2nd Floor—Water & Environmental Science Building***

Thursday 17th November (3pm—5pm) University Hall, To Be Advised

Thursday 22nd December (3pm—5pm), Markin Hall Atrium

Thursday 19th January 2012 (3pm—5pm), Andy's Place, AH-100 Anderson Hall

Thursday 16th February 2012 (3pm—5pm), Markin Hall Atrium

***Thursday 22nd March (3pm—5pm), WE2034 (Seminar Room) & WE2046 (Foyer/Lounge Area)
2nd Floor—Water & Environmental Science Building***

Thursday 19th April (3pm-5pm) Andy's Place, AH-100 Anderson Hall

It is hoped that these get-togethers will become a good networking base from which faculty members (both new and established) can glean useful information, meet members they would not normally meet and just generally socialize.

A cash bar and snacks will be available, so make sure you make a note on your calendars!!!



ULFA REPRESENTATIVES

The following Members have been elected to serve as ULFA representatives:

APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE FOR

Vice President (Academic): Robert Sutherland, CCBN—Neuroscience

Associate Vice President (Students): Jasminn Berteotti, Arts & Science Co-op/Applied Studies

Employee and Family Assistance Program

The program provides direct access to confidential, professional counseling to help deal with work, personal and family related problems and their possible negative effects on performance. The service is available to individual employees and family members. The service is provided through the specialized firm of Human Solutions, an independent agency with offices across Canada. Alberta Blue Cross employs a managed approach to this service, providing auditing and administrative functions. For further information go to

<http://www.humansolutions.ca/www/services/Assistance.aspx>



Information on UofL Employee Assistance Programs can be found on

<http://www.uleth.ca/hum/eap/index.htm>

INTERESTING MAY FACTS

According to the early Roman calendar, May was the third month. Later, the ancient Romans used January 1 for the beginning of their year, and May became the fifth month. May has always had 31 days.

Mothers Day was first observed in 1908. It was designated by Presidential proclamation, and was recognized officially by Congress and the President in 1914. It is celebrated in honor of Mothers on the second Sunday of May.

Many Mexican Americans celebrate what they call Cinco De Mayo, on May 5th. It is the anniversary of the Mexican victory over the French at Puebla in 1862. It is a national holiday in Mexico.

MAY VERSE:

Hail, sweet month of May!
 Hail, bright month of May!
 Bring sunshine with thee,
 Chasing clouds away.
 March has left us sighing
 In cold and chilly blast,
 April's tears have fallen,
 May has come at last!

Anonymous

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Association or of its Executive unless so specified.

Current and past issues of the ULFA newsletter can be found on the ULFA website. <http://www.ulfa.ca/>