

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN

Winter/hiver 2014

Issue No. 17



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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Greetings to CURAC members,

This fall has been an exceptionally busy and productive period for CURAC. To illustrate:

1) The third Bulletin, which focused on selected statistics from the CAUT Almanac 2013-14, was published and distributed to member associations.

2) The agreement with Queen's University to house CURAC archives was signed, sealed and delivered, and the transfer of documents, organized by George Brandie, Chair of the Archives Committee, is already underway. A deposit to the archives has been received from the Windsor University Retirees' Association – *Back in the Day*. A review of the book appears later in the Newsletter.

3) An examination of the proposed policy concerning accessibility of publications arising from grant-supported research was undertaken by Peter Russell, Chair of the Professional Support Committee – see his report in this issue of the Newsletter.

4) A statement prepared by Linda Kealey and the Committee on Health Care Policy, critiquing the reform of Canada's Health Transfer on the basis of its inadequacy and inequality, has been circulated to members and comment invited. Member associations are encouraged to send a copy of this bulletin to the premiers, finance ministers and health ministers of their provinces. The Prime Minister and leaders of the federal NDP and Liberals have also received copies. Next on the agenda for the Health Care Policy committee is a consideration of the issue of population aging and long term care.

5) Membership fees for 2014 are being collected by our Treasurer, June Panteluk.

6) A letter has been sent to the Prime Minister and others arguing for augmentation of the Canada Pension Plan. The Pension Committee is chaired by Paul Huber.

*Update on
2014 Conference*

7) Preparations for the 2014 CURAC conference in Hamilton in May (a collaborative venture between MURA and Mohawk College) progresses - see the report from the LOC Co-Chairs Mary Johnston and Helen Barton following this letter. One item recommended for inclusion on the program is the issue of Memoranda of Understanding between the retiree associations and their university administrations.

*NSERC Response
Received*

8) A response from NSERC was received reporting on the statistics associated with the outcomes of grant submissions from Emeriti Professors. The data provided suggest that "Retired professors are neither penalized nor advantaged relative to non-retired ones...."

*Finance Committee
Agenda*

9) A number of committees have revised their terms of reference.

What's ahead? Consideration is currently being given by the Finance Committee, chaired by Kohur Gowrisankaran, for a proposal to increase membership fees. A statement providing a rationale for the increase and a request for the views of members will be circulated shortly. Also on the Finance Committee plate is a review of the travel policy which is directly relevant to delegates attending the CURAC conference in the spring.

*Benefits Committee
Seeks Member Input*

The Benefits Committee, chaired by Patti Stoll, plans to build its membership by finding new committee members from CURAC member associations who are knowledgeable about the benefits available to the retirees of their university/college.

*Website Manager
Position Available*

The Board is seeking a new website manager to replace George Brandie who has administered the site for many years. Interested persons should contact Bryan Harvey, Chair of the Communications Committee.

*President to Contact
all Member
Associations*

As outlined in my letter in the last issue of the Newsletter, I will be contacting each member association to solicit information about priority issues confronting the association, to seek advice about matters the association would like CURAC to pursue, and to request names of volunteers for the Board and/or CURAC committees. Results of these deliberations will be presented at the annual conference in May.

Very best wishes to all for a profitable and productive new year.

Sandra W. Pyke

CURAC President

*Innovation: The
Future of Aging*

at

The

12th

Annual

CURAC/ARUCC

Conference

In

Hamilton

Ontario

May 28-30, 2014

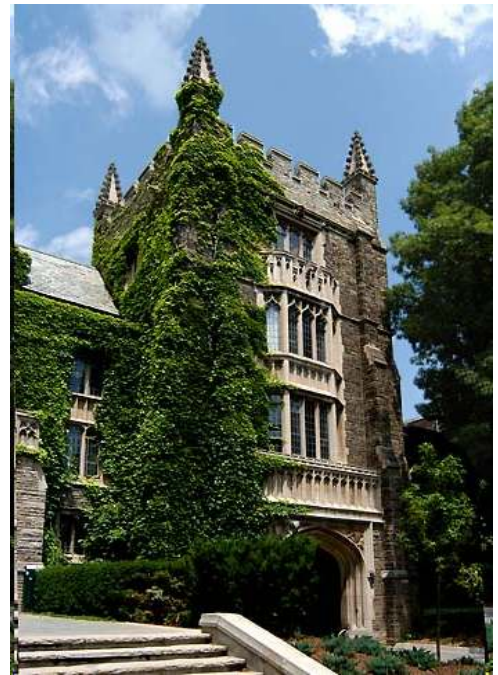
"Best Practices"

Speakers

Needed

The McMaster University Retirees Association (MURA) and the Retirees Association of Mohawk College (RAMC) are hosting the 2014 CURAC/ARUCC conference and AGM this year in Hamilton from May 28 to 30.

