

WLUF ADVOCATE

Building community through dialogue, discussion, and debate.

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Whaddya say, John A?

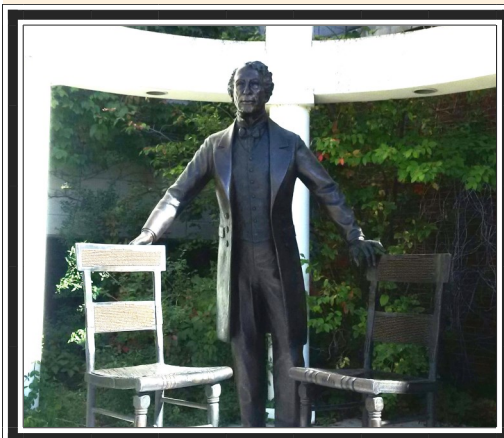
Check out our Contest, and win a photo op with the former PM, a \$20 LCBO gift certificate, and the pleasure of having your witty saying posted on the WLUF website!

- * Open to all staff and faculty
- * Contest closes October 26
- * More details on p. 3.

Stop the Statue Project at Laurier

Jonathan Finn, *Communication Studies*

On June 30, 2015, Wilfrid Laurier University President Max Blouw announced that Laurier's Waterloo campus would permanently house 22 life-size bronze statues of Canadian Prime Ministers. The "statue project" is the brainchild of Jim Rodger (former principal of Waterloo Collegiate) and Dave Caputo, CEO of local tech company Sandvine, and was initially proposed for Kitchener's Victoria Park. When presented with the proposal in November, 2013,



Kitchener City Council wisely solicited public response, and 79 percent of 2,441 respondents were not in favour of the project. And so City Councillors voted it down, 8-1. In contrast, at Laurier there was minimal internal consultation and absolutely no public consultation. The decision was made by the Board of Governors and announced in relative quiet during the summer.

After reading about the June 30 announcement in *The Record* and on

cbc.ca, I developed a petition called "[Stop the Statue Project](http://www.change.org/p/wilfrid-laurier-university-stop-the-statue-project)" on [change.org](http://www.change.org). To date, [nearly 800](http://www.change.org/p/wilfrid-laurier-university-stop-the-statue-project) students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members have signed.

There are many reasons to oppose the project: lack of consultation; insensitivity that such a project displays towards Canada's Aboriginal Peoples, women and minority populations; cost of installing and maintaining the statues; lack of rationale or clear need for the project; the fact that the decision was made by the Board and not Senate (the Board is responsible for fiduciary decisions whereas Senate is responsible for the educational mission of the University); the statue project is defended as enhancing discussion of Canada's history, which surely falls under the educational mandate of the University); the fact that the project was announced on the heels of numerous firings and budget cuts and claims of financial distress flies in the face of reason.

At the September 16 meeting of Senate, the President confirmed that the statue project will go ahead as planned, despite opposition. I plan to bring a motion to Senate for its October 20 meeting, asking the Board to reverse its decision and to end Laurier's involvement in the statue project. I encourage all of you to look at the petition (sign and comment if you see fit) and to attend the October 20 Senate meeting. The petition can be found here: <https://www.change.org/p/wilfrid-laurier-university-stop-the-statue-project>.

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Editorial Policy

The views expressed in *WLUFU Advocate* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of WLUFU, the Communications Committee and/or the editor, except where such views are clearly indicated. The editor reserves the right to edit and reformat submissions in order to meet the format and requirements of the newsletter. It is the policy of *WLUFU Advocate* to encourage discussion and debate that is respectful. We do not (re)print or publish *ad hominem* attacks on fellow members, nor any submissions that might be deemed libellous or discriminatory. Submissions to the newsletter must include name and contact information. Name(s) may be withheld upon request.

Precariously Employed: A Ballot-box Issue

Kimberly Ellis-Hale, *Sociology*

Signs are up, debates are underway, and town halls are being held across the country – yes, it is Federal election time in Canada. Pollsters and pundits are having their heyday as parties jostle for the lead or compete for a foothold. All the while the door-to-door canvassers – dedicated and unsung – continue their work.

One such person knocked at my door (despite a large lawn sign proclaiming my support for a competing party). I encouraged my son, a first-time voter, to hear what the young man had to say.

I was half-listening to their discussion, mentally checking off the various issue boxes, until it turned to postsecondary education. I cannot begin to express my disappointment when I heard the canvasser tell my son that “it wasn’t really a *federal* issue.” At that point, I joined in their discussion.

If one takes but a cursory glance at the parcelling of responsibilities for postsecondary education, it may be easy to miss the hand of the federal government beyond its funding transfers. Closer inspection, however, reveals its role in postsecondary student grants, loans, private savings plans, tax credits and debt. An even closer look reveals its power when it comes to infrastructure and equipment funding, support for research and innovation, and opportunities taken or missed to develop evidence-based social, environmental and economic policies.

However, even the closest examination fails to unearth any evidence that the federal government understands its responsibility for, or accountability to, the growing army of precariously employed Canadians – and in particular, to the per-contract academics who are increasingly used to prop up Canada’s postsecondary system.

If one accepts that a postsecondary education will be required for over two

thirds of future jobs, then it seems reasonable that those tasked with providing it deserve some attention paid to the conditions of their employment. Reasonable job security, wage parity, health benefits and pension prospects – in other words all of the hallmarks of a “good job” – are currently beyond the reach of precariously employed academics. Ironically, this is an employment category we are supposed to be helping our students avoid! If postsecondary education is supposed to provide the pathway to a prosperous economic future, then why are so many who work to provide it not themselves benefiting from it?

While the federal government may not have direct responsibility for the way in which our tax dollars are spent within the postsecondary sector, we have tasked them with providing leadership. As leaders, ensuring the responsible handling of funds earmarked for education is not outside of a federal mandate. Sorry Mr. Canvasser, but it *is* a “federal issue.”

Here is my offer: I am willing to replace my particular party lawn sign with that of any party that shows the political will to address the issue of Canada’s growing reliance on precarious labour – and to present us with effective strategies for ending that reliance in all sectors, including the education sector.

**Everyone
deserves
fair
working
conditions.**

October 7, 2015

Fairly & Fully Employed
FairEmploymentWeek.ca



Laurier Commons and the Caucus for a Democratic Union

Helen Ramirez (*Women and Gender Studies*) and Nelson Joannette (*History*)

In order to update you on the latest developments of the Laurier Commons, we'd like to let you know that the Caucus for a Democratic Union (or CDU) has spring-boarded as a distinct group. The CDU is comprised solely of CAS members but welcomes support from others. Rather than being under the WLUFAs banner, the CDU's objective is to form a distinct union, with the sole mandate of pro-actively advocating on behalf of CAS. The following explains the history of how and why the CDU offshoot of its sister organization, the Laurier Commons, came into being.

It is interesting that the champions of democracy often come from the sectors that are most affected by those in power who speak of democracy but seldom practice it. In the Spring, students, staff and faculty from our Brantford campus gathered, not only to contest the cuts that had resulted in the loss of jobs of our colleagues – employees who have been committed to the values Laurier promotes – but also to contest the loss of courses that would mean dedicated contract faculty would have fewer or no courses this year. This Stop the Cuts initiative opened the conversation about these actions across all campuses and, from these conversations, emerged Laurier Commons.

The firings and cuts to courses taught by contract faculty were just two examples in a larger series that told us that the university had discarded its values and its mission, and had chosen, instead, an economic argument that will continue to destroy the heart of an institution that at one time promot-

ed inclusivity, diversity and transparency. Laurier Commons is a collection of people who gather to support the specific efforts of each other's work to hold our institution, our departments and our union accountable to the exercise of democratic principles.

Laurier Commons raises questions about how best to protect and defend the values that make a university a living example of a space where democracy is learned and practiced. The group should not be seen as dissident voices but rather defenders of core values. It is a sitting place where so-called "dissidents" can gather for support. This is a space where what we teach is practised.

It is difficult, though, for those who raise hard questions because when requests for change aren't taken seriously, other means may be required in order to be heard and accorded justice. When conversations move in directions which are critical of others, the intent is not to dismiss the work of individuals in various positions of power but to hold them accountable for not doing what they should do to protect, defend and work for those most vulnerable. The aim is to instil fundamental change in times of great urgency.

For more information about Laurier Commons or the Caucus for a Democratic Union please contact: Helen Ramirez (hramirez@wlu.ca) or Nelson Joannette (njoannette@wlu.ca).

Whaddya say, John A?

Ever since the first prime ministerial statue appeared on the Waterloo campus, folks have been wondering what exactly Sir John A. McDonald is about to say. Is he just going to invite us to have a seat in those handsome ladder-back chairs? Or does he have sage

advice for a university that is striving to "inspire lives of leadership and purpose" in these troubled times? Maybe he has something he wants to whisper in our administrators' ears? Or shout to the skies above?

We think you may have some ideas, and so are running the "Whaddya say, John A?" contest to find out what they are. The contest is open to all staff and faculty, and the ten finalists (as judged by, who else, the WLUFAs Communications Committee), will have their entries posted on the WLUFAs website. The winner (as decided by a guest judge from WLUFAs Council) will get their photo taken with Sir John A – or (Brantford colleagues take note) photoshopped in if they can't make the trip! And, in a nod to the former PM's spirited legacy, the winner will also receive a \$20 LCBO gift certificate!

Please email your comments to: wluca@wlu.ca by 5pm on October 26.

There is no word limit but we think we should warn you that the judges are known to have short attention spans.

WLUFAs President's "OPEN DOOR" Schedule

Brantford:

Oct 6 9:30-3:30 **SCJ 210**
Nov 3 9:30-3:30 **RCW 323**
Dec 1 9:30-3:30 **RCW 323**

K.W.:

Oct 21 10:00-12:00 **DAWB 4-108**
Oct 27 10:00-12:00 **SR 113** (Science)
Nov 4 10:00-12:00 **SBE 3245**
Nov 10 10:00-12:00 **BA535** (Bricker)
Nov 11 10:00-12:00 **205**
(Social Work)
Nov 24 10:00-12:00 **DAWB 4-108**
Nov 25 10:00-12:00 **SR 113** (Science)
Dec 2 10:00-12:00 **SBE 3245**
Dec 8 10:00-12:00 **A 510** (Music)
Dec 16 10:00-12:00 **DAWB 4-101**

Sometimes Less is More (Editorial)

Sue Ferguson, *Director,
Communications Committee*

Remember last year? Milton? Enrollment numbers dropping? IPRM? Sexual assault on campus? Precarious work? Layoffs? Full-time negotiations? Some issues just aren't going away, and so we'll keep talking about them – and more – in the pages of this year's *Advocate*. But thinking that maybe “less” really can be “more,” we're going to lay things out a bit differently.

Last year, we published three eight-page issues. We don't have any scientific evidence but we're pretty sure that these were not as well read as the shorter, snappier, one- to two-page supplements that we put out to respond to pressing issues. So, expect shorter (four page) issues, and more regular two-page supplements that take up a particular subject in greater depth. Our first supplement, on sexual violence on campus, will be out soon.

You'll notice also that *Advocate* articles are shorter. We're hoping that this too will encourage you to read to the end of each article. Of course, lots of topics can't be boiled down to a sound bite, and so we'll post longer versions of some articles on the *Advocate* blog. (On the other hand, some topics *can* be boiled down to 140 characters, and our social media manager, Matt Thomas, now regularly does just that so please consider following us on [twitter](#) – and [friend](#) us too.)

What else can you expect from this year's [Communications Committee](#)? We're committed to expanding the conversation about gendered violence, for one thing. We will also take a look at university funding, online learning, and the upcoming negotiations between our contract faculty and the administration, and much more. The issue of precarious

labour on campus is not going away, and affects all faculty, permanent and contract, as well as Laurier administrative staff and custodians. It also holds long term implications for the role of postsecondary education in our society, and so will continue to be a focus of our work this year.

Whatever our plans are, we are only too happy to change them to accommodate issues important to you, our readers. The *Advocate* was created – in part – to disseminate information that the Association Executive identifies as important for members to read. Mainly, however, it is intended to be a forum for members to converse with each other. Let us know what you want to talk about. You can reach us at the emails or phone numbers listed on the [web-](#)

The More Things Change...

Michele Kramer, *WLUFA President*

The Communications Committee asked me to provide a “message from the president” for this *Advocate* and so – being completely new to this type of a position – I looked at what past-President, Rob Kristofferson, did for his message last year. What surprises me most is that I could probably shamelessly plagiarise from Rob's piece and the message would still be relevant.

As most of us know, budget cuts loom over our heads once again this year and the Administration's movement towards “Responsibility Centred Management,” even while it continues to press for expansion (yes, Milton has not gone away) is – again – leaving departments, programs, and the faculty and staff that support them, reeling to cover the work that needs doing, and to scrape for what's available in an ever-shrinking pot of funds. The recent release of the [White Paper:](#)

[Strategic Academic Plan, 2015-2020](#) is yet another example of how immediate these pressures are. In this environment, it becomes more important than ever that we continue to stand together as a strong, vocal and – above all else – united group.

Finding a way to foster a united front, as most know, is one of the greatest challenges our Association faces. It's not an easy thing to bring together such a diverse group of members and to address everyone's concerns. Under Rob Kristofferson's presidency, WLUFA began to take steps toward greater inclusivity for the Association, and I would like to see those steps continued and enhanced during my own term.

Please feel free to come and visit with me during my “open door” sessions this term that I am offering in various locations across our campuses (please see the schedule on p. 3). I'd love to hear your thoughts about what WLUFA does right, what you think it does wrong, and how you think we might do better. This year, WLUFA will be working not only on greater outreach to you, our members, but also to other union groups both on and off campus. The idea of “precarious employment” is one that is frequently connected only to our contract faculty. But the fact is, without diligent and active employees and their unions, “precarious” may become an adjective for us all.

I know how difficult it is to find the time in your now very busy workdays to volunteer any precious left-over minutes to WLUFA – but we need you very much. Please keep an eye out for our appeals to you this year. Any time, any contribution, however great or small would be welcomed and deeply appreciated.