

# NEWSLETTER

Vol 25 N°1  
SEP. 2007

## Ad Hoc Negotiations???



**The VCTA Executive**

In November of 2006, FAC was mandated by its Federative Assembly to see if our employer was open to discussing salary realignment. As you may recall, after we rejected the "agreement in principle" in the last round of contract negotiations, the government ended the negotiations and decreed a new contract. One consequence is that FAC colleges, beginning with the academic year 2007-2008 and continuing until 2010, will receive our salary increases later than our colleagues at colleges affiliated with the other two union federations

(FEC-CSQ et FNEEQ-CSN). This results in a loss of \$233 (for someone making \$70,000) up to Aug. 1, 2008 and a total loss of about \$2,000 to the end of the decreed contract (Dec. 1, 2010). Given this situation, FAC decided to ask for salary realignment.

In response, last March 2007, the employer made four counter demands: the evaluation of teachers, the abolition of DEC courses in Continuing Education, mandatory teacher participation in supervision of the ExitTest, and changes to the replacement policy of nursing teachers. Subsequently, the last two items were excluded from discussions.

The Vanier General Assembly of May 16, 2007 was then consulted on the issue of salary realignment. At that time, it was explained that, as well as its demands regarding Evaluation and Continuing Education, college administrations were interested in receiving from the government extra resources that they were denied when our union federation rejected the agreement in principle.

After a long discussion, the G.A. voted to recommend to FAC that it not negotiate on the issue of salary realignment at this time. It was felt that, among other things, such negotiations made little sense in a period of decreed non-negotiations. As well, it was argued that such piecemeal negotiations could prejudice FAC's legal challenge to Law 43 as well as future negotiations. It was also pointed out that the International Labour Organisation had recently condemned the Quebec government's decree and determined that they had negotiated in bad faith. FAC and other union groups have mounted a legal challenge to the special law which ended the negotiations. This challenge concerns, among other things, issues related to salary. FAC is also contesting aspects of the decree that imposed certain working conditions upon us. However, we are alone in this legal challenge as the other federations accepted the agreement in principle.

At the end of May, during the FAC Federative Assembly, we were informed that the issue of Continuing Education was taken off the table. However, the issue of Evaluation remains, and FAC has added another demand. We are asking that the rules regarding the retraining of tenured teachers without a workload be modified to give us access to unused resources that have accumulated for this purpose. Although FAC is not abandoning its legal challenges, it is consulting its member unions on the issue of salary realignment. Given that there are new elements to consider, the General Assembly at Vanier will be consulted again in relation to salary realignment.

**COME TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 19, 7 PM** to discuss this important issue.



# Letter to the Editor

Not one, not two but five!

I came into the union office on Thursday and found five unwashed cups in the sink. What exactly is that? Is it so difficult to enjoy a good cup of coffee then quickly wash up after yourself? As I was writing this scathing report, a certain respected teacher also mentioned that he had found food dumped in the sink a day before. Another teacher confessed that she had washed the five cups.

Hello!! Two words: Communal Area!

- *Concerned Teacher*

## CALLING ALL RUNAWAY COFFEE CUPS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

If some of the cups from the VCTA office have been hiding in YOUR office, could you please shepherd them back down to C101? Thanks.

## 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 25, 2007

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

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**Janice Paquette** is the Editor.

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Technical assistance by **Jason Leonard**

### TO CALL VCTA EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

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Janice: 7416

Eric: 7415

Stephen: 7414

**VCTA Office: C101**  
**Telephone Extensions:**  
**7053 / 7054**

#### VCTA Executive 2007-2008

President: Ganesh Harilal  
Vice-President/Info: Janice Paquette  
Vice-President/External: Eric Durling  
Secretary/Treasurer: Stephen Block  
VCTA Secretary: Susan Panneton

#### Executive Office Hours A07:

Mon. Ganesh Harilal  
11:30 A.M. – 2:15 P.M.  
Tues. Eric Durling  
1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.  
Wed. Ganesh Harilal  
3:00 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.  
Thu. Janice Paquette  
9:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon  
Friday Stephen Block  
9:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

#### Secretary's hours

Susan Panneton  
8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.  
Monday to Friday  
Closed for lunch from Noon – 1:00 P.M. (approximately)

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Wed. September 19, 2007**  
**Amphitheatre**  
**Supper at 5:30, meeting**  
**starts at 6:30**

# 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 new Board Room if there is not a CRT. 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 – A07 SEMESTER

September 13, 2007    September 27, 2007

October 11, 2007    October 25, 2007

November 8, 2007    November 22, 2008

December 6, 2007

## Association Council Members 2007/2008



**Eva  
Stelzer**



**Fred  
Andrews**



**Jeanne  
Masterson**



**Joe  
Twardowski**



**Joel  
Casseus**



**John  
Tromp**



**Karen  
Tennenhouse**



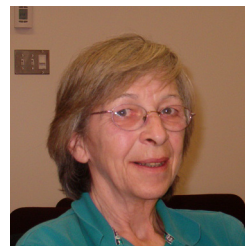
**Marc  
Bélanger**



**Stephen  
Newbigging**



**Ali  
Alousi**



**Helena  
Dedic**

# Palestinian question on the agenda...

At the Association Council meeting of May 10, we discussed motions to be presented at the June Federative Assembly (FA) which would lead to FAC signing a manifesto in support of the Palestinian people and the President of FAC speaking at a demonstration to mark the 40th anniversary of the occupation of Palestine.

Many people joined in the discussion to point out that, since our union had had no discussion on this issue for many years, taking the FAC motions to the next General Assembly would be likely to cause needless division in our ranks. Some people found the declaration to be too strident in tone and one-sided to support, while other members argued in favour

of it. One teacher pointed out that the resolution was incorrect and should address the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. After a very fruitful discussion, the Council passed a motion that our representatives at the FA should abstain on the motions. It was agreed that the FAC motions would not be presented at the General Assembly. However, at the same time, most people agreed that the VCTA should have discussions on the Palestinian question to increase awareness in our community. Please read Neil Caplan's article on page 6 for a discussion of two proposals that we can consider.

The motions on Palestine were presented and passed at the Federative Assembly, with the Vanier delegates abstaining.

## More On Afghanistan

Last semester our General Assembly adopted resolutions to demand that the Canadian government withdraw Canadian troops from Afghanistan and that we ask the College to stop military recruitment on campus. It was also decided that we should ask FAC, our union federation, to support our motions. This semester we will be meeting with the Vanier Social Justice Committee to plan how to deal with the recruitment on campus issue. Below you will find the follow-up at the FAC Federative Assembly. Our letter to the Prime Minister was answered with thanks and an attempt to convince us that we should have troops in Afghanistan. The response can be viewed in the VCTA office.

## VCTA's Motions on Afghanistan Adopted at the Federative Assembly

At the June Federative Assembly, the VCTA motions concerning getting Canadian troops out of Afghanistan and stopping recruitment on campus were adopted, with two additional motions. They read as follows:

- That FAC demand that the government of Canada replace its military intervention in Afghanistan by humanitarian work aimed at the protection of human rights and the improvement of living conditions for the people of Afghanistan.
- That FAC support organizations that defend and promote women's rights in Afghanistan.

