



# Courier

Queen's University Staff Association

Est'd 1972

VOLUME: 2/08 - APRIL 2008



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*QUSA - Working for YOU!*

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### 2007/2008 EXECUTIVE Committee

(term July 1/07 to June 30/08)

**President:** Spring Forsberg  
Faculty of Arts & Science 78560

**Vice- President:** Gail MacAllister  
Psychology 36406

**Secretary:** Carolyn Morrison  
Psychology 32493

**Treasurer:** Sheri Foster  
Political Studies 77451

### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

**General Staff:**  
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Patti George, Purchasing 74233  
Lori Rand, Residences 32048

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8:30 AM to 2:30 PM



## *QUSA General Meeting, February 28<sup>th</sup>*

*by Sharon David*

*The QUSA general meeting was held on Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup> and was well attended. President Spring Forsberg began the meeting with an update on a recent review of QUSA's accounts. In particular, the QUSA executive prepared a 2-3 year projection to determine if a fee increase is necessary to cover QUSA's modestly growing operating costs. Spring also discussed one issue resulting from the recent QUSA Membership Survey, namely exploring the possibility of unionization. As a result, an additional survey to obtain a more accurate response concerning member's views on unionization was emailed to the membership (see page 4 ).*

*Sheri Foster presented the treasurer's report. Next, Lori Rand presented an excellent overview of the results from the QUSA Membership Survey. The survey response was very good with 52% of our members participating. The executive plans to review the results of the survey and develop a plan of action. Please see Jessica Maskell's article on page 4 and 5 of this Courier issue.*

*Our guest speaker was Dr. Bill Cannon – Chair of the Queen's Pension Committee (and an associate professor in the School of Business) who spoke about the current pension plan issues. Dr. Cannon has been the Chair since 2000 and recently announced his intention to step down as a result of the Board of Trustees proposed governance changes, but remains Acting Chair at the moment. He provided us with an overview as to why the university has indicated a need to review the Queen's pension plan (QPP). The original goal of the QPP was to provide a cost effective joint RRSP for all Queen's employees. The administration's view is different – the QPP is a fringe benefit offered to employees, for which they would like to minimize their costs. Dr. Cannon confirmed that there have not been any changes to the QPP in 30 years and indicated that we have the best pension plan in the country. The Queen's Pension Plan is a hybrid plan – a defined contribution with a defined benefit (the minimum guarantee). We generally get the higher of either the money purchase (the amount of money we contribute to our plan which is our defined benefit) or a minimum guarantee. In the past, most employees retired with the money purchase pension (previously after 15-18 years of contribution but now realistically after 22-26 years of contribution). In the last 2 years however, the number of late career starters have increased – these employees will retire with the minimum guarantee as they have not accrued sufficient years of contributions to the plan and hence, will require a monetary "top-up" to their plan. Other issues the plan is currently facing include the fact that our retirees are living longer and that the rates of return on our investments have been lower.*

*Dr. Cannon discussed the proposed changes to the governance process and the effects it could have had on the QPP. He announced that on February 26<sup>th</sup> the Board of Trustees withdrew the proposed changes after much negative feedback. Instead of the governance changes a new proposal was tabled to change the pension plan committee membership. Two existing administration members (Vice-President Operations and Vice-President Human resources) will be replaced with two non-administrative members chosen by the Board of Trustees. This proposal also includes the drafting of a more comprehensive pension committee constitution. Dr. Cannon hopes that this draft will be available for review before the fall Board of Trustees meeting. He plans to remain as the Acting Chair if all goes well with these changes; should we hear that he is stepping down then that will be our red flag that things have gone awry.*

*Finally, the underlying pension deficit problem still needs to be addressed. The current unfunded liability in the plan is around \$65 million (the plan needs to have enough money in its coffers to pay out every active and retired member in the event that the plan is dissolved – this has been legislated by the government). To address the unfunded liability deficit, proposals such as putting a cap on the minimum guarantee will be discussed down the road. Keep watching for QPP updates from QUSA.*



