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By Darryl Bedford and Jennifer Boswell

What is Ontario Online— And why does it matter to you?

On January 13, 2014 Ontario Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) Brad Duguid announced a new institution called Ontario Online. The announcement, moderated by a student from Carleton University, was livestreamed and posted on Youtube under the title "[MTCU Google Hangout](#)."

After a short speech by Duguid, one question each was posed from student panels at MacMaster, Confederation College, St. Clair College, Queens University and the University of Waterloo. Afterwards, questions from the media were allowed.

Who wasn't part of this announcement? Faculty. Neither college faculty with OPSEU nor university faculty with the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) were involved.

This is not surprising since neither group was consulted on the plan.

WHAT IS ONTARIO ONLINE?

Here are the basics:

- Dozens of Ontario post-secondary credits are to be centralized in one bureaucratic entity called Ontario Online
- \$42 million dollars is being dedicated over 3 years to launch the site
- The site is scheduled to go live for the 2014/2015 academic year, with growing postsecondary participation expected over time
- Students will be able to access Ontario Online to take online courses offered by a range of colleges and universities
- Students will immediately know which institutions will recognize the credit, so credit transferability is key to the plan

- This "collaborative center of excellence" aims to improve the learning experience and provide better access to high quality post-secondary education from anywhere in the province.

Besides what is in the YouTube announcement, OCUFA (Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations) has published a leaked confidential memo from Deputy Minister Deb Newman with further details--<http://ocufa.on.ca/wordpress/assets/Leaked-Memo-Online-learning.pdf>

The Newman memo promises that, over time, there will be "increased productivity gains through collaboration, and an enhanced national and international profile for Ontario in the online learning landscape."

Near the end of the YouTube announcement, a reporter referenced how far online technology extends reach. Duguid answered that there is no reason why Ontario Online can't be global.

WHO DEVELOPED ONTARIO ONLINE?

This is a program developed collaboratively by 'representatives'—without faculty or other support staff—from Ontario's colleges and universities. Discussions were held in the summer of 2013.

Duguid says that all Ontario colleges are on board, as they had already organized themselves in preparation for this initiative. Some universities are also ready to participate. It is expected that more universities may come on board as the program gets up and running.

Discussions in summer 2013 were so positive, in Duguid's words, that the minister expects Ontario Online to be embraced by most if not all Ontario postsecondary institutions. Although Duguid says in the video that no institution will be forced to participate,



Ontario's union
Le syndicat de l'Ontario

OPSEU Local 110 officers

President: Darryl Bedford

1st VP: Kathryn Tamasi

2nd VP: Mike Boisvert

Chief Steward: Mark Feltham

Treasurer: Rachel McCorriston

Secretary: Whitney Hoth

Reach Local 110 at:

Fanshawe College (Room D2018)

P.O. Box 7005

1001 Fanshawe College Blvd.

London, Ontario N5Y 5R6

Ph. (519) 452-4205

Fax (519) 453-5345

Email: union@opseu110.ca

Website: <http://www.opseu110.ca>

Newsletter Committee:

Jennifer Boswell (Editor)

Kathryn Tamasi

Darryl Bedford

Paul Evans

Approved for distribution:

Darryl Bedford,
President OPSEU 110

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Ontario Online *continued*

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one leaked document makes it clear that every college and university will be forced to accept each others' courses for credit.

From the student perspective, improved and transparent credit transferability seems a significant improvement.

STRUCTURE OF ONTARIO ONLINE

From another leaked document, see on this page a visual depiction of Ontario Online.

At the top of the chart sits a Board of Directors, and directly beneath the board are two committees. There aren't any college or university faculty on the Board of Directors, nor any indication that they may be on the Course Committees.

In his announcement Duguid explained that the Course Hub will coordinate shared courses. The central point is to "maximize scale in mutual recognition of academic cred-

it." The Knowledge Hub will develop and share best practices, research and data.

The Support Hub is the only place faculty are mentioned in the leaked document. In Duguid's presentation, he noted it will offer "centralized support for students, instructors and institutions while reducing costs through collaboration on tools, services and technology." This online portal will ensure one-stop access to courses, research and teaching resources. As online programs need to be accessible, this support structure will ensure that "students, instructors and institutions" can get to the available resources.

WHERE WILL THE COURSES COME FROM?

One of the colleges has disclosed that each college will be paid \$75,000 to develop each of two courses. Proposals have already been submitted, midterm reports are due to the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) by March 14, and all development activities will be complete by September 1, 2014.

Instead of college faculty making decisions as to which courses will go online, it is clear that the decisions are being made by the bureaucrats.

One college's administration has disclosed that their two courses will be electives. At first thought, perhaps a college offering two

electives online is no big deal. However, consider that the other 23 colleges may do the same with their two course contributions. That would be 48 electives that each col-

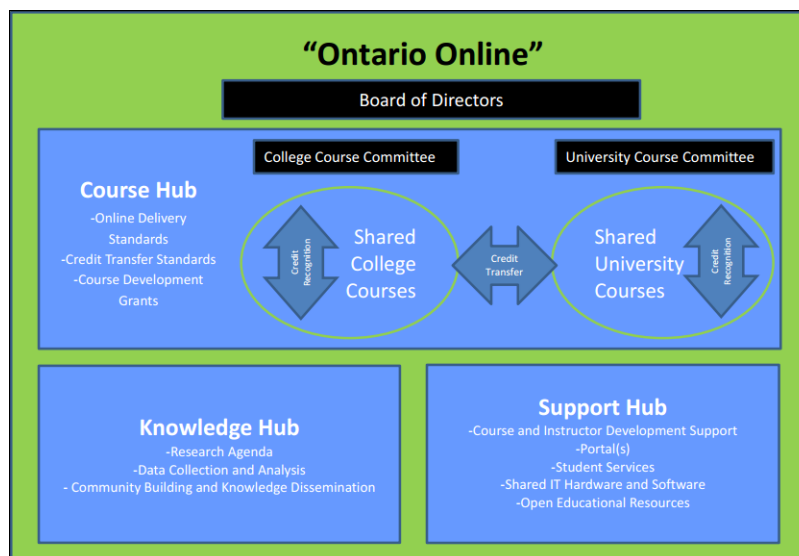
lege may be required to recognize. What impact will 48 online electives have on a department such as Fanshawe's School of Language and Liberal Studies?

CONCERNS

No faculty participation: A steering committee will have representatives from OntarioLearn, Ontario Universities Online, and Contact North. Again, there is no mention of college or university faculty.

Job security and/or job losses: What will happen to people employed across the post-secondary education sector? Duguid stated that Ontario Online will eliminate duplication in "developing material, learning techniques and technology."

Duguid also mentioned "intellectual tech-



Ontario Online *continued*

(Continued from page 2)

nology," (whatever this means) noting that it will be shared in terms of costs, and "formulas will have to be worked out with the organization."

Job losses seem an inevitable consequence of "reduced duplication" across institutions.

JP Hornick, OPSEU College Faculty Divisional Executive Chair expressed, "We are concerned that the Ontario Online initiative is primarily a cost-cutting venture intended to facilitate larger class sizes and increased hiring of part-time and contract teaching staff."

