

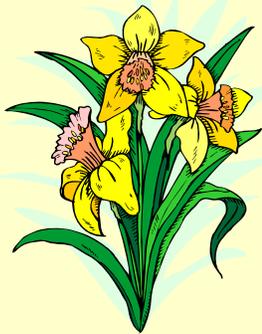


# Courier

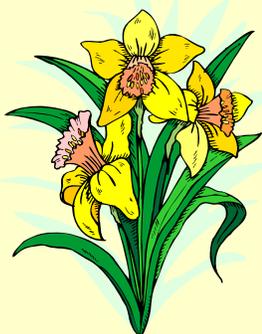
Queen's University Staff Association

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## VOLUME 1/09 – MARCH 2009



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### QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY STAFF ASSOCIATION

**CAMPUS LOCATION:** Room 235, John Deutsch University Centre  
**PHONE:** 613-533-2215  
**EMAIL:** [gusa@queensu.ca](mailto:gusa@queensu.ca)  
**WEB:** <http://www.queensu.ca/gusa>

## Call for Nominations

Nominations are now underway for positions on the **2009-10 QUSA Executive Committee** and the **2009-10 QUSA Salary and Benefits Review Committee**.

There are 12 positions available on the Executive Committee and 3 positions on the Salary and Benefits Committee. All QUSA members in good standing may be nominated or may nominate themselves.

The University acknowledges the contribution of Executive members. The Principal writes to Unit Heads/Supervisors encouraging them to provide elected members the necessary time to carry out their QUSA responsibilities.

For more information and a nomination form, contact the QUSA Office.

Completed forms should reach the QUSA Office, Room 235, JDUC, in time for the deadline of

**Friday, April 3, 4 pm**

### Questions?

Contact any member of the current Executive.

# QUSA ANNOUNCEMENTS

## QUSA is growing!

We welcome the following new members:

Vicky Andrews	University Registrar
Paul Carl	Aboriginal Student Centre
Amanda Consack	Medicine
Lynne Gaudet	Human Resources
Kathy Hoover	Geography
Marilyn Lavoie	Philosophy
Heather Moulton	Education
Beth McDonald	Applied Sciences
Cheryl Power	Rehabilitation Therapy
Mark Publicover	Geography
Phyllis Reid	Law
Karen Somers	NCIC Clinical Trials
Deborah Stirton-Massey	History
Remi Straus	University Registrar

## General Meeting Door Prizewinner

**Rita Foley** (Office of the University Registrar) was the lucky winner of the QUSA February General Meeting Door Prize of two tickets to the final concert of the 2008-09 Queen's School of Music Faculty Recital Series.

The concert took place at Dunning Hall on February 28, performed by voice instructors Elizabeth McDonald and Gregory Brookes, with pianist Allison Gagnon.

**THANK YOU** to the **School of Music** for donating the tickets.

[www.queensmusic.ca/music](http://www.queensmusic.ca/music)

### Erratum (Pension Plan Article, December 2008 *Courier*)

The formula provided in my article contained an omission. For earnings **after August 31, 1997**, the minimum guarantee calculation uses 1.4% of any earnings up to the YMPE. The 1.35% mentioned in the article only applies to earnings **up to August 31, 1997**. My apologies for this oversight.

*Peg Hauschildt*

## Call for Strawberry Social Volunteers

QUSA needs volunteers from our membership to help plan and organize this year's **June Strawberry Social**. If you can spare a few hours in the upcoming months to contribute your time and ideas, or if you can assist at the event, we'd love to hear from you. Contact **Sarah** in the QUSA office.



Think Spring ...



Think Strawberries!



... Think Sun

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We hope you are enjoying your new-look *Courier*! We have taken into account the feedback received from you, our members, and you have helped us define what is to be included in the Newsletter. You will see that we are attempting to reflect the professional face of our organization in our communications, the *Courier* being just one way in which we reach out to our membership. We encourage you to let us know what you think, and to offer suggestions for future editions.

If there is one thing you can count on, it's that you can't count on things staying the same! Not only is our *Courier* changing, but our workplace community is certainly feeling the changes of the 21st century. Some of you are now involved with QUASR, and we wish you all the best with that project. We are all hoping it will offer improved services to many of us on Campus.

Of top priority, however, are the discussions going on around us regarding our changing financial picture. I am sure you have been following the messages of Principal Williams who recently presented an updated report on the financial situation at Queen's, noting that even the 15% cut over the next three years may not be enough to balance the budget. This is because, during the upcoming three-year period, Queen's will run a deficit which will eventually need to be paid off.

The Principal suggested that several areas have been considered as we find a way first to meet the cuts and then the deficit. The Task Forces have found some operating cost-savings, and they will continue to work to identify more. Despite these continuing cost-reduction efforts, the largest part of our operating costs remains the wages bill which makes up 70% of the University's annual budget. Principal Williams indicated that this is the area where savings need to be found.

Some actions have already been taken towards such savings. The senior Administration has

frozen their own salaries for 2009. A hiring freeze has been implemented with exceptions made only in special circumstances.

The question you have is, most likely, how is QUSA proceeding on this front? QUSA does not want to act too quickly by offering proposals that may not in the long run be necessary. We plan to proceed with caution and care. We require transparency and a thorough review and understanding of the targeted savings from operational changes, as well as an account of anticipated savings from retirements, hiring freezes, etc. We will continue to meet with the other employee groups to ensure that information is shared between us and that we work together for the common good of this community. We also ask you for your suggestions, and invite you to contact the QUSA office with your ideas as to how our QUSA employee group can contribute to cost-savings.

Since these discussions are taking priority, Pension Plan discussions have been somewhat stalled, but meetings are set to resume next month. We are pleased to report that a draft of a new Workplace Dispute Policy has been approved by the QUSA Executive and presented to the Administration. On the Job Evaluation front, we have asked for a realistic and committed time-line for completing the new System, with a status report from Human Resources provided to us all.

And, finally, your Salary and Benefits Committee is working towards a new Agreement, and discussions are proceeding in spite of our current economic climate. You are most fortunate to have an outstanding team negotiating during this difficult period.

Please feel free to contact the QUSA office if you have any questions or concerns. We thank you for your commitment to QUSA and for your ongoing support of our efforts.

*Spring Forsberg*

# SALARY AND BENEFITS SURVEY RESULTS

**Lori Rand**, Chair of the **2008-09 QUSA Salary and Benefits Committee**, presented the results of the 2009 Staff Salary and Benefits Survey at the QUSA General Meeting held on February 24.

QUSA has been part of Queen's staff salary and benefits deliberations for the entire 37 years of its existence. The Survey is one of the many tools that the Salary and Benefits Committee uses to assist in negotiations with the Department of Human Resources.

All Queen's staff members were invited to complete the 2009 Survey, which was distributed electronically by HR. HR, however, had no input into the Survey content. There were 1,208 responses to 1,900 distributed surveys (a phenomenal 64% response rate). The response rate required to validate the Survey was 25%.

There was an even split between QUSA member and non-member Survey responses, and almost all QUSA members responded. The split between General Staff and RG&C Staff responses was 70%/30%.

The Survey was quick to complete, quick to analyze, and completely anonymous. It was not password-protected, but the assumption was made that staff would complete it honestly and once only. A 5% error factor is built in.

#### **Priority rankings were:**

1. Money in your pocket
2. Dental care
3. Pension Plan enhancements
4. Vision care
5. Vacation accrument
6. Alternative medical
7. Tuition assistance
8. Orthodontics
9. Elder care
10. Child care

#### **Key findings relating to child care and tuition benefits:**

- a) over the next 4 years there will be an increase in the number of staff members accessing both these benefits;
- b) over the next 4 years only 20% of the total staff population will be accessing these benefits.

The S&B Committee will continue to analyze the results in conjunction with other existing tools. The Committee will endeavour to set up Focus Groups to assist in interpreting the results – watch the QUSA ListServ messages for details. Full Survey results are posted on the QUSA website.

#### **Points arising from questions and observations from QUSA members at the General Meeting**

- **Pensions** – no. 3 on the rankings list but very important—the S&B Committee should be encouraged to make this part of its purview and bring it to the table, as Pension Plan negotiations are presently in a state of openness.
- **Purview** – S&B committees have fought for all benefits – the goal is to monitor them all.
- **Staff members “stuck” on the last step of their grade level** – this does not fall within the purview of the QUSA S&B Committee but can be addressed at the JCC.
- **Employee group negotiation order** – it has been discussed at the JCC that QUSA should be viewed as the last group in the chain to negotiate a new Agreement, not the first in a new chain.
- **Early retirement** – QUSA has communicated to the Administration that early retirement packages, if offered, should be offered to all employee groups, not just faculty.
- **Principal's position on Queen's staffing** – the Queen's staff has been “cut to the bone”, and Queen's is operating with the minimum staff complement for sustainability.
- **Actuarial study** – QUSA should consider doing one.
- **Tax implications of tuition benefit** – if paid to the employee, as at Queen's, this is a taxable benefit – an employee at UWO has recently challenged this in an attempt to have tuition benefit amounts paid directly to the student – QUSA will follow up.
- **General/RG&C tuition benefits** – these are separate pots – RG&C funds cannot be transferred to the General Staff tuition fund because the RG&C fund is supported by a central fund that principal investigators pay into – the General Staff tuition fund was underfunded in relation to demand during the current S&B Agreement period and has been topped up with surplus money from the child care fund – it is hoped that the data from the 2009 Survey will guide the S&B Committee in negotiating for a more accurate General Staff tuition fund amount for the next Agreement.

**THANK YOU** to the hard-working members of this year's QUSA Salary and Benefits Committee:

**Lori Rand, Pam Bandy-Dafoe, Michelle Knapp-Hermer, Davin Carlson, Carla Ferreira and Dean McKeown**

# QUSA EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

QUSA organized an **Information Session for Research, Grant and Contract (RG&C) QUSA members** on Wednesday, January 28, in the John Orr Room, JDUC. About 25 members attended. Presenters were the Queen's Department of Human Resources team of **Lorna Baxter, Patti Evaristo** and **Pat Eaton**.

The presentation focused on the Queen's **Redeployment Process**, which is only applicable if a contract is terminated early. A link to the full presentation is available on the QUSA website.

The HR team spent about 30 minutes answering a wide range of questions. For example, staff members wanted to know if they were eligible for early retirement. Patti Evaristo provided the following response after the meeting:

*Employees can take advantage of the early retirement options at Queen's if the employee is 50 or over and has 5 years of accumulated service or more, and the sum of both the age and the accumulated service is at least 65 years or older.*

Because of the good turnout and broad spectrum of questions from our members, Lorna Baxter confirmed that HR would be willing to do more such presentations. QUSA will take up this offer in the fall.

**Kelly Petrunka**

Around 85 QUSA members braved the cold temperature to file into Ellis Auditorium on Tuesday, February 3, to hear a brief **Overview of the Queen's Pension Plan** and to participate in a question-and-answer session with our presenter **Bob Weisnagel**.

Many of the questions related to the differences between the two Plan options (money purchase and minimum guarantee) and how they worked. Others were interested in learning about how the recent turmoil in the global markets would affect their pensions.

At the conclusion of the 50-minute session, Bob Weisnagel encouraged all those contemplating

retirement in the next one to two years to contact him for individualized information before making the decision. Some staff members stayed on to speak directly to Bob.

**Peg Hauschildt**

The aim of the **QUSA Education Committee** is to continue to provide a balance of professional and personal development opportunities for QUSA members. The winter term has been very busy with noon-hour events held in JDUC, including:

- A visual presentation and update on the progress of the **Queen's Centre**, facilitated through the office of Ann Browne, Associate Vice-Principal (Operations and Facilities) - *January 8*.
- An update on the **Fields and Stadium Project** (facilities and fundraising), presented by Marie Miller and Adam Say of the Office of Advancement—*January 27*.

During January and February the Education Committee partnered with the KFL&A Health Unit to present a five-week Wednesday noon-hour program **Motiv8**. The sessions were delivered by health professionals, including a physical activity specialist, a public health dietitian, a community food advisor and public health nurses. Each participant was lent a pedometer and received a log book, education support materials and other incentives. Feedback was unanimously positive.

Some of the topics under consideration for the balance of this academic year and into the next are:

- Community Outreach Centre (Aberdeen St.)
- Spirituality Panel
- Cultural Festivals
- Student Initiatives
- Becoming a Queen's Student

The QUSA Education Committee welcomes your suggestions for future topics and your feedback on our noon-hour sessions. Contact our Committee Chair [sandra.jeffers@queensu.ca](mailto:sandra.jeffers@queensu.ca).

**Sandra Jeffers and Jessica Maskell**

# ROUND-UP

## About QUSA

The Queen's University Staff Association (QUSA) has been representing the interests of Queen's University non-unionized staff for 37 years. Membership is voluntary and new members are always welcome to join. Visit the website for an enrolment form.

### 2008-09 Executive Committee

**President:**

Spring Forsberg, Arts & Science 78560

**Vice-President:**

Peg Hauschildt, Physics 32169

**Secretary:**

Carolyn Morrison, Psychology 32493

**Treasurer:**

Tracy Elliott, University Secretariat 77225

### Members-at-Large

**General Staff:**

Jane Dauncey, Psychology 32875

Patti George, Strategic Procurement Services 32136

Sandra Jeffers, International Centre 78434

Michelle Knapp-Hermer, Global Development 77210

Lori Rand, Residences 32048

**Research, Grant & Contract Staff:**

Pam Bandy-Dafoe, Chemistry 32630

Kelly Petrunka, Better Beginnings 74952

**West Campus Staff:**

Jessica Maskell, Education 77295

**QUSA Business Administrator**

Sarah Pugh 32215

## Financial Planning Advice

The **Alumni Relations Office** and its affinity partner, the **Clearsight Investment Program**, are offering **FREE** investment and retirement planning seminars to Queen's faculty and staff:

### When Bad Things Happen to Good Portfolios

Wednesday, April 22, 12-1 pm or 6-7pm

Robert Sutherland Room, JDUC

Light refreshments served

For more information, email

[alumserv@queensu.ca](mailto:alumserv@queensu.ca)

## Physical Fitness

Registration is open for **Queen's Recreation** Spring programs. Classes begin April 6.

**New additions: Belly Dancing, Fitness Plus**

Register at the PEC Customer Service Desk.

Phone: 32500

Web: [www.gogaelsgo.com/brochure](http://www.gogaelsgo.com/brochure)

## Community Volunteer Opportunity

If you have the time to help make a difference in the life of a sick child, retired QUSA member

**Cherrilyn Yalin** invites you consider

volunteering for **Almost Home**, a safe, friendly and inviting "home away from home" for families whose children require medical care in Kingston hospitals. For more information contact Nancy

Irwin: [nancyirwin@almosthome.on.ca](mailto:nancyirwin@almosthome.on.ca)

## About the Courier

*The Courier is the Newsletter of the Queen's University Staff Association. From 2009 it will be published three times per year, in March, June and November.*

Editorial Committee:

*Spring Forsberg, Peg Hauschildt, Sarah Pugh*

*The Courier belongs to you, our QUSA members, and we welcome your submissions. We encourage you to share your news of milestones in your life and career (births, marriages, promotions, retirements, volunteer service, etc.). Before each issue we will advise, via our ListServ, the deadline for receipt of such information.*

*Longer articles and letters on topics of interest to the Queen's University staff community, or in response to Courier content, are also welcome. We ask you to contact the Business Administrator at the QUSA Office by the first day of the month prior to the publication month of the next issue, so that a word limit can be agreed and space can be allocated.*

*Submissions must be original and signed. Opinions expressed are those of the writer. Please include your name, affiliation and phone number, and submit by email to:*

[qusa@queensu.ca](mailto:qusa@queensu.ca)

*We reserve the right to edit submissions to address style, length and legal considerations. We also reserve the right to edit or reject any submission that does not comply with policy.*