

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Vol 24 N° 1
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Welcome Back From the Executive

Welcome back to the 2006-2007 academic year, with a special warm welcome to all of our newly hired colleagues. There are many issues, challenges and opportunities facing us at all levels. We are looking forward to working with you all to face the upcoming challenges and turn them into opportunities. There is a large window of opportunity before the next round of negotiations to come up with effective strategies to promote the teaching profession and the CEGEP network with a view to improving our working conditions and education for students.

To this end, we will try to work together with the whole Vanier community, including all the local associations, the Director General and the Academic Dean in a collegial environment, while continuing to ensure that our members' rights are protected. As a public post-secondary education institution, Vanier exists under the umbrella of the Parent Report, a report which highlights accessibility to and excellence in post-secondary education. We should all work individually and collectively to educate and form the future generations so that they can participate successfully in a knowledge -based global society.

Below are some issues that we will take to the Association Council and General Assembly for discussion with a view to developing positions to take to the wider Vanier community.

Promotion of the Teaching Profession and Education

In today's knowledge -based global economy, societies have no choice but to invest heavily in education in order to form successful and socially responsible citizens. Therefore, the teaching profession and post-secondary education have to be promoted and recognized as vital, not only by political institutions but by everyone .

Unfortunately, since 1982, education in general and the teaching profession in particular have been systemically undermined in Quebec and our working conditions have deteriorated while our salaries were dropping. When the CEGEP system started in the late sixties and early seventies, Quebec and Ontario had the highest paid college teachers in Canada. Today college teachers in Quebec are the lowest paid, with annual salaries lower by roughly \$15,000 to \$20,000 when compared with college teachers' salaries in Ontario. Furthermore, during the 1970's the gap between the salary of college teachers and college administrators was about 15-20%. Today this gap has grown to far beyond 40%.

Improving the salary and working conditions of teachers should be a priority for everyone in our society and the teaching profession should claim back the respect that it deserves. As an executive, we will look for opportunities to work at all levels to this end.

Celebrating the CEGEP System

The CEGEP system is unique and has contributed very well to the intellectual, social, economic and cultural development of Quebec. The history of the education system in Quebec and the Parent Report, which lead to the establishment of the CEGEP system, is indeed very fascinating. Many studies, like the one done by Pierre Fortin of UQAM and presented during the Forum on the Future of College Education in 2004, show just how successful the CEGEP system has been for the whole Quebec society. It was for this reason that many teachers felt an immense pride during the Forum at having contributed to this immense success. Should we not start educating ourselves, then our students and finally, the public at large, about the strength of this system?



Dear Readers:

As you probably know, the VCTA has changed the way that we deal with our newsletter. For the past two years the newsletter has been in the very capable hands of Shirley Pettifer, who was the editor, without being a member of the VCTA Executive. Last year the General Assembly voted to have a member of the Executive take over the responsibility for the Newsletter. So, as Vice President in charge of information, I have become editor. It is a daunting task to follow in Shirley's footsteps and I will try to maintain her high standards. I hope to get help from as many of you as possible in the form of submissions or ideas for future issues. In the Newsletter, we will make a special effort to familiarize new people with our Vanier union culture, including collective agreement/ decree matters, pedagogical issues and social issues. If you have questions about any of these, please send them in and I'll do my best to get answers for you. Thanks to all of the people who have submitted articles for this issue.



Janice Paquette
Editor

- Janice

Calling All New Teachers!!!!!! Join the union

Vanier College works under the Rand Formula which says that anyone working as a teacher for Vanier College has to pay union dues because they benefit from any gains that the union wins. However, no-one is automatically a union member. To become a union member, you have to pay a \$2 fee and join the union. You can do this by going to see Susan in the VCTA office in C101. The VCTA has to protect all teachers' rights whether they are members or not. However, in order to have a voice in what we collectively decide to do as a local union, you have to be a member. This gives you the right to attend and vote at all VCTA meetings.

Deadline for Submissions to the next issue
is September 22 , 2006

Send contributions to Janice Paquette:
paquetjt@vaniercollege.qc.ca

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Vice-President/Info: Janice Paquette
Vice-President/External: Iannis Stavrianos
Secretary/Treasurer: Stephen Block

Executive Office Hours H06:

Mon.	Iannis	10:30 - 1pm
	Hodé	1:30 - 4pm
Tues.	Janice	2:00 - 4pm
Wed.	Iannis	10:30 - 1pm
	Hodé	1:30 - 4pm
Thurs.	Stephen	10:30 - 1pm
Fri.	Janice	10:00 - 1pm
	or Stephen	10:00 - 1pm



Susan Panneton first came to the V.C.T.A. in January 2003 when she replaced Pat Dichmann who was on a sabbatical leave for the H'03 semester to obtain her silver accreditation in dance. From December 1, 2003 Susan and Pat shared the position of the V.C.T.A. Secretary. Pat has now retired and Susan will be working four days per week as the V.C.T.A. Secretary. Her efficiency and happy smile help to make our union office and lounge a good place to be.

Susan's office hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 8:30-4:30
Lunch: 12- 1 (approximately)

Welcome Back From the VCTA Executive

Con't from cover



Stephen Block, Janice Paquette, Iannis Stavrianos and Hodé Erdogan

In the past 35 years we have graduated many students, most of whom today are contributing to the well being of this society. Should we not call upon our student alumni and their families to generate a strong network of friends of the CEGEP system? Should we not explore the possibility of an annual week of events (just like our Social Science Festival) throughout the CEGEP system to celebrate the teaching profession and the CEGEP system? Let's be proud to say that we teach at a CEGEP. At the last FAC Federative Assembly, we mentioned this idea and the reaction from the others around the table was very positive. If we could implement this idea locally at Vanier, then we could promote it at our federation. Who knows where it could go from there?

VANIER COLLEGE – What kind of an institution do we want?