Use of term 'instructor' rather than 'faculty' or 'professor': The teaching and subject expertise of college faculty is being undermined in our colleges, particularly through management intervention in areas that aren't their purview. The persistent use of the term 'instructors' throughout Duguid's presentation coupled with the absence of faculty participation exposes the continued undermining of faculty's expertise and qualifications.

Education: What will happen to student success and retention? Actual learning? Actual *education*? St. Clair College asked a question prefaced by the statistics regarding low student completion rates (about 15%) for MOOCs (massive open online courses). Given this grim statistic, the students asked, "how will quality and relevance be maintained?" The minister's answer repeated previous assurances of quality and the mantra of "student choice." The courses would be "implemented thoughtfully." Duguid noted that research will be a part of this initiative also.

Intellectual property rights: If faculty members are asked to do this work, who will own the intellectual property rights? Will existing curriculum be uploaded to be used over and over again? Will faculty be properly compensated for its usage?

Business/customer-service model: The jargon of business and innovation-speak peppered Duguid's talk: "excellence," "innovation," "high quality," "globally competitive," "maximizing scale," becoming "leaders rather than followers." There wasn't one reference to educational principles or theory.

Duguid noted that he was previously the Minister for Economic Development and Innovation, and that Ontario Online offered great opportunities in these areas. The University of Waterloo panel noted that Waterloo was known for its expertise and entrepreneurship, and asked pointedly "how can entrepreneurs get involved?" Duguid was very enthusiastic. "We need you!"

Cost driven: Duguid asked the rhetorical question "do savings drive this?" No, he answered, "quality drives this," but we can't deny that "there will be savings to the system and we don't shy away from that."

FACULTY ARE THE EXPERTS

Online teaching can have its place. However, education will not be advanced through a centralized post-secondary credit-granting organization run by bureaucrats and accountants. College and university faculty who are "on the ground" in contact with the students and who have teaching and subject expertise should be assessing the learning needs. We are the experts. ☪

OPSEU CAAT

Academic's Position on Online Teaching

Our principles developed based on feedback from you, the college faculty:

- Online teaching is exactly that, teaching
- Online teaching where it occurs must be performed by faculty members, and not "facilitators"
- Faculty are the experts and must be given academic freedom including the ability to select teaching methods that match their students' learning needs; these are not decisions to be made by bureaucrats or accountants
- Online teaching must be credited as teaching and compensated appropriately through the workload formula
- Faculty need access to support, professional development opportunities, and a suitable infrastructure to teach effectively online
- With these principles and procedures firmly established to ensure quality education, online teaching can have its place in the college system

* Volunteers Requested *

Faculty teaching online course sections during the Summer '14 term are sought to log their time this summer. We will provide you with data recording materials. An honorarium will be given in appreciation for your participation.

If interested, please contact us at 519-452-4205 or union@opseu110.ca

By Jennifer Boswell

We're All in This Together: Member Meeting January 29, 2014

"Remember, I'm pulling for ya—we're all in this together." ~ Red Green



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The GMM meeting of January 29 was a good gathering of faculty from all across the college. It was an opportunity to have Fanshawe College faculty / Local 110 members share their concerns about their work.

Circumstances in different areas came to light and were discussed. We learned about our shared workplace issues, and got to know some colleagues in other areas of the college.

It is hoped that people who talked about their struggles gained comfort and strength knowing that they are not alone.

Motions that are going forward to the provincial demand set meeting March 22nd and 23rd were passed.

Partial Load Concerns

Provincial pre-bargaining survey responses ranked partial load concerns number one, with a 'take strong action' recommendation.

The discussion began with partial-load concerns. One discussion was about bridging their benefits over the summer. If a manager or chair could write a letter of intent, showing that the partial-load employee would be employed the following fall, could benefits be bridged?

Another partial load member sadly related that after years of working 12 hours a week, being partial load for years, he was suddenly told he would be working 13 hours a week. What did this mean? A substantial cut in salary, and a

loss of benefits. Terrible.

The local is hearing more and more about partial-load members being suddenly assigned more teaching, moving them to sessional status, with its attendant wage cut and loss of benefits.

For members who don't think that union membership is beneficial to them, please note that partial-load members are part of our union, and sessional members are not. The high hourly wages for partial-load were negotiated years ago by our union, and stand in stark contrast to part-time and sessional rates.

Another concern that was brought up was how slow grid progression is for partial-load members. A motion relating to this was also passed unanimously.

Coordinators

Other concerns raised included coordinators' roles and job definition. Several coordinators, current and former, were at the meeting. It was recognized that coordinators suffer from having a poorly defined work description and pressures to take on work or roles they may feel uncomfortable with. Whether a coordinator is step one or two is also a concern. As well, some coordinators are now working in degree programs, which may pose issues different from diploma programs.

Professional Qualifications

Professional designations came up. Now that we are progressing to degree programs, and faculty are required to have PhDs and other professional designations to teach in these programs, the lack of recognition for these increased qualifications in the salary grid is an issue.

Online Learning

Online learning is a huge issue. While we don't want to stop progress, some members said, we would like to have the large amount of work it takes to teach and develop online curriculum be recog-

nized.

Ontario Online (discussed in the first article of this Educator) has been launched, and is a serious challenge to job security for all faculty. Curriculum sharing agreements have already been signed between Ontario colleges. What that means for faculty in various schools here at the college remains to be seen.

Scheduling

Scheduling and timetabling and family responsibilities were discussed. Now that classes are being scheduled up to 9 p.m., rather than the traditional 8-5 p.m., it's causing problems for those with caregiving responsibilities.

Counselling

Counsellors were represented at the meeting. They are struggling with heavy workloads and increasingly complex cases. Better workload provisions are needed, and a motion was passed to that effect.

It felt good to come together and offer support to our struggling colleagues, if only moral support was possible at that time. We are all proud of the work we do, but we need the resources to do it more than adequately—we would all like to do our jobs well.

Have the resources to do our jobs well is what the union will fight for at the bargaining table. We support them, like we support our colleagues and co-workers in working at this very rewarding, but demanding career. ☹



By Mike Boisvert, 2nd V.P. of Local 110

Academic Freedom

"What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know." St. Augustine (AD 354-430)

St. Augustine's reflection on time is reminiscent of the problem of academic freedom: it seems we all know what it means, until we're asked to define it. One way to think about academic freedom is to consider it to mean the right of an educator to teach and conduct research free from interference. Concise though this definition may be, it raises more questions that it answers. *Interference from whom exactly?* From the government? From administrators? A board of governors? Colleagues? Students? Community stakeholders? And, *at one point does interference become severe enough to warrant defense of one's rights?* How does one distinguish between serious interference and a frustrating, but minor irritation?

History and Definition of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is a product of the university and its definition has changed over time. Though the concept originated in Greece, its modern conception arose in German universities during the 19th century and became an American concern in the early 20th century (Horn, 1999). The first instantiation of academic freedom in the North American education context was the 1915 statement by the American Association of University Professors, which defined the concept as comprising "freedom of inquiry and research," "freedom of teaching," and "freedom of extramural utterance and action" (www.aaup.org, Reports & Publications). The AAUP

statement on academic freedom was further clarified in 1940, and has been reaffirmed in the years since. It wasn't until the 1950s and 60s that academic freedom became an immediate concern of the Canadian professoriate, and during this period faculty associations (backed by the Canadian Association of University Teachers--CAUT) were successful in having principles of academic freedom formalized in collective agreements.

