

A message from our President

Greetings to our virtual academic body!!!

I attended the Installation of TRU's 3rd President – Dr. Alan Shaver and the 2nd Chancellor – Honourable Wally Oppal, Q.C. on June 8th. It was most encouraging to hear Dr. Shaver state the importance of Distance Education today. When I attended the banquet later that evening, I approached Dr. Shaver and gave greetings on behalf of TRUOLFA. I mentioned how impressed I was with his earlier comments and he stated clearly that “Distance Education is our future; we cannot continue building universities”.

I also attended the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE) Annual General Meeting in Prince Rupert along with Be Harris. The AGM covered the Union business and reminded me how different our needs are compared to the University Faculty. One of the concerns I have is the distance between us. There are few opportunities to meet and discuss challenges. Students feel the same way. For Distance Learning to achieve high enrollments, we need to reduce that “long-distance feeling”.

The TRU-OL Online Facilitation course includes discussion on student engagement with other students in TRU-OL Online Modality courses. I believe this is a crucial element that is missing from my courses. I look forward to learning which techniques breakdown these barriers and thinking of ways to implement them into my teaching.

Gordon Tarzwell, Associate Vice-President, Open Learning, Distance and Online Learning, has stated that remuneration of OLFMs' who have successfully completed the TRU-OL Online Facilitation course will be based on the April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2012 Collective Agreement Article 8.2. Basically, what this means is that an OLFM whose courses are going from the Independent Modality (Print, Standard Web, and Dynamic Web versions of the course) to Online Modality will be paid 20 hours at the Computer Course Rate, as per Appendix A of the April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2010 Collective Agreement, which is \$29.25/hour.

In the situation when a new course is offered Online, the successful OLFM candidate who has met all the qualifications to new Online Modality course except the TRU-OL Online Facilitation course, then TRU-OL will pay the successful qualified OLFM, who has successfully completed the Online Facilitation course, 20 hours at the Computer Course Rate \$29.25/hour.

Negotiations for the remuneration of Online Pedagogy Training clause were very difficult. TRU-OL did not want to pay for any training; their argument was that the OLFMs should shoulder the cost of training through the PD fund, if necessary. TRUOLFA's position is that the Employer has responsibility to provide us paid training in the area of technology use for delivering education. To this end, as per other educational institutions, it is in the Employer's best interest to sponsor courses that OLFMs need to keep abreast of the pedagogy and technology required for teaching and updating Online Modality and Independent Modality (Print, Standard Web, and Dynamic Web) courses, as per the 2010-2012 Collective Agreement. This continues to be a major issue that requires ongoing work.

To ensure your opportunity to continue to teach your Independent Modality Courses that are being converted to Online Modality, it is critical that you take the time to examine the list of courses that TRU-OL will publish twice a year where they will identify the anticipated launch dates of the courses that are being converted to Online Modality in the next six months. If the course you are currently teaching is on the list of courses that are being converted to Online Modality delivery, it is imperative that you enroll in and successfully complete the TRU-OL Online Facilitation course in time to qualify to teach the Online Modality course. We encourage you to send an email message to Valerie Peachey, Director of Delivery, stating that you require training because your course is on the course revision list for Online Modality.

On March 14, 2011, TRU-OL provided TRUOLFA a list of the Online Modality courses that they anticipated to launch within the next six months. The following Table shows the anticipated course launch dates in chronological order by month and season:

Anticipated Course Launch Date March 14 to September 14, 2011	Number of Courses
March	4
April	4
May	9
June	3
July	1
Spring	2
Summer	3
Fall	15
Total	42 courses
36/42 courses are Online, 4/42 courses are Web, and 2/42 courses are Practicums	

We have been trying to understand and get a handle on the implementation issues of the 2010 – 2012 Collective Agreement, including the information on the biennial aspect of providing us the list of anticipated dates of Online courses. We are discussing the issues in the Labour Management Committee meetings and will provide you updates when we clarify the implementation issues identified above.

We have decided that at this time the best way to share the information on the anticipated date of the launching of courses with you is to publish the list of courses in TROULFA's Website (<http://www.truolfa.ca/resources.html>) under the topic "Online Course Launches." Kindly check the list of courses and if you have any questions please let John know (John's email jobrien@tru.ca, VOIP: 6962). We are working with TRU-OL through our Labour/Management meetings to have the anticipated list of courses to be launched within the next six months

provided to us in a timely manner so that our members are provided the opportunity to take advantage of TRU-OL's Online Facilitation Course offerings.

The TRU-OL Executive has reviewed a report from the Remuneration Committee that was charged by the 2010-2011 TRUOLFA Executive to explore the possibility of increasing the honoraria paid to the Executive and provide recommendations. The Committee has made two major recommendations.

Recommendation 1: To reduce the number of positions on the TRUOLFA Executive

Recommendation 2: To increase the current remuneration provided to the Executive commensurate with the job description and the workload of the various positions.

There are 11 positions on the Executive; the suggestion is to reduce the number of Directors from 4 to perhaps 1. There is an opportunity to consolidate 2 Secretary Positions into 1, and 2 Treasurer Positions into 1 but two concerns have emerged in our deliberations. One, the amount of work for a volunteer position with a modest stipend may not attract members to serve in these positions. Two, there is a need to provide opportunities for faculty to get involved in and learn about the Union at the Director level so that they feel comfortable to put their names forward and get elected on the various positions .

At this point the majority of the Executive decided the current organization best serves the membership. The Executive will remain with all 11 positions.

The remuneration of the President was also resolved. Based on the time spent from mid-February to the end of June, 2011, the Executive recognized the President's contribution and during the July Executive Meeting, the President was asked to leave the meeting and the rest of the Executive debated the best course of action. A motion was made, seconded, debated, and unanimously voted on to increase the President's stipend from \$323.58 to \$1000.00 per month for the calendar year January 1 to December 31, 2011.

For your information, November of 2010, members from the 2009-2010 TRUOLFA Executive mentioned the need for the Executive to commission a report on the stipends of the members of your Executive. The 2009 – 2010 Executive had thought about increasing the President's stipend but because of the 2009-2010 protracted negotiations of the Collective Agreement their energies were directed to negotiation of our April 1 2010 – March 31, 2012 Collective Agreement. Consequently, the work of the TRUOLFA Executive Members' stipends was passed on to the 2010-2011 Executive.

In November 2010, Richard Duguay, TRUOLFA Treasurer, was asked to chair a Committee of three individuals to explore and recommend fair honoraria for the various positions on the TRUOLFA Executive. The TRUOLFA Executive Remuneration Committee was established in January 2011. The Committee members were Richard Duguay (Chair, TRUOLFA Treasurer), June Williams (Past President, TRULFA), and Tom Friedman (Past President, TRUFA).

We will provide a report of the Remuneration Committee at the AGM October 23rd following the Kamloops workshop. Please save the date!!! Your participation in the meeting will continue to help us build a stronger Faculty Association to serve our members.

The payroll debacle has frustrated many of the members. The reality is that we need to check our pay stubs more thoroughly. The Banner 8 software has generated the majority of the challenges therefore it falls on the membership to be diligent on checking that all services provided are paid on a timely basis.

The strategic planning meetings scheduled in Vancouver mid-August are another issue. Your Executive is discussing the options to demonstrate to Judith Murray, Vice President, Open Learning, that a 2.5 to 3 hour meeting is significant to warrant payment for time and travel. While attendance should be voluntary, I feel payment should not be voluntary!

Enjoy the summer with your family. I am sure both gardens and vacations are on your agenda!

John