### **Military OFF Campus**

It is not only at Vanier that military recruitment on campus is being questioned. Last year the students at Marie-Victorin CEGEP got the military banned from recruiting on their campus. The campaign has also started at CEGEP St. Jerome.

**We now have a comprehensive document dealing with all aspects of parental leave that was put together by the Dawson Teachers' Union (DTU). We are currently trying to put it in pamphlet form but anyone who needs the information now can get in touch with us in the VCTA office. (C101)**

# Vanier Social Justice Committee

## Eric Lamoureux



The Vanier Social Justice Committee is holding its first meeting of the semester on Wednesday, September 5 at Universal Break in A-302 and all are invited. The VSJC is made up of faculty, staff and students working to end poverty, racial and sexual discrimination, war, human rights abuse, environmental destruction

and all forms of injustice. In the past years we were active on many fronts.

1. We participated in campaigns run by Students for a Free Tibet, censuring the Chinese government for the killings of Tibetan refugees. We also helped present a speaker against Chinese persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.
2. On December 6th, the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, we held an event in the Carrefour commemorating the deaths of 14 women at the Université de Montréal in 1989. At that event, we also held a human rights write-a-thon as part of Amnesty International's observance of the anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. We sent students to conferences run by the Institut du Nouveau Monde, exploring future social directions for Quebec society.
4. We marched in protest demonstrations related to Canada's participation in the war in Afghanistan. We also steered a motion through the VCTA declaring our opposition to Canada's

participation in the war in Afghanistan, and encouraging Vanier to stop military recruitment on campus. (We haven't finished the work on recruitment on campus but will be taking it to the administration and Board this semester.)

5. For Valentine's Day, we prepared and circulated a flyer on fair trade chocolate. We also began work on a campaign to examine Vanier's contract with its food suppliers, with the goal of bringing more fair trade and more nutritious food to the college.

6. We participated in global demonstrations highlighting the issue of global warming.

7. We wrote letters to the governments of Libya and Canada to save Bulgarian and Palestinian health care workers in Libya from the death penalty. Those workers have now been sent home.

8. Several members spoke to classes about refugee issues in Canada.

9. We began work to support and supplement Vanier's new project concerning AIDS in Africa.

10. We supported the work of Vanier's Native Awareness Group as it raised awareness about local Native issues.

We have speakers available to speak on various issues in classrooms and we plan to host a speaker series over the coming year on the above issues and many more. For more information, contact Eric Lamoureux at lamouree@vaniercollege.qc.ca or Doug Miller at millerd@vaniercollege.qc.ca

**Eric Lamoureux** teaches history and is a founding member of the VSJC.

## Parental Leaves

### Eric Durling

In a previous newsletter article, I explained the basics of how to apply for benefits under Quebec's new parental insurance plan (QPIP). Having been on the plan myself this past academic year, I thought I would offer some brief impressions of it.

Like most government programs, it has its good and bad points. The possibility of applying by internet is convenient, but if they need additional documents or information, they tend to be very quick to threaten to cut you off if they do not receive it in very short order. This can be very inconvenient if you are away from home.

On the whole though, I would have to say that the program works quite well. I can't really say that I noticed a significant difference during the weeks when I was at 70% of my salary. The child tax credit from Ottawa and especially the Quebec family allowance payments really help to fill the gap.

According to government statistics, 97,000 parents in Quebec took advantage of the plan in 2006. 35,900, or 37%, of these were men. Although these figures may seem impressive at

first, when we consider that all new fathers can have three to five weeks paid paternity leave, they become less so. Some families probably do have financial situations that prevent both parents from being on leave at the same time. However, as I talked up the program to new fathers around me, I was surprised at how some men seem hesitant to take time off from work even when it is economically possible. I can only speculate that now that we have a choice to be full-time fathers for a few weeks or months, we are subject to the dilemma that women have been facing for some time. We could be perceived, by our peers or by our employers, as not being fully committed to our careers or to the all-pervasive ideal of professional high-performance. I also wonder if we feel a bit locked into our traditional social role as providers to the detriment of other aspects of fatherhood.

In a similar vein, as I took part in some of the programs in my community which offer activities for new parents and children, I was a bit disappointed by the lack of fathers involved. I would have settled for less than 37%, but I was often the only one (This really kills the suspense when they give out the award for the father who has participated the most).

The new fathers that I've come to know in the past year seem very involved in parenting. I think that we just need to grow accustomed to a society that encourages us to invest more time in our children and families. Many people with whom I spoke were convinced that this would be the case as the parental insurance program becomes a more familiar part of young families' lives.

# How I Commemorated the 40th Anniversary

## A personal exploration into union solidarity activities

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Neil Caplan



On May 10 2007 the VCTA Association Council engaged in an important discussion over whether to bring to the General Assembly a motion to endorse a pro-Palestinian rallying call to mark the 40th anniversary of the June 1967 war in the Middle East, denouncing Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands and its treatment of the Palestinian people. The Council decided that the FAC motions would not be brought to the upcoming General Assembly, but that the VCTA would undertake "to begin a discussion among our members on the Palestinian question with a view to developing a common position based on widespread, informed and respectful discussion."

While it may be impossible to arrive at a common position, I nonetheless believe that VCTA members can and should become involved in solidarity-related activities relating to the thorny and divisive Israel-Palestine problem. I will start with some personal reflections and conclude with two concrete suggestions for action.

### Some Personal Reflections

The June 1967 war marked my first awakening, as a post-graduate student searching for a new area of research and study, to the complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This year therefore also represents the 40th anniversary of my own professional and academic path into this troubled region. I have been researching, writing and teaching about the history, diplomacy and psychology of the Arab-Israeli conflict almost exclusively since that time. Digging in archives for authentic primary sources and writing articles for a limited scholarly audience are the activities I enjoy best.

But I learned quickly that there is little connection between historical knowledge about this protracted dispute and finding a solution to it. Having become a specialist in the history of (mostly-failed) Arab-Zionist and Arab-Israeli negotiations from 1913 to 1956, I can tell you a lot about why past negotiation attempts have failed and what contemporary proposals are **not** likely to work. My historical expertise does not, however, equip me in any way to offer sound advice on how to negotiate a breakthrough to this intractable conflict.

During and since my student days I have exposed myself to the endless controversies and debates, albeit with less and less enthusiasm after discovering so many repeating scripts, patterns and vicious circles. I've gone to mass meetings and heard partisan speakers whip up the crowds to either angry condemnations or false hopes based on simplistic solutions, and experienced the inevitable dynamic of heckling and shouting. I've witnessed a number of tense and edgy debates and confrontations on the rarer occasions when representatives of both sides have agreed to appear on the same platform. I also used to sign petitions and attend rallies, but hardly do so any more. These latter mild forms of activism

seemed "right" at the time, but in retrospect I've usually had second thoughts about their wisdom and/or usefulness.

