

# NEWSLETTER

Vol 25 N°4  
FEB. 2008

## 'WELCOME BACK' BUT NO HAPPY HOUR FEBRUARY 2008

On Jan. 31, the first meeting of the Human Resources Subcommittee of the Strategic Plan Committee was held. One of the items discussed was how to create a positive working environment at Vanier. One suggestion was to have more events like "Happy Hours" so that we can get together informally. The VCTA General Assembly has supported the idea of Happy Hour and this is why the VCTA has organized these events in the past. Unfortunately, this semester, a problem has developed. The College Administration is refusing to allow us to have either Jake's Mall or the D cafeteria at 3:30 to set up for the Happy Hours to start at 4:30 because these are student spaces. They have suggested that we use the Staff Cafeteria. However, the Staff Cafeteria is too small for a Happy Hour and we think that to start the set up at 4:30 would have Happy Hours starting at 5:30, which is too late. Therefore, we haven't planned one yet for this term.



# Should we change the Professional Development Fund regulations for attending a conference?

Evangeline Caldwell

During the last union meeting in mid-December we increased from two to three the number of years that Professional Development (P.D.) funds may be combined when the expense is a single conference. As the allocated P.D. fund is \$650.00 per person per year this becomes \$1,950 per conference. Currently, the regulations stipulate that: .... In the case of conferences any teacher who hasn't used any P.D. funds in a given year may in the following year combine the three years P.D. funds to attend a conference.

As the regulation currently stands, if a faculty member spends \$75.00 on a fitness activity, Performa course, or any other event, that member could no longer combine the remaining sum for that year (\$575.00) with two other years to attend a conference. A few of us at the union meeting suggested a change in the regulations to remove the <no money spent> requirement. Proposed language for the regulation could be as simple as ...In the case of conferences any teacher may combine three years of P.D. funds to attend a conference.

In good union tradition we then continued our discussion of P.D. funds. It quickly became apparent that we needed to enlarge the discussion to all faculty members especially since we have so many new colleagues who will hopefully offer input and suggestions as to how to make P.D. funds work better for all of us. What think you? Many other possibilities may be explored. Let's talk about it at the next union meeting. The food is good and there is money available for babysitters. Just call the union office: 7053.

*Evangeline Caldwell is a Psychology teacher at Vanier.*

## Deadline for Submissions to the next issue is February 21, 2008

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

### In this issue:

What is a department meeting?.....	3
Changes to the Professional Development Policy.....	4
Faculty Professional Development.....	5
Joining Association Council .....	6
Vanier: AIDS Action in Africa .....	7
Black History Month .....	8

The NEWSLETTER is published by the Vanier College Teachers Association, 821 Ste-Croix Ave., St-Laurent, QC H4L 3X9.

**Janice Paquette** is the Editor.

Printing is by Vanier College Graphics and Printing.



Technical assistance by **Jason Leonard**

## TO CALL VCTA EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Ganesh: 7413

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 W08:

Mon. Eric Durling  
 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.  
 Tues. Ganesh Harilal  
 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.  
 Wed. Janice Paquette  
 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.  
 Thurs. Stephen Block  
 9:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.  
 Friday Stephen, Eric or Ganesh  
 10:00 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)

**Black History  
 Month  
 Celebrate it!**

# What is a department meeting?

A department meeting is like a General Assembly of the department where all of the rules and policies of the department are made. According to clause 4-1:07 of the Decreed Agreement (p. 22), the department is supposed to (among other tasks) provide assistance to new teachers, recommend any special admission criteria for students, analyze the human and material needs and resources of the department, appoint teachers to various committees, etc. In fact, the department meeting has a lot of decision-making power that can influence many areas of college life, including pedagogical matters. It is supposed to “define the objectives, apply the teaching methods and establish the evaluation techniques specific to each course for which it is responsible. (p. 23)

The department decides how many department meetings to have each semester or each year and it is in these meetings that the department, as a collective, makes decisions that affect all of its members. According to Clause 8-4:01, a teacher’s workload includes “participation in departmental meetings and activities required for running the department.” Obviously, most of us have to miss a meeting once in awhile, but part of a teacher’s contractual responsibility is to attend department meetings. If you have to be absent, it is usually enough to call the department coordinator to say that you cannot attend a

meeting, without necessarily giving detailed reasons for the absence. (no, your mother does NOT have to write a note). In any case, any policy that applies must be equally applied to all members of the department.

And it is in the department meeting that all of the rules and regulations are decided by the department members. Department members have a say over their work that does not exist in other institutions of higher learning such as universities. This is not an accident but a deliberate choice made by teachers when the CEGEPs started in Quebec. Teachers wanted to get away from the old hierarchical, top-down policies to create institutions where teachers had the right to operate in a more democratic manner than was (and is) current in the universities. Hence, the department, rather than the coordinator, is supposed to have the power to decide how things should work in the department and it is in the department meeting that these decisions are made. It is also in the department meeting that teachers get information about what is happening at various bodies like Academic Council and where teachers, through their departments, can have an influence on what happens at Vanier College. For all of these reasons, the department meetings should be of concern to all teachers.

## New Federal Money in the CEGEP’s: Not for teaching

Eric Durling



Last year, the federal government announced that it would invest 180 million dollars in education in Quebec. The Ministry of Education and the Federation of CEGEPs have announced their priorities for the 30-35% of this amount that will be allotted to the college network.

The first of these priorities is the promotion and encouragement of economic development of Quebec’s regions by addressing an imminent shortage of skilled labour. This will be done through investment in Technical and Career programs and in Continuing Education. More opportunities will also be offered to immigrants (regardless of their language) to allow them to have their competencies recognised, complete their training and give them individual supervision.

Investment will also be directed toward services for handicapped students and those with mental health problems to contribute to their integration and success. Success rates for

the general student population will also be targeted in the allocation of federal resources. These funds will be directed toward psychological and orientation services to better counsel students, to ensure that the college is a more stimulating learning environment and that the students make a better career choice. Another of the Ministry and the Federation of CEGEP’s priorities is applied research related to technological support for small and medium-sized businesses as well as that which concerns technology transfers for regional branches of colleges.

Although all of these areas are important, and deserving of investment, it should be noted that teaching is once again very low, if not imperceptible, among the priorities of our employers. As was the case in the last round of negotiations, when all three federations of college teachers made investment in type-one teaching activities (the things that all teachers do), their number-one priority, the government refuses to recognise the importance of teaching in relation to student success.

**Eric Durling** is an English teacher at Vanier who is presently on the VCTA Executive/External. He is our representative at FAC, our federation.

### Fair Trade Chocolate for Valentine’s Day: Still Available

At [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org), (go to global economy then fair trade), you can read about the horrific conditions of the children who work in the chocolate trade. This Valentine’s Day you can buy Fair Trade chocolate. Here is a list of some stores in Montreal that sell fair trade chocolate. If you know of other places, let us know.

Eco-Quartier on de l’Eglise street near Vanier, La Maison Verte Co-op in NDG, Dix Milles Village Store (branches in NDG, Pointe Claire and on St. Denis St.), Frigo vert (near Concordia)

# Changes to the Professional Development Policy

At the General Assembly on Dec. 12, there were two important changes to the Professional Development Policy at Vanier. These changes were suggested since we have a healthy surplus in our PD fund. The first change allows AEC teachers to use PD money pro rata to their workload on a trial basis for the next two semesters. The AEC teachers teach in attestation rather than DEC courses and, although they pay union dues and can join the union, they are not counted in the total full-time teaching equivalents for PD purposes.

The second change allows teachers to use three years of PD money (3X\$650) on one major conference. At the Assembly, there was discussion about the way that the PD rules were applied, since the rules say that you can only combine years if a teacher hasn't used ANY PD funds on anything else. Some members wondered if this rule could be changed to allow teachers to use small amounts of money on things like Tai Chi or other fitness activities and then spend the rest of the amount on the major conference. Others wondered if the combination of three year's PD could be done for purposes other than conferences.

Association Council has had one discussion on this matter and will continue the discussion at future meetings. Some Council members supported the idea of allowing members to combine 3 years and spend the money on any PD event and not just conferences. It was pointed out that the rule about combining funds was meant to provide some funding for a special project, like an expensive conference, while attempting to ensure that there wasn't a "rush" on the funds, which would lead to a potential deficit and cutting the amount available to everyone.

Others thought that Employee Fitness should not be funded by PD, since it is professional development only for Physical Education teachers. Perhaps we should be approaching the administration to ask them to fund the employee fitness, as most employers do in the private sector? Others brought up the question of including fees for professional associations or subscriptions to scholarly journals in the policy changes.

It was pointed out that if we widen the criteria too much, the surplus will quickly be depleted, making it impossible to continue. The actual money that we receive for PD from the government is \$170 per FTE, that is \$170 per full-time equivalent (not teacher). The reason that we can have a limit of \$500 or \$650 per person is because many people do not use the funds at all. Obviously this debate has just begun and we invite you to join it. If you have any comments or positions about how we

should be spending the PD money that is available to us, please write to the newsletter. We will have to make some decisions at a future General Assembly. Let the debate begin!

Concordia, **\$429 Million** in debt  
UQAM, **\$565 Million** in debt

**BANKRUPT!**



## They screw up, we pay?

The provincial government has cut funding to education massively over the past fifteen years. Today, our universities are suffering, class room sizes are on the increase, and students' and teachers' standards of living are falling. As inflation goes up, the minimum wage today is worth less than 30 years ago in food, rent and other living expenses. Student-parents already face even longer work hours in order to raise a family, how are they supposed to study and work even more to pay their fees? Working students can't afford any more increases! The government's billion dollar tax-cut last summer would have been enough to make education free.

The government cares more about teachers' and students' strikes publicly exposing their embarrassing failures than actually fixing our public services: they've even passed a law banning teachers and 500,000 other public sector workers from striking. What's more, even the \$500 tuition fee increase is a lie, if the Liberals continue giving billions of dollars to their corporate friends while insisting that students are the ones who should pay for our failing public education system, we will be expected to pay over \$10,000 each.

In November, Dawson students joined 60,000 students in a Quebec-wide 3-day strike for free, quality, accessible education. That was just the beginning.

**On February 21st, join tens of thousands of working students in a protest to demand:**

Free, quality, accessible education through massive government reinvestment  
Quality daycares for student parents  
An end to the anti-strike Law C-43  
A meaningful minimum wage, \$10/h

<http://www.commonfront.org/>

*International  
Women's Week  
March 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008*

# Faculty Professional Development

## GENERAL APPLICATION RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. All faculty, including those on leave of absence, may apply to the PD Committee for any activity described under "Activities Funded."

2. All applications must be made at least 3 weeks in advance. No payment for retroactive applications can be made. However the summer deadline application is one week before the last day of availability in June.

3. All applications must be submitted on the required forms, accompanied by appropriate documentation, and addressed directly to the VCTA Professional Development Committee.

4. At the beginning of each academic year, faculty will be informed of the maximum limit per full time faculty member for that year. The maximum amount is determined each year. The limit for part time faculty is determined by the fraction of their workload indicated on their contract.

However, in the case of conferences any teacher who hasn't used any PD funds in a given year may in the following year combine the two years PD funds to attend a conference.

5. Mileage can be claimed at the current rate recognized by the College.

6. The cost of library access cards may be claimed with the submission of a receipt.

## SUMMARY OF PROCEDURE

- a) The first step is to apply to have your Professional Development activity approved.
- b) Upon completion of the activity, submit your expense re-

port, with all necessary original receipts, to the Professional Development Committee.

