

BUFA FORUM



President's Message

Innovation: The Death of Tenure?

In the past few weeks I have been exposed to two versions of the administration's roadmap for Brock's future. The first is President Lightstone's "thought piece" on innovative pedagogy that he shared with the Senate ([Private PDF from Lightstone](#)). The second was the Social Science town hall meeting where Dean Dunk put forward the budget for the upcoming year. Both called for the development of innovative pedagogy as an urgent imperative to avoid disaster.

Let me begin by saying that I am quite dubious about innovation that is driven top down through a discourse of emergency. It has been my experience that when administrators deploy the tactic of "do it or horrible things will happen", they are engaging rhetoric designed to cut short reasoned analysis and grass roots participation. The positioning of the administration in a statement such as "a train is coming and will run us over if you don't do what I say" is profoundly hierarchical. It is premised on the assumption that the administration is privy to information that the rest of the organization doesn't have and is capable of analyzing that knowledge in a manner superior to the average worker. Generally, such an administration will engage in the dissemination of extremely one-sided information, much of which is highly polemic and often obscures broader political or institutional goals and intentions. If feedback is sought, it is mostly pro forma and any information that undermines the proposed solutions to the emergency is ignored or discounted.

In its most extreme forms this is an assertion of raw power clothed in the language of necessary expediency or utility. It is traditionally the tool of demagogues and dictators who argue for extreme social restructuring justified as emergency measures. I am not suggesting that our administration is anywhere near this extreme. I am, however, uncomfortable with the top down approach to innovation, as it seems quite contrary to the fundamental element of self-rule implied by the Brock Act. It seems to me that innovation is best driven from the ground up as a naturally occurring response to problems experienced by those doing the work.

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In that regard, if the administration is interested in exploring innovative pedagogies, it should first seriously consult those involved in providing that aspect of the academy. The faculty is the group that has the most direct experience and expertise as to what is happening at Brock in terms of teaching and research. That is why Senate, and not the administration, is given the role of managing the academic mission of the university.

In the Brock Act, the Senate is given responsibility for 1) the educational policy of the University, 2) to control, regulate and determine the educational policy of the University, and 3) to be concerned with all matters that affect the welfare of the University to take part in the planning and development of the University. The administration function (outside of those responsibilities given to Senate) **is to administer on behalf of the board**, “the government, conduct, management and control of the University and of its property, revenues, expenditures, business and affairs are vested in the Board, and the Board has all powers necessary or convenient to perform its duties and achieve the objects and purposes of the University.” The architects of the act, in constructing a system of shared governance clearly intended for a delineation of powers, with the faculty being the driving engine of pedagogical innovation and control.

The recent actions by the administration in the arena of innovative pedagogy seem to come dangerously close to undermining this delineation of powers. Among recent actions is the “training” of the board of trustees in innovative pedagogy. It is interesting to note that the administration did not tap into the extensive resources available here at Brock in terms of award winning faculty in the area of pedagogy. Instead, they brought in an outside trainer who has a particular focus on on-line learning. In keeping with this the Board was provided with a book to read called *The Innovative University*. This book proposes that universities move large sections of their pedagogy on-line. This, in and of itself, is not problematic. Certainly, on-line learning is a developing trend here at Brock as well as

elsewhere. What is troubling about this text is the fact that its authors suggest that in order to be truly innovative, the outdated system of tenure must be undone. In a recent interview in Forbes magazine the authors propose the following:

Forbes 9/23/ 2011

It’s important to clarify what we mean by “tenure.” First, its performance based: you don’t get it for life unless you perform well for life, based on regular review. Partnership in a law firm, an investment bank, or a consulting firm may be a helpful analogy. Second, the activities being performed by the tenured professor must be consistent with the mission of the institution, which for most institutions is likely to be narrower than the mission of a large research university. Most professors will need to spend the majority of their time teaching. A school that generates the bulk of its revenues via tuition will be able to afford some time for faculty research. However, that research will need to have relevance to the student learning experience, and it won’t be the driving factor in tenure decisions; teaching quality will be. Tenure based primarily on publications isn’t a sustainable model for most institutions.