Despite the growth of heavy layers of cynicism, I have also, on occasion, been encouraged by learning about groups proposing solutions or attempting to engage in dialogue. Similarly, I've been impressed by occasional encounters with clear-thinking, enlightened or courageous Israelis, Palestinians or Arabs from other countries. Yet, in the end, looking back over 40 years, these well-intentioned activities and individuals, whose impact on "the situation" is so frustratingly limited, have not altered my basic pessimistic stance. Too many times have I seen positive contributions or influences nullified in an instant when Palestinians or Israelis are attacked, killed or wounded, as happens all too often. Against such a repeating backdrop of bloodletting, it is little wonder that, when firebrand fear-mongers take to the public stage, they are so successful at shaping and sharpening hostile, often racist, attitudes toward "the Other."

From my first academic encounters with the history and evolution of this conflict I came to believe – out of respect for the true and (unfortunately) mutually exclusive minimum demands of both Israelis and Palestinians – that there can never be a definitive or "just" solution. The best one can hope for are, in my view, partial, tentative and fragile accommodations; these, unfortunately, are usually deemed unacceptable to protagonists who are loath to scale back their oft-declared minimum demands. At first I adopted this realistic and hard-headed stance intellectually, with cool detachment and sang-froid. As I get older, however, I'm finding it more painful each time I encounter new evidence that validates my pessimism.

As a teacher, researcher and writer, however, I have regarded it as my professional responsibility to keep such thoughts to myself. What right do I have to infect my listeners or disempower my students with my personal moods of despair? In my introductory survey courses, I see my task as being to unravel and describe the complex history of the conflict with maximum accuracy, fairness and perspective. In outlining the parties' respective sets of demands and grievances, I try to distinguish between carefully examining their contrasting narratives, on the one hand, and the determination of rights and wrongs, on the other. The latter, I suggest, are an endeavour best directed to the extracurricular domains of debating, editorializing, activism and advocacy. Keeping the two "compartments" separate is, of course, never fully achievable; but the effort to separate them for purposes of gaining a better basic understanding is, I've found, well worth it.

My doubts regarding the feasibility of a ready solution and my reluctance to advocate on behalf of one party against the other are probably the main reasons why I seldom come out of self-imposed seclusion to take a public stand or join in activities along the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian battlefield. This avoidance of active engagement is further reinforced by a third element: extreme caution regarding the public role of

academics or intellectuals, along with a realistic sense of my own human fallibility. As an Israeli-American professor aptly put it, "We read the world as best we can, and we are often wrong."

But, counteracting all this, a part of me wants to allow for the possibility, however distant, of some light at the end of the tunnel. This may be what motivates my involvement with the Montreal chapter of the Canadian Friends of "Peace Now." Its parent organization, a mildly leftist grassroots movement founded in Israel in the 1970s, supports "two states for two peoples" – the "two-state solution" that has become more mainstream among Israelis (and Palestinians) with every passing year. Without knowing for certain that it will produce an immediate and rosy solution, I do believe that it's an ethically sound position and one that offers the only possible way out of the deadlock. If there is to be any modest reduction in animosity and some accommodation to replace the current hatred and tension between Arabs and Israelis, we must see the withdrawal of Israeli troops and settlers from most of the territories captured in the June 1967 war, the ultimate goal being the creation of a secure Arab state of Palestine which would live in peace alongside a secure Jewish state of Israel.

#### **From Avoidance to Activism**

The foregoing may help to explain why I found myself struggling with a whole gamut of emotions, some of them contradictory, when I learned about the motion the VCTA was being called upon to endorse. While it is imperative that ethically-driven individuals and groups show sympathy for, and champion when possible and feasible, those who have been wronged and unjustly treated, it is equally important to recognize that protracted and complex conflicts cannot be reduced to simplistic formulae of good versus evil. To single out for condemnation and sanctions one party to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the sole culprit and only obstacle to peace is a distortion of the facts and a misreading of history – not to mention ineffective and counterproductive.

In response to the proposed FAC 40th anniversary action, my avoidance impulse gave way to a new-found spark for involvement – but in ways that will show solidarity with victims of injustice without allocating blame to any single party and dragging the Vanier community into useless polemical bickering. With regard to the Palestine/Israel dispute (as with other causes worthy of our attention and support), the VCTA can and should play a useful role by selecting forms of activism that are based on adequate consideration and study, and by choosing "battles" or causes that reflect our members' priorities.

I think, for a start, that we should be focusing more on the social, economic and educational realms, while trying to sidestep strident or sterile politics. In concrete terms, I would like to propose that we examine lending our support to two ongoing projects that I think complement each other in interesting ways:

- 1) Zatoun: selling Palestinian olive oil and related products
- 2) Givat Haviva: promoting peace education among young Palestinian Arabs and Jews living in Israel

#### **Palestinian Fair-Trade Extra Virgin Olive Oil**



In late May, I contacted Carolle Charlebois of Zatoun and invited her to visit Vanier and meet with available VCTA executive members so that, together, we could learn more about her organization. During our meeting, Janice Paquette and I were both very impressed with what Carolle had to say, and Janice has arranged to set up a workshop with her on Wednesday, September 26, to explore the ways that VCTA members might create a purchasing group for Zatoun produce. Our involvement would offer both material and moral support, and not just verbal solidarity, for Palestinian olive-growers who have to market their oil and soap products in the face of heavy obstacles caused by the Israeli occupation and harassment by militant Jewish settlers. For more details, visit the excellent Zatoun website at [www.zatoun.com](http://www.zatoun.com).

In a personal aside I have to admit that, for years, I had been "tuning out" (perhaps as untypical, or as "propaganda") evidence of the bullying inflicted upon Palestinian farmers and olive-growers by groups of Jewish settlers. Over the summer I happened to read *Dark Hope* by David Shulman, a highly-respected scholar of South India at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Shulman offers a somber and highly disturbing first-hand account of the brutal behaviour and unpunished crimes of the settlers. Reading this book confirmed for me that buying and helping to sell Zatoun olive oil is a solidarity activity worthy of support.<sup>{1}</sup>



#### **Peace Education**

As educators, we should have a special affinity for the goals espoused by institutes and organizations that devote themselves to the long and painstaking work of educating the young towards peace and reconciliation. The Givat Haviva Institute has been operating in Israel since 1963 but has recently experienced funding and organizational setbacks and the loss of some key personnel. At risk are some of the innovative social, educational and recreational programmes aimed at getting Palestinian-Arab and Jewish children to know each other better as human beings. Through carefully planned activities, animators and teachers try to develop ways for people to break away from stereotyping and demonizing each other. Their programs include empowerment seminars for Jewish and Arab women; dialogue and encounter groups; and joint Jewish-Arab recreational and arts programs for youth (soccer camps, sailing teams, photography projects). One example of their work was the successful photo exhibit, "Through Others' Eyes," that was sent abroad during 2005 to Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City and other venues.

Janice Paquette and I have invited Reuven Shultz, local peace activist and longtime director of the Montreal office of Labour Zionist Alliance of Canada, to speak to us on Wednesday October 17 to learn more about what Givat Haviva seeks to accomplish, and how best we, as educators, might lend our support. For more information, visit the website at [www.givathaviva.org](http://www.givathaviva.org), especially the links to Programs for Children & Youth and "All for Peace" Radio, and to the Givat Haviva Institute and the Jewish-Arab Center for Peace.

### In conclusion...

I believe that, through our involvement in activities such as these two, VCTA members can express their concern and solidarity vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in ways that reflect and promote the kinds of values and goals that most of our membership, I think, espouse as individuals and would want to see their union promote. Focusing on constructive and creative activities, I hope, will allow for forms of really helpful involvement that could bypass, or at least minimize, the acrimonious and harmful debates that are inevitable if we were to focus instead on our various personal loyalties and animosities towards Israelis or Palestinians, and/or our political views on the requirements for that ever-elusive just solution.

Interested members are invited to examine the websites and to attend these two scheduled workshops. Then they can decide on how far they wish to be involved, and how they wish to express their solidarity. Following these information

meetings, members can choose to endorse the proposals for collective VCTA action that I have included above, or to formulate others, at Association Council, and proceed from there to discussion and ratification at a General Assembly.

### Endnote

{1} Just published by the University of Chicago Press. I highly recommend this book for its most credible eyewitness evidence, which is interwoven with the beautifully written personal reflections of a troubled soul.

**Wed. Sept. 26**  
**Palestinian Fair Trade Oil**  
**Workshop with Carolle Charlebois**  
**Boardroom**  
**Universal Break**

**Wed. October 17**  
**Workshop with Reuven Shultz**  
**Board Room**  
**Universal Break**

**CUBA TODAY**  
**Elena Diaz Gonzalez**  
**Cuban University Teacher**  
**Sept. 19 • Universal Break • Amphitheatre**

### WELCOME TO VANIER

**Stephen Dinsmore, English Department**  
**Heather Robb, English Department**  
**Joseph O'Shea, Sociology Department**  
**Lilian Liganor, Commerce Department**  
**Christine Lavoie, Psychology Department**  
**Geeta Johal, Mathematics Department**  
**Chantal Desrosiers, Mathematics Department**  
**Rejean Forand, Chemistry Department**  
**Karl Laroche, Biology**

## Arcade Award

### Avrum Dunsky

Congratulations to David Smith, the Physics lab technician who is this year's winner of the Vanier College Foundation Arcade Award. Nadia Turbide, on behalf of the foundation, presented him with the



award in recognition of his important contribution to the Arcade itself. This is the first time the Arcade Award was presented.

The annual award was created this year thanks to the Vanier College Foundation matching the proceeds of a 2006 FAC award won by the Arcade. The Arcade Award aims to recognize innovation on the part of science and math faculty or staff in one of three categories. 1. Course and classroom related activities or materials, designed to enhance the science students' learning process. 2. Collegial activities or materials designed to enhance the interaction of science department and/or program members in an atmosphere of professional development. 3. Community activities or materials designed to bring some aspect of science to the college community. Members of the Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics departments will be eligible to apply in February for the 2008 award. Further information is available from the Faculty of Science and General Studies office.

**Avrum Dunsky** is a physics teacher and one of last year's winners of the FAC prize.



# Vanier

## AIDS Action in Africa

Sonali Srivastava



Vanier College's International Education Office is proud to announce the launch of its special project which serves to engage our youth in Canada's fight against HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

As part of this special 2-year initiative, sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), a team of students and staff will embark on a study trip to Malawi to witness first-hand how the people and country have been so drastically affected by the pandemic. After a two-week stay in a village in Central Malawi, the team will return to share their experiences by taking HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention information to students at Vanier and in Montreal high schools. The ultimate objectives of the study trip and the awareness project are two-fold: to do HIV/AIDS education with young people here, while increasing their consciousness of global affairs by using one of Canada's Millennium Development Goals as an educational tool. We hope to introduce and sensitise tomorrow's citizens to an important issue that has affected the entire world, including Canada. This knowledge and exposure will encourage our students to become more socially aware and responsible individuals. We hope that it will also encourage them to be actively involved in bringing change to their community.

This project also opens the door to many exciting possibilities within the classroom. In a symbiotic fashion, we can become a resource in the classroom, while student projects in class can be organised to help build our resource base. Teachers can direct interested students to become student leaders for the project and help identify areas of cooperation. Several events will rely upon teacher support including contributing to the presentations of Social Science Week, October 22-26, as well as a major day-long series of conferences on November 26 to mark World AIDS Day and sensitise students to the relevant issues.

We look forward to sending our team to Malawi in January 2008 and also hope to have your support for our upcoming fundraising activities. To help raise funds for the study trip, we will be selling raffle tickets during our HIV/AIDS Education Week (October 22-26). We also plan on getting the Vanier community together for our Wine & Cheese event and a Silent Auction on November 1st where you will have the chance to bid on many coveted items!

Furthermore, within our recently developed international

education website: [www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/international-education](http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/international-education), we have a special section devoted to this project. Please check our website regularly for relevant updates and important dates and times to remember. This site includes additional information on the planned events and also has a page dedicated to teachers suggesting how they can 'Take Action' by incorporating this global issue within their class. There is also a comprehensive list on relevant library resources available to students and teachers. Finally, make sure you, and your students, see the eye-catching bulletin boards in the A wing (2nd floor) and the display case in front of the library that have been created to publicise this initiative!

We look forward to working with Vanier staff, faculty and students on all these events and hope that you will help make this project a great success.

**Sonali Srivastava** coordinates the Vanier CIDA project on Aids in Africa.



**Happy Hour • October 25 • In support of this project**

# How Some Things Work:

## CI Workloads vs. PES Allocations

Fred Andrews

### Introduction

In a previous article we focused on the meaning of PES allocation (see “How Some Things Work...” in the Feb 2007 Newsletter). This current piece discusses “Individual Workload or CI” and its relationship with PES allocation.

CI stands for “Charge Individuelle” in French. In English it means Individual Workload for teachers. There is a formula in our Collective Agreement, which sets out the methods for calculating the CI for teachers. Based on the CI, each teacher is accorded a teaching contract. The total of teaching contracts for all members of a discipline represents the total workload for each discipline.

Terminology alert: Three terms keep cropping up and are often used interchangeably.

**Discipline** is a three-digit code and a name identifying and area of knowledge. (Some examples are 101 for Biology, 109 for Physical Education, 201 for Mathematics, 320 for Sociology, 322 for Early Childhood Education, 603 for English, etc.) Every course being taught at Vanier has one of the recognized codes as a prefix.

**Department** is a grouping of teachers and/or disciplines. Each department has a coordinator who performs certain administrative duties as set out in the Collective Agreement. Most frequently discipline and department coincide, but not necessarily. Most teachers are assigned to a particular discipline. However, some teachers teach in more than one discipline, and hence in more than one department.

**Program** is a curricular grouping of a set of specific courses from several disciplines plus general studies (English, French, Physical Education and Complementary) to provide a coherent body of knowledge (we should say competencies). Some examples of programs are Science (200.B0), Social Science (300.A0), Communications (500.A1), Early Childhood Education (322.A0), Computer Science (420.A0), etc.

Now we are ready to delve into CI and its relationship to PES allocations.

### Recap of PES and PES Allocations

While we will not reexamine the PES allocation details, which were discussed in the previous article cited above, it is important to understand the essentials of PES allocations.