## ACTIVITIES FUNDED

1. conferences;
2. studies required to complete a Master's or PhD Program in the teacher's area of specialization;
3. research at the college or research funded by government agencies;
4. studies or research related to teacher's area of specialization, but not necessarily leading to a formal degree;
5. activities to develop another specialization that is offered at Vanier College;
6. studies in education;
7. studies in French as a second language;
8. studies related to acquiring and applying teaching skills, i.e. pedagogical, computer skills, etc.
9. specific areas of development identified by departments and programs;
10. physical fitness activities or courses at Vanier College;
11. courses, conferences, workshops related to health issues, retirement issues, or life planning issues;
12. expenses related to putting on an exhibit related to a teacher's subject area;
13. applications from any recognized faculty group in the College, to fund colloquia or in-house training programs or workshops. Events held in association with other Cégeps may also be considered. The subject matter must be related to professional development. The maximum limits for each of these will be determined at the beginning of each year.



## Vanier College's Sustainable Living Project

The International Education Office is launching the Sustainable Living Project this semester! The project is for students who want to know more about international affairs and how to and invest in people living in resource-poor nations. Students can invest directly to an entrepreneur via established micro-finance programmes through the acclaimed [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org) non-profit organisation. This website links individuals with entrepreneurs from around the world! Selected students will be given \$50 to invest. For more information students should be referred to [www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/international-education](http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/international-education) or to Sonali Srivastava (B228A). Deadline for applications is Feb 29th.



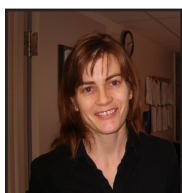
Comedy Benefit for Staff/Faculty to support the Sustainable Living Project

70% of ticket sales will go towards funding the International Education Office for this project! Tickets cost \$10 and can be purchased in advance from room B228A. Please come

to support the cause on Wednesday, February 20, at Jilly's Billiard Club, 6900 boul. Decarie.

# Joining Association Council

## Stephanie Felkai



As a young teacher, I was approached to give my impressions after attending my first few meetings as the newest member of Association Council. Why do my impressions matter? Well, let me first say that I feel a little on the spot trying to write about my first impressions but I am glad that they seem to matter enough that I have been asked to write about them! And I hope that they can offer some insight for everyone concerned—especially teachers who haven't been directly involved in union matters and those trying to get new teachers involved.

The joint meeting of Association Council, Academic Council and Board Faculty Representatives in January '08 was my first event. Among the agenda items was Encouraging Union Activity (New Teachers/Women). Although there was no time to discuss this last item in that meeting, the problem is apparent after sitting in on only one meeting.

The current members of the VCTA Executive and Association Council are knowledgeable, experienced and passionate, not only about their primary practice—teaching—but they are also very familiar with how the whole college functions. The VCTA is a strong union now. That might be thanks in part to its past membership and executives but certainly its strength depends on how our current executive is performing.

Discussions over the "Access versus Excellence" debate have shown me that the members have the interests of the students at heart.

Preliminary discussions on Vanier's Human Rights policy are bringing problems of its implementation to light and it looks as though the VCTA commentaries can only help to make the policy work to better protect all the members of the college. I'm looking forward to seeing how implementing measures of the Human Rights policy will evolve.

But, the active members of the union are asking, "Who will take over?" and saying, "We need new blood." Well, okay, let's be clear, union activity doesn't actually need blood sacrifice but I'm gathering that it's not a cake-walk. I'm sensing that it'll take time, energy and patience that I probably don't realize at the moment that I have. So, the question is which of us "newbies" will respond to the call to get involved in union issues? And when we do, I can imagine we'll end up being very passionate and wanting our hard work to be continued and preserved by the new "newbies" down the road.