The CAUT defines academic freedom more comprehensively as the "right to teach, learn, study and publish free of orthodoxy or threat of reprisal and discrimination....to criticize the university and...to participate in its governance" (www.caut.ca, Issues and Campaigns). Academic tenure is seen as a key lever to ensure that principles of academic freedom are upheld.

Academic freedom language had been sought following threats of censure and outright dismissal of academics for dubious reasons. One famous case is that of history professor Harry Crowe. Crowe was fired from United College (Winnipeg) in 1958, after a private correspondence in which Crowe criticized the administration was leaked to the principal of the college. Concerned that his academic freedom had been violated, CAUT undertook a formal investigation, the first of dozens that CAUT has pursued since the Crowe case. Largely due to the release of the CAUT report, Crowe was reinstated (Horn, 1999).

Of course, some have doubted whether academic freedom protections are warranted or actually applied for their stated purposes. Reflective of these concerns is the following definition of academic freedom as published in a New York Times

editorial: "Academic freedom...is the inalienable

right of every college instructor to make a fool of himself and his college by intemperate, sensational prattle about every little subject under heaven... and still keep on the payroll or be reft therefrom only by elaborate process" (cf., Metzger, 1993, p.16).

Freedom of the Educator vs. Freedom of the Institution

Individual professors are not alone in wishing to exert academic freedom rights. Academic institutions themselves seek to exert such rights of their own. At the institutional level, academic freedom rights typically include decisions over who teaches, what is taught, as well as how and to whom it is taught. Not surprisingly, tensions often emerge between the academic freedoms of the individual professor and those asserted by the institution. How much leeway, for example, is a professor afforded in determining how material will be taught? Does the institution allow the instructor latitude to choose course materials, teaching methods and student evaluations? Does the institution exert its own academic freedoms mainly in the form of setting guidelines around such things as grading curves, grading deadlines, and what is generally expected to take place in the classroom? Or, does the institution extend its control further to also determine the selection of materials, as well as the required teaching methods and forms of evaluation?

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Academic Freedom *continued*

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Academic Freedom in Ontario's Community Colleges

Does academic freedom exist in the community college system? Yes, it does. And no, it doesn't. Yet, it might. But, it might not. Although the term "academic freedom" does not appear anywhere in the CAAT-A collective agreement, *institutional* academic freedoms are protected therein. Article 6 most directly references these institutional freedoms, granting managements' right to "plan, direct and control operations, facilities, programs, courses". Article 13 deals with the related issue of the Colleges' ownership of copyright.

Aspects pertinent to the academic freedom of the individual professor are referenced in the collective agreement. The "class definition" for Professor indicates that "a Professor is responsible for providing academic leadership and for developing an effective learning environment for students" (p. 144). This includes "specifying or approving learning approaches, necessary resources, etc." and "selecting or approving textbooks and learning materials."

However, this freedom is restricted by the preamble, which states that a Professor operates "[u]nder the direction of the senior academic officer of the College or designate" (p. 144).

The reader may interpret the former language to mean that certain academic freedoms are granted to faculty (despite the absence of any statement actually affirming a commitment to academic freedom). While some faculty are indeed able to make decisions without interference from managers, many report they are unable to do so. Thus, the language in the collective agreement may lead to inequities in the application of

individuals' academic freedoms. Absent a

strong statement indicating faculty's right to select textbooks, teaching methods and evaluations, faculty may have these decisions imposed upon them according to the whims of particular managers.

Although the collective agreement fails to affirm a commitment to academic freedom, most of Ontario's 24 community colleges have their own institutional policies around academic freedom. Examining the policy statements of the 16 colleges whose policies are readily available online indicates that 11 have academic freedom policies that are directed at both research and teaching, while 5 have statements directed at research only.

Fanshawe College has its own institutional policy on academic freedom, [*Policy 1-J-05 Academic Freedom – Rights and Responsibilities*](#). The policy notes, rightly, that academic freedom is not absolute and carries with it responsibilities, including but not limited to those codified in law. Several issues central to the concept of academic freedom are also referenced. So, for instance, it seeks to "make intellectual Scholarship, discourse and critique possible without reprisal or repression by the institution, the government or any other person or entity" (section 3.2). Scholarship is defined as "the pursuit, creation and dissemination of knowledge through integrity in research and other scholarly initiatives." Explicit reference to "teaching" (or even "classroom") is absent from the policy document, and scholarship is defined as research and other forms of, well...scholarship. Whether the circular definition of scholarship was an oversight or deliberate, the college policy appears to be commitment to academic freedom in research, but not in teaching.

Academic freedom in Ontario

community colleges thus exists as a series of paradoxes. Institutions have academic freedom enshrined in the college agreement, but individual educators do not. In spite of this, some faculty are granted some control over the selection of materials, teaching methods and student evaluations; for other faculty, these decisions are made by managers. Some community colleges allow professors to exert institutionally granted academic freedoms in the context of research and classroom teaching, other colleges enable academic freedoms in research but not in teaching.

Should Academic Freedom be Codified in the Collective Agreement?

The most direct way to remove the inconsistencies in how individual academic freedoms are evinced is to include clear language in the collective agreement that affirms the colleges' commitment to principles of academic freedom for educators and specifies some range of responsibilities to be covered. This issue has been raised by faculty representatives in previous rounds of bargaining, but it has been a nonstarter. The colleges may be reluctant on several levels. It is easy to imagine concerns that faculty will pursue rights to co-governance, tarnish institutional brands by speaking out against administration, or erode an institution's control over curriculum products that may have monetary value to the institution, particularly as course content is increasingly placed online, and therefore owned by institutions.

The most significant impediment to codifying specific academic freedoms in the collective agreement may well be structural in nature. Increasingly, colleges are relying on non-full-time faculty to teach. The Fanshawe staffing statistics for October 2013, for instance, show that of the 1326

(Continued on page 7)

Academic Freedom - end

academic employees, 61.1% were comprised of part-time, partial load or sessional employees. Fanshawe is but one data point in a staffing pattern that has characterized post-secondary institutions in Canada and the U.S. A recent report by the Coalition on the Academic Workforce, for instance, indicates that approximately half of all post-secondary instructors have part-time status; CBC radio's *The Current* focused a recent segment on the increasing use of non-full-time instructors in Canadian universities where a similar proportion of faculty are estimated to be non-full-time.

It's an understatement that full- and part-time instructors have differing relationships with their institutions: given this reality, will part-time staff, faced with uncertain employment, be as eager as full-time staff may be to decry perceived violations of their academic freedoms? Will administrators see benefit in empowering such faculty by permitting greater individual control over academic decisions, even at the expense of limiting some institutional freedoms?

Academic Freedom Going Forward

Academic freedom is rooted in the

tradition of the university, and, to be sure, community colleges and universities have taken separate courses in their evolution. However, Ontario's colleges have broadened their scope, aims and activities in recent history, becoming in certain respects "university-like". Several colleges, for example, have forged partnerships with universities; some offer articulated programs that lead to post-secondary degrees; still others grant degrees themselves. Applied degree programs routinely include general education electives courses that are required to be "university level". Further, an increasing number of college faculty hold doctoral degrees and have received extended postgraduate training in universities, where the privileges of academic freedom are often assumed.

Results from the 2014 CAAT-A pre-bargaining survey indicate that a majority of Fanshawe college faculty rate academic freedom issues as 'critical' in the upcoming negotiations. The primary academic freedom concerns of most Fanshawe faculty include a desire for authority over student grades, control over the selection and determination of curriculum and methods of evaluation, and the right to express opinions of the

institution without fear of reprisal. Were such freedoms to be granted and codified in the collective agreement, the colleges would be in a position of committing to a version of academic freedom that is less expansive than that defended by CAUT, but that nevertheless includes core freedoms common to post-secondary systems in Canada and the U.S. This may be the best compromise between the competing interests of individual and institutional academic freedoms. ☙

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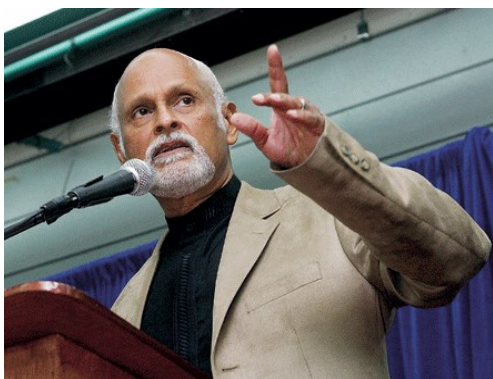


Nathan Denette / The Canadian Press

March 8, 2014



Congratulations to the 2014 Canadian Olympic Women's Hockey team on a great performance and the most exciting game played since 2010! Congratulations also to the truly awesome Hayley Wickenheiser, 5 time Olympian and the best female hockey player of all time.



www.barbadoesadvocate.com

Report by Jennifer Boswell

Anton Allahar speaks at Fanshawe

Dr. Anton Allahar, professor of sociology from Western University spoke to a crowd at Fanshawe College for the Social Science Speakers' Series on February 13, 2014. He is the author of several books, including *Ivory tower blues: A university system in crisis* (2007); *La tour de papier: L'université mais à quel prix?* (2010); and *Lowering higher education: The rise of the corporate university and the decline of liberal education* (2011).

An engaging speaker, Allahar at times spoke rather earthily, which delighted the audience. Those moments were needed to relieve the tension, because for most of the 50 minutes he slammed students, teachers and administrators for the mess and mockery they have made of higher learning. He mentioned a twerking Miley Cyrus in one breath, and excoriated students for their intellectual laziness in the next. He indicted all present—"we are all perpetrators and consumers of this system"—then specified how all of us are to blame for the low state of higher education.

His research and comments center mostly on university education—the arts, humanities and social sciences in particular—but much of what he said hit home with the college audience. The ideas presented below are his.

STUDENTS

It is a truism that every older generation blames the ones below for various ills, but Allahar asserts that this younger generation is "more stupid" and less mature than older generations.

One reason for this generation's shortcomings is helicopter parenting, which is also responsible for the neurotic nature of today's students. Allahar saves a special vitriol for the arrogance of one

helicopter parent who dared to phone him directly and tell him he must take a certain author off his syllabus. He most certainly did not comply.

There are also cultural reasons for students' changed behavior and abilities: while the past was based on literature and reading, today's society is audio-visual based, facilitated by the 'click here' culture of the Internet. Blame also the "cult of self-esteem," as well as the feel-good but erroneous idea that learning must be fun and enjoyable and not hard.

As a result of these pernicious influences, Allahar states that universities are filled with impatient students who are unaccustomed to effort and not given to "philosophical meanderings."

Allahar breaks students down into 3 categories. Category 1 students are bright, highly motivated, and would do well even with bad teachers. They quickly reveal themselves: they raise questions, wrestle with ideas and engage readily in the work learning requires. This category comprises about 10% of all students.

Category 2 students are mediocre. They see education as "a right with no responsibilities." Category 3 students don't really want to be in postsecondary education, but are there at others' insistence.

Category 2 and 3 students see higher education as simply a stage in their life cycle. They attend to comply both with the high expectations set by their demanding helicopter parents and to the standards of credentialism that our society has set. As a result, these students are highly unmotivated and disengaged.

Allahar then left classification and moved to moralizing: besides not wanting to be in higher education, Allahar says Category 2 and 3 students don't deserve to be there either. How did the majority of students at university come to this sorry state? Political correctness.

DEMOCRATIZATION OF ACCESS

Education has been used over the past decades to address issues of inequality. This was a noble and worthy effort, but

has led over time to the current state of affairs. In an effort to democratize access to higher education, many students who don't belong in university now attend, according to Allahar.

While the professor is quick to note that he has met many wise, hardworking people who have not attended university, he argues strongly that postsecondary education should be reserved for those who truly want, or need that kind of education. It is not for everyone.

Yes, equality is a worthy goal, but we fool ourselves if we think that all first year, first term students who are sitting with expectation and trepidation in our classrooms are equal. They are not: it is a fiction that we in North America like to tell ourselves. Some had idyllic childhoods with expensive tutors, while others had alcoholic parents; some worked throughout high school to pay for tuition, others have no money worries.

"We are such an unequal society that education can no longer lessen the gap. Stratification continues."

The majority of students at university have been empowered and entitled by democratization, but don't deserve (or haven't earned) the power or entitlement presumably bestowed by a good university education.

PROFESSORS:

"BULLSHIT FOR HIGH SALARY"

Allahar flung out this challenge to teachers: what would happen if teachers failed all the students who deserve to fail? This caused faculty in the audience to draw in their breaths and look at each other.

The public thinks that all professors do is "bullshit for high salary," says Allahar. Perhaps that's what they do, now. Professors have had to slow down in order to pull along the 90% of students who haven't or won't expend the effort because they don't want to alienate the majority.

As a result of the unsuitable, disengaged and yet entitled students that now fill universities, the curriculum has been dumbed down. Professors can no

Anton Allahar *continued*

longer make demands on their students that the professors themselves met in the past.

He charges that teachers now have a therapeutic philosophy: don't piss students off, don't treat them too roughly. Everyone gets a gold star so teachers don't have too much hassle, whether from the students themselves, helicopter parents, or administration.

The majority of students know what they want and are increasingly assertive of their rights. The appeals process shows that students who don't receive a passing grade now hold the teacher and administration responsible.

New, probationary or contract faculty can be manipulated through the instructor evaluations that students fill out. Students can turn up the pressure to ensure easier marking or higher grades.

Allahar calls this situation a "disengagement compact": a younger, insecure or otherwise vulnerable teacher (such as one teaching contract to contract) faced by a tough student can tacitly say "cut me some slack—I'll give you a B if you leave me alone."

"HIGHER EDUCATION, OR EDUCATION FOR HIRE?"

Allahar has a pithy way of expressing himself: he uses the phrase "higher education, or education for hire?" to introduce his discussion of the role of capitalism in education. Another wake-up call was issued: we are fooling ourselves if we think that we are educating our students. Our society is capitalist—and so is education.

Post-secondary education has become just another commodity bought, sold and traded on the market. Students believe they are purchasing admission tickets to jobs.

The signs are all around us: campuses have come to resemble shopping malls—franchises, clothing stores, coffee shops, bank machines, computer stores and so on now crowd campus common areas. He points out that students use the words of capital to describe their education: "I'm shopping for a good course, a good prof., a good school."

A problem central to both colleges and universities is the incursion of corporate dollars into the system. All colleges and universities now have business's names on various buildings. One can ask, to what extent is the corporate agenda running the curriculum? Ryerson's "Ted Rogers School of Business" is just wrong, says Allahar. Government should fund education, not businesses.

From administration's perspective, students are BIUs—basic income units. It's all about bums in seats; institutions are always concerned about filling the classrooms because post-secondary education operates on per-student funding.

Higher education has become an "edu-business." Students have become customers. And we know that the customer is always right.

"If you lack an imagination, then you cannot imagine what it is you lack"

GRADE COMPRESSION AND CREDENTIALISM

Grade inflation has been much lamented in education circles. The professor offered a very succinct description of this phenomenon, along with a clarification. He notes that "inflation is too much money chasing too few goods: the sky is the limit on price. But for grades, the limit is 100—so what is actually happening is not grade 'inflation' but grade *compression*—everyone gets an A, but what kind of A? 80 - 85 - 90 - 95?"

Credentialism is another result of the degradation of education: the piece of paper, whether a diploma or a degree, is an end in itself. As noted earlier, these pieces of paper are seen as tickets to jobs. The actual education that is supposed to occur along the way becomes incidental and subordinate to the credential.

Credentialism also refers to the new reality that many jobs now require a degree or diploma. Students are required to have university degrees and college

level diplomas and experience to do the same jobs that required no education or only a high school diploma in the past. It's a shame, says Allahar, because this represents a "mortgaging of our youth": there aren't enough jobs out there, so students are "warehoused" in school.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The intense talk ended with this statement: "Students, if you are pissed off with me, I've done my job!" The professor received a solid round of applause.

Despite his long list of accusations aimed at students, he agonizes over their deficient education, whether it is their own fault, the fault of their professors, educational administrators, or society itself. The core problem, he passionately exclaims, is that "if you lack an imagination, then you cannot imagine what it is you lack."

Is there any solution to the crisis? Allahar argues that we need to reassess the entire educational system. It is not a political football—it must be depoliticized. Academic standards should not fall prey to politics. We should encourage genuine scholarship in our students.

CONCLUSION

Are Anton Allahar's charges simply the latest in a long line of complaining older generations decrying the faults of the younger? I don't think so. Most everyone involved in education today realizes that things have changed, and not for the better. When a young boy I know couldn't read or do math in Grade 2, and was passed on anyway to Grade 3, he thought his teacher had made a mistake and forgotten that he hadn't passed one test in Grade 2. But that is the policy: no one gets held back. When even a 7-year-old boy knows something is wrong—we have a serious problem, at all levels.

As a professor, I found it strangely exhilarating to hear Professor Allahar describe, in plain language, many of the hard and sorry truths about education today. I felt I was being called out for my own culpability.

Perhaps you see yourself in some of his pronouncements. Perhaps you are outraged by his elitism. You are encouraged to respond. ☙



This is my last year as your academic

Board of Governors Report by Kay Wigle

Farewell message from outgoing BOG Academic Representative Kay Wigle

representative on the Board of Governors (BOG). Reflecting on the previous 5 years, I frequently questioned the value of an internal governor because of the challenges I faced being an employee and a board member. I had to divorce myself from the day-to-day operations of the college because, as a board member, addressing operational issues is not part of the mandate. This was made very clear and stepping into operational issues was not tolerated.

In a previous newsletter, I answered the question asked by many employees whether the Board of Governors “rubber stamped” what the administration wants. I reported that the governance model used by the BOG relied heavily on the integrity of the management to present well-balanced reports. I also stated that, according to the governance model, board meetings must be the board’s meeting and not management meetings. This is an important distinction that at times in the past seemed blurred.

My 6th year is different with many positive changes in the way meetings are conducted. The role of the internal governor hasn’t changed; you still cannot address operational issues. The difference is, the meetings are truly meetings where board member’s voices are heard. All board members (external and internal) have more input this year and managers act as a resource only.

Scott Player, the chair of the Board

of Governors pays close attention to running an efficient meeting. Scott and the other members of the Board Process Committee (the executive committee of the board) introduced the consent agenda this year. This means reading reports ahead of time and if there are no concerns or questions, the reports are passed without discussion. If there are concerns, then the questions are addressed. This is a much better method of dealing with reports that previously involved many lengthy power point presentations by managers and minimal discussion by board members.

Another change the Board Process

BOG Election

Nominations open
March 10th to March 26th.
10 nominators must sign
your form

Campaign period
April 3rd through April 10th
Online elections
April 10th at 10:00 a.m. until
April 11th at 10:00 a.m.

Committee introduced is having evaluations after every meeting. All board members submit an evaluation of every meeting for the board process committee to review and make changes, based on the feedback.

With the recent positive changes, I now can say I will miss being your academic representative.

Being a member of the Board of Governors takes a significant time commitment. Preparation for the meetings is crucial. You receive several

lengthy reports one week prior to the Board Meeting to read.

Meetings are the 4th Thursday of every month (except summer) and the meetings start at 4:00 p.m. Board members typically sit on two or three different task forces, each of which can involve several meetings. There is a spring workshop, which is usually two days of planning for the following year. This workshop develops the board’s strategic priorities and annual work plan. Being a board member is a voluntary position; you do not get time on your SWF. One term of office is three years.

There are many positives about taking on this commitment. You will see the college at a different level, learn where decisions are made about strategic directions, policy development and review, international activity, and take part in the performance review of the board’s only employee (the president). The board operates using the governance model and new board members will get an orientation to this method. You will also been assigned a mentor for your first year on the board.

Nominations open Monday March 10th and close March 26th. You need 10 nominators to sign your form. The campaign period runs from April 3rd through to April 10th. Online elections are from April 10th at 10:00 a.m. until April 11th at 10:00 a.m.

If you are considering running to be the academic representative on the board and want to meet to discuss the commitment, email me at kwigle@fanshawec.ca ☎

By Paul Evans

Breaking Bad: Why you must watch it

My son tried to encourage me to watch *Breaking Bad* when it was first on. I didn't at first, but regretted it when I read all the high praise that *Breaking Bad* received when it ended. My son ordered the complete series and we watched it together--we were male bonding big time. Every night I would ask my son "do you want to do some cooking?" and then we would settle in to watch. Here are ten things you will learn about from watching *Breaking Bad*.

The importance of family: It was great to watch a show that champions old-fashioned family values. Everything the main character, Walter White, does is for his family; he is indeed a devoted family man. Now, some of these things he does are immoral, unethical or illegal--but they are all for his family. There are other family oriented characters in *Breaking Bad*: there are The Cousins, the twin Mexican assassins. Another strong bond links Todd and his Uncle Jack, who have a special relationship.

Science education: In the papers and on television we hear how North American students today in are falling behind in science education. By watching *Breaking Bad* students can improve their knowledge about science—chemistry in particular—immensely. Walter White is a dedicated and gifted chemistry teacher. There is plenty of lab work to pique the interest of viewers. Finally, Walter is so dedicated that he takes a former student of his, a high school dropout, under his wing. This former student, Jesse, is so respectful of Walter that he always calls him Mr. White.

High school teaching in America: The show illustrates what high school teaching is like in America. Walter White is a dedicated teacher, and his classes are small and attentive. However, he only makes \$43,000 a year. He has to supplement his income by working part-time in

a car wash. Still, Walter appears to be doing well; he has a nice house with a swimming pool. Unfortunately Walter gets sick with cancer and finds out that his health insurance plan is not very good. Faced with this perilous situation Walter decides to set up his own business to pay for his health care and leave a nest egg for his family.

The American health care system: America has the best health care in the world if you have the money to pay for it. We see the problems that Walter faces when he gets sick. Also, when his brother-in-law, a drug enforcement agent (DEA) gets shot in the line of duty he discovers that his health insurance coverage isn't very good either. Fortunately, his helpful brother-in-law Walter is able to help him out with money he has made from being



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entrepreneurial and innovative in his own business venture.

The Sunbelt: *Breaking Bad* shows why so many Americans are moving to the Sunbelt. The show is set in Albuquerque, New Mexico and the weather there is beautiful. The sun shines 330 days of the year. It is surrounded by a picturesque desert landscape. It is a nice place to go for drives. Also, it is a good place to bury things.

Lawyers: Some of you might have a low opinion of lawyers. This will change when you meet lawyer Saul Goodman. He is a man totally committed to his clients and will do anything on both sides of the law to help them.

The perils of greed: Viewers will learn about the perils of greed by watching the show. For instance, one character is earning a salary of \$7.5 million dollars a year. Most of you might think that would be enough, but not this character. He is dissatisfied and wants to earn more. He is jealous of his boss who makes more. As the Good Book says, "The love of money is the root of all evil."

The War on Drugs: The series shows that the war on drugs is futile. Unfortunately, the Drug Enforcement Agency is outmanned, outgunned and out-moneyed by the drug kingpins and cartels. The DEA always seem to be five steps behind the criminals. When agents manage somehow to kill one drug kingpin, a new one soon pops up. The war on drugs is doomed to failure by an endless supply of people chasing dreams of riches.

American capitalism: Critics

smarter than me have pointed out that at its heart *Breaking Bad* is a critique of American capitalism. All of the businesses in the show are shady: some are fronts for drug money, others are crooked, and some are run by owners who got rich stealing the ideas of a previous partner. The drug trade itself is an example of capitalism at its most vicious. It is based on the basic economic law of supply and demand, and

demonstrates entrepreneurship in its most elemental form. The only problem is that the drug trade is illegal and feeds on ruined lives and human blood.

Great music: All of *Breaking Bad*'s important lessons are accompanied by a great soundtrack. After watching the show, you will have songs like "Crystal Blue Persuasion" and "Baby Blue" permanently embedded in your mind.

I encourage all members of Local 110 to watch *Breaking Bad*. Your life will never be the same—and you'll learn some lessons that (thankfully) Fanshawe doesn't teach. ☹



Chief Steward's Report by Darren Chapman

What We Do

that authorization. A grievance of this sort is an individual grievance. A related action is a group grievance, which is when more than one member is affected and signs the grievance (Article 32.08).

The only formal action the union can take independent of individual members is on the basis of dispute over a college policy, known as a policy or union grievance (32.09). The union can do this if they believe the college has a policy that violates the collective agreement or other laws (such as a policy being applied arbitrarily, or one that creates an unfair or discriminatory situation for members). Article 2 staffing grievances are filed regularly to try to get departments and schools to hire more full-time faculty.

Handling grievances are one of the most notable duties we perform, but they aren't the only duty.

Besides filing grievances, other ways Local 110 supports members is through listening; counselling; having union representatives present when interacting with others at the heart of the issue (for example, when meeting with chairs); and bringing up recurring issues at University College Committee (UCC), a monthly meeting with senior management at the college. In some cases union officers have met with management outside the UCC to try to solve issues.

There are both benefits and limits to this system: a benefit is that the union cannot bring an action/grievance against the employer without the member's permission. This ensures that a member is not used as an example case without that member's consent, or where the member may not agree with the union's perspective or

motives.

The limit is that members have to be willing to stand up and identify themselves when

challenging a contravention of the collective agreement. This is significant as some may be hesitant to do so for fear of retribution or retaliation by their manager. This hesitance may be something a manager relies upon when assigning work or mistreating members in the workplace.

Reluctance to Stand Up for Oneself

In our experience, a hesitance to file grievances works against members far more than it benefits the reluctant person. Consider a situation where faculty are asked to do work outside the CA such as coordinating a student club or activity, or "course mastering" without recognizing additional hours. While faculty may agree to do so, it may be reluctantly agreed to, as the CA states that all work for full-time members must be recorded on the SWF. If the added work were to be put on the SWF, then it may put the individual into an overtime situation. The managers generally do not want to pay overtime, and so moral suasion is used, and/or side deals are struck to convince the member to do the work without recognition of the hours they should be given credit for.

Management knows that individuals are unlikely to grieve extracurricular work on their own; however, members are consistently communicating to union officers and stewards that all the work they are doing is not properly documented on their SWFs. The end result? Trouble builds, then someone reaches a tipping point and the situation explodes in crisis. We see this often in the union office.

A second example is more disturbing. There are examples in the

(Continued on page 13)

About three years ago I became Chief Steward. I became involved in the union in part due to a management issue for which I needed union support, and, in part, due to my belief that our local executive did not fully represent the views of our members. Over the course of my involvement I have been amazed at the lack of understanding (or interest) members have about what the union does, or can do for them.

Some faculty may not feel a philosophical connection to a union because many came to the college never having been a member of, let alone involved with, a union. What I have found interesting and surprising is how members do not fully understand our union, what we can do for you, what we can't do, and how we interact with management at the college. The following addresses these points.

Member Supports

First, members should understand that our Collective Agreement (CA) limits what the union can *formally* do for members without written direction from them. Due to limitations on the union in Article 32.09, the member him or herself must file an individual grievance under Article 32.02 for the union to be able to take action and seek redress. The union can muster its considerable resources when it has

What We Do, *continued*

college where individuals are unfairly dealt with (i.e., favoritism, nepotism, conflict of interest, etc.) or are bullied by management. In these cases it is up to the member to come forward, identify themselves and make a stand. Individuals risk being targeted and discredited by management for coming forward, but the union is there to protect them from retribution. It is no surprise that we see evidence of such behavior by management and yet most of us either turn a blind eye or work hard to become one of the "favored" in hopes of avoiding the negatives. This in turn causes unrest and distrust in the workplace--not only mistrust of management, but between members as well.

Confidentiality

I am very proud of the work we do on our member's behalf, but if there is one area where we can improve, it is that we can do a better job of communicating the work we do and success we have had on behalf of members. Again, this is a two-sided issue. Many members come into the office looking for assistance but do not want anyone to know they have been there, whether management or fellow members. Each case is treated with the utmost confidence, and so unless the member wishes, we do not discuss any situation outside the union office. Sometimes members who work closely with each other don't even know each has shared common concerns with us.