Vanier is a public post secondary institution with both pre-university and technology programs. Currently we have an enrollment of about 5,500 FTE's (full time equivalent) day students. The maximum number of students allowed by the Ministry of Education, based on our physical space (called the "devis pedagogique") is 5250 +/- 10% (maximum of 5775). However, demographic studies done by the Ministry indicate a temporary increase in student population for Vanier to about 6300 FTE's (See "Student Enrollment" by Hode Erdogan Vol 23, #3, Dec. 2005). Since Vanier has not planned for a possible expansion of our campus space, how are we going to handle this increase in student numbers? Are we going to fail them by not providing spaces at Vanier? Or as a community are we prepared to explore and find some innovative ways to accommodate the additional students and the about 50 teachers who would have to be hired? As a community, we should be discussing what to do in the face of the increased enrollment and what to do should we decide to accept more students. We should also be debating what kind of balance we want between pre-university and technology programs. In the past few years, our tech-

nology programs are shrinking while pre-university programs are expanding (See "Student Enrollment by H. Erdogan, Vol 23, #6). The change in this balance has huge implications on the College finances (see the article by Fred Andrews in this issue) and the CEGEP network.

One of the main goals of the CEGEP system is to offer both pre-university and technology programs. To maintain the traditional balance between these two programs is extremely critical in maintaining the CEGEP system, not to mention financial stability for Vanier.

In the end, we all should remind ourselves that Vanier College is a public post-secondary institution whose mission is clearly defined under the Parent Report, as an institution that strives for excellence while recognizing the principle of accessibility to post-secondary education for students.

Online Courses

In the past few semesters, a few of our colleagues have been experimenting with online courses (blended or otherwise). Since these courses have some implications for everyone's working conditions, we hope to start a discussion about these courses in the community.

Union Issues: 2006/2007

Above are some examples of the issues that we must address, both individually and collectively, in different forums – Association Council, General Assemblies, Departments/Programs, Joints, Academic Council and Board of Directors. Together, we can find satisfactory solutions to fulfill the mission given to us under the Parent Report. We could play leadership role at the Federation as well as the FEDE level (Federation of CEGEPs-a group which represents the college administrations).

While providing leadership as an Executive, with input from the Association Council, we will provide information on a regular basis to the VCTA membership at large, so that

each member will have an equal opportunity to participate actively in the decision making process through the General Assemblies.

The rights and the interests of all the members of the VCTA - tenured and non-tenured, new-comers or veterans, will be represented and protected. We will make ourselves available at the VCTA office to deal with the concerns as well as to receive the guidance of all VCTA members.

Please feel free to approach any Executive or Association Council member to express your concerns or to give us your guidance on the many issues facing us. We promise you a fair, transparent and accountable VCTA executive. We ask you to participate at various levels to help us to make our union stronger.

What is the Association Council?

The Association Council is a body created by the constitution of the VCTA as the main political body to guide the Executive between General Assemblies. It is composed of 12 teachers elected by the membership plus the executive. It usually discusses all major issues and makes recommendations to the General Assembly. Association Council meetings are open to all members.

All teachers are welcome to attend these meetings. They are usually held in the Staff Cafeteria. An agenda is sent out to all members before each meeting. Minutes are sent out only to members but if you wish to receive the minutes, please inform Susan.

Association Council Meetings: F2006

Aug. 31
Sept. 14
Sept. 28
Oct. 12
Oct. 26
Nov. 9
Nov. 23
Dec. 7

Association Council Members: 2006/2007

Ali Alousi
Marc Bélanger
Shernaz Choksi
Ganesh Harilal
Eric Lamoureux*
Jeanne Masterson
Stephen Newbigging
Guy Quinn
John Tromp
Joe Twardowski
Cemal Yalinpala
Plus the 4 executive members

* Eric Lamoureux will be unable to attend meetings in Fall, 2006 because of his schedule.....A replacement will be named to replace him for the first term.

If you have concerns that you feel the union should address, feel free to consult a member of the Association Council.

Social Justice at Vanier

Eric Lamoureux



The Vanier Social Justice Committee was born out of the efforts by a group of concerned citizens to help Marcela, Alvaro and Mireya Vega

gain legal refugee status in Canada in 2004. Its members came from all walks of Vanier life – professionals, support staff, students, and teachers. With a victory in the Vega family case under their belt, the members decided to stay together and use social justice issues as a way to involve the Vanier population more deeply in the life of the community and the world around us. In 2005-2006, the VSJC was just getting on its feet, putting together a constitution and deciding on focus issues. Despite this, its members managed to start the social justice work at Vanier.

*We spoke to classes about refugee issues in Canada, including the lack of appeal for rejected refugee claimants and the Safe Third Country agreement. This agreement sends many claimants automatically to the United States for refugee hearings, where almost inevitably they are denied status and deported back to life-threatening situations.

*We prepared and circulated a flyer on Fair Trade during the Intercultural Food Fair held in Jake's Mall. The flyer explained the concept of Fair Trade and urged consumers to take it into account when shopping, even when buying coffee at Vanier.

*With the help of Cheryl Holmes, we created and circulated a list of social justice audio-visual resources available in the Vanier library.

*On December 6th, the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, we held an event in the Carrefour commemorating the deaths of the 14 women in 1989.

*A speaker was brought in to talk about the many problems faced by foreign migrant workers on Quebec farms.

* We made representations to the committee preparing guidelines for Vanier's international education initiatives, many of which were included in the final policy document.

* *Trial*, a spoken-word piece based on Franz Kafka's work was presented in the Auditorium. This work highlighted the plight of the victims of the Canadian government's security certificates. In the name of anti-terrorism, these certificates have robbed several men in Canada of their basic legal rights, including their freedom.

*We supported the work of the Vanier College Students Association on the *Make Poverty History* campaign and provided speakers to raise awareness about the causes of global poverty.

We are still deciding on our focus areas for 2006-2007 and invite everyone one in the Vanier community to get involved. We especially urge teachers to think about including speakers from the committee in their classes to address any of the above topics, as well as native issues, development in the "Third World", global economic justice, environmental questions, and much more. Our first meeting will be within the first few weeks of school. For more information on the VSJC, please contact Eric Lamoureux at lamouree@vaniercollege.qc.ca, or Doug Miller at dmillerd@vaniercollege.qc.ca

Eric Lamoureux teaches history at Vanier and is one of the founding members of the revived Vanier Social Justice Committee.