PES (“Périodes Étudiants par Semaine”) for each course, is calculated by multiplying the number of “validated” students by the number of contact hours per week for the course. Contact hours per week is the sum of the theory, lab and stage for each course. The PES for all “program specific” courses for each program is totaled. This total is then incorporated into

another formula involving two factors to calculate PES allocation granted by the Ministry to the college for each course. The college, however, determines the actual teaching allocation to be granted to each program and hence to each discipline. This allocation is not necessarily the same as that calculated by the Ministry since the College has the prerogative of making its own internal distribution of teaching allocations.

### Note that:

- All PES allocations and official teacher workloads are always based on “validated” enrolments in all courses.
- “Validated” enrolments are those determined by the college’s procedure for confirmation of attendance which ends about 5 weeks into each semester.

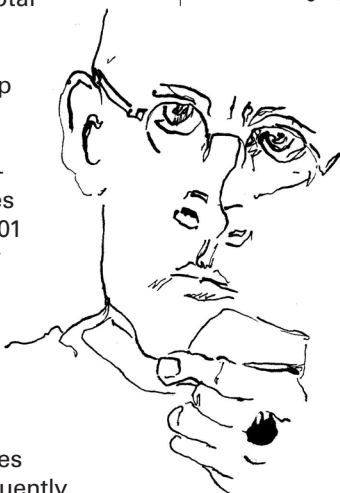
During each winter semester (March-April) the College runs calculations to project enrolments, PES, and teaching allocation based on the PES allocation values for the next academic year. Enrolment estimates are used for all courses based on information generated by the college and from information provided by the departmental coordinators. **It is absolutely crucial that coordinators examine these enrolment estimates very carefully.** These are the numbers that determine the teaching allocation for the next year. Enrolment estimates must aim at a projection of validated (or confirmed) enrolments, not just starting enrolments for each semester. Faculty Deans generally inspect these various enrolment estimates as well. The process of estimating future enrolments is definitely not an exact science.

By April 15 of each year the college must deposit its schedule of teaching allocations by discipline for the next academic year with the teachers union (VCTA).

During the fall semester (October-November) the college re-examines the PES allocations to get a more accurate estimate of the PES projections for the whole year. At that time the validated fall enrolments are available and thus a more accurate estimate of the winter enrolments should also be possible (as compared with the previous March-April estimates). Departmental coordinators should re-examine these enrolment estimates carefully.

### CI Workloads: An Expenditure of Allocation

Each department determines the courses and number of sections needed to deliver the courses for their disciplines for the fall and winter semesters. Later the coordinator assigns choices of courses to teachers (according to whatever process the department uses) to cover all sections of courses that must be delivered for the fall and winter semesters. This generates individual teacher workloads and discipline workloads. It is useful to think of the PES allocations for a discipline as



a “budget” and to think of the combined teacher workloads for a discipline as an “expenditure”. The coordinator must make the expenditure match the budget yet there is no exact mechanism to make this happen.

While individual disciplines might not exactly balance their total teaching contracts with their PES-allocations for each year, it is imperative that the college as a whole does balance the overall allocations and teaching contracts each year. Otherwise, a deficit or a surplus carries over to the next year and must be redressed.

Furthermore, if a department runs a deficit wherein its assignment of workloads to teachers exceeds the PES-allocation which its courses generate, that deficit must be made up by other departments in the college. This is a “zero-sum situation” (i.e. what someone gains someone else must lose). Another view is that the overall pie is a fixed size each year. If some disciplines get bigger pieces than their calculated shares, then others must get smaller pieces than their shares.

There are two separate yet related aspects regarding the calculation and assignment of individual workloads. The first one relates to the workload of each individual teacher. The second one relates to the sum of individual workloads, which calculates workloads by discipline and by program.

#### **Workload of Each Individual Teacher**

There are regulations and limits (set out in our Collective Agreement) that must be adhered to:

- The workload for each teacher is calculated according to the formula in our collective agreement in Appendix I-1. The details of this calculation will not be discussed here, but only some guidelines.
- Each tenured full time teacher should have a CI between 80 and 88 for the year, although slightly less than 80 (say 78) may be acceptable in certain departmental situations. (Various leaves and retirement plans can modify this. Human Resources will serve as a guide in this regard.)
- For purposes of seniority, workload is usually expressed in units of FTE (standing for Full-Time Equivalent). Each tenured teacher deemed to be teaching a full load for one year accrues 1 FTE of seniority whether or not his/her CI is below or above or exactly equal to 80.
- Seniority for teachers is listed by discipline. A few teachers hold seniority in more than one discipline.
- The maximum seniority anyone can gain per academic year is 1.000 regardless of how much teaching and/or coordination is done.
- For full time tenured teachers the teaching contract is 1.000 FTE unless the teacher is on one of the reduced workload plans.
- The absolute maximum CI per teacher for any one semester is 55 (unless the CRT is consulted). This permits a substantial imbalance across the two semesters for that teacher. A more-or-less even split between the two semesters (about 40 42 CI is more desirable), but may not be feasible.
- A teacher may be assigned a CI over 88 for the year, but she/he must agree beforehand and will be paid a compensatory amount, which is usually quite small. Human Resources will calculate this at the end of each academic year.
- For non-tenured teachers having an annual contract in August, the FTE fraction is calculated as their CI divided by 80. If that figure is 1.000 or greater for the year then the teaching contract is for 1.000 FTE. Typically, this would only occur for someone having a full year replacement contract to replace

someone on a full year leave of absence. It can also occur if a teacher has a .5 in the autumn and a .5 in the spring or if the workload adds up to 1.000 (a C.I. over 80) after validation in February. In all of these cases, the teacher gets a full-time contract.

- For non-tenured and part-time teachers it is important that their teaching load at the end of the year, based on validated student enrolments, is 80 or more if possible. If it is less than 80, then their seniority and pay are reduced to the fraction calculated by CI/80. For example a CI of 78 produces an FTE fraction of 0.975. This is not a good thing for the teacher since it means that they will lose the hiring priority that a full-time teacher has.
- However, if non-tenured teachers are on semester by semester contracts, as is usually the case, then the situation is more complicated. Depending on the semester by semester distribution of workload, such teachers could have a CI total just below 80 (79 for example) and yet be credited with as little as 75 CI (i.e. 0.9375 FTE) for the year with regard to salary and seniority. The VCTA and the College are discussing this unusual circumstance.
- It is important not to split any full-time teaching load because this could deny the right of a full-time teaching load to a teacher with greater seniority. This determination might be problematic so advice of the VCTA and/or Human Resources may be necessary.
- Also, please see the recent “VCTA News Bulletin #9” for a discussion about substitution and its importance in reaching full time status for non-tenured teachers.
- Teachers, coordinators and the VCTA must be vigilant since there are complexities (not all covered in this article) in our Collective Agreement and the way it is interpreted.

#### **Workloads for Disciplines**

The workload attributed to a discipline is the sum of all individual teaching contracts attributed to that discipline. In some cases individual teachers are shared across disciplines. The individual workloads for such teachers must include all courses taught by that teacher, but each discipline must be attributed its pro-rated share of that teacher’s teaching contract.

Departmental (discipline) coordinators assign courses to all individual teachers while making sure that all required courses are assigned to someone. Also, they must fit the required courses into the available teaching allocations as granted by the college. This is often not a straightforward process due to all of the constraints that exist.

Coordinators must make sure to respect the individual workload requirements of all teachers with respect to seniority, various leaves of absence, various reduced workload plans, etc. They must fit course assignments and total teaching contracts into the teaching allocations granted by the college based on projections for validated enrollments in all courses for each discipline.

In general the Ministry has established parameters for PES allocations such that they are sufficient to cover all courses for all programs that have stable “healthy” enrolments. The notion of “healthy” enrolments by program is dependent on the nature of the program and on the allocation parameters assigned by the Ministry. It is not an exact value, but if workloads are assigned in an efficient way as outlined in the next section then the annual PES allocations should generally cover the annual teaching contracts.

As noted previously, the college assigns a “teaching allocation” to each discipline based on, but not necessarily constrained by the calculated PES allocations using the Ministry’s formula. The department coordinators must fit teaching contract assignments within the college’s assigned teaching allocation. However, enrolments in a program can become so small that the PES allocation generated is too small to support the courses that must be offered. The college then must boost the teaching allocation for the program and attempt to improve enrolments or close the program.

### Inefficient Assignment of CI Workloads

CI-Workloads can be assigned “inefficiently” so that it is not possible to cover all required courses within the teaching allocation that has been granted by the college. Here listed are some (not recommended) ways to assign individual workloads inefficiently so as to generate an apparent need for more teaching allocation than is necessary. The notes also indicate a proper way to distribute the teaching workloads. Please note that some course assignments that could look “inefficient” may be necessary because of curriculum balance, service courses, etc.

1. Open too many sections to cover the expected enrolments in a course.

This will force the average enrolment per section to drop and more teaching contracts will be needed to cover the workload. The efficient way is to establish a workable maximum class (and lab) size for each course and then determine the actual number of sections needed to deliver the course to all expected (validated) students.

2. Open one section per lab group for a course

This will make too many small sections for a course. It is more efficient to have a larger lecture section and two (or three) smaller lab groups depending upon the size of the lab facility.

3. Assign more teachers than necessary to teach multiple sections of a given course.

This will create extra preparation credits for more teachers and will tend to increase discipline teaching contracts. From an allocation point of view it is more efficient to assign two or three sections of a given course to a given teacher before moving on to another teacher to also assign more than one section of a multi-section course. A teacher having two sections of the same course will receive a credit for preparing the course only once. In some instances, however, it may not be desirable, pedagogically, to double up course sections per teacher.

4. Assign too many preparations per teacher.

The CI for an individual teacher will rise significantly if the teacher has 3 or 4 distinct courses. It is preferable that a teacher be given 1 or 2 distinct courses rather than 3 or 4. This becomes a serious problem if many teachers are assigned 3 or more distinct courses unnecessarily.

5. Split individual sections of a course among more than one teacher (“team teaching”).

This exaggerates the number of different preparations per teacher, especially if it is done frequently. There must be a compelling reason to split courses in this fashion.

6. Permit full-time tenured teachers to have a CI substantially below 80 (in the vicinity of 70)

This will necessitate an increase in hiring of about 10% for each of these situations to cover the workload for the discipline. Also, it means that some full-time tenured teachers have a CI of 70 while others in the college have a CI of 87. This is a large discrepancy when all full-time teachers should have comparable workloads.

The Ministry’s PES-Allocation formula is designed with the expectation of a reasonably efficient assignment of CI-Workloads. As mentioned earlier any extra allocation taken by one discipline must be paid for by other disciplines. In effect extra jobs in one discipline are paid for by reducing jobs in other disciplines. There is no magic allocation pool for us to dip into. Each of the inefficiencies described above exists in the college and someone else is paying for it.

The CI-Workload assignment process must not be used inefficiently so as to fallaciously generate the need for extra allocation beyond what the College has granted to a given discipline. Only projected enrolments in each course can be questioned with respect to correctness. An exception exists for programs whose enrolments are too small to PES allocations to cover the workloads.

### Summing up

Here is a short list of some things that we have considered:

- During March-April period, enrolment projections for all courses for the next academic year are generated by the college and inspected for validity by departmental coordinators (and generally by the Faculty Deans as well)
- This process generates the first projections of PES and PES allocations.
- The college distributes its list of teaching allocations (based on the calculated PES allocations) after considering feedback from departmental coordinators.
- By April 15 of each year the college deposits its proposed schedule of teaching allocations by discipline with the VCTA.
- The departmental coordinators set out efficient teaching assignments for departmental members according to a set of rules, procedures and priorities as outlined above.
- Each teacher has a calculated CI and teaching contract based on the CI formula set out in the Collective Agreement in Appendix I-1.
- The summed individual teaching contracts based on CI calculations from this process must fit into the granted teaching allocations for each discipline.

Fred Andrews teaches in Computer Science.

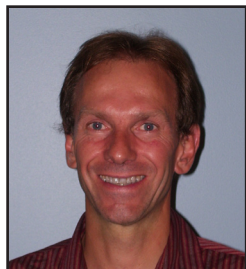
## N Building Renovations

### Stephen Block

With all the changes in the N Building, some teachers may find themselves inconvenienced or in the dark concerning available services. We are aware of the new long line-ups at the photocopiers but undoubtedly there will be other issues arising. There is no Dean’s office in the New Building for the present time and support staff numbers are greatly depleted. Only LITC in N215 has an office where teachers can bring concerns they normally would have addressed to a Dean’s office or other support staffers. Please bring any related issues to the union’s attention as well as to the administration so that the union may be in the position to inquire at the very least and then perhaps act on your suggestions or concerns.

# Are We Preparing our Students for University?

Philippe Brunet



I must admit that I am worried. I hear that students coming to the colleges are increasingly weak and that there is little to do to improve their fate, beyond what is already being done. I understand from several conversations that many of my colleagues have developed various imaginative approaches to handle this situation. Some say that teachers are not responsible for the shortcomings of

the students nor for the lack of financial support to improve their lot and thus, our responsibility is limited to helping them make at least some progress while they are at Vanier. If the diploma that we deliver means less than it used to, again this is not our fault. The same probably occurs at the university level (inflating marks in certain university departments is seen as a useful tool to keep money.. err... students coming in). But are we preparing our students adequately for the future?

Because we have weaker students, some teachers have decreased either their course content or the difficulty of their assessments (or both) to a level that most students feel comfortable with. As a result, one of the first things to go in my department was the writing of full lab reports. Grading these reports is often the task that science teachers hate the most since it is repetitive, rarely imaginative, tedious and time-consuming as the teacher adds comments and re-edits sentences properly to provide examples to the students. One rationale behind this sad change is that weaker students must concentrate on the basics of the subject and so it is useless to ask a student to write a scientific report if it means that they will lack the time for doing assigned problems or preparing for tests. Therefore, in many of our courses students are only asked to fill out data sheets included in the lab manual. Sadly, this means that many of our science students will get to university without knowing how to communicate in a scientific manner. They will be ignorant of how to explain a theoretical concept in a concise manner, how to write fully supported statements and won't know that conclusions must be justified by experimental results. An alarming proportion of my second-year students have never had to write a lab report before. At best, some have written abstracts that were "corrected" with a check mark to show that the work was acceptable. I have rarely seen a graded report with enough comments to assist in a student's future efforts.

Another approach lies in giving students handouts that present a limited number of typical problems. These problems will be asked, with minimal changes, in the upcoming test. In such instances, when I see how little work some students are asked to do, I have the impression that we have come to the "fast-food" period of education. Also absent are the more theoretical questions as these are believed to be beyond the capabilities of these poorly prepared students. In this view, a typical answer is a number, and often the teacher accepts some margin around the correct value and also tolerates missing signs, units and precision. Isn't it generally accepted that the process is as important as the

final result? This reminds me of an event that occurred several years ago with a NASA Mars probe. The billion-dollar device crashed on the red planet because some scientists confused miles and kilometres. Who cares about the final result, outside of this innocent unit problem, all the calculations were done perfectly well!!

Once, I heard a conversation in which a concerned teacher explained how he tried to satisfy the stronger students without penalizing the others. The clever solution was to minimize the content of his lectures to a level that was "satisfactory" to "most" students. In parallel, he prepared "optional" handouts for the ones that were interested in learning extra topics. This is certainly a more positive approach than accepting the sad alternative. But I can't keep myself from asking how all of this is finally assessed, and how many students really took advantage of this if the smallest common denominator is the standard rule. This business is often quite empirical, and clever is the teacher who finds the ideal approach.

Yet another teacher explained that all students can live an interesting challenge at Vanier. I understood this to mean a challenge at the level of each individual student. He first stated that, according to an informal consensus, science course class averages at Vanier should be around 70% (This is a guideline as we are not responsible for the strengths or weaknesses of specific groups). The idea here was to set the difficulty level of the first 60% of a test so that almost all students can succeed. The remaining 40% would consist of questions of increasing difficulty with the last 10% being hard enough to give the better students the chance to shine. In this way, the success rate remains high (most students will succeed the easy questions), the R-score of the good students is saved, and all students have a positive experience. I question how we expect our students to perform at the university level with such an approach? With the overall level of preparedness of incoming CEGEP students steadily decreasing, and the respectable universities maintaining their standards, how will these students perform after leaving the college? With this approach, can we say that our diploma is worth as much as it used to be? One last method, which in my opinion is extremely unfair, consists of cancelling questions that have been failed by a majority of students. Students who succeeded in correctly answering these questions are simply not taken into account.

I heard through the grapevine that, a few years ago, Mc Gill University asked our department to provide the curriculum of our Organic Chemistry I course. I assume that they were unsure if we were teaching the course as effectively as it is taught at the university. (Is there a problem with the success rate of our students at Mc Gill?). I am not sure what to conclude about this, but they were apparently satisfied with the response we sent them (I believe it was the course objective list).

The lowest common denominator being the rule, it is difficult for a teacher to stand out from the general trend. If a teacher is more demanding than the students are used to, or if they expect their students to study weekly while their peers in other groups only work a few hours the week of a test,

the student's level of dissatisfaction rises rapidly. Also, if a teacher's average is not around the expected 70%, colleagues will sometimes suggest that they are too demanding or that they teach at too high a level (university level?). Overall, it seems to me that a teacher who lowers their expectations has a much easier life.

The above represents my view of the current situation. I must admit that it represents a very narrow view (limited to my experience) and that I might be completely off track. I didn't do any extensive research on the subject; I have simply expressed a feeling that is growing inside of me. What I see and hear around me is making me increasingly uncomfortable with teaching. Are we producing science students who will be prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow in order to maintain our lifestyle?

I hear that our economy will have to be based on our capacity to innovate. Will our students be adequately prepared for these difficult challenges? When most of my students tell me that they never had to open a book in high school and still had very good grades, I understand that either they are geniuses

or they didn't learn much. I also understand that they did not develop good study habits. Many of these students firmly believe that a test can be prepared for the evening before, and what worries me even more is that this method works in many of their courses. Are these the years of "fast food" education? We have some very good students and I sometimes feel that we could do so much more for them if classes were not aimed at the level of our weakest students.

I don't have many solutions to propose yet, but in my view the first thing to do would be to determine in a quantitative manner what our students know or what they have achieved when they graduate from Vanier. If a non-biased study shows that things are not as bad as I have made them to be, I will be reassured and I will apologize for being so demanding of my students. But if the study demonstrates my beliefs to be accurate, then we will have to sit down and find a way to make things better.

**Philippe Brunet** teaches Chemistry at Vanier. He thanks Mauro Dizenzo for revision and a much more fluid English version of this article.

#### CONGRATULATIONS ON GETTING TENURE:

Edward Awad, Biology Department  
Nick Deligiannis, Chemistry Department  
Carl Mercadante, Chemistry Department  
Jicai Pan, Physics Department  
Grace Edeh, Early Childhood Education Department  
Eric Lamoureux, History Department  
Ljiljana Petrovic, Humanities/Philosophy Departments  
Lisa Jorgensen, Humanities Department  
Nancy Leclerc, Anthropology Department  
Nicki Debiparshad, Economics Department  
Maria Da Palma, Economics Department  
Majid Shahidi, Business Administration/Commerce & DDMT Departments  
Martin Siberok, CAMT Department  
Aurora Flewwelling-Skup, English Department  
Patra Reiser, English Department  
Henry Tambor, English Department  
Naira Harutyunyan, Mathematics Department  
Anna Krasowski, Mathematics Department  
Tian Xiang Shen, Mathematics Department

\*We expect that there will be a few more teachers who will get tenure with last minute changes. In the past few years we have noticed that there have been a number of cases where teachers were overlooked for getting a "postes" or getting tenure. If you have any questions about your own situation, please contact the VCTA executive.

#### WARMEST WISHES TO OUR TEACHERS WHO RETIRED DURING 2006/2007. WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT HAPPY HOURS!

Shernaz Choksi  
Patricia Conway  
David Daniel  
Carolyn Dellah  
Klaus Dichmann  
Vasagamoorathi Krishnasamy  
Barbara Marcus  
James Najarian  
David Oxley  
Ishwar Prashad  
Sanjukta Sharma  
Ari Snyder  
Cemal Yalinpala

#### **FAC VP POSITION OPEN**

There is a vacant executive position at FAC. If you are interested in applying, you will find the information posted in the VCTA office.

# The Social Science Festival: Oct. 22-26

## Nancy Leclerc

The theme of this year's festival is "**Social Science in Action**" and we hope to raise awareness in the community on the many ways the Social Sciences can be applied to real world issues and concerns. From the sharing of research techniques and the results of actual research projects, to the exploration of issues of immediate concern, to illustrations of what people trained in social science can accomplish, this year's line-up will effectively show how we can put social science in action!

Confirmed guest speakers during the SSF 2007 include Gwynne Dyer, who will address "The Geo-Politics of Climate Change"; David Shantz of the Archambault and Leclerc institutions who will discuss the living conditions of prison inmates, and Professors Bill Reimer and Fran Shaver of Concordia University who will discuss their respective research on rural economies and sex trade workers in Montreal as well as student participation in their research projects. Shelley Kath, one of the climate change messengers personally trained by Al Gore, presents the slide show that forms the subject of the documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Finally, as has been a tradition for the past two social science festivals, Vanier's own Native Awareness group will be hosting a Native speaker's panel to address issues of concern in Native communities today.

In addition to hosting guests, the Social Science Festival is an opportunity to showcase in-house talent. Vanier speakers include:

**Ricardo Duenez**, Geography, who will help participants learn how to assess their individual footprints on the environment;

**Karen White**, Psychology who will inform us on the nature of phobias;

**Mathieu Sossoyan**, Anthropology who will discuss the interesting social phenomenon of soccer hooliganism;

**Alena Perout**, Geography, who will explain the nature of sustainable development;

**Sevak Manjikian**, Religious Studies and Humanities who will explore the history of marriage and divorce in Islam

**Sonali Srivastava**, Co-ordinator of the Vanier Aids in Africa Project, who will discuss her work in HIV/AIDS prevention among sex workers in Bangladesh

Last but certainly not least in the list of internal speakers will be a small group of students gathered by **Doug Miller** of the Learning Centre who will address issues of racism and ethnicity.

What is a festival without movies?!?! **Ronit Avni** will be joining us during this year's festival to screen and discuss her film "Encounter Point" ([www.encounterpoint.com](http://www.encounterpoint.com)), which explores efforts to reach "a nonviolent end to the [Israeli-Palestinian] conflict." We will also screen the NFB film "In the name of the mother and the son," which explores the lives of

two young Haitian men living in Montreal's St-Michel district. We hope to have filmmaker **Maryse Lagagneur** present for a post-film discussion.

Once again, **Peter Gantous** of Psychology will emcee the annual Social Science quiz show where students get to show off their social science savvy while being entertained by Prof. Gantous's antics!

Another Social Science Festival tradition is the Memorial Lecture, held in honour of the late **Ron Charbonneau**. This year, we have the honour of hosting **James Najarian**, recent retiree from teaching History and Humanities, who will address uses of media images in Nazi Germany.

As always, there will be student displays located throughout the college during the entire week of the festival. Teachers who are interested in having their classes create such a display, or who have an idea for another student-centered activity should contact **Nancy Leclerc** at [leclerca@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:leclerca@vaniercollege.qc.ca)



## Poetry Slam Dedicated to the memory of Gloria Di Murro

On October 10, 2007 during Universal Break (12:15 PM) selected faculty members will read their work in 'the theatre space' Room B-323. The \$5.00 donation will go towards a special scholarship fund set up by the Di Murro family for gifted Communication students. Bring your lunch. Coffee will be served.

# Capdhhe 2007

Lisa Jorgensen

In April I attended the annual conference for the **Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education (CAPDHHE)**. The CAPDHHE conference provides people working in human rights in university and college settings the opportunity to exchange information, ideas, innovations, and practical tips for dealing with cases of discrimination and harassment. Vanier, recognized for its strong human rights policies, was the only CEGEP represented at the conference.

This year's conference was titled "**Rhetoric, Reality, and the Places in Between: Exploring the Complex Intersections of Human Rights in Higher Education and the Workplace**". I have chosen to write about some of what I found to be the most interesting. You can also check out the program at [www.capdhhe.org](http://www.capdhhe.org) and contact me if you would like more information.

## **Changes in Human Rights Case Law**

There have been major changes in the case law relating to intersectionality in human rights cases and for the first time the intersectionality of harassment and discrimination is being recognized by the courts. For example, judges looking at harassment based on gender will consider how other factors including age, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, economic circumstance, sexual orientation, and/or disability compound the effects of harassment.

I have information about the new case law if anyone is interested in the details on the innovative decisions of the BC Human Rights Tribunal.

## **The Harper Government and Human Rights**

**Shelagh Day**, the publisher of the Canadian Human Rights Reporter spoke about the effect on women of the Harper government's shifting public programmes into the private sector. There is a tight connection between women and social programs as women are still the primary caregivers of children, the elderly, and the disabled. Social programs enable women to be relieved of the burden of care while creating paid caregiver positions. Losing these programs not only erodes women's capacity to move forward but also puts the burden of care back on women. Day argued that strong social services are the backbone of an egalitarian society and that with the move toward privatization we are moving further and further away from this goal. She reminded us that it is important not to forget what we have lost. Day also took the government to task for removing the court challenges program, which she pointed out is an ideological decision rather than a financial one as the programme only cost 2.5 million dollars a year. The groups most impacted by this decision, including gay marriage advocates and women's rights advocates, are the groups most critical of the conservative government. This move is another step backward for human rights.

## **Lee Maracle on First Nations Students**

Lee Maracle, an award-winning poet, novelist, and storyteller gave the conference's keynote address, in which she encour-

aged us all to think about the ways that universities and colleges must change in order to welcome and be meaningful to First Nations students. Currently, universities and colleges in Canada are alienating environments for native students, resulting in high dropout rates. Maracle spoke of a need to reconceptualize the learning and teaching setting to reflect native ideas of co-operation and to recognize the importance of the oral tradition. Without fundamental rather than surface changes, native students will continue to be left out of higher education and other students will continue to be trapped in a hierarchical and corporate educational environment. Her speech was certainly thought-provoking and her criticisms must be taken to heart, especially as Vanier wants to reach out to native communities.

## **Electronic Harassment**

The session on electronic harassment was so full that conference-goers stood in the hallway hoping to get some advice on how to deal with people using tools such as facebook, myspace, and blogs to harass students, teachers and co-workers. Harassment officers are inundated with complaints of electronic harassment. Students now use the internet to discuss their teachers and as you can imagine, it isn't always kind. Students also discuss other students and post potentially embarrassing photos on their facebook or myspace pages. Films from cell phones are also being posted on sites like YouTube (you might recall the 'Vanier Catfight' incident). Another problem is that students are generally free about the information that they provide about their own lives on such sites. This has led to stalking and harassment. Though the session was packed, there was not a huge amount of information about potential solutions to this growing problem. Dealing with online harassment at Vanier requires coordinating with many areas of the college including the human rights office, security, and L.I.T.C. Surely there will be more workshops focusing on this important issue at future conferences.

## **The Open Door Network**

At the conference there were many discussions about Positive Space Campaigns, known at Vanier as the Open Door Network. The Open Door Network is a project with the mandate to help create a campus that is free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and sexual identity. The ODN will be running workshops in the fall to promote awareness about these issues. We are aiming for more visibility in the college this year, so the more faculty who attend the workshops and earn the student-designed ODN sticker for their door the better. You can contact the Open Door Network at [odn@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:odn@vaniercollege.qc.ca) if you would like more information about this initiative.

**The CAPDHHE conference** is an excellent venue for discussing the wide range of human rights issues that come up on university and college campuses. We must stay on top of these developments if Vanier wants to continue to be a leader in creating an educational environment that ensures that everyone's human rights are respected.

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