The welcome reception on Wednesday evening, May 28, and the conference sessions on Thursday, May 29 and Friday, May 30, will be held at McMaster University.



The banquet on the evening of May 29 will take place at Mohawk College (Fennell Campus in photo below)



The theme of this year's conference is *Innovation: The Future of Aging*. The Local Conference Organizing Committee is very pleased to be able to offer a range of interesting talks on this theme, including presentations by eminent Hamilton academics on innovations related to hearing aids, older drivers, and community engagement. There will also be sessions on keeping up with new developments in computing, population aging and its economic costs, and university and college support for professional activities of retirees. Sandra Pyke, CURAC President, will present interim results from a

canvass of member associations. Delegates from several associations have volunteered to participate in the popular *Sharing Best Practices* sessions, but there is room for more. If your association would like to make a brief presentation on the association's successes and challenges, please contact Mary Johnston at johnston@mcmaster.ca.



*Les Prince Hall
Residence*

*Online
Registration*

Questions?

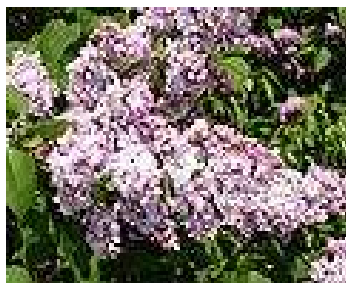
We have arranged for accommodation at the Staybridge Suites Hotel in downtown Hamilton and at one of the McMaster residences, Les Prince Hall. To book a room at the Staybridge Suites, you can either call the hotel directly at 905-527-1001 and speak to the front desk agents or call the toll free number at 1-800-238-8000, or visit the website at: (<http://www.staybridge.com/hotels/us/en/hamilton/yhmha/hotel/detail>). We have reserved rooms for Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights (May 28-31) at \$129/night. This rate applies to bookings made before April 28; after that reservations will be subject to availability and at the next available rate. The name of the block of rooms is '2014 College and University Retiree Association of Canada'; you should mention that name when booking.

Les Prince Hall offers en-suite residence rooms with single or twin beds and access to a common room with fridge and microwave. Information on rates and how to book these McMaster residence rooms will be posted on the conference website (mcmaster-retirees.ca/curac2014.html) as soon as it becomes available.

Online registration for the conference will be available in mid-February through the conference web site mcmaster-retirees.ca/curac2014.html. Please visit this site from time to time for the updated conference program, as well as the latest information about registration, accommodation, travel and activities.

We're looking forward to seeing you in Hamilton this May. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact us at curac2014@mcmaster.ca or 905-525-9140 extension 23171.

Helen Barton & Mary Johnston
for the Local Conference Organizing Committee
MURA & RAMC



Weekends in May and June are the best time to visit the extensive Lilac collection at Hamilton's Royal Botanical Gardens, the largest botanical garden in Canada. Birdwatching is another very popular activity at RBG.



*Funding Councils
Propose Open Access
to Publication of
Funded Research*

by

Peter H. Russell

(Toronto)

Chair

Professional Support

Committee

phruss@aol.com

Since 2008, The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) has required recipients of its research grants to ensure that the results of their research are freely available on line. Now Canada's two other national funding agencies, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) are proposing to adopt the same policy.

Under the policy, grant recipients would be required to ensure that "any peer-reviewed journal publications" arising from Agency-supported research are freely available either through the publisher's website or an online repository."

NSERC and SSHRC propose to adopt this policy – subject to the feedback they receive through consultation – in September, 2014.

This does seem like a good policy proposal. The products of publicly funded research should be available, free of charge, not only to the scholarly community but also to the general public who pay for them.

It should be particularly attractive to pensioned scholars who may no longer have access to research libraries, and find it difficult to pay the high cost of journal subscriptions. On the other hand, concerns have been raised about the policy being unsuitable for humanities disciplines and about its implications for the funding of scholarly journals.

Please get in touch with me if you think there any aspects of this proposal that CURAC should raise with the funding agencies during this period of consultation.

*CURAC/ARUCC Archive
Established*

George Brandie and Paul Banfield



celebrate the agreement between
CURAC/ARUCC and Queen's University
Archives.

In October, 2013, CURAC/ARUCC President Sandra Pyke and Queen's University Archivist Paul Banfield signed a formal agreement by which Queen's University Archives will become the official home for our archival records. At the same time, our Board of Directors established an Archives Committee to prepare and transmit relevant documents and computer files to the Queen's Archives. The archive will include official and legal documents (our Constitutions and Bylaws, Minutes of Board Meetings and General Meetings, listings of our Directors over the years, summaries of Annual Conferences, etc.), copies of our Briefs to governments and communications by the Board to governments and the public, Newsletters and other documents and pictures of continuing interest. Once documents and files have been delivered and indexed by the archivists, they will be available for review by visitors to the Queen's University Archives.

The Windsor University Retirees' Association has kindly sent us a copy of their book of memoirs, *Back in the Day* (described on Page 8 of this Newsletter), for inclusion in the archive. If other Associations have books of memoirs that could also be included in our archive, please send them to Dr. George Brandie, Department of Chemical Engineering, Queen's University Kingston, ON K7L 3N6

Pensions -

Anticipated

Investment

Performance

in

2014

by

Ian Skaith

OCRA - Fanshawe College

CAAT Pension Plan

2013 Performance

CAAT Plan to merge

with an Ontario

University plan?

Investors since 2009 have earned interest returns from typical safe return assets that are abnormally low. Government treasury bills and bonds are yielding less than 2%. In 2013 the annual after tax returns on US and Canadian equity and real estate were excellent. Pension managers now have sufficient surplus capital to extend their risk profile into foreign and domestic stocks, bonds and real estate.

Through the income tax system, after tax income for pensioners has been augmented by income splitting and tax credits aimed at helping seniors and pensioners, particularly those with health impairment and dependency.

Successful pension fund investing depends on effective diversification and low cost management. Large defined benefit pensions like CAAT (Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology), OTPP (Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan) or OMERS (Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System) hire their own managers and avoid the high management costs paid by defined contribution funds who invest in external investment funds. For example a 2% MER (management expense ratio) will reduce fund performance by 45% over a 20 year investment horizon. High-risk investing in private equity, real estate and hedge funds can cost well above 2% of invested capital. Keeping costs down is critical to pension performance.

In 2013 the CAAT Pension Plan ran a 3% surplus, adding to its accumulated capital and meeting the regulator's minimum. The investment return net of inflation exceeded the 4.5% needed to meet recipient demand and pay the conditional indexing obligation. This was accomplished despite increasing retiree pension claims. I believe 2014 will yield similar good results but perhaps with more volatility caused by shocks to the financial markets coming from Europe, the Middle East and the US Congress. Volatility and asset risk is being successfully managed by derivative strategy.

There is no way to tell at this point whether the amalgamation of university pension plans with CAAT will create a significant burden on cost and returns. Adding new members will be a benefit in terms of cash flow. A well-managed pension plan will help retain good faculty and staff.

There also could be some challenge in combining the CAAT and university pension investment portfolios. There will be a need to revamp and refocus portfolio holdings. The CAAT pension managers claim that no pension member will have their pension impaired by amalgamation. The Plan has achieved a Level 3 Funding Policy rating which we hope can be preserved or improved to ensure the ability to pay indexing.

(Ed. Note: Check the CAAT Plan website: www.caatpensionplan.ca; click on "Looking Forward to Growth" under the heading of "News.")



**OCRA
General Meeting
Report**

by

Joan Cunnington
OCRA - Seneca College



The 11th General Meeting of the Ontario Colleges Retirees' Association was held on October 24, 2013. Approximately 90 retirees representing 14 colleges travelled to Kingston for the meeting hosted by St. Lawrence College and the St. Lawrence College Retiree Association.

After the presentation of reports from the association's officers and the election of directors, an update from the CAAT Pension Plan generated many questions for Kevin Rorwick, CAAT Plan CFO. Of particular importance to most of those present is the cessation of indexed increases to pensions based on pre-1992 years of service on January 1, 2015. Mr. Rorwick also answered questions about the Plan's investment performance (improving) and the possibility of a university plan or two joining the CAAT plan (nothing definite yet).

Representatives from the College Employer Council explained the functions of "The Council" - one these functions being the policyholder for the health benefits of college employees and retirees. There were updates about benefit changes, and more questions were asked and answered.

The highlight of the day was the visit of "Sir John A. MacDonald" and "Lady Agnes" (re-enactors Brian Porter and his wife Renee). Dressed in 19th century fashion, "Sir John" took us back to the political issues of his time in a most informative and entertaining way. Some St. Lawrence college students also received a history lesson when they discovered "Sir John" and "Lady Agnes" in the hall outside the OCRA meeting room.

In all, it was a very good meeting, and OCRA thanks St. Lawrence College for hosting the meeting and appreciates the welcoming support from staff and retirees at St. Lawrence. More details of this meeting can be found on the OCRA website (www.ocraretirees.ca) in the draft minutes, or in the summaries in the January 2014 newsletter.

The featured member association for this edition of the CURAC/ARUCC newsletter is Windsor University Retirees' Association. Here is a brief summary of the association's founding and its activities.

**Windsor
University
Retirees
Association**
by
Datta Pillay
Newsletter Editor
Windsor University
Retirees Association

Windsor University Retirees Association (WURA) was founded in 1990 by three retired professors. The association holds two general membership meetings, one in the fall and one in the spring. The business of the organization is conducted by an executive composed of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, past resident, newsletter editor, and six directors. The executive meets once a month or at the call of the chair. In 1991, a newsletter was published under the editorship of Dr. William Phillips. Dr. Datta Pillay assumed the editorship in January 1998, a position he still holds today. The newsletter is published four times a year: March, June, September and December.

WURA set up a bursary fund with contributions from members and, when the program was available, matching grants from the Provincial Government. Currently, four bursaries of \$ 1,500 each are awarded, with the assistance of Awards Office. Also a \$50 donation to this bursary fund is made by WURA in honour of WURA members who have passed away.



During its first eight years, WURA had little or no communication with senior administration of the university. In 1998 with appointment of a new president, Dr. Ross H. Paul, a new relationship began to develop. Dr. Paul came to all the WURA general meetings, and he was the first president to attend a WURA Executive meeting. He was sympathetic to the needs of retirees and made arrangements to provide office space, a modest budget, and \$12,500 in travel funds for retirees to attend and present papers at conferences. Dr. Paul also made sure that retirees are respected by the various academic departments and that they receive invitations to all university functions. He wrote to all the heads of departments regarding best practices in treating retirees. He also set up a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with three members each from WURA and Administration.

In 2008, Dr. Alan Wildeman became President of the university, and he has continued to attend all WURA meetings, extended support to WURA, and consolidated the WURA budget. He also supported the idea of treating retirees with courtesy and for the past two years arranged a tea party for retirees, which has been well attended by the retirees.

Back in the Day 1963-2013
The University of Windsor
As We Knew it

A Collection of Memories
of the first 50 years of the

University of Windsor

Book Review

by

Joan Cunnington

(OCRA - Seneca College)

Back in the Day 1963-2013, or to use its subtitle, *The University of Windsor As We Knew It*, is a 351-page collection of memories of life and events in the university over a 50-year period. The four sections of this book - Foundations, Vignettes, New Directions, and Portraits - provide detailed insights into the changes that took place at the University over the 50-year period. There are 20 pages of photographs of professors and staff, and short biographies of the authors as well. The book ends with the report of a question-and-answer session featuring the university's current president, Dr. Alan Wildeman.

Chapters in the first section give the background to the events that resulted in the transformation of Assumption College, a small Catholic liberal arts college affiliated with the University of Western Ontario, into the large secular University of Windsor of today. This process began with the creation of Assumption University in 1956, but many issues remained unresolved. Most important was the choice of perpetuating Assumption University in the Catholic tradition under the leadership of the Basilian Fathers, or whether to "become 'big'" (p. 12) and accept the province's funding to build a larger, secular university. The resolution of this dilemma resulted in the construction of buildings, the hiring of faculty and staff, and the creation and expansion of programs to meet the needs of the baby boom and subsequent generations for higher education in southwestern Ontario.

While some of the memoirs recall events of the expansion period, others describe the years when student unrest disturbed the daily routine, and the developments which led to the formation of the faculty union in 1976. The evolution of a more inclusive system of governance and management is a major preoccupation of some of those who contributed to *Back in the Day*. The effects of changing

provincial government policy and financing on the university become clear, as does the rise of more equal participation for previously unrepresented segments of the population in higher education as well as in its governance and management.

The 72 chapters of *Back in the Day* cover a wide range of topics over a 50-year period, and whether the reader is a former academic or staff member of the University of Windsor or an outsider, these memories bring back reminiscences to anyone who was involved in post-secondary education during this period. Perhaps no chapter illustrates this commonality more accurately and amusingly than Udo Sautter's "When the History Department Turned Modern: Or, How I Witnessed the Advent

of the Computer" (Ch. 48). This chapter reminds me of an event which changed my career: while visiting a lawyer's office, I watched in amazement as a seemingly unattended machine churned out page after page of legal documents.

The enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication with which the builders of the university went about their their work in creating their "new" university as well as those who followed after them is the most constant factor in the memories recorded in this book. In his chapter (No. 64) "Back in the Day," Alistair MacLeod says, "The University of Windsor has been a great place to work." It is clear that all these authors agree with him wholeheartedly.

For those in Windsor or on campus, *Back in the Day* can be purchased for \$25 (including GST) at the University of Windsor Bookstore. Elsewhere, the book can be ordered through your bookstore from the distributor in Canada and the United States, DitListCo. The publisher is Black Moss Press, 2450 Byng Road, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, N8W 3E8. Assistant to the Publisher: Vanessa Shields; email address: vshieldsblackmosspress@gmail.com

CURAC/ARUCC is a non-profit federation of retiree organizations at colleges and universities across Canada. Its primary aim is to coordinate activities that promote communication among member organizations, to share information, provide mutual assistance, and speak publicly on issues of common concern to its more than fifteen thousand members across Canada.



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