

WLU F A D V O C A T E

Building community through dialogue, discussion, and debate.

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Perspectives: IPRM

Categorically, a Mistake

Peter Eglin, Sociology

The IPRM project misconceives the nature of the academy. It assumes that the evaluation of academic work can be done by extracting and abstracting measures of performance from the actual practices that constitute that work in the local contexts in which those practices have their home. How good a given program is, whether it is worth enhancing, maintaining or minimizing, depends on an indefinitely large range of considerations, including irremediably contested assessment criteria, and potential effects in the lives of students or the society generally that may not be apparent for decades. The idea that such determinations can be made by an abstracted measurement exercise involving collecting “data” on such things as “student demand” is simply preposterous.

This does not mean that evaluation cannot be done. Obviously not, for it is continually done. But its doing is traditionally and properly located in close affiliation to – indeed, as part and parcel of – the very activities it evaluates. This is most truly the case for the base activity of the university, namely the thinking work that goes into what Ernest Boyer called the scholarships of teaching, research (discovery and integration) and applica-

tion. Each academic evaluates their own work as a constitutive part of doing it— whether preparing classes, revising manuscripts, devising new experimental tests or whatever. In turn, fellow practitioners in critical communities evaluate one another’s work when presented for curriculum review or publication. And whole programs are evaluated by departments and their curriculum committees, faculty councils and their curriculum committees, academic planning committees, senates and periodic review committees. At all levels, disciplinary or faculty colleagues do the evaluating and academic criteria are primary. Resource implications are surely considered but academic criteria come first. Moreover, what might be called “disciplinary respect” is accorded each lower level of this decision chain by each higher level. Thus do academic institutions function.

Two implications for the IPRM project follow. First, we have no need for another system of program evaluation as a well established, academically based, collegial and democratic system already exists in the university. But secondly, and more profoundly, the idea that the fruits of this institutional web of evaluative decisions can be captured, or replaced, by a set

(cont’d on p.2)

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Categorically *(cont'd from p.1)*

of administratively-driven, abstractly formulated categories of assessment removed from the local, institutional practices that give them meaning is a category mistake of the first order. The *value* of the academic activities thereby assessed is lost. The very

procedure designed to measure the phenomenon in question loses it.

See also Peter's article on The WLUFAs Blog at:

[Corporate Rule, Universities and the IPRM](#)

IPRM is a Reality: WLUFAs Needs to "Check In"

Rick Henderson, Physics and Computer Science

It is now January 5, 2015, and with a new year comes a time to reflect. The much-needed holidays were a time to relax and I can now look back at the IPRM process with a pair of (mostly) fresh eyes.

Essentially, this is a call to the WLUFAs Executive to look more closely at the realities of running a university in today's economic climate, and I hope it will encourage other WLUFAs Members who feel the same way to discuss with the Executive how we – as Members – want our voice to be heard. We should not let the voices of the few and the loud speak for us all.

What follows here is a communication I sent to members of the WLUFAs Executive this past November. I still stand behind what I wrote:

As both a CAS Member and a representative on the IPRM Planning Task Force, I am sick and tired of reading material that purports to "come from WLUFAs" when it does not have the full backing of all of its constituents.

WLUFAs recently put numerous resources into creating and sending out a PDF meant to derail the IPRM process. This was a waste of time and energy, especially when WLUFAs could do better in serving its Members by helping to find solutions for problems in the real lives of their constituents or, perhaps, by making sure that their own academic programs are valid and representative of the current needs in education for students.

*The backlash demonstrated by faculty members (primarily in the Faculty of Arts in Waterloo, as well as Faculty of Liberal Arts in Brantford) is exactly what is described in the early chapters of the book by Robert E. Dickeson, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*. He describes how during this process faculty fre-*

quently try desperately to cling to their bits of ground for fear of losing it, but that this is most likely because those same faculty have failed to stay relevant in today's (educational and economical) environment.

All of this anti-IPRM work is an insult to the faculty members who have laboured for long hours to develop the IPRM process as a Laurier-created solution to the Laurier problem of limited resources. This is not merely a copy of "the Dickeson model."

Stop getting in the way of progress. Stop trying to hold your own piece of the pie, and think about making Laurier a better place for everyone in the coming centuries. That is what IPRM is all about.

I ask the readers to remember that the IPRM process is a Laurier-grown process designed to make the university a better place for the future. It is meant to give some direction on what kinds of programs should be approved, and which shouldn't. As always, academic program change starts in the departments, and eventually moves to Senate for approval. This is a legislated requirement of the University Act and will continue to be the case once the IPRM process gets implemented, as stated numerous times by the Planning Task Force co-chairs, and re-iterated by Dr. Blouw in a recent interview. [Specific reference to this can be found on the PTF report, page 22, second last paragraph.](#) Every single person on the Planning Task Force, the Academic Priorities team, and the Administrative Priorities team was nominated by Laurier staff and faculty. Some of the Resource Management team were appointed because that team required specialized knowledge of finance and resource management, but the rest of the team was also nominated by staff and faculty.

IPRM is truly a "made at Laurier" solution.

Why Target a High Quality PhD Program for Elimination?

Jason Neelis, Religion and Culture

The IPRM Report's rationale for recommending to phase out or minimize Laurier's participation in the joint PhD program, Religious Diversity in North America, is difficult for me, my colleagues at both institutions, and our excellent students to comprehend.

Our "high quality" program uniquely focuses on a critical area of Religious Studies and has a very strong record in bringing prestige to Wilfrid Laurier University since it was initiated ten years ago. Twenty graduates who have completed dissertations (13 of them at Laurier, including two recent gold medalists) have distinguished themselves in permanent academic positions here at Laurier and elsewhere in Canada and in the United States, in highly competitive post-doctoral fellowships from SSHRC and ACLS, and in non-academic professional roles as archivists and social justice advocates.

Given the PhD program's quality, productivity and impact, why is it targeted for elimination? [According to the rationale](#), the "Joint program with UW is high quality but resource intensive. Program is disproportionately supported by UW, which also attracts more students due to better financial support." In actuality, however, the program does indeed generate significant resources for Laurier, since PhD students have attracted external funding from SSHRC, OGS and other sources, winning \$115,000 in research fellowships and scholarships this year alone, far surpassing the amount of internal scholarship funding. To put it crudely, the joint PhD program gives Laurier great returns on its investment, or more bang for its buck!

The assertion that more students are drawn to the University of Waterloo than to Laurier because of relatively greater financial support is demonstra-

ble false. There are currently 24 PhD students evenly split between WLU and UW, with 12 at each institution. This selective program fulfills its promise of intensive supervision and collaborative advising by typically admitting only two students to each institution per year, but admissions vary from cohort to cohort. The argument that better financial support from UW (which is not verifiable) correlates to less demand at Laurier is not borne out by admissions, acceptance of offers, or completion rates. PhD students are attracted to Laurier and UW due to the specialized expertise of faculty advisors and other considerations which are more difficult to quantify than relatively insignificant differences in funding packages.

It is troubling that the rationale for the recommendation to eliminate the joint PhD program was apparently not based on reliable data or considerations of quality and impact. The discrepancy between IPRM's rationale and reality calls for more careful reconsideration and fact-checking. Considerable effort and resources of time and energy are necessary to justify, establish and maintain a successful PhD program. This program's accomplishments and contributions to Laurier should not be so easily dismissed.

Higher Education in Peril: A Case for Anthropology

Natasha Pravaz, Anthropology

The IPRM report recommends that Laurier's Anthropology BA Combined be "Phase[d] out based on shrinking faculty complement and declining demand." No other relevant explanations of the reasoning behind the recommendation are provided in the report, nor were they forthcoming at the Town Hall meeting where I sought answers to my questions. Considering the magnitude of this recommendation, I was disturbed to find no public forum where I could address my concerns. The Kafkaesque feeling only grew when I was told that I should

just submit my comments online (though I am not to expect an individual response).

Academic programs across the province undergo painstaking Ministry-mandated periodic reviews, which involve many hours of reflection over a period of several months on the part of faculty members. Each program writes an extensive document which considers a period of seven (as opposed to four) years, makes reference to the previous review documents as points of reference, and includes the detailed assessment of external professionals in their fields of expertise. While the disparities between periodic reviews and the IPRM report in the thoroughness with which programs are evaluated should suffice to raise some concern, the inaccuracies generated by prioritization initiatives' expediency are reason for alarm. Anthropology is a case in point.

The notion that the Anthropology program at Laurier has a "shrinking faculty complement" is a fallacy. The now-devolved Department of Anthropology had five permanent faculty, and due to personal career choices of staff, lost three faculty in 2012. This staffing issue was resolved by ceasing to offer a BA Honours and focusing on the BA Combined. The remaining two faculty component is stable – not shrinking – and able to deliver a highly successful BA Combined at a very low cost to the University. Yet the revenue-generating nature of the Anthropology program for the period under review (steadily increasing and with a net average of \$775,512.25) seems to not be as important a variable in the IPRM decision-making process as the report indicates. We might conclude that WLU's supposed "financial crisis" may indeed be, as [Bill Salatka claims](#), a fairy tale.

The second fallacy is the statement that the Anthropology program shows “declining demand.” As a direct consequence of the devolution of the Anthropology *department*, the BA Honours ceased to be offered in the 2012-13 academic year. As no new students were allowed to join the single Major option since 2012, their numbers declined with every graduating cohort, while the number of combined Majors remained quite stable, particularly considering the anxiety among students generated by the department’s devolution (see [Winter term, table A6 in the Registrar’s Report](#)). However, these particularities are not reflected in IPRM tables. Rather, the figures represent aggregated data on student numbers from the Anthropology BA honours *and* the BA Combined.

Anthropology students are the discipline’s strongest advocates, just ask any of them. Our emphasis on ethnographic, experiential learning and training in cross-cultural social analysis is a major asset to students in the Arts and Humanities. But let’s not rely only on qualitative evidence. The numbers are evidence that Anthropology is a benefit, not a burden to the University.

The Board of Directors meets next on **February 2nd from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.**, and then again on **February 26th from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.** to consider and vote on the IPRM report. Both meetings will be at the **Senate and Board Chambers**.

Please consider attending these meetings to continue our engagement as WLU faculty in the protection of the governance process at this university.

Kari Brozowski, Health Studies

Senate passed a number of IPRM motions on January 12, 2015. The motions do not support any future IPRM processes, and also indicate that the current IPRM recommendations will not be implemented if they are not viewed as reasonable. The Vice-President Academic announced that Faculty Deans will essentially decide on resource allocation, including decisions about whether or not a program should be minimized or phased out.

In other words, a great deal of money has been spent on an exercise which aimed to take control of Faculty resources from the Deans, only to revert to the Deans making decisions about program resourcing. The question is, what was the point of running an expensive IPRM process in the first place?

It seems the controversial results of the IPRM were not anticipated, and this has led the senior administration to back off from endorsing the full final report. It appears that faculty and students speaking up had an effect. For instance, the program coordinators from Anthropology and Women’s Studies spoke eloquently in Senate about concerns with the process and methodology. And students from these programs who were encouraged to attend the Senate meeting expressed outrage over the potential cuts to their programs. One distressed Anthropology student spoke about his academic future being compromised if his program is cut.

Many faculty and students see the IPRM recommendations to “phase out” various programs as problematic. At the December 17, 2014, Senate meeting, a faculty member opposed the recommendations to cut Muslim Studies and a Ph.D. program in Religion and Culture. He stressed that both programs highlight the importance of religious diversity in today’s society. To cut Muslim Studies in particular during a time when Islamic religion and society faces such a difficult cultural and social climate is unwise and upsetting to say the least.

Such opposition is not surprising given

the inherent methodological difficulties with the IPRM process. How exactly are we to rank programs at this or any other university? How can a committee of largely self-selected faculty (the committees were comprised of appointed and elected faculty, but many of the latter essentially volunteered) decide which programs stay and which go?

Such decisions cannot be based on the profitability of a program. According to the [mission statement at this university](#), “Wilfrid Laurier University is devoted to excellence in learning, research, scholarship and creativity. It challenges people to become engaged and aware citizens of an increasingly complex world. It fulfills its mission by advancing knowledge, supporting and enhancing high-quality undergraduate, graduate and professional education, and emphasizing co-curricular development of the whole student...” It does not mention profitability.

Our legitimate governance process is outlined in the [Wilfrid University Act](#). The Act charges Deans who are closely involved with their faculties with making decisions about program enhancement, transformation or cutting in consultation with their faculty in a proper and sensitive manner. These recommended changes to programs follow the legitimate line of communication to the Senate and Board for approval. Furthermore, the provincially mandated cyclical review, in which experts from the program area review a program, fosters informed program changes.

The IPRM is not a provincially-mandated process. If we actually are in a challenging financial time at WLU, then we need to examine other expenses at the university, including the proliferation of senior administration. The Administration Planning and Resource Management (APRM) report that was emailed to WLUFAs members recommends cutting some of these expenses.

On a positive note, this misadventure has galvanized faculty at WLU to understand their governance system better and to become engaged with the WLU Act’s line of communication. It is important that the WLU Board of Governors is made aware of faculty concerns.

Lessons from IPRM: Senate works just fine!

**Rob Kristofferson,
WLUFA President**

This issue of the *Advocate* presents multiple viewpoints offered by our members on various issues related to the recent IPRM Report. I feel it safe to say that, whatever your opinion of the process, it has caused heightened feelings. Discussions I have had with Members from across the university confirm the feeling [I expressed to the K-W Record late last year](#), that in my 20 plus years of university teaching, I have not seen a process so thoroughly upset faculty and undermine morale.

The fate of the IPRM – and the programs it identifies for potential differential resourcing – remains to be seen. Two Board of Governors meetings next month (February 2 for discussion and February 26 for decision) will determine whether or not the report will be implemented in whole or in part. The recommendations flowing from the recent Senate meeting discussing the Report, however, give us an opportunity to reflect on where things appear to stand.

First, it is important to note that part of the IPRM committees' "Made at Laurier" approach to the Dickeson model has made a difference: the proportion of programs assigned to the dreaded bottom categories was not 40 percent (as rigid Dickesonian quintiles require), but 17 percent (academic) and 18 percent (administrative). And it's telling that a number of those academic programs that ended up in "Phase Out or Minimize" or "Transform with Fewer Resources," categories had either initiated or undergone significant change since the process was begun. Combine this with the fact that most academic programs ended up in the middle categories, and the conclusion is clear: our normal Senate process works just fine, thank you. The idea that tired, stale and static academic programs are too stuck in the mud and unresponsive to change that reflects the realities of today's world is demonstrably false.

Should the Board approve implementation of the academic program rankings, it is important to note too that this will be done through "normal" Senate processes. At the 12 January, 2015, Senate meeting, senior administrators explained that any changes recommended would have to be considered and initiated by faculty at the program level. For example, they explained that a Dean assigned a budget cut would have to work with their academic subunits to figure out how best to absorb the contraction. In that event, IPRM rankings would simply be one piece of information that might inform discussion between Deans and their programs. Other, more immediate factors would also figure large, including more recent performance indicators that better capture assessments of "value," and the program's fit with the new [Strategic Mandate Agreement](#). In other words, the need to cut or change a program will become a conversation between members of that program and the Dean, based on the situation on the ground at that time. If true, those most expert in the academic area under question and most aware of the economic and enrolment realities of the Faculty in which this conversation takes place will determine the fate of the program. Again, situation normal.

What's more, Senate voted to cast aside the implementation recommendations enumerated in the Planning Task Force section of the IPRM Report. The reasoning? These both exceeded the committee's mandate and duplicated established processes. On the other hand, Senate did vote to recommend the hybrid Responsibility Centre budget model proposed by the Resource Management Team. Versions of activity-based budgeting (of which the Laurier model is one) are being implemented at various universities across the country and have been a hot topic of conversation at meetings I have attended this year with the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). The emerging consensus is that such models have major academic impacts, especially insofar as they foster a market-based competitive environment in an institution carefully constructed around structures that promote the depth

and breadth of the universe of learning – the university – we create through collegial cooperation. I urge you to have a look at [WLUFA's information sheet](#) on the proposed budget model.

I conclude with a couple of quick points about the budget's potential effect here at Laurier. First, devolving budgetary responsibility to Deans would appear to necessitate the *further* expansion of mid-level management personnel to track the fortunes of their "responsibility-centre." Second, competitive pressures will impel Faculties to compete with each other for a fixed number of students through course registrations and the capture of majors. While introducing these new costs into a closed system makes little sense, in most universities this effect might be moderated by the more radically distinct divisions between faculties. There are, for example, only so many course registrations that a Faculty of Science might capture from a Faculty of Arts. But at Laurier, where we have *three* separate Faculties based in Humanities and Social Science (Arts, Liberal Arts, and Human & Social Science), such competition threatens to destroy more than it can create.

Please write to us!

Letters to the Editor are published soon after we receive them on our blog site to promote an on-going discussion. This month features [a piece by Peter Eglin](#), Associate Professor of Sociology, about IPRM and its implications for governance in the neo-liberal university.

WLUFA supports
National Adjunct Walkout Day
February 24, 2015



Mark your Calendars: February 25 is National Adjunct Walkout Day

Kimberly Ellis-Hale, Sociology

What is said to have begun as the simple rumination of one American Adjunct Professor has now grown into a national – wait, an international – movement.

February 25, 2015, will mark the first-ever [National Adjunct Walkout Day](#)—a day that could answer the question, “What would the halls of academe look like without the precarious academic worker?” In the United States, the answer is “empty,” as more than 50 percent of faculty hold part-time appointments and non-tenure-track positions account for more than 76 percent of all instructional staff appointments. In Canada, the answer may be harder to come by since many university administrations do not keep track of data on Contract Faculty. We do know, however, that, as of 2012, Contract Faculty at Laurier were responsible for over half of the total student “spaces” occupied at the university (that is, the number of students times the number of courses taken). We also know that we are not the biggest employer of Contract Faculty in the country. In the UK the situation may be even more dire, with increasing reliance on “zero-hour contracts” (contracts, or casual contracts, that allow employers to hire staff with no guarantee of work) – a pattern repli-

cated in countries such as Australia and Ireland.

With no single central organizing group, National Adjunct Walkout Day activities in the US will look different across American campuses. Some campus groups will draw attention to costly administrative bloat funded by continued exploitation of contingent faculty. Others will focus on the negative impact precarious employment has on the quality of education, lost research opportunities and heavier administrative loads carried by tenured faculty. None of these actions are without risk or threat: a recent [American Campus Security](#) article published in preparation for the day suggests that administrations use zip ties to reduce the costs when handcuffs are not returned!

There is, however, some agreement nationwide around the use of two main images to symbolize the day. The first of these is a “scarlet A”, representing the shame which should be worn by administrations who continue to exploit adjunct



professors while lining their institutional pockets. The second image references other social justice movements through the “raised fist”, but includes the addition of a bar-coded wrist to symbolize the treatment of adjuncts as a faceless, generic, cheap and disposable workforce.

However you plan to mark this day, and you should, ask yourself this, “Is the adjunct crisis reflecting or advancing a

broader labour crisis, where exploited professors are being employed to teach what will become a new generation of exploited workers?”

The use (abuse) of Contract Faculty is not *just* a “university” problem.



Look for WLUFAs materials and ideas to support the February 25 Walkout, and to build greater awareness of the situation on Canadian campuses.



Laurier Faculty Receives The Lorimer Award

[The Lorimer Award](#) is established by OCUFA in honour of Joyce and Doug Lorimer of the Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association and is instituted to honour and recognize outstanding contributions to improving the terms and conditions of employment of Ontario university faculty through bargaining.

This year’s recipient is [Sheila McKee-Protopapas, WLUFAs Executive Director](#).

Congratulations Sheila from WLUFAs and all of your colleagues!

Stay informed about Negotiations! Visit the Wlufa website for regular [Bargaining Updates](#).

Saving the Wilfrid Laurier University Press

Eleanor Ty, English & Film Studies

The following are comments submitted for consideration alongside the IPRM Report to the Board of Governors in early January

In early December 2014, a number of my colleagues and I in English and Film Studies were dismayed to find out that Wilfrid Laurier University Press was categorized by the Administrative team of the IPRM in the “phase out or minimize” category. Ute Lischke contacted the Press Director, Brian Henderson, who informed us that in advance of IPRM recommendations and Senate approval, the Press was already told that their budget for next year would be substantially cut to the point of being non-functional.

We then wrote and circulated a petition, “Save Wilfrid Laurier University Press” outlining why the recommendation to cut the Press was problematic. WLUP Press, founded 40 years ago, has now established itself internationally as the first choice press for many researchers. It excels in the Social Sciences and Humanities’ areas of Life Writing, Film, Aboriginal, Gender, Canadian, Jewish and Historical Studies. It fulfills the

university’s mandate to disseminate scholarly research, and further our vision of “diversity and inclusivity.” We asked our President for a commitment to continue the press, so that it can find a new model of sustainability in the next few years. We were heartened by the support of people from the academic and broader community, mostly from Canada and the US, but also from countries such as Spain, England, Poland,



France, Brazil, Australia, Israel, etc. We also asked individuals who used WLUP books in their scholarship and teaching, authors and editors, to write letters to President Max Blouw, Vice-President Academic Deb MacLatchy, and Jamie Martin, the Chair of the Board of Governors. Several wrote very moving letters and Tamas Dobozy spoke to the *Kitche-*

ner-Waterloo Record about the press’s importance and how the press serves as a way of “branding” Laurier as a research institution.

To date, we have more than 1,900 signatures on the petition, which shows the strong support the press has from the larger community. Supporters include faculty, students, alumni, donors, writers, readers, editors, and Canadian taxpayers. Many could not believe the news that our university can no longer afford to support a prestigious press, which operates on a minimal cost of around \$300,000 to \$400,000 a year, and has been willing to innovate and embrace digital delivery in the publishing world.

We all would like to help the university transform into a first-class destination for undergraduate and graduate students, and we are aware that there are many financial challenges today due to lower enrolment. However, phasing out a program that promotes our brand worldwide, gives us prestige as an institution that cares about diversity, aboriginal causes, new media and social justice does not seem like the right direction in which to go.

WLUFA Communications Survey Results—a Snapshot

- ◇ Approx. one in five Members responded to the survey: approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ Regular Faculty and $\frac{1}{4}$ Contract Faculty.
- ◇ The majority (75 percent) of respondents prefer communications from WLUFA to come to them via email and email attachments.
- ◇ For their second preferred communications method, a significant number of respondents answered that they prefer to access the WLUFA website for information (34 percent) or to receive hard-copy communications in their department mailbox (25 percent).
- ◇ Very few respondents (0 to 6 percent) chose forms social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.) as one of their top three methods of communication with the union.
- ◇ The majority of respondents check the WLUFA web-site when they are seeking information.
- ◇ 50 percent of respondents answered that they receive adequate information during contract negotiations while 25 percent answered that they do not.
- ◇ Remaining respondents either did not answer, or answered that they have not been at WLU for the negotiation of their contract as of the time of the survey.
- ◇ The majority of the respondents would like to see [Advocate](#) include articles that are union-centred (both WLUFA and provincial/national organizations) as well as coverage of pedagogical news, issues and debates.
- ◇ Disappointingly, very few respondents expressed an interest in contributing to [Advocate](#).

Yes, Librarians go on Sabbatical!

Matt Thomas, MLIS
eResources Librarian

It's true. Laurier Librarians go on sabbatical. Sort of. We actually have what's called the "Librarians' Academic and Professional Leave" (see our [2011-2014 full-time collective agreement](#), article 17.3) which is somewhat different than the "Sabbatical Leave" for faculty (article 17.1-17.2) but the basic concept is the same. They're both regular extended periods of time, away from the hustle and bustle of regular campus duties, allowing us opportunities to engage in projects that can enrich and inform what we do as well as bring value to ourselves, Laurier, and our respective fields.



Academic librarians can engage in "typical" academic work on this Leave such as conducting and organizing research, manipulating and analyzing data, and preparing material for publication and/or presentation. Our research can be on a topic within librarianship itself, such as search behaviour or collection evaluation, but many librarians have research interests outside of our professional field as well. Not only is the research and publication process personally fulfilling and professionally rewarding, in our role of supporting the research of others, it's valu-

able to have the experience of being on the *other side* of the desk.

But given the professional responsibilities of our roles, we often take the sabbatical opportunity to see to more practical concerns such as improving certain skills, observing practices in other institutions, or exploring entirely new areas. A common use of sabbatical time is to take courses, complete certificate programs, or even work on additional graduate degrees (besides our professionally-required Master of Library Science or equivalent). Regardless of how a librarian chooses to spend her/his time, the Leave is often seen as a way to connect and give back to librarianship (or another field) and re-

charge from concentrating on just *getting the job done*. And it's a way to reaffirm our academic status, at least for ourselves, something that's not always appreciated outside (or even within) the Library.

Not all librarians go on sabbatical though. In some institutions, the culture is just not there and few, if any, ever request Leave. Elsewhere, librarians are as expected as faculty are to take research leaves. At Laurier Library, we're comfortably in the middle: some go regularly, some occasionally,



some are just dipping their big toe in the process, and some have never gone. A sometimes insurmountable barrier to any of us taking a sabbatical leave is the need for our responsibilities to be passed on to someone. This is especially the case for some administrative positions such as department heads (similar to, but more "permanent" than, department chairs) or unique positions where there simply isn't anyone to act as back-up for the six months to a year that one would be unavailable. (Only rarely is there money in the budget to arrange for a new position to directly replace someone or even to just add to the complement so someone else can act as replacement.) Although not ideal, some feel the need to maintain a connection with the Library, doing certain tasks through their Leave that simply cannot be done by anyone else. Because the nature of librarianship tends to be very cooperative, we are always concerned about smooth sailing in our absence and not being a burden to our colleagues.

I'd like to thank my colleagues for the feedback they provided me for this article.

Some of you tell us that you are "old school", and would prefer to receive issues of the WLUFA Advocate in your physical (not virtual) mailbox. We're going to try to accommodate you. Send an email request to be added to our hard-copy subscriber's list. Note in your email your program or department please. Send your request to Larissa at lbrocklebank@wlu.ca.

We're keen to hear about your own understanding and experiences with Laurier's governance structures: how effective they have (or have not) been, and any ideas you might have to make them more so.

Please consider posting a comment on our blog site at:

<https://advocatewlu.ca>