First Meeting

FRIDAY,
SEPT. 8th

2:30 p.m.
A301

All Welcome!

Parental Rights

Eric Durling



While no one can say that the previous year was a particularly good one for organised labour in Quebec, a recent change to the law which governs parental rights for working parents is one improvement which should not be overlooked. As of January 1, 2006, certain parental leaves which were previously unpaid now allow parents to receive a percentage of their salaries under the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP).

As many new teachers are currently being hired at Vanier, and some of them may be thinking of having or adopting children in the near future, I thought that it might be useful to outline the process that one must go through to benefit from these new provisions. Our collective agreement gives us certain parental rights regarding leaves. In order to benefit from these rights, one must properly notify the College who will in turn reply to your request. It is wise to also get in touch with QPIP regarding your rights under their plan. They have different deadlines than those in the collective agreements. One must apply to the QPIP for whatever benefits he/she might be entitled to.

Women are entitled to 21 consecutive weeks of maternity leave under the Collective Agreement. The mother-to-be must notify the College in writing at least two weeks before she plans to start her maternity leave. She must supply a medical certificate of pregnancy with the expected due date. She then applies for a maternity leave under QPIP where she will have two options: she may take 18 weeks at 70% of her salary or 15 weeks at 75% of her salary.

The Collective Agreement offers father-to-be five days of paternity leave at full pay. The days do not have to be taken consecutively, but they must be taken between the date of birth and the fifteenth day following the mother and/or child's return home from the hospital. In case you feel you're being cheated, guys, there is more, but I'll get to it when I discuss parental leave, which applies more generally to mothers, fathers, and adoptive parents.

An adoptive parent has the right, under our Collective Agreement, to a maximum of 10 consecutive weeks leave, provided that his or her spouse is not on such a leave. The leave can begin on the date when the adoptive parent assumes custody of the child. If a teacher must travel outside Quebec for adoption purposes, he or she must send a written request to the College, preferably two weeks in advance, and unpaid leave will be given for the time required for such travel. However, if the parent takes custody of the child, the travel time can be deducted from (or can be included in) the ten consecutive weeks mentioned above.

Maternity, paternity and adoption leaves may all be extended under the Collective Agreement for a maximum of two years

of additional unpaid leave, depending on the leave chosen. You simply have to write a letter to Human Resources, informing them how much of this maximum period you intend to take. As with the maternity provisions, fathers have a choice of benefits. They may choose either 5 weeks at 70% of their salary or 3 weeks at 75 % under the QPIP. These weeks are over and above the 5 days paid paternity leave described earlier. Biological parents may also share a number of weeks of parental leave between them. Between the two of them, they may share 7 weeks at 70%, followed by 25 additional weeks at 55%, or they may share 25 weeks at 75%. If, for whatever reason, one spouse chooses to take no parental leave, the other may take all of the weeks. It is important to remember that during the parental and paternity leave paid by QPIP, the teacher is on an unpaid leave from the College.

Adoptive parents are also eligible to receive benefits during the parental leave offered by the government. Between them, they may share 12 weeks at 70% of their salary, followed by 25 weeks at 55%, or they may opt for 28 weeks at 75 % of their salary.

For detailed information, and to apply for the government benefits, you may consult the website at www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca. There is also a toll-free number (1-888-610-7727), but as there are tens of thousands more parents this year than the government anticipated, the line is almost always busy. If you feel you have to speak to somebody, I'd suggest that you call just after they begin taking calls in the morning or just before they stop doing so in the evening. All information about this government program, as well as family allowance payments and more, is also available in a booklet entitled [Becoming a parent](#). You can obtain a free copy at Services Québec offices, or by calling 1-800-363-1363. You may also contact the Human Resources Department for more information on parental rights issues under the collective agreement.

One must remember not to confuse the benefits to which you are entitled under QPIP with the benefits you are entitled to under the Collective Agreement. They are two separate entities that work independently as far as benefits and deadlines are concerned.

We are very fortunate here in Quebec to have such parental rights, which, to my knowledge, are unique in Canada and among many other countries. I hope all of you new parents or parents-to-be will be able to make the most of these opportunities, and I'll be thinking of you as I do so this year.

Eric Durling is an English teacher and former Vice President of the VCTA. He is presently on parental leave.

Open Letter to the Director General

Dear M. Heroux,

I would like to begin by thanking you for engaging with me in a frank telephone discussion regarding the 21% increase in parking fees the College intends to levy for the upcoming academic year. I believe our discussion provided both of us with significant food for thought. Having pondered the issues you raised with respect to increased parking fees, I find myself doubly committed to the idea that the College Board made an inappropriate and injurious decision when it voted to increase fees in the amount and in the manner it has; furthermore, your defence of this decision distressed me and has moved me to share the contents of our discussion with my colleagues in the Vanier community. My intention in doing so is to highlight the systemic problems faced by members of the Vanier Community as a direct result of poor communications, inadequate consultation, and a fundamental inability to acknowledge the full range of “stakeholders” whom you, as Director General, represent at the Board.

My concerns with respect to the increase in fees were enumerated as follows:

- The increase is disproportionate to salaries of faculty and support staff (particularly in light of recent salary freezes and paltry increases in future years that will not keep pace with inflation).
- The increase is disproportionate to the cost-of-living increases reported by our government.
- The increase is being levied without reference to the actual cost of providing parking services to faculty and staff.
- Revenues generated by parking fees, pursuant to *your* instructions, will be used to offset non-parking operational expenses (in other words, parking fees paid by faculty and staff are subsidizing college activities and expenses that are the responsibility of all Quebec taxpayers).

Mr. Heroux, I do not believe it is necessary for me to belabour the first two points made above: most employees of the college have experienced a net decrease in their discretionary incomes over the past few years, and recent salary freezes and the imposition of insulting contracts on members of college unions have simply exacerbated the financial difficulties faced by many of the community’s members. Knowing this, you voted to impose an additional burden on employees without, I might add, an objective accounting of the necessity for so doing. This leads me to the most egregious of faults I find related to the decision of the Board.