Now, I have to admit I sometimes ask myself why I've gotten involved in the first place!!! Do I have the courage to do this? Union/management relations are like a contest; but it is an unfair contest since one side is paid full-time for this work whereas the other side has to divide their time between teaching and their union involvement. But, I am looking forward to seeing how many issues I heard about in January develop. And though I recognize that I have some trepidation about getting involved, I also realise how very necessary it is for more of us "newbies" to take these first steps. Our lives as teachers are so very much affected by the environment and working conditions that are dealt with by the union.

**Stephanie Felkai** teaches biology at Vanier and is the newest member of Association Council.

## ERRATUM...ERRATUM ERRATUM

In the December issue of the VCTA newsletter, there were some unfortunate errors in the Report of the Human Rights Coordinator (p. 10). Below we list the correct Table 3 from the Coordinator's Report. \*

Table 3 - Distribution of Respondents

	2005-06	2006-07
Students	6	10
Professionals	0	0
Management	2	0
Support	3	1
Faculty	24	15
External	6	8
Unknown	6	4
Total	47	38

\*Apologies from the editor for the error.

## Hi Janice,

As part of the activities for Black History Month, Student Services, the Vanier Social Justice Committee and the History Department are sponsoring the Black History Month Poster Contest. There are \$150 in prizes available to the top three posters (funding generously provided for by Dean **Nancy Wargny**). The deadline to submit is February 19th and the judging will be on the 20th. Submissions go to **Dany Brown** in Student Services. The posters need to celebrate Black history in their content and show its richness. Otherwise, anything goes.

It would be a great help if teachers could mention this contest in their classes. The Social Justice Committee also has speakers who could come speak for just a few minutes to your classes and explain the contest. Please contact Eric at lamouree@vaniercollege.qc.ca or ext.7430 if you would like to invite someone or if you have any questions.

Thanks! **Eric Lamoureux**

## TAX TIME SOON

We have received brochures from our insurance company, Samson Groupe Conseil, concerning tax credits for medical expenses and for health Care (Quebec only). You can get a copy of this in the VCTA office.

# Vanier AIDS Action in Africa

## Malawi Study Trip. They're Back!

Sonali Srivastava

The International Education Office is happy to report that our Vanier team consisting of 6 students and 3 staff members, has had an incredible experience in Malawi and is now back in Montreal! The team left on January 1st and returned on the 20th just in time for the beginning of the new semester. Both staff and students learned about HIV and AIDS in the best way possible - at the grassroots level, and have collected interesting data based on interviewing several people of different strata in society.

Below is an excerpt from an email that **Judy MacDonald**, the Coordinator of Learning Enrichment and Support Services for Programs, sent during the trip:

Hello everyone,

All is extraordinary here. The village could not have been more welcoming and **Doug Miller** has been working all out to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

You would be so proud of our students who have (more or less) adjusted to the lack of electricity, the cockroaches and geckos, being surrounded by children all the time, eating different food, etc. They all are totally in love with Malawi and so far I can assure you that our immense effort to make this all possible is entirely worth it. The students have received a rare view of what life is really like for the citizens of this beautiful but very poor country. There have been amazing moments, for example, when the village women sang and danced for us in the pitch dark with only a few candles to light them up. **Melodie Hicks**, the nursing professor, is the all time star for being an excellent and positive role model and is looking after a woman with AIDS who has injured her foot.

On Monday we started what is quickly turning into the most exciting part of our visit - our study of what is happening with AIDS in this country. By then the students were ready to take on the challenge of interviewing different local groups. Doug had organized the students into three groups: political, social, and medical, and had given each group a number of suggestions of where to go to collect information. At the end of yesterday the groups reconvened to share what they had learned; their excitement was palpable as they analyzed what they had gained, how they could ask follow-up questions, and where they would go from there. The "social" group had interviewed a community organization that gives support to AIDS sufferers (counselling, nutrition advice, etc.) The "political" group had returned to the MP to find out specifically what was being done for AIDS. Today, this group had a follow-up interview with 22 leaders. The chairman had composed a poem of thanks to the students for coming. Today at lunch, the students were all almost bursting with excitement with what they were discovering.

