

# Vanier College Teachers' Association

News Bulletin 5, Nov 3, 2016



## PD and “dubious” conferences

Last May, the Professional Development Committee started to receive PD requests to attend conferences that seemed somewhat peculiar. The admin rep on the committee started to question some and spent a few minutes developing an “abstract” that was sent to the organizers of several conferences. This bogus abstract was accepted at most of these. What were some of the “red flags”?

- \* Very expensive registration fees, even for presenters, and distant, desirable locations.
- \* Short conferences with little time for presentation, e.g. a three day conference, with only one day for presentations and two days for tourism and events.
- \* No actual theme for the conference, but people can submit abstracts on a wide range of topics.
- \* A “peer-review” process for papers which takes a very short period of time, sometimes 48 hours.
- \* Spelling and other English-language mistakes on the conference website, although the conference is in English.
- \* No program for the conference, until shortly before it is held.
- \* The name of the university offering the conference has a name very close to the name of a well-known university (so one could easily think that the well-known university was sponsoring the conference).

We would ask teachers to check conferences very carefully, especially in regards to the points noted above, before they put in a PD request. In the light of last year's experience with “dubious” conferences -- and executive members had to agree that there were dubious conferences -- we agree that the PD Committee has to look at applications for conferences carefully to make sure that our PD funds are not paying for “dubious conferences.” The administration has articulated its position as follows:

*The Administration wants you to have a meaningful and productive PD experience. Please choose your conferences wisely as we have found there are dubious conference organizers purporting to offer high-level conferences when in fact the conferences they promote are ‘vanity’ conferences. They cater to a clientele not wishing their research to be exposed to peer review. In other words, anyone can present a paper at the conference without any real vetting. Applications to attend such conferences will be denied.*

The PD Committee is a parity committee in the Collective Agreement, meaning that each side (the admin and the VCTA) has one vote. If one side does not agree to an application, then it is not approved.

## Report on Cont Ed “Charges”

The VCTA Exec met with the Admin last on Oct 25 to go over some of their proposals for the Cont Ed charges we gained through our recent Collective Agreement negotiations. At this time, we indicated that as “charges”, this can only be used in *Volet 1*, which means it can only be used for teaching and related work (e.g. class preparation, student support, grading). Many of their proposals conflicted with this restriction, and so the admin decided they would “take this under advisement.”

### **Report on resources for teachers for students with special needs** – Fneeq letter and petition attached

The money (now approximately \$640 000, for two years combined), gained through the same negotiations to address teachers' work with students with special needs, is not so restricted. Your VCTA representatives have been asking, at CRT (the Labour Relations Committee), for this money to be used in the classroom since last spring. Our General Assembly motion of Apr. 22, 2016 demonstrated Vanier teachers' desire that the resources: "be allocated to teachers' workloads for the support and supervision that teachers give when they have students with disabilities in their classes." Not only has this been discussed at Association Council and the General Assembly, we held a coordinators meeting, largely on this issue, to get more feedback in early October. Among the variety of proposals offered, some suggested using the resources to reduce the number students, by weighting special need students more; others have suggested having an extra teacher available in the class (or in special office hours).

However, the College has disregarded these suggestions and decided to dedicate the resources to different kinds of projects, including those initiated by teachers, as indicated in the Academic Dean's email of Oct. 28, 2016. Although the VCTA Executive does not believe that the College is using these resources as effectively as possible, we are encouraging all departments to apply for their share of them so as, at least, to ensure equitable distribution of the funds to departments. The message from the Dean's office explains that teachers should take their ideas to their departments so that they can be voted on. The department coordinator will then send the Dean any projects that have been forwarded by the department. Our administration has made it clear that departments who do not apply for resources to be used for next semester may lose their portion for that semester.

We are going to continue to work on this, and will review next semester as a pilot project. So please help us argue on your behalf more effectively by showing your support for use of this money for teachers dealing with these students in or out of the classroom. Please find the FNEEQ letter attached and please sign and circulate our petition, attached, at your departmental meetings!

### **Workload and Leaves**

We would like to remind non-tenured teachers that, for the regular-day teaching, the first person on the list will be offered an available workload. If that person does not take the whole workload offered, the whole workload will be offered to the next person and on down the list. We are currently trying to determine how this is applied in Cont Ed and will inform you as soon as we have the information.

Also, if a non-tenured teacher is on *any* kind of a leave, they must first get the workload and sign a contract for it, in order to have the leave. When coordinators send the completed Tâche to the college, they must show that the non-tenured teacher has a workload in order for them to be given the leave or release time. There can be a note, in Tâche, for that teacher, indicating that they are on leave and that their workload would be given to a second teacher. The workload can then be assigned to the next teacher who has a hiring priority (coordinators can put a note for the second teacher, saying that this is the workload from the first teacher). You would then sign a bulk hiring form for both teachers.

### **Sharing Our Pride**

The Open Door Network and U.M.B.R.E.L.L.A. invites all people at Vanier who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, gender non-conforming, two-spirited, genderqueer, intersex, queer, questioning or allies to a special gathering, Nov. 10, 5:30 - 8:00 (B-325). For info: [ODN@vanier.college](mailto:ODN@vanier.college) .