## President's Report

by Spring Forsberg



*Is that spring in the air...or just lots of exciting buzz!!! I cannot remember a more vibrant campus with change in the works – not only when we look at the physical environment, but also when we look at the mood on campus. There is a cry for something new. Perhaps we have spring fever – we want growth, change, and improvement. This time it isn't just a coat of paint on a deck, or fresh flowers in the garden but perhaps a change for staff and how we move forward in an uncertain climate.*

*The QUSA Executive was motivated by the results of the Survey, a report which you will find in this Courier, to further survey our members regarding the repeated comment of unionization. During my tenure as QUSA President I have heard rumblings of unionization and know that there are strong feelings either way. Until now those comments were somewhat sporadic. After this recent survey however, it became apparent that we want to meet the needs of those who have expressed an interest in unionization so we are attempting to be an information supplier. We are not advocating one way or the other. But we do see our role as providing you with an opportunity to be made aware of the various unions, and to gather as much information so that you/we are mindful of the type of things we will want to consider if unionization moves forward.*

*Of course there are many things going on other than the discussion of unionization. The Pension concern regarding governance has been resolved for the most part with the outstanding issue once again being the need to work out details regarding the pension shortfall. Further, members of the Executive have been active in organizing educational sessions, attending Senate, Board of Trustee meetings, reviewing the survey results to help guide the Salary and Benefits committee, and continuing to work with Human Resources on resuming the discussions regarding the Job Evaluation System review and additional items that were part of our Agreement.*

*Upcoming events include QUSA hosting the COUSA Conference (Council of Ontario University Staff Associations) in June. We are looking forward to showcasing our staff and campus. And of course June will also bring strawberries! This year the majority of our QUSA events have been educational with only a few social events so we look forward to this annual social event which seems to be the unofficial start of summer.*

*To date, this has been an extremely busy and active Executive. We continue to work towards improving our work place and ensuring the Administration is aware of the issues that are of concern for staff. We hope the next few months bring not only the signs of spring but also information that will help move us forward effectively.*

### Welcome New Members!

- \* Charlie Cooney, Mechanical & Materials Eng.
- \* Karen MacIntyre, Environmental Studies
- \* Vanessa McCourt, Four Directions Aboriginal Centre
- \* Shelagh Mirski, Environmental Health & Safety
- \* Katherine Peter, Athletics & Recreation
- \* Amelia Ponte-Viveiros, Political Studies
- \* Deborah Stirton-Massey, History
- \* Karen Topping, School of Environmental Studies



### Fond Farewell

*Fond Farewell to  
Linda Kemp,  
Senior Awards Officer,  
Office of the University Registrar,  
Student Awards  
who will be retiring in April  
after 28 years of dedicated service.  
Enjoy your retirement Linda!!!!*

## QUSA Survey Results



*The QUSA Executive would like to thank all our members who recently participated in two on-line surveys. The first survey regarding QUSA's role within the university had a response rate of 320 members, or 52%. The results of this survey prompted the creation of a second survey regarding the question of unionization. It had a response rate of 410 participants, or 67%. Your QUSA Executive will dedicate time to review the results and implement any necessary changes.*

The results of both surveys are below. Please note that all individual comments have been deleted in order to protect the confidentiality of our members.

### Unionization Survey Results:

1. I am interested in pursuing unionization.

**Yes 197 (50.3%)    No 195 (49.7%)    Abstain 18**

2. I want QUSA to connect me with information regarding unions and unionization.

**Yes 216 (53.9%)    No 185 (46.1%)    Abstain 9**

In response to this survey a QUSA Executive sub-committee has been formed to organize a general information session for members on unionization.

### QUSA Membership Survey Results

1. I would prefer to be informed about QUSA events by (check all that apply):

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
The Courier	26.4%	84
Email (listserv)	94.3%	300
QUSA Webpage	15.1%	48
Posters	2.2%	7
The Gazette	11.9%	38
Facebook Message	3.1%	10

2. I find the following QUSA communications:

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Very Useful</b>	<b>Useful</b>	<b>Moderately Useful</b>	<b>Not Useful</b>	<b>Don't Use</b>	<b>N/A</b>
QUSA Website ( <a href="http://www.queensu.ca/qusa/">http://www.queensu.ca/qusa/</a> )	21	41	61	7	73	5
The Courier	36	81	54	11	25	6
Listserv Emails	173	89	13	2	4	3

3. I currently use (check all that apply):

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Facebook	25.8%	79
MySpace	1.6%	5
MSN	21.9%	67
Queen's Wiki	6.2%	19
None of the above	59.8%	183

4. I would join a QUSA Facebook Group:

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	14.4%	46
No	58.9%	188
Maybe	26.6%	85

5. I feel the main benefits of my QUSA membership are (check all that apply):

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
A unified voice of non-unionized staff	84.4%	259
A body to provide input into University decision-making	78.5%	241
A body to provide input into staff policies, procedures and issues	83.4%	256
A body to negotiate salary and benefits with administration	89.9%	276
Staff representation within administrative committees	70.4%	216
Education sessions	39.1%	120
Social activities	29.3%	90
A sense of community	30.6%	94
A body to represent my needs	52.1%	160

6. I feel that my QUSA membership dues are a worthwhile investment.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	93.1%	283
No	6.9%	21

7. QUSA provides a variety of leadership opportunities (e.g., member of standing committees - volunteer; member of executive committee - elected; member of Salary and Benefits - elected; a variety of other involvement opportunities). I am interested in becoming involved in a QUSA opportunity.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	24.2%	69
No	75.8%	216

8. QUSA currently offers a variety of personal and professional development opportunities (i.e., education sessions) in addition to social events. I feel that the quantity and quality of these events are (check all that apply):

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Just right	59.5%	154
Too many	1.5%	4
Not enough	10.0%	26
I would like more education sessions	24.7%	64
I would like more social events	7.7%	20
I would like less education sessions	1.5%	4
I would like less social events	2.7%	7
I am happy with the quality of the education sessions	28.2%	73

9. If indexed in a logical manner, I would access/reference The Courier on the QUSA website (<http://www.queensu.ca/qusa/newsletter.html>).

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	67.6%	190
No	32.4%	91



## *Notice of Motion: - Membership Fee Increase*

Despite rising operating costs, QUSA has managed to maintain our current membership fee for over 10 years and has done so by increasing our membership and cutting out some expenses (*i.e. giving up a photocopier; changing hard copy newsletter to on-line copy; list serve electronic agendas, and notices for meetings and other events; posting general meeting minutes to the web site*).

However, the Executive has had to consider rising costs and realizes that we can no longer sustain our operating costs based on our current level of revenue. We have carefully considered several scenarios to meet our financial projection which demonstrates that we will be working in a deficit position for the upcoming year.

Ideally, we should increase the fees by \$1 a month to cover our costs and still have money in reserve for unexpected expenses (e.g.: legal consultation for the next salary proposal). However, the Executive would like to minimize the increase to \$0.50 and subsidize the reserve money by using accumulated interest from the original G.I.C. investment. Although we would like to keep our reserve fund to cover any costs in dispute resolution, it has been accumulating interest over several years and is presently valued around \$12,492.00.

In order to minimize the increase to our members, we would like to maintain a pot of \$10,000 and transfer monies above this amount into our operating budget. Also any future interest would be transferred into our operating account. This keeps the dispute resolution reserve at the same level.

### ***At the upcoming Annual General Meeting the following motions will be proposed:***

**Motion 1:** To transfer balance over and above \$10,000 in G.I.C. to operating budget.

**Motion 2:** To increase membership fees by \$0.50 per month, effective July 1, 2008.

**Note:** *If Motion 1 is not approved, Motion 3 will be presented as follows:*

**Motion 3:** To increase membership fees by \$1 per month, effective July 1, 2008.

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## *Unionization Survey: What's Next?*

*Did you know that 50% of our membership were interested in learning more about unionization and 50% were not? The Executive was happy with the survey's response rate of 67% and could see the strong interest at both ends of the scale with regards to this issue.*



*The survey was not a mandate for QUSA to begin the process of unionization but to begin to provide information about it. To meet the needs of those who want to know more about unionization an executive sub-committee was established to determine the next steps. The sub-committee and the QUSA Executive felt that it is our role to provide information regarding unionization to our membership. To ensure we meet the needs of our membership, the sub-committee recommended to the QUSA Executive that we host a lunch hour presentation on the pros and cons of unionization. Dr. Robert Hickey from Policy Studies has accepted our invitation to speak on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in Dupuis Auditorium at noon. We hope this will be informative and will encourage staff to think of questions they might want to ask the various unions when they receive information from them.*

*The sub-committee also recommended that we notify various unions of an interest on campus in hopes that they will offer information sessions to staff. We will advertise the details of those meetings to our members to ensure that all are aware of any information sessions.*

## *Queen's University Glaxo Wellcome Clinical Education Centre - Learning Together for a Healthy Future.*

*Nursing student, child volunteer and parent ... photo by Bernard Clark*



*Ever wonder how nurses and doctors learn to perform physical examinations or gain experience asking a patient about their health? Queen's nursing, medical, and rehabilitation therapy students learn these skills at the Glaxo Wellcome Clinical Education Centre (CEC). The CEC enhances traditional opportunities for health sciences students to learn and develop their clinical and communication skills in a unique experiential environment.*

The original centre was conceived in the late 1960s by clinical teachers in Queen's School of Medicine as a way to face the challenge of too few hospital-based patients available for clinical skills learning. Their idea was to create a centre in which students could learn clinical skills with

the help from volunteer "patients" from the community who would allow students to practice, make mistakes, reflect and try again in a lower stress, lower stakes environment than in the hospital. From this vision, the first Clinical Learning Centre was created and opened its doors in 1972. In 2000, the present, much expanded Glaxo Wellcome Clinical Education Centre was opened in the Louise D. Acton Building as an interprofessional and interdisciplinary learning space. Through the planning and delivery of educational initiatives, the Faculty of Health Sciences teachers use the CEC to provide creative clinical education that is based on patient centered care.

Through hands-on exchanges with "patients" from the Kingston community, Queen's health science students practice patient encounters with either Volunteer Patients (who offer true health information and/or present with authentic illnesses or disabilities) or Standardized Patients (who are trained to realistically imitate presenting distinct illnesses, injuries or disabilities). Students learn how to interview, take medical histories, perform physical examinations and conduct specific assessments. These "patients" play a central role in the functioning of the CEC and are fundamental to the students' learning and understanding of health and illness from the patient's perspective. Key to the successful operation of these programs is the role of Kingston citizens who willingly participate and the careful recruitment and training which accompanies the coordination of matching appropriate "patients" with the goals and needs of the diverse clinical sessions in the various disciplines.

A fully accessible facility, the CEC is a specifically designed educational space that caters to clinical education needs through the replication of a variety of hospital and community-based clinical settings. With its specialized audiovisual and communications technology, and supported by over 500 Volunteer and over 100 Standardized Patients, the CEC offers numerous opportunities for students to practice and acquire feedback on the development of their skills. The Centre welcomes and encourages use of its facilities and services for curriculum delivery and professional education in other academic programs outside of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Community and private sector groups may also reserve use of the CEC on a fee for use basis.

Many Queen's staff are Volunteer or Standardized Patients. If you would like to find out how to become a Volunteer or Standardized Patient, or would like a tour of the CEC, please call us at 32380 (613-533-2380). You can find more information about the CEC on our website <http://gwcec.queensu.ca>.



**The QUSA Education Committee presents ...**

## *Obsessive Compulsive Disorder*

*Do you wipe off the doorknobs in your home each time someone touches them? Do you go to great lengths to avoid stepping on cracks in the sidewalk? Or do you feel compelled to wash your hands so often that they've become raw and chapped?*

*Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is an illness that causes people to have unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and to repeat certain behaviors (compulsions) over and over again. We all have habits and routines in our daily lives, such as brushing our teeth before bed. However, for people with OCD, patterns of behavior get in the way of their daily lives. Most people with OCD know that their obsessions and compulsions make no sense, but they can't ignore or stop them.*

### **What are obsessions?**

Obsessions are ideas, images and impulses that run through the person's mind over and over again. A person with OCD doesn't want to have these thoughts and finds them disturbing but he or she can't control them. Sometimes these thoughts just come once in a while and are only mildly annoying. Other times, a person who has OCD will have obsessive thoughts all the time.

### **The following are some common obsessions:**

- *Fear of dirt or germs*
- *Disgust with bodily waste or fluids*
- *Concern with order, symmetry (balance) and exactness*
- *Worry that a task has been done poorly, even when the person knows this is not true*
- *Fear of thinking evil or sinful thoughts*
- *Thinking about certain sounds, images, words or numbers all the time*
- *Need for constant reassurance*
- *Fear of harming a family member or friend*

### **What are compulsions?**

Obsessive thoughts make people who have OCD feel nervous and afraid. They try to get rid of these feelings by performing certain behaviors according to "rules" that they make up for themselves. These behaviors are called compulsions, and compulsive behaviors are sometimes also called rituals. For example, a person who has OCD may have obsessive thoughts about germs. Because of these thoughts, the person may wash his or her hands repeatedly after using a public toilet. Performing these behaviors usually only makes the nervous feelings go away for a short time. When the fear and nervousness return, the person who has OCD repeats the routine all over again.

### **The following are some common compulsions:**

- *Cleaning and grooming, such as washing hands, showering or brushing teeth over and over again*
- *Checking drawers, door locks and appliances to be sure they are shut, locked or turned off*
- *Repeating: such as going in and out of a door, sitting down and getting up from a chair, or touching certain objects several times*
- *Ordering and arranging items in certain ways*
- *Counting over and over to a certain number*
- *Saving newspapers, mail or containers when they are no longer needed*
- *Seeking constant reassurance and approval*

### **How common is OCD?**

For many years, OCD was thought to be rare. Some recent studies show that as many as 3 million Americans ages 18 to 54 may have OCD at any one time. This is about 2.3% of the people in this age group. OCD affects men and women equally.

## What causes OCD?

### What causes obsessive-compulsive disorder isn't fully understood. Main theories include:

- **Biology:** Researchers believe OCD is a result of changes in your body's own natural chemistry.
- **Environment:** Researchers believe that OCD stems from behavior habits that you learn over time.
- **Insufficient Serotonin:** An insufficient level of serotonin, one of your brain's chemical messengers, may contribute to OCD. Some studies that compare images of the brains of people who have OCD with the brains of those who don't show differences in brain-activity patterns. In addition, people with OCD who take medications that enhance the action of serotonin often have fewer symptoms.
- **Strep Throat:** Studies suggest that some children develop OCD after contracting strep throat (this is termed **PANDAS** – Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections). The research suggests that an antibody against strep throat bacteria mistakenly acts like a brain enzyme which disrupts communication between neurons in the brain and may trigger OCD. These studies, however, are controversial and more evidence is needed before strep throat can be blamed.

## How is OCD treated?

Obsessive-compulsive disorder treatment can sometimes be difficult, and it may not offer a cure. However, OCD treatment can help bring symptoms under control so that they don't rule your daily life. OCD treatment has two main components: psychotherapy and medications.