So far the experience has been magical.

### Staff Turnover Situation as of January 31/08

Faculty			
disc	# over 60	# over 65	p-ters w/GOS
101	3	1	5
109	4	0	7
141	0	0	2
145	0	0	5
180	3	0	11
201	8	3	11
202	3	1	4
203	6	2	6
221	5	0	7
223	2	1	3
234	2	2	1
247	4	0	0
320	0	0	3
322	0	0	5
330	0	0	5
345	11	1	14
350	5	2	12
351	1	1	4
381	0	0	2
383	3	1	5
385	0	0	1
387	5	1	5
410	7	2	11
412	1	0	2
420	4	2	3
510	7	3	5
550	6	1	31
602	1	1	9
603	15	6	20
607	2	1	1
608	0	0	1
609	0	0	2
610	1	0	2
	109	32	205
Total in day category			575
Support	10	4	
Total in category (including casuals)			225
Profess.	4	3	
Total in category (incl. Special projects)			36
Managers	6	0	
Total in category			29

1. Discipline
2. Number of people over 60 years of age (including over 65)
3. Number of people over 65
4. P-timers: This should be non-tenured teachers who have submitted a General Offer of Service, which gives them the right to get hired this year.



# VANIER CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

- Feb. 1-29** Display Cases in Carrefour & Library (TBC)
- Feb. 5** Movie - Auditorium \* "Darfur Now" (10:00, 12:00, 2:00 & 4:00)
- Feb. 26** Movie - Auditorium\* "Tupac Resurrection" (10:00, 12:00, 2:00 & 4:00)  
(Sponsored by the V.C.S.A.)
- Feb. 13** Black Theatre Workshop \* U.B. \* Auditorium presents the play "Come Good Rain"  
Set in Uganda during the turbulent & murderous regimes of Idi Amin and Milton Obote. The play chronicles a young man's life growing up and witnessing the reckless abandon with which the Pearl of Africa becomes it's own festering curse. Combining African mythology, history and dynamic narrative, the play finally emerges as a celebration of the indefatigable nature of the human spirit.
- Feb. 15** "I Have A Dream" Essay contest  
Create your own "I Have A Dream" essay and submit it to C 203 before noon Feb. 15th. Cash prizes will be awarded.
- Feb. 19** Black History Month Poster Contest  
Help keep memories alive by submitting a poster for the Black History month Poster Contest. Poster must illustrate the beauty and culture of Black History. Must be submitted to C 203 by Feb. 19th noon. Cash prizes will be awarded. Winners to be announced on Feb. 20 during U.B. in the Mall.  
(Sponsored by the Vanier Social Justice committee, Student Services & the History Dept.)
- Feb. 20** Student Panel - Aids in Africa\*UB\*B 323  
Students from Vanier's Aids in Africa trip will relate their experiences on the reality of life in Africa.  
(Sponsored by The Learning Centre and Student Services)
- Feb. 20** Krump Dancing \* UB \* Mall  
(Sponsored by the V.C.S.A.)
- Feb. 21** Film - "Race to Execution" 10:00am & 2:00pm\*Amphitheatre  
Deals with racism and the death penalty in the United States.  
(Sponsored by Professor Ron Curtis of the English Dept.)
- Feb. 23** Kenyan Ambassador at Marianopolis - 11:00am- 3:00pm  
(Dance, drums and lunch - \$6.00)
- Feb. 27** Soul Call \* UB \* Mall  
Join us for a celebration. We guarantee great food, entertainment, music and culture
- Feb. 18 - 26** Black History Quiz - C 203  
Pick up the Vanier Black History quiz and test your knowledge of Black History. Cash prizes will be awarded.
- Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26** Black Quotes (VanierThisWeek)

**(For more information, please contact Student Services C 203)**