

# WLUF ADVOCATE

Building community through dialogue, discussion, and debate.



## The Marathon Continues: Tricky Terrain Ahead

*The Communications Committee offers this short assessment of this past year's activities. A fuller accounting can be found in its Annual Report .*

How should this year at Laurier be summed up? The *Advocate* has reported on Contract Faculty conditions, Fulltime Faculty contract negotiations, rape culture on campus, the IPRM, staff terminations, the budget, and more. For many Faculty and staff, the year has been more grueling than a marathon, with the terrain shifting every few months onto new struggles. We're gasping to arrive at the finish line, and yet there seems to be no end to the harsh reality of what too many this past year have faced.

Jobs have been lost and many departments and programs are reeling from cuts. At the same time, we're busily refashioning our programs and departments to address declining enrolments, preparing to do more with less for the foreseeable future. We can only wonder which courses and faculty members will be deemed expendable next, and whether our programs or departments will be able to live up to what we sell our students. Can we deliver what we promise?

Many of us teach critical thinking skills and unexpectedly this year had to employ those very skills in the direction of our own institution, weighing whether or not this year's experiences have been warranted or if we are victims of poor administrative analysis and decision making. We attempted, in these pages, to join the dots – connecting what we saw to larger questions of the University's legislated mission, its traditions of academic governance and the responsibility of a public institution to the citizenry it serves. For the first time in many years, the stakes felt high enough for us to speak up loudly and forthrightly in our quest for answers.

Not everyone has agreed with this approach or the analysis that has broadly guided our thinking, writing and actions. And we've been sure to include those alternative analyses and dissenting voices that have agreed to publication, both on the *Advocate* blog site and in the *Advocate* itself. Others *have* agreed and encouraged us to continue – with some accusing us and/or the WLUF Executive of being too reticent to criticize. That debate is stirring – however minimal – is surely a sign of success. Let's hope more can be cultivated, resulting in harder questions getting asked,

## Communications Committee

Sue Ferguson  
Director of Communications  
sferguson@wlu.ca

Kari Brozowski  
Brantford Faculty Liaison  
kbrozowski@wlu.ca

Kimberly Ellis-Hale  
Contract Faculty Liaison  
kellis@wlu.ca

Michele Kramer  
Communications Officer  
mkramer@wlu.ca

David Monod  
Full-time Faculty Liaison  
dmonod@wlu.ca

Helen Ramirez  
Contract Faculty Liaison  
hramirez@wlu.ca

Matt Thomas  
Librarian, Member

## Editorial Policy

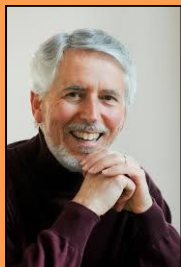
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and greater engagement with the issues.

But let's not kid ourselves. Communications can be tricky terrain. More debate means having difficult conversations – acknowledging that the interests of a diverse group will not always align easily, and that consensus is not necessarily attainable. Still, