



Weekly Bulletin for Department & Program Heads

Number 3: Tuesday 13 November 2007

CUPE 1975 job action – update

Thanks

My thanks to all Heads and Co-ordinators for their patience during the strike. I want particularly to thank Rick and Lynn for working far beyond the call of duty so that our students continue to be able to take classes. Despite the size of our Faculty there are only 3 out-of-scope people to undertake reassigned duties including cleaning, security, paper and copier supplies, telephones, mail, student enquiries, and so on. Rick and Lynn have put in long hours on top of their teaching and administrative commitments to ensure that our buildings are clean, phones are answered, classes are able to proceed, and student advising continues.

Priorities

Needless to say, however, we are extremely limited in what we are able to do. Activities involving the Faculty Plan Development Committee and the Space Committee are on hold. Drafting of the Faculty's budget document is likely to be delayed.

Our priorities are simple: the teaching of students comes first, followed closely by meeting other student needs such as advising. To do these things, we have to ensure that the buildings are clean. Then comes the task of responding to telephone and email enquiries from students and the general public. We are trying to respond to all messages within a day.

Finally, we are placing a high priority on the faculty recruitments that are now under way (for more, see below).

Mail

Mail is now being brought to campus. Items destined for Arts departments are picked up from the mailroom once a day and brought to the Dean's Office, where they will accumulate until we are able to move them to department offices. There is no outgoing mail service at present.

Applications for faculty positions

We are now entering the peak period for receipt of applications for our currently advertised faculty positions. The lack of clerical help has led to changes in the way we are handling application materials. Letters of reference and other supporting materials received since the beginning of the strike are **not** being acknowledged at this time. Applications received during the same period **are** being acknowledged, as it is important that candidates know we have received their applications.

Because we do not at present have time to photocopy application materials, they are being retained in the Dean's Office. Heads of recruitment committees are welcome to peruse applications here during normal office hours. We will re-evaluate this arrangement by the end of this week.

Depending on the duration of job action, we may have to adjust our timelines for candidates' campus visits and interviews, as the work of organizing these visits is the responsibility of CUPE 1975 clerical staff in the departments.

Health and safety

Students continue to be very accommodating with regard to putting litter in bins and generally keeping washrooms, classrooms, and corridors in good condition. Please do continue to remind students before they leave your classes and seminars to deposit all litter in the bins.

Class cancellations – reminder

For the duration of job action, please notify Rick and me via email of class cancellations owing to instructors' illness. We are answering telephone enquiries normally directed to CUPE 1975 staff in department offices, and need to know about cancellations. We also need to prepare and post written notices of class cancellations on classroom doors.

As always, if you have concerns or questions about any of these things, please do not hesitate to call the Dean's Office at 4895.

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### **Faculty Council – Wednesday 21 November**

You will have seen the call for agenda items that went out next week. We intend to proceed with the regular November meeting of Faculty Council.

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ISOOF competition results

A number of Arts faculty members were successful in the recent International Strategic Opportunities Fund competitions (Initiatives and Student Mobility). Congratulations are extended to the following colleagues on their successes:

- *Margot Hurlbert, Jim Mulvale, and Nick Jones*—Globus Intensive Course on Social Justice and Human Rights 16-27 June 2008 in Germany (\$2,500 Student Mobility and \$4,500 Initiatives)
- *Bernie Thraves*—Geography of the Caribbean GEOG 440-001 (\$3,500 Student Mobility)
- *Tomoko Lamb*—Kyota Koka University Language and Culture Summer Program (\$5,000 Student Mobility)
- *Brenda Anderson and Wendee Kubik*—Missing Women: Decolonization, Third Wave Feminisms, and Indigenous People of Canada and Mexico WMST 3XX (\$5,000 Student Mobility)
- *Emmanuel Aito and Nadine Bouchardon*—Albi, Les Cathares, Le Terroir FR 390AC (\$5,000 Student Mobility and \$5,000 Initiatives)

Possible Arts internships in the University Secretary's Office

The University Secretary's office needs several student interns, perhaps with a background in PSCI, ECON, ENGL, and related disciplines, to serve as policy writers. I've indicated to Annette that Arts should certainly be able to assist in this regard; she and Stuart Wilson, our internship co-ordinator, will be discussing arrangements soon. Stay tuned.

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## Dante – a horse, a jockey, or what? And who's Jean Genet?

From Michiko Kakutani's *New York Times* review of Alan Bennett's new book, *The Uncommon Reader*:

One thing [Queen Elizabeth II] has never been described as is an avid reader. One biographer asserted that the queen once asked if Dante were a horse — or a jockey. Another biographer declared that she rarely reads a book unless it is horse-related.

Enter Alan Bennett, the deft, virtuosic author of plays like *The History Boys*, *The Madness of George III* and *The Lady in the Van*. In *The Uncommon Reader* Mr Bennett poses a delicious and very funny what-if: What if Queen Elizabeth at the age of 70-something were suddenly to become a voracious reader? What if she were to become an avid fan of Proust and Balzac, Turgenev and Trollope and Hardy? And what if reading were to lead her, in turn, to becoming a writer? Mr. Bennett's musings on these matters have produced a delightful little book that unfolds into a witty meditation on the subversive pleasures of reading.

Mr Bennett, of course, has depicted the queen before, in his play *A Question of Attribution*. In that play the queen has a chat with the royal family's curator of art, Sir Anthony Blunt, who is concealing his identity as one of England's most notorious spies, and she more than holds her own with this condescending aesthete, suggesting that she is perhaps on to his dangerous game. As played by Prunella Scales, the queen emerged as a shrewd and self-possessed woman, sly and witty and dignified, and decidedly loath to have the wool pulled over her eyes.

The queen in *The Uncommon Reader* is very much that same woman: not remotely intellectual, but inquisitive and intelligent and quite impatient with overly long-winded or self-indulgent writers. Reading Henry James, she blurts out, "Oh, do get on." And reading Samuel Johnson, she remarks, "I can see why Dr Johnson is well thought of, but surely, much of it is opinionated rubbish?"

She starts reading out of duty — when her corgis stray toward a mobile library parked near the palace, she feels an obligation to borrow a book — and unexpectedly finds duty turning into curiosity, and curiosity into pleasure....

It's not long before the queen's passion for reading begins to affect her work. She finds herself increasingly bored with all her ceremonial duties, eager to be done with the pomp and circumstance so she can get back to whatever she is reading. She takes to asking people she meets what books they're reading, which has the effect of making them feel uncomfortable and inadequate. And she asks the president of France at a state dinner what he thinks about Jean Genet, which leaves him utterly flummoxed. Even more alarmingly, she finds that reading has softened her up — made her aware of her own emotions and more sympathetic to others.

The full review is available on the *Times* website at the following address:  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/30/books/30kaku.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/30/books/30kaku.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

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