Most businesses, agencies, organizations, and governments take great pains to ensure that they “cost” each and every initiative and activity they undertake. They do this so they know when they are likely to run into financial difficulties, when they are likely to realize profits, and when they are making sound fiscal decisions. When I enquired into the cost of providing parking to an employee, you indicated that the college did not know—that this had not been costed and that, in any event, I probably wouldn’t want to know, just in case the costs proved greater than \$200 per year. Mr. Heroux,

nothing could be further from the truth. I want to know how much it costs to provide parking services to employees. I suspect most faculty and staff would like to know. If, in fact, you cannot provide parking at a competitive rate for similar services offered in similar institutions operating under similar mandates, you and your management team are not managing the college’s budget effectively and efficiently, and should review your practices. However, as you are not heading up a for-profit organization, but a public institution whose budget is entrusted to you pursuant to a specific mandate, you should *not* be endeavouring to engage in cost-recovery programs by gouging employees. You should not impose 21% increases in fees without the consent of the general public *and* the Vanier community at large. When you averred that you found it acceptable to use employee parking fees to offset other budget deficits, I inferred that your interest in the well-being of employees (particularly those whose salaries had been frozen and whose discretionary incomes were shrinking rapidly) was very low on your list of priorities. In a world where most reputable managers understand that employees are valuable stakeholders who make or break the bottom line of any organization, this kind of thinking is untenable and, frankly, shameful.

I recommend that you, as a representative of the *entire* Vanier community, initiate a review of the decision to increase parking fees by 21%. I recommend that you insist your managers provide you with a costing of parking so that you make rational, ethical decisions with respect to parking fees and policies. Who knows, maybe it costs you more money to hire parking police than you net from policing activities! I suggest you approach all stakeholders in the college and review the policy of using employee parking fees to offset operational expenses that should, in fact, be shouldered by Quebec taxpayers. My employment at the college does not entitle you or the Board to insist that I pay more than my legislated share of the cost of CEGEP education.

Finally, Mr. Heroux I respectfully offer this piece of advice: it is better to have your stakeholders very much in your sights/sites, as it were! Keeping them there sometimes means “putting them first.”

Sincerely,



Noreen Bider

Noreen Bider has taught English at Vanier College for over 7 years.

Why do “Native Issues” concern YOU?

Myriam Mansour



Native issues concern YOU because the land you stand on is the land the First Nations have been occupying for thousands of years.

Native issues concern you because a lot of what you see and use daily are in fact innovations and contributions from the First Peoples and represent an integral part of the fabric of our society.

Native issues concern you because Native people have not disappeared from the surface of this planet and still thrive among us.

Native issues concern you because among your own students there are most likely a few who are Native or of Native descent. By the nature of your profession you owe them respect and should acknowledge their social realities.

Native issues concern you because the majority of the students sitting in your classes lack information about First Nations’ culture and the First Peoples of this country, province and city.

Native issues concern you because many of your students and probably many of your colleagues have deeply entrenched misconceptions about and prejudice against Native Peoples.

Native issues concern you because the media tends to distort reality and propagate a negative image of Native people. As intellectuals and educators, whether in computer science or in philosophy, we deal daily with individuals who are sensitive to what we think of them, and sensitive to what we think of “the other”.

Native issues concern you because perhaps you need to change your perception of “the other”... because you live on the land of “the other”.

The Native Awareness Group invites you to keep up with the college-wide activities it will be organizing throughout the year to stimulate interest and to open new perspectives on Native realities. Throughout the year, we plan to invite guest speakers, show films, organize panels, hold workshops, and mount displays. Keep an eye on our activities!

Would you like to provide suggestions, share ideas or join our group? Do you want to know about our next event? Contact us at: mansourm@vaniercollege.qc.ca

Myriam Mansour has taught geography at Vanier since 1997. She also co-ordinates the Social Science Resource Centre Tutoring service and the Social Science Honours program. Her Masters’ thesis focussed on Public Policy and Immigration, a sub-field of Human Geography, and she now has a special interest in issues concerning the First Nations.

Interesting links:

- McGill’s First Peoples’ House - <http://www.mcgill.ca/fph/> (Annual Pow-Wow and Symposium on Indigenous Cultures - September 21-22)
- Quebec Native Women - <http://www.faq-qnw.org/>

Documentary:

- *Indian Summer – The Oka Crisis*
A 2-part series presented on CBC starting Friday, September 15, 2006, 8:00 p.m.
Based on real events in 1990, the fictional story of how a minor protest by Mohawk Indians, to protect their three centuries old cemetery from a golf course expansion, leads to the largest deployment of Canadian troops since the Korean War. Alex Rice, Tony Nardi, Gary Farmer, Tantoo Cardinal, Eric Schweig, Ben cardinal, Bill Merasty. (source: www.cbc.ca)

Highlights of the June 13th, 2006 Board of Directors Meeting

Mark Prentice and Hodé Erdogan, Faculty Representatives

- The Creative Arts, Literature and Languages Program Evaluation Report was adopted.
- The Board was presented with a Communication Plan for the College, included was the creation of an administrative unit to coordinate internal and external College communications for public relations and organizational communication.
- The Board was also presented with the College policy on International Cooperation, Exchanges and Training.
- The Board adopted the College Budget for 2006-2007 including a deficit of approximately \$252,900 to be applied against the College surplus. *
- The Board adopted, in collaboration with l’Institute Supérieur des Techniques Appliquées en Chimie Agroalimentaire (ISTACHA) and the Collège Alfred de l’Université de Guelph, a self-financing project Titled *Training for Sustainability* in the Democratic Republic of Congo for a four year period.

*Note from the editor : Obviously there will be a lot of discussion in the College about this budget. See the articles in this newsletter “Budgetary Surprise at Vanier” and the “Open Letter to the D.G.”

Supporting Each Other

Stephen Block



We are coming up on the fifth anniversary of a very important event in world history. It was just five years ago that I was scratching my head, thinking how I could impress upon yet another new crop of students in my media and propaganda course what it was like to live in troubled times, in times of war and fear. Amid an early September discussion on topics for our public affairs scrapbook, I was asking students what

topics they may wish to explore. "The Backstreet Boys", a student in the back corner opined, half curious to know if I would accept it. "What would the Backstreet Boys have to do with this course", I asked. "I don't know, I don't really like news", she said, "and I like the Backstreet Boys".

The task of keeping students' interest seemed, year by year, to be more daunting. But the next week at the end of the class we emerged to discover that a plane had flown into the World Trade Center. The same student greeted me as I was leaving the 'N' building. "Sir, does this mean there's going to be a war, Sir, I'm scared". And so, it seemed, in retrospect, the preferable position of fighting the uphill battle to keep student interest during easy times was over. History was making a comeback, and so were public affairs.

As a new member of the VCTA executive, maintaining teacher interest in the union and union issues can sometimes seem just as daunting. Why should we care about the union? Tales of hard times seem to be behind us. What does the union do anyway except burden us with paper and try to turn us into soldiers for a cause? And yet, just like war and current events we'd rather see go away, union issues are always there whether we wish to face them or not.

To wit:

Last Newsletter we celebrated the exemplary contributions of Kevin and Gloria, two support staff members, to the positive atmosphere at Vanier. They, like many other support staff and professionals, make our working lives easier. But it is also not a secret that on occasion relationships at Vanier can also be stressful, especially when administrators do not fulfil their responsibilities to manage. Disputes between teachers and other workers at Vanier should be unusual events under normal circumstances. However, disputes become more frequent if teachers are expected to do a manager's job, which is NOT part of the workload of teach-

ers but of the administration. According to the Quebec Labour Code, only managers are supposed to manage. When they fail to do so, they leave teachers in an uncomfortable position. What are we to do if we don't get the help that is needed to do a good job for our students?

Support staff numbers are dwindling and their workloads, in many instances, is increasing. They do not have the same protection teachers have. But that does not mean that we are insulated from the effects of cut-backs in other categories of workers. Very clearly they do affect how we do our job with our students. Whether in the print shop, or in security or among the technicians or in the libraries, when other workers are compelled to double up in their jobs, they may be unable to provide the same level of services that we have a right to expect. And it is management which is supposed to make sure that we have enough support. Obviously, if they fail to create enough staff or professional positions and then leave it up to the people concerned to "fight it out" amongst themselves, there will be problems. This begins to illustrate how a work environment can become poisoned not just through the heavy-handedness or lack of even-handedness of the manager but because of inaction, or budgetary decisions. In all these cases a conflict between employees may have an underlying cause which stems from policies beyond their control, policies which are or ought to be in the hands of managers. With more cut-backs due to last year's deficit (covered by the surplus, increased parking costs and some staff cutbacks, such as in the mailroom), this problem is likely to get worse rather than better. As a union we have to develop strategies with the other unions, including pressuring the administration to provide adequate resources and personnel.

Dr. Stephen Block teaches Humanities and has a background in labour relations. He is presently the Secretary-Treasurer of the VCTA.

English translation of the Ministry of Education document on "further developments" in college education coming soon to your email. Discussion in the first General Assembly....Sept. 20? We'll keep you posted.

Congratulations

Avrum, Marcel and Philippe!



Philippe, Marcel and Avrum were recognized for their innovative work at the May Federative Assembly.

Each year FAC, our union federation, presents awards to salute the exceptional work of its members. This year we have three winners at Vanier. Marcel Pérez and Philippe Gagné of the French Department won in the pedagogical activity category for their work in setting up the website "Pleins feux sur les sciences" and Avrum Dunsky from Physics won for his work in setting up the Arcade in the Physics area (A 4th floor). The awards were presented at the Federative assembly in May. Congratulations to all of them. See below for a description of the prize winning projects.

The «Fédération autonome du collégial» (FAC) is the union federation to which the Vanier College Teachers' Association belongs. It consists of about a third of all CEGEP teachers' unions, including the Dawson Teachers' Union. Among its structures are the CI, one representative from each union, which takes the role of our Association Council and the FA (Federative Assembly) with roughly proportionate representation which meets 3 times a year to give the executive direction. It roughly plays the role of our General Assembly.

« Pleins feux sur les sciences », un projet pédagogique qui me tenait à coeur.

Marcel Pérez, «one of the first at Vanier»

C'est bien connu, les professeurs sont toujours à la recherche de textes motivants, au contenu riche, libres de droits, utilisables en classe sans restriction. C'était vrai, pour moi, surtout dans le cadre des cours de français de bloc B orientés vers le champ d'études des élèves.

Nous avons eu la chance, à Vanier, de disposer d'excellents textes de vulgarisation scientifique écrits par Joe Schwarcz entre 1993 et 1999 dans The Vanier Science Spotlight. Ce fascicule annuel de deux à quatre pages, très apprécié par la communauté de Vanier était distribué dans les écoles secondaires pour attirer de bons étudiants de Science ainsi que sa version française réalisée par Simone Paradis - professeure et traductrice professionnelle - sous le titre de « Pleins feux sur les sciences ». Avec beaucoup d'humour et de suspense, ces textes nous dévoilent la genèse étonnante de découvertes inattendues, et nous donnent la clé de nombreux mystères.

Depuis la fin des années 1990 l'idée de bâtir un site pour abriter les 38 textes de Joe Schwarcz me trottait dans la tête. Nous savions que cela pourrait constituer un excellent outil pédagogique pour nos étudiants des cours de français de

bloc B dont le contenu est orienté vers les sciences pour la compréhension de textes scientifiques ou techniques, l'étude du vocabulaire et des expressions typiques.

Plusieurs années ont passé sans que le projet se fasse car j'étais trop occupé. Mais en janvier 2004, à un an et demi de ma retraite, j'ai lancé le projet en faisant appel à mes collègues. Je voulais bâtir un site avec la participation active des étudiants par le biais d'un concours avec des prix à gagner.

C'est alors que Philippe Gagné, un autre fou des sciences et de la pédagogie en ligne, est devenu mon partenaire. Ensemble nous avons élaboré notre projet avec l'aide de Doug Robinson (LCIT) pour les questions techniques, et celle de Bruce Norton (DDMT), devenu la personne-ressource pour tous les candidats ! Ensuite nous avons présenté ce projet au Département. De nombreux volontaires nous ont alors offert leurs précieux services pour vérifier les contenus des textes et établir une thématique.

Au cours de l'été 2004 Philippe et moi avons travaillé à mettre sur pied le concours de conception du site « Pleins feux sur

les sciences ». Nous avons conçu la structure du site et écrit en commun presque tous les textes de chacune de ses pages à l'exception de ceux de Joe Schwarcz. Puis j'ai bâti un « site du concours » qui présentait aux candidats les ressources nécessaires y compris les grilles d'évaluation utilisées par le jury pour sélectionner les trois meilleurs sites.

En même temps, Philippe Gagné, aidé par le bureau du DG, s'occupait aussi, avec succès, de la recherche de commanditaires pour offrir de beaux prix aux gagnants. Tout au long du projet, nous avons aussi bénéficié du soutien constant des diverses instances administratives (FAT; FSGS, Learning Centre; Student Services; DG's Office; Academic Dean's Office; Maths and Science Centre).

41 étudiants de Sciences, Informatique, DDMT et Technologie de l'architecture se sont inscrits au concours. Vers la fin, les 30 étudiants qui restaient dans la course ont soumis les 25 sites qui ont été présentés aux sept membres du jury - trois de Vanier (Fanny Fennec, Farid Sandoghdar et moi) et quatre du milieu de l'industrie de la conception de sites Web (dont Alex Buchanan, ancien étudiant d'Informatique de Vanier).

C'est Istvan Puzdai, étudiant en Informatique qui a été le grand gagnant de ce concours et qui signe la conception visuelle et la programmation remarquables du site. Une fête a été organisée début février 2005 au Mathematics & Science Centre pour la remise des prix aux trois gagnants. Entre 80 et 100 étudiants, profs et administrateurs y ont assisté et ont chaleureusement applaudi les vainqueurs Istvan Puztai, Stéphanie Vissa et Elias Kalantzis. Joe Schwarcz qui était présent s'est dit très impressionné non seulement par le résultat final mais aussi par tout le travail accompli.

Les étudiants ont eu du mérite, car pour construire un site Web il faut faire montre de créativité, maîtriser plusieurs logiciels, être précis dans le respect des exigences et faire preuve de persévérance. Il est clair qu'il y a à Vanier, des futurs professionnels talentueux qui sont sur la voie du succès. Notre concours leur a permis de se mesurer à leurs pairs et d'être jugés par des experts externes et ceci, tout en nous donnant un outil pédagogique original et unique dans le réseau des collèges qui est maintenant entre les mains des professeurs et de leurs étudiants.. Notre double objectif pédagogique est donc atteint et nous en sommes très satisfaits.

Mon rêve des années 90 est donc aujourd'hui réalisé et j'en suis fier. C'est, je crois un bel exemple d'activité motivante pour tous, exigeante, mobilisatrice, transdisciplinaire et interfacultaire. Je suis donc heureux d'avoir terminé ma carrière à Vanier sur cette note aussi positive!

Quant à mon jeune collègue, Philippe Gagné, il est parti du bon pied et je suis certain que ce projet n'aura été que le premier d'une très longue liste.

Salut à tous mes amis!

Marcel Pérez was a member of the French Department at Vanier from 1970 to 2005. Although he is now retired and enjoying enormously the total absence of papers to mark, he has never really left the college. Presently he continues as the webmaster of the French department website, on a volunteer basis, and to work on pedagogical projects. He is also a mentor and gives workshops to his colleagues, while continuing to cultivate the art of being a grandfather. He can be reached at www.profweb.qc.ca/mperez/ To have a look at the website, go to <http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/french/francais-des-sciences/index.shtml>

The Arcade Story

Avrum Dunsky

When Dave Smith and I installed the first 13 Arcade exhibits on Feb. 20, 1975, the reaction was immediate and overwhelming. Students, staff and faculty from all college areas flocked to play with the new toys. Permanently installed in the B-400 corridor, the displays were operated day and night. In the first few weeks it became evident that the cleaning staff had adopted the exhibits as their own, cleaning and polishing them daily.

In the fall, the famous Doorbell was added and during the next few years the Arcade grew to include over twenty displays. About half were basic demonstrations of physics principles, while the others were puzzles or games relating to physics. Some of the original ones did not stand up to the heavy use and had to be removed, while some of the newer ones proved to be most popular.

When we added a few electronic counters the resulting numbers were quite remarkable. The least used display (the small AC/DC demo) was operated an average of 20,000 times in any given year. The ever-popular Doorbell averaged 75,000 rides during its 11 years.

The concept of the Arcade is based on the philosophy that science is best appreciated by experiencing it. The hands-

on style of the Science Centre was quickly spreading throughout the world. In 1977, according to the Association of Science Technology Centres, the Arcade at Vanier was probably the only such installation outside of public museums in North America. At that time there were only 22 accredited Science Centres around the world. Today there are over 400.

The principle behind 'hands-on' science exhibits is to bring the wonder, the fun and the excitement of science to the public at large. Although the Arcade served the immediate college community, it also enjoyed the organized visits of numerous elementary school classes, as well as scout and church youth groups. The many high school class visits usually resulted in a complete tour of the college, a precursor to today's



recruitment activities.

The Arcade had different effects on different participants. The science student enjoyed a part of science not normally experienced in the conventional science content course. Non-science users (both students and staff alike) had their curiosity awakened. The questions they asked and the depth of answers they expected far exceeded expectations. The Arcade seemed to have something for everyone. Sadly, though, aging exhibits combined with shrinking budgets forced us to remove the Arcade in Dec. 1990.

At the 2004 Vanier Open House, a few parents (former Vanier students) were surprised to learn that the Arcade no longer existed. They had brought their Secondary V sons and daughters to visit "their" College and see the Arcade and were very disappointed that it no longer existed. This experience generated the impetus to recreate the Arcade.