Respectful Communication

Over the last several years your union officers have made it a priority to change the tone of communications and interactions with management. There has been a concerted effort to take the high road and be respectful. We have limited the emotion and dealt

with facts. And in return we expect respectful, professional responses from management. If there is anything I am most proud of during my involvement, it has been that I have participated in the process of improving union-college communication. I think we can safely say that due to our professionalism and approach, both management and the union are on the road to building trust and working to make Fanshawe a better workplace for all.

On the other side, as an organization we can do a better job of communicating our successes, of which there have been many. Perhaps we need to look at this in greater detail and formulate a communication plan which illustrates the work that your executive is performing on your behalf.

On a related note, I would be remiss in not noting the quality of our written communications through the local's newsletter, "The Educator." Jennifer Boswell and her communications team routinely provide one of the best and balanced labour newsletters in the country. The newsletter touches on a variety of issues that appeal to the wide interests of our members. I would urge all members to consider writing content for The Educator: it is your newsletter and should communicate interests or issues from members across the college.

Preparedness and Professionalism

Members should also know that your local executive is one of the most professional, prepared and knowledgeable locals in the Ontario college system. We are able to be so thanks to your financial support through dues. We have invested in IT which ensures every document that comes into the office is digitally scanned and searchable. Our local has excellent data management which greatly assists

us in our efforts to support members. While it is a considerable investment, it is a prudent one that helps our local president Darryl Bedford represent our members during arbitrations at a fraction of the cost the college expends, as it uses corporate lawyers. And Darryl often wins! This has been a fantastic benefit and one that we should all be proud of.

In addition, our local has internally developed grievance handling software (thanks again to Darryl Bedford) which is state-of-the-art in the labour movement. This has saved the organization and our members significant funds just in managing workplace grievances and files. We are currently investigating the opportunity to sell this software to other labour organizations/locals as a source of revenue for our members.

Conclusion

In ending, I appeal to you to tell us what you think of the work we are doing on your behalf. Tell us what your concerns are or what we can do better. It is through your financial support and the efforts of its members, stewards and officers that our union and local have been able to win the protections, rights and benefits we currently have.

Fanshawe College Local 110 is truly our collective organization and its success falls on all of our shoulders. ☪



©CALM, Wilson

Article by Whitney Hoth

Elegy for Detroit

Across the river from Windsor, Ontario is a surreal landscape of boarded houses, abandoned churches, empty office buildings, crumbling factories, miles of broken roads, and not infrequently, packs of feral dogs prowling railroad embankments and vacant lots. Detroit is spectacularly dead, site of the largest municipal bankruptcy in United States history. No city of comparable size in North America has ever experienced so thorough a collapse. One would have to think back to the San Francisco earthquake, the Chicago Fire, or the Halifax Explosion for urban devastation of similar scale, but those were sudden traumas from which the cities themselves recovered while Detroit is in the last stages of a terminal illness from which it may never return as one of America's principal cities.

For almost my entire life, Detroit has been dying. I say 'almost' because I have distant memories—seeming more like dreams now—of a quite different city. In the late 1950s and early 1960s my father taught at Wayne State University in Detroit. On weekends, my parents would often take us downtown to the enormous, block-long 25-story J. L. Hudson Department Store building on Woodward Avenue, which was then one of the largest department stores in the world. J. L. Hudson's old-style elevators had brass-fitted Art-Deco doors with elaborate Egyptian-era motifs and operators in braided uniforms who perched on leather stools with studded brass nails that folded down from mirrored interior walls. On the first floor, next to the massive mezzanine escalator was a bronze framed marble plaque commemorating all the J. L. Hudson's employees who had served in the world wars, with the names of those who had died highlighted in gold foil. Every

Christmas, the toy department on the 7th floor would construct, out of

Legos, a scale-perfect model of downtown Detroit. My brothers and I would stare at this for hours. That unlimited supply of Legos was my first idea of wealth. J. L. Hudson also provided a special children's store during Christmas where we could shop for our parents with the help of Hudson's staff, men dressed in dark suits with ties and women wearing pearl necklaces and high heels. For the Thanksgiving Day Parade in Detroit, J. L. Hudson would drape the largest American flag ever made on the east wall of the building, covering almost all 25 stories.

My parents had been Depression poor, but they were now G.I Joe and Rosie the Riveter made good, and they were enjoying the post-war boom in this city of shining marble and brass. From J. L. Hudson we would drive up Woodward Avenue past the plate-glass windows of the Vernors Ginger Ale factory where we could see the enormous oak barrels used to age this ginger-flavored beverage. Vernors was a local product that had been developed by a pharmacist as a digestive aide in Detroit hospitals but had morphed into a commercial soft drink. Having a Vernors with a dollop of ice cream floating in it was a treat of that time.

Greek Town, The Detroit Institute of Arts, The Fisher Building, Orchestra Hall, Tiger Stadium, The Detroit Public Library, Cobo Hall: all of these were thriving. Sixten Ehrling, notable interpreter of Wagner, was conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and I saw him conduct his last concert there before his retirement. Streets were crowded day and night with massive crowds attending live performances or



Susan Tusa, Detroit Free Press

movies in such venues as the sumptuous Fox Theater, a 1920s movie palace with a huge theater organ and an elaborately decorated interior. In the summer, there were trips to the Detroit River and Belle Isle Park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted who also designed Central Park in New York. I remember the fountains and grottos and bridges that connected the golf courses and the aviary and the botanical gardens. Detroit meant grandeur and civilization encircled by the vast dirty factories that powered it, the Ford Motor Company, Chrysler and General Motors. One of my earliest memories is holding my mother's hand as a powerful train pulled in at the Michigan Central Depot, a station larger than Grand Central Station in New York. You can still see this building on the north side of the now rotting Ambassador Bridge. You can not only see it, you can *see through it* since every one of its many hundreds of windows on both sides has been removed and the frames scavenged. There it stands, a Beaux-Arts masterpiece built too well to fall, weathering slowly like some granite mountain peak.

What happened to Detroit? It was a one-industry town, and when the auto companies began to retrench and move out, the city floundered. Racial polarization culminated in the riots of 1967 which precipitated decades of 'white-flight' to the suburbs. A string of corrupt crony-dominated municipal

Elegy for Detroit, *continued*

(Continued from page 14)

governments hastened the decline.

All these are familiar causes, but the deeper causes were the progressive substitution of machines for people in manufacturing, the co-optation and domestication of unions, the corporate strategy of shifting productive work to the erstwhile Confederacy where a history of chattel slavery makes the idea of wage slavery less objectionable, and finally, the free-trade green light for corporations to export work to repressive regimes abroad with their compliant and impoverished populations willing to work long hours for subsistence wages. Not Chicago but Detroit was the city of 'big shoulders,' and big shoulders counted for nothing in the new era of machine-mediated production and the dominance of symbol manipulators in government, business, finance, technology and

medicine. Diego Rivera's tremendous frescos in the Detroit Institute of Arts commemorate both the high tide and the coming destruction of this world of workers making things in North America. When Detroit was a great city, union membership and wages were both high. Now, in its terrible senescence, Michigan has become a *right-to-work state*, a frightful euphemism.

It's all over now. Great sumptuous palaces of commerce like the old J. L. Hudson department store on Woodward Avenue now exist as isolated remnants only in New York and Chicago. In their place, we have proliferating Wal-Marts. Wal-Mart understood long ago that we no longer require displays of polished brass and marble or the ministrations of an articulate and well-dressed staff to sharpen our appetite for consumption: all we need is piles of stuff in vast warehouses at cheap prices tended by underpaid unfortunates in dirty uniforms. The multiplication of *No Frills*, *Price Choppers*, and *Costco* continues,

perhaps soon to be followed by competitors such as *Just Stuff*, *Grab-n-Go*, *No Crap*, and *Feed-Your-Face*. Welcome to the new world of low overhead, where even something as modestly blue-collar as Sears can no longer compete with the regimented hideousness of Wal-Mart and its naked philosophy of graceless heaps of cheap goods sold in bulk to the poor or the increasingly marginal middle-class which is satisfied with its bleak landscape of unvaried suburban sameness and everyday low prices.

At least Detroit, even in its ruin, is grand. Its decay is striking because it reflects a lost significance, a ruin of something once distinctive and individual, not the dreary sameness of a globalized culture of utilitarian consumption producing nothing but interchangeable commodities in an abstract grid. Farewell to Detroit, and to my Depression-era parents who fought Fascism, made decent livings and advanced the middle class. Farewell to that. ☪

Epilogue to *Elegy for Detroit*

Unions, union members and their pension funds have been blamed for the Detroit bankruptcy. Some people have also charged that what happened to Detroit could happen in Ontario. Both these claims are untrue. Our cities cannot go bankrupt as they lack the legal ability to take on debt. Also, Detroit failed because all risk was placed on the city rather than the whole state of Michigan.

What really hurt Detroit, along with other events such as the decline of manufacturing, was population loss. A loss of population in a large urban centre would play out differently in Ontario. If Toronto started shrinking tomorrow, for example, the province would help cushion the impact as risk and revenue are spread around the province.

Our Ontario public pension funds such as OPTrust, CAAT, and OMERS are well regulated and funded. The risk is shared province-wide. This was not the case for Detroit.

These passages from a message from Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president of OPSEU, clarify some of what happened in Detroit:

Americans are dividing themselves by income. Most U.S. cities (including Detroit) once had a mix of rich, middle-class, and poor residents. Now, each lives separately in their

own city, with their own tax base. The rich have good schools and parks, strong police, good public transportation, and other first-rate services. The poor are left with terrible schools and parks, high crime, and fourth-rate services. Detroit, the poor, mostly black and abandoned enclave, is left to sink within a sea of comparative affluence. Its suburbs are among the richest in the nation.

Detroit's bankruptcy resulted from the unwillingness of affluent areas to support poor inner-city neighbours with tax dollars. No support – no rebound. By drawing a boundary around the poor inner city, and requiring those within the boundary to take care of their problems alone, affluent suburbs climb off the hook. "Their" city isn't in trouble. It's that other one—Detroit—that is! This is how, in a time of widening inequality, wealthier Americans are writing off the poor. (from <http://www.opseu.org/presidentsmessage/july23-2013.htm>)

Michigan is divided between the haves and the have-nots. Many, many people and institutions said 'no' to Detroit when it asked for help during the long years of its decline.

Municipal workers saying 'no' to the offer of ten cents on the dollar for their pension and health benefits were, and are not responsible for Detroit's bankruptcy. ☪

Poll results show majority of Canadians hold favourable view of unions

A majority of Canadians believe that unions and employee associations play a positive role in Canadian society, according to the most recent public opinion poll commissioned by CAUT.

In a Harris/Decima survey conducted last month, 56 per cent of Canadians had favourable views of unions, with 70 per cent saying unions are still needed today. By contrast, just 28 per cent of Canadians hold negative views of unions and a similar number said they are no longer needed.

Support for unions is highest in British Columbia where 63 per cent of respondents held positive views of unions.

The survey also found that Canadians are suspicious of politicians who hold anti-union views. A clear majority — 53 per cent — of respondents said they are suspicious of government and politicians who try to limit collective bargaining and the political power of unions.

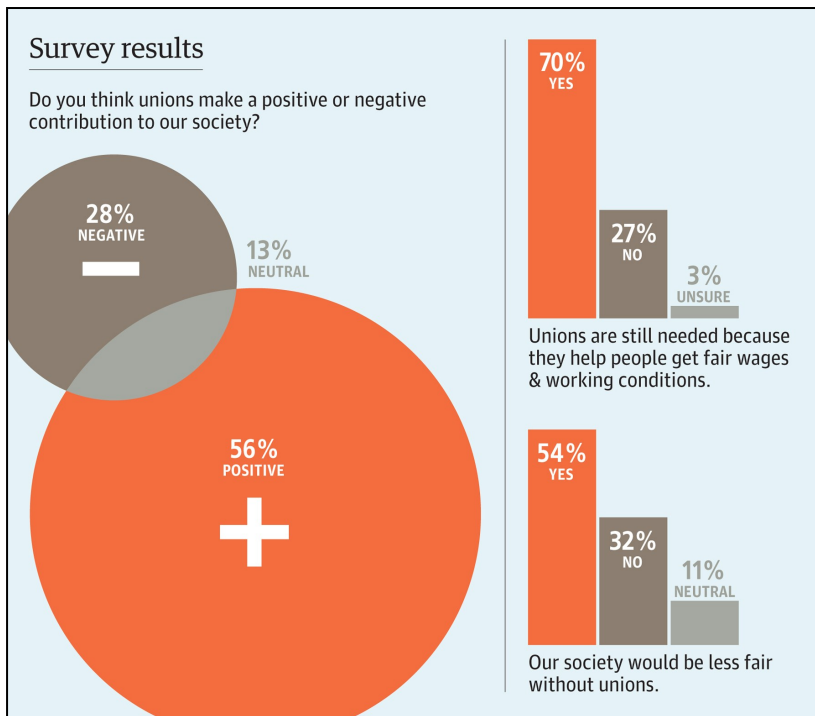
"It's a pleasant surprise that in spite of the anti-union posturing by the federal and some provincial governments, most Canadians continue to hold positive views of unions and employee associations," said CAUT's associate executive director David Robinson.

Robinson added that a strong majority of Canadians are opposed to so-called "right to work" legislation that would allow individuals to opt out of paying dues even though they would continue to receive benefits negotiated by the union.

According to the survey, two-thirds of Canadians think everyone in the workplace should be required to pay union dues if they benefit from the union's work.

However, Robinson noted that Canadians are divided in their views of public sector unions. Forty

per cent believe that governments should have the right to impose contracts on public sector workers, while 42 per cent disagree. Similarly, Canadians were equally split over whether public sector unions should have the right to strike. Forty-four per cent backed taking away the right of public sector unions to strike, while 42 per cent disagree.



"While Canadians' views of public sector unions are almost evenly split, the results nevertheless mean we need to do some more work in convincing more people of the importance of respecting the collective bargaining process," Robinson said.

The survey also shows that support for the federal Conservatives at just over 26.5 per cent is at its lowest level since 2006. Meanwhile the Liberals have

widened their lead to 35.9 per cent, while the NDP has the support of about 24 per cent of Canadians. ☞

The telephone poll of 2,000 adult Canadians, conducted Nov. 7-18, has a margin of error of ± 2.2 per cent, 19 times in 20.

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You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life.
~ Winston Churchill