It is troubling that our administration is presenting our Board of Trustees “training” that indicates 1) we don’t have expertise on faculty in innovative pedagogy and must go outside for expertise 2) the system of tenure is no longer viable and 3) that most of us will increasingly need to focus on teaching not research.

The critiques of the book include comments such as: <http://pedabloggy.stevegreenlaw.org/?p=1102>

The book is written for a general audience, which I take to mean people not familiar with the literature on higher education reform. It is framed as a story rather than an analytical piece. It presents a series of assertions (and makes a number of assumptions), but does little to provide supporting evidence for them. Who knew, for example, that face-to-face instruction was invented at Harvard? My biggest complaint is that the authors don’t consider any alternatives to their thesis.

The “disruptive innovation” that the authors identify is online learning, though honestly that’s only a small part of the book. Their key proposal is to expand the number of students taught by developing online programs in which full time faculty are largely replaced by (trained) adjuncts.

In other words, this drive to innovative pedagogy is another cloaked administrative initiative to corporatize the university along the lines of neo-liberal pedagogical imperatives. Which leads me to my final worrisome experience, the Dean of Social Sciences Town Hall.

In that meeting Dean Dunk stated first that the Administration is saying there is no money and therefore there will be budget cuts. The cut could be as much as 2.5%, unless faculty undertake massive innovations in teaching, that qualify as being “transformative pedagogic innovations (TPI)”, which has yet to be defined by the Administration. If this occurs (at what level and to what degree is unspecified), the budget cut for the faculty will be only 1.5%. Clearly, the question arises: if the money is “not there”, how will this differential be covered? Increased deficit? The solution is the hope that if we invest in these TPI’s, then the province will shower funds down on us for our efforts. However, the presentation also demonstrated that the province has no money. So it is unclear how this is even remotely possible. What is clear is that the administration remains committed to cutting resources selectively.

The one slide that was unequivocal was the slide showing that the only budget line that could result in real savings was the line for faculty salaries. This means that, all rhetoric aside, the only way to have real savings at Brock University is to cut the number of tenure track faculty. With this information we can see that the use of the book, *The Innovative University*, is a Trojan horse designed to introduce the Board of Trustees to the idea that tenure needs to be revised, so that the number of tenure track faculty can be reduced.

Obviously, the cuts also affect academic programs and change working conditions—for example we will now be doing the teaching with fewer resources, less contact time, fewer assignments, etc. The implementation of innovation as proposed and driven by the university is a blatant attempt to engage tenured faculty in creating the conditions that will eliminate our own jobs. We have seen this

before in Niagara. It was a tactic used in the reconfiguring of nearly every manufacturing sector job in our region. We can see how that turned out. Now the focus is on us.

There is a ray of hope, however. The Board of Trustees has not approved the current budget. There have been indications that they have not fully taken on the administration’s proposals for solving our budget issues. The current Board president has made it clear that he understands that the Senate controls the direction of pedagogical innovation at Brock.

If we mean to sustain quality education at Brock, as delivered by tenure track faculty, we need to be sure that our voices are heard at both the Senate and the Board. We do have faculty representation at board comprised of Susan Sydor, Barry Wright and David Vivian. I would strongly urge all BUFA members to contact these faculty representatives. Ask them to convey to the board what is actually happening to education at Brock. Request that they represent your interests to the Board so that the Board understands the impacts of the cuts they would be sanctioning if they approve this budget.

Also, let your Senators, particularly on the Budget Advisory Committee, know that you do not believe this budget is in keeping with sustaining the academic mission of Brock University. The members of that committee are June Corman, Roberto Nickel, Carol Merriam, Nota Klentrou, Duncan MacDonald, Steven Renzetti, Francine McCarthy and Maureen Connolly.

If there was ever a time to get involved and to have your voice heard. That time is now. Please let us know at BUFA if there is anything we can do to facilitate your efforts in this regard.

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Health & Safety Officer's Report

Joe Norris (worker representative and BUFA Health and Safety representative) has been active in working with Dan Pozzobon (HR & EHS) and Domenic Maccicia (management representative) in conducting a "gap analysis" on how Faculty at



Risk is conceptualized and administered at Brock University. There does seem to be a reticence by the Student at Risk Office to share cooperative administration of "risk" when those hazards involve students. However, we are confident that we can work together and expand the internal responsibility system in this regard to the point where sharing and cooperation becomes the norm. To date, the gap analysis "team" has established the following priorities.

1) We will have a parallel EAR (employees at risk) similar to SAR (students at risk). This may change the existing Vulnerable Workers group's responsibilities.

2) We will have an umbrella group through which the others will report and communicate. This may be a function of the Emergency Response Team.

3) While both the SAR and EAR will work with the problematic individuals, they must report to corresponding bodies when it is determined that the greater community may be at risk.

4) Appropriate JHS worker representatives will be brought in at this point. We will discuss our involvement in this.

5) We will create a flow chart that shows degrees of violence but we will add communication expectations.

6) A revised set of protocols will be developed by Val Wolfe, Dan Pozzobon, Domenic Maccicia, Joe Norris and myself, based on our last committee meeting. This will be discussed at the April, 2012 Occupational Health and Safety meeting.

Meetings continue and progress as expected. Updates will be provided as they emerge.

Jonathan Neufeld

BUFA Health and Safety Officer

Worker Chair: Joint Health and Safety Committee

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What's the BUZZ?

Larry Savage represented BUFA at the Niagara Regional Labour Council's Strategic Planning meeting in February 2012.

Michelle Webber attended the OCUFA conference, "Ensuring Student Success", January 20 and 21, 2012 and represented us at the OCUFA Board meeting on February 11 and 12, 2012.

On February 10, 2012 Linda Rose-Krasner participated in the OCUFA Grievance Officers' meeting.

Grievance Officer's Report

Complaints and Grievances:



Article 4.05 of our Collective Agreement requires that the University consult with BUFA prior to modifications of policies that affect our working conditions. BUFA has three ongoing complaints related to violations of this Article, following University modifications to policies on the submission of external grants (Research Services), Donor and Development policies, and a Library policy regarding RACER. The Research Services complaint became a Stage 1 Grievance on February 1, 2012, following a lack of BUFA consultation before a mutually agreed-upon deadline expired. Discussions with Research Services and the Donor and Development Office are in progress, and we expect discussions on the Library policy to begin shortly.

Following a negative response from the University, BUFA has not pursued a complaint that the University failed to provide adequate support to a Department in hiring and evaluating TA's. However, we will continue to monitor the support given by Human Resources to Departments in such matters and proceed with further complaints if warranted.

In January 2012, BUFA submitted a complaint under Article 31 Working Environment, Occupational Health and Safety. This complaint was based on our belief that the University failed to respond adequately in the matter of a faculty member who was threatened by a student. We sought greater protection for the faculty member's safety, the development of an effective and integrated protocol for responding to such events, and a defined role for BUFA in the process. With the assistance of BUFA's representatives on the Joint Committee on Health and Safety, protection for the faculty member was increased. Discussions on relevant policy development are ongoing.

In February 2012, BUFA filed two complaints related to compensation. In the first, we cited a failure of management rights in not compensating faculty members for graduate supervision, as had been arranged in advance. The second complaint was based on the failure of the University to extend similar compensation to other faculty members in similar situations.

BUFA has an ongoing Stage 2 grievance related to a denial of tenure.

A complaint regarding an alleged violation of respectful workplace and another related to interference with a Chair's duties have been successfully resolved.

Accompanying and Advising Members

The Grievance Officer and members of the Grievance Panel have accompanied members to Department information meetings related to tenure and promotion as well as to meetings with staff from the Office of Human Rights and Equity. In addition, I have advised members and Departments/Centres on a number of issues, including the preparation of Normal Department Workload Standards and Annual Department Workload Plans, tenure and promotion processes, spousal hiring procedures, workload adjustments, personnel files, Departmental Rules of Procedures, TA hiring and performance evaluation, strategic planning, performance review letters, the Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment Policy, and Academic Review procedures.

Presentations, Workshops, Meetings and Other Activities

In December 2011, I participated in a CAUT meeting of Senior Grievance Officers and Francine McCarthy, a member of the Grievance Panel, attended the OCUFA Grievance Officer's meeting. In addition, in January 2012, I gave a presentation

to the CAUT's Presidents' Forum about our recently negotiated workload provisions. Last month, I attended the OCUFA meeting for Grievance Officers.

An information meeting on the negotiated changes in the Tenure and Promotion process for faculty members was held on March 5, 2012. As an additional part of our preparation for the first implementation of the new Article 21 procedures, BUFA is working with the Administration to try to reach agreement on the definition of several components of this Article, including the terms "arm's length" and "peer review".

BUFA also is participating in a trial collaborative problem-solving process with CUPE 4207 (the local for Teaching Assistants and Sessional Instructors). Representatives of both

unions will attempt to resolve issues between our members informally, in the hope of avoiding situations in which one union files a complaint or grievance that involves directly a member of the other union.

Members of the Grievance Panel have continued to be a valuable source of advice and support.

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Grievance Officer
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OCUFA Officer's Report



The OCUFA Status of Women Committee has organized a one day workshop entitled "Navigating the Academy: Lessons and Strategies for More Equitable Universities". Professor Carla Fehr, Wolfe Chair in Science and Technology Studies, University of Waterloo, is the keynote speaker. Workshop topics include tenure and promotion, how "academic excellence" gets defined, workplace culture, and successfully navigating academic careers. The workshop will be held on May 4, 2012 in Toronto. Registration fee is \$75 and includes lunch. Registration and venue details can be found on the OCUFA website (www.ocufa.on.ca).

Michelle Webber
OCUFA Director
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Rumour Mill

Has some of the senior administration discussed the possibility of reducing the number of sabbaticals granted in a given year as a cost saving measure?

Is the senior administration exploring post-tenure review options?

Communication Commentary

A New Look and Function

Both the BUFA *Forum* and the BUFA website



www.bufa.ca have gone through major makeovers. The

Forum will remain your newsletter but shortly will also undergo a name change so that it won't be confused

with the current use of the term 'forum' as used on the web (Forum aka asynchronous discussion board).

You will be notified later about a contest to rename your newsletter.

The web has undergone a major transformation in both look and function.

The site itself is at a new location www.bufa.ca and now contains a private members section for confidential information, surveys and electronic voting. If you have not yet done so, please login in and change your temporary password.

You should be able to easily find all pertinent membership information as well as keep up with breaking post-secondary news. The site will be updated almost daily and can serve as a weekly read to keep informed about information that impacts our

work. The BUFA Blog is a section that will grow over time with positions on a variety of academic issues. They are searchable by categories and presently we have copyright, tenure and innovative pedagogy.

As part of our communication task, we are exploring ways of better informing the general public and elected officials about our positions and what we do. Please read the letter from Kevin Cavanagh, Associate Director, Communications and Public Affairs.

The Links

The links have moved to www.bufa.ca where you will find:

- OCUFA Reports
- Weekly news about post-secondary education
- News about Faculty Associations across Canada

These links will be archived to ensure that you can have future access, when needed.

Joe Norris
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Announcements

Elections

**The close of nominations for the BUFA executive is:
Thursday, April 5, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.**

Please go to announcements at www.bufa.ca for detailed information
and nomination forms.

BUFA Annual General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, May 22, 2012 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. Sankey Chamber

**Refreshments are served at all General Meetings.
In the interest of sustainability feel free to bring your own beverage cup.
We look forward to seeing you there.**

The Other President's Social

**Monday, April 16th, 2012
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Pond Inlet**

Please join us to meet with colleagues and pay tribute to the accomplishments of
the more than 100 BUFA members who serve on Committees
on behalf of the BUFA membership.

Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres will be served, along with liquid refreshments.

BUFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and STAFF CONTACT LIST

President	Hans Skott-Myhre Child and Youth Studies	Extension 4323 hans.skott-myhre@brocku.ca
Vice President	Kathy Belicki Psychology	Extension 3873 kathy.belicki@brocku.ca
Past President	Dawn Good Psychology	Extension 3869 dawn.good@brocku.ca
Secretary	Nancy Taber Graduate and Undergraduate	Extension 4218 nancy.taber@brocku.ca
Treasurer	Jonah Butovsky Sociology/Labour Studies	Extension 4371 jbutovsky@brocku.ca
Grievance Officer	Linda Rose-Krasnor Psychology	Extension 3870 linda.rose-krasnor@brocku.ca
Health and Safety Officer	Jonathan Neufeld Graduate and Undergraduate	Extension 3771 jonathan.neufeld@brocku.ca
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