In November 2004, we started to rebuild some of the original exhibits and designed some new ones. With the support of the college administration, we were able to have 15 refreshed and new exhibits installed in March 2006. The area we have available is somewhat smaller than the original Arcade, but we have managed to recreate the original feeling. The students' initial reaction was identical to that of their counterparts of 30 years earlier. Over the first 5 weeks the counter installed on one of the exhibits (not the most popular) registered over 5000 users, and although there will no doubt be a slowdown in activity, it looks like the new Arcade will enjoy the same degree of use as the original one did. Some students have brought friends from other CEGEPS to see the Arcade. Staff members flocked to it and some



have brought their children in to enjoy it. One of our students asked his father to explain the Jacobs Ladder, an exhibit involving an apparent contradiction. His father's explanation, although very elegant and well informed, differs from ours but the debate continues. During the recent annual Music Fest (March 20-24), at least 1600 of the participants found out about the Arcade and managed to find their way up to B400. Hopefully we will host a number of high school groups this year

The current version of the Arcade could not have been built without a lot of support, cooperation and help. Special thanks go to:

Caroline Hanrahan for her enthusiastic support and for the resources she made available.

Sam Kay for providing all of the services needed. Sam, I'm afraid you blew away that misleading reputation you seemed to relish. Now everybody knows how cooperative and helpful you can be.

If Sam gave the word, it was Yvan Bergeron who made it happen. I cannot imagine the Arcade being built without Yvan's enthusiastic support and help.

The entire Service Department, especially Brendan Flynn and his team members Claude Bleau, Emanuele Cosentino, John Lynch, Serge Ostiguy, Regent Sansregret, & Gaetan Valiquette

Last but not least, there is the one person who made it all possible. Dave Smith adopted the Arcade as his own and was instrumental in the conception, design, and construction of each and every item. Simply put, without Dave there would be no Arcade.

Avrum Dunsky has taught physics at Vanier College for many years. His wonderful sense of irony makes him a delight to talk to. You can often find him in the VCTA lounge around lunch time.

Budgetary Surprises at Vanier

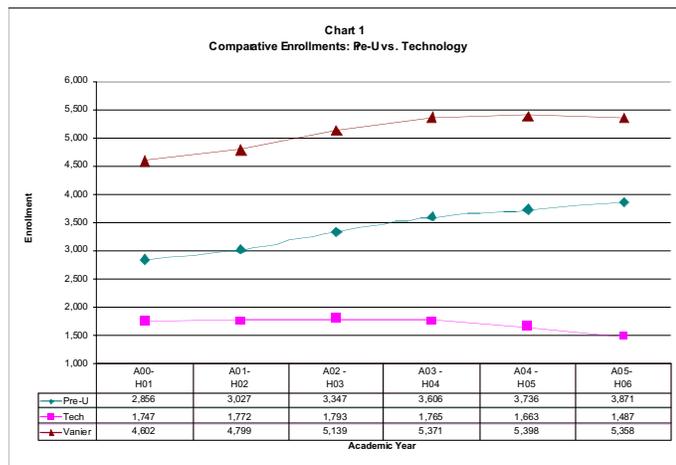
Fred Andrews



As you can see from Chart 1, below, the enrollments at Vanier have been increasing year by year since the fall of 2000.

Funding to support these students is provided by the Ministry of Education of Québec (MEQ) and has been increasing regularly until the current year. For the year 2006-2007 this operational funding has decreased for the first time in several years. This would seem unusual since

enrollments are still increasing. However, there is an explanation.



Part of the funding by the MEQ to support CEGEP operational budgets is based on student enrollments by program. Funding per student differs quite widely across programs.

It is useful to review the general mechanism used by the MEQ for funding CEGEPs. Operational budgets are established via a set of budgetary guidelines known by the French acronym FABES. (Capital budgets are handled separately and will not be discussed here.)

Each of the five letters in FABES stands for a separate category of funding as follows:

- "F" is for a fixed overhead allocated to each college.
- "A" is for pedagogical affairs. This factor will be discussed in greater detail as it represents the variable funding based on enrollments by program.
- "B" is for buildings
- "E" is for teaching ("Enseignants") that is anything dealing with "masse salariale" covering teachers' salaries and benefits.
- "S" is for special projects. This covers various research grants such as PAREA and other such things.

Examining the "A" in "FABES"

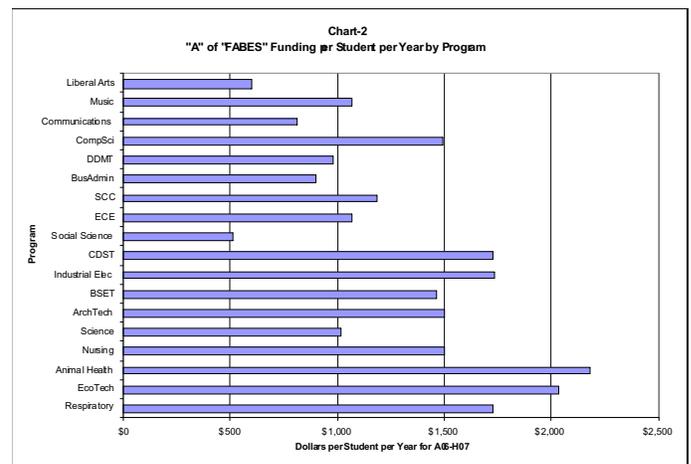
As noted above "A" stands for pedagogical affairs. This part of the budgetary guideline provides funding to cover such areas as:

- expenses for teaching excluding masse salariale for teachers
- services for teaching
- student services
- management of human resources
- management of teaching activities
- management of financial resources
- management of printing and materials

Basically, this budgetary category generates the funds to run the operations of the college (materials, services, support staff, managers, etc.).

Different programs have different requirements for the use of resources. For example some programs require major use of labs and materials (including animals, chemicals, computers, technicians, etc.) Other programs have smaller requirements for material resources. The MEQ's funding under the "A" category of "FABES" accounts for these differences on a per student basis. If a college has a healthy annual operational budget, it can, at its own discretion, decide how to apply that budget each year.

Chart 2, below, shows the Funding Provided per Student per Year by Program by the "A" of FABES.



As we can see, there are wide differences in per student funding according to the program of enrollment. On this chart almost every technology student generates funding substantially above that generated by any pre-university student.

If we combine the overall enrollments by program at Vanier with the funding per student per year by program, using the MEQ formula for funding, we can display the change in yearly funding under the "A" category of "FABES". (Annual enrollments by program are available through Vanier's Recruitment Office, but are not shown separately here.)

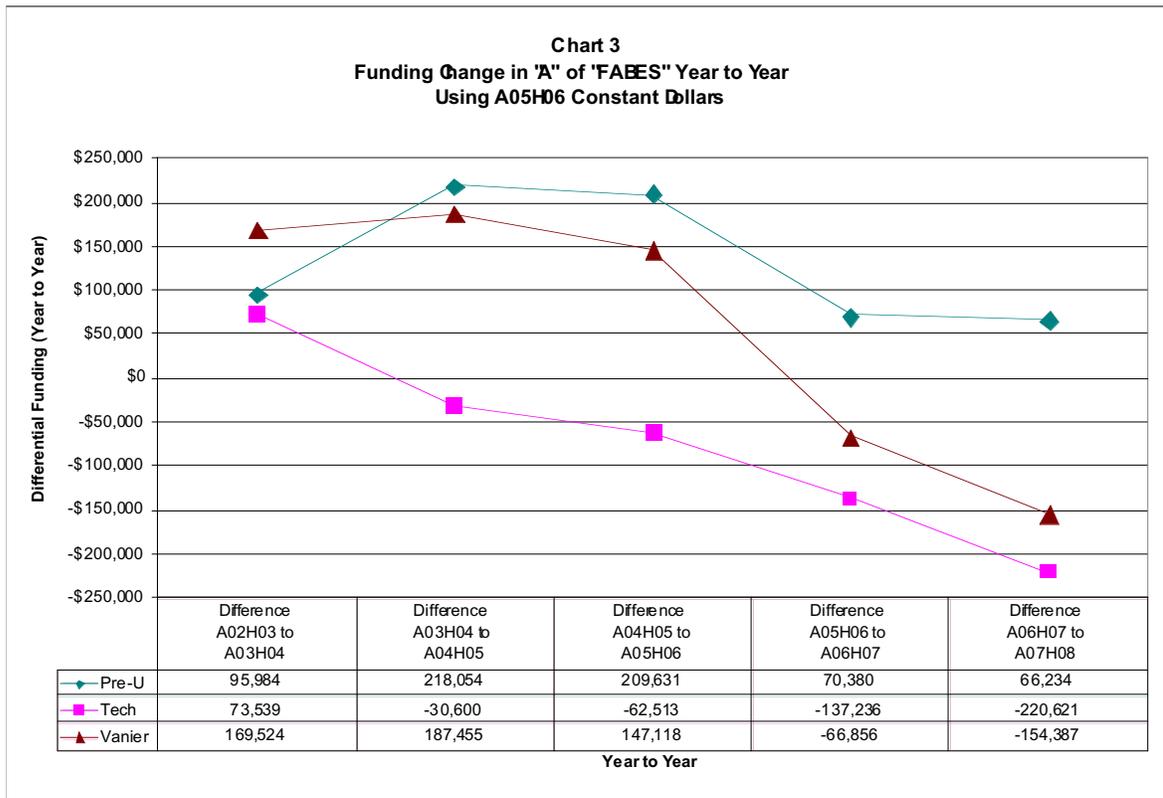


Chart 3, shows this as “Funding Change in A of “FABES Year to Year Using Constant A05-H06 Dollars”..

This chart needs a bit more explanation to help you understand it.

- This chart uses “A05H06 Constant Dollars” to show the strict effect of enrollment patterns on the budget allocations. The MEQ uses two index factors in its budgetary formula each of which increases year to year to provide CEGEPs with more funds each year to account for naturally increasing costs of materials, salaries, services, etc. These index factors affect funding for all students in the same proportion. So by using “constant dollar” index factors from any one given year we can see the true differences in budgets resulting from changes in enrollments.

- There are three graph lines (one each for Pre-University, Technology and Vanier as a total)

- Each marked point on the three graph lines shows the dollar change from one academic year to the next.

- For example the three leftmost points show the differences in funding from academic year A02H03 to A03H04 as an increase of \$95,984 for Pre-U, an increase of \$73,539 for Tech, and an increase of \$169,524 for Vanier. The total for Vanier is just the sum of Pre-U and Tech. This means that Vanier received \$169,524 more for its operational budget in A03H04 than it did in the previous year, A02H03.

- Next look at the difference from A03H04 to A04H05. Pre-U increases by \$218,054 but Tech decreases by \$30,600. Vanier in total still goes up by \$187,455 (in fact, more than the previous year-to-year change). But danger is on the way as a result of decreasing enrollments in key technology programs even though the overall college enrollments are still increasing.

- Now look ahead to the difference from A05H06 to A06H07. The total for Vanier is now decreasing by \$66,856 from year to year. Pre-U has gone up by a modest amount, but Tech has decreased by a larger amount so Vanier’s total drops from A05H06 to A06H07. But our expectation from the pre-

vious several years was that the overall operational budget would continue to increase as overall enrollments increased.

- This turns out to be a false expectation due to the loss of enrollments in many technology programs.

- Finally, look at the calculated expectations for the succeeding academic year A06H07 to A07H08. There will be a further decline in operational budget of \$154,387.

- We know this already since the MEQ bases its budget calculation for a given year on the enrollments by program from two years earlier. So the budget allocation for A07H08 will be based on Vanier’s enrollment by program for A05H06. Thus it is possible for us to anticipate budget variations down the road and to avoid surprises. It also allows us to try to make changes in enrollment profiles if we consider that to be important. If we do manage to make such changes, the effect will not be reflected in budgets until two years later.

- Because of the enrollment drop in certain technology programs, Vanier’s overall budget allocation under A has dropped and will continue to drop.

Now we can understand why colleges with a higher proportion of Technology students also have stronger operational budget allocations from the MEQ for running their colleges.

The MEQ documentation used to prepare this article may be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/ens-sup/ens-coll/reg-pub-index.asp>

<http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/ens-sup/ens-coll/Cahiers/repatri.asp>

Fred Andrews has been teaching Computer Science at Vanier for 35 years. During that period he has also done other things such as program coordination, chairing Academic Council, and working on special projects. Lots of laughs are important.