### Psychotherapy

A type of therapy called **cognitive behaviour therapy** has been shown to be the most effective form of therapy for OCD in both children and adults. Cognitive behaviour therapy involves retraining your thought patterns and routines so that compulsive behaviours are no longer necessary. One approach in particular is called exposure and response prevention. This therapy involves gradually exposing you to a feared object or obsession, such as dirt, and teaching you healthy ways to deal with it. Learning the techniques and new thought patterns takes effort and practice, but it's worth it. Most people with OCD show improvement of signs and symptoms with cognitive behaviour therapy.

### Medications

As treatment for OCD **medication** can help about 70% of the time. The principal class of medications that do this are antidepressants known as serotonin reuptake inhibitors, such as clomipramine (Anafranil), paroxetine (Paxil), fluvoxamine and sertraline (Zoloft). Antidepressants may be helpful for OCD because they may increase levels of serotonin which may be deficient. All of these medications have side effects and safety concerns, and you may need to try several medications before finding one that's both effective and tolerable. It is important to realize that although helpful, it is rare for any of these medications to eliminate symptoms completely.

### Information taken from:

- *The Ontario Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Network:* <http://www.ocdontario.org/>
- *Obsessive Compulsive Foundation:* <http://www.ocfoundation.org/>
- *Mayo Clinic:* <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/obsessive-compulsive-disorder/DS00189/DSECTION=1>



## Queen's Golf Tournament

The Annual Queen's Golf Tournament will take place on  
**Wednesday, June 18 – 12:30pm Shotgun Start – Colonnade Golf Club.**  
Register before May 15 to be eligible for a reduced rate. For further details:

<http://queensrecreation.com/index.php?section=4&course=27>





*Volunteers  
Required for the  
Strawberry  
Social Planning  
Committee.*

If you can help us out ... please contact the [QUSA Office](#). The time commitment is until the end of June.

*2008/2009  
Executive Election*



Within the next few weeks you will be receiving a ballot to vote for the position of Vice-President on the 2008/2009 QUSA Executive.

Please take the time to vote and return your ballot to the QUSA office by the May 2 deadline.

*Let's Hear  
From You*

**Send a Bouquet:**  
*Give someone a pat on the back: let us know if something is going right.*

**Sound-Off:**  
Have a comment, complaint, question?

Bouquets/Sound-Offs should be sent to the QUSA Office, Room 235, JDUC



**Contributors  
Wanted for:**

- Announcements
- Bouquets
- Compassion in Action
- Sound-Off
- Office Next Door
- Any other topic

**NOTE:**

*Announcements for staff members other than yourself require permission from the staff member concerned.*

Submissions must be signed so information can be clarified with the writer, if necessary.

*What your QUSA Executive Members Have Been Up To...*

We'd like to introduce you to a new piece for the QUSA Courier which we hope will become a fairly regular item. As part of our responsibility to our membership, in addition to attending bi-weekly meetings with the Executive, we also participate in matters of mutual interest with the Administration that include but not are limited to issues such as salary levels, policy items, and working conditions. So, here's a list of what some of us have been up to in recent months – please contact any one of us if you have questions and/or comments:

**President: Spring Forsberg**

- Pension meeting with the various bargaining units and Human Resources
- Monthly meeting with Rod Morrison (VP, Human Resources)
- Quarterly meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee with Principal Hitchcock and various VPs

**Vice-President: Gail McAllister**

- Various meetings with Rod Morrison (VP, Human Resources) regarding staff issues

**Secretary: Carolyn Morrison**

- Quarterly meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee with Principal Hitchcock and various Vps

**Treasurer: Sheri Foster**

- Confederation of University Staff Associations (COUSA) conference in Toronto

**Members-at-Large:**

**Lori Rand**

- Quarterly meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee with Principal Hitchcock and various VPs
- Monthly meeting of the University Senate

**Peg Hauschildt**

- Pension meeting with the various bargaining units and Human Resources
- Board of Trustees Pension Committee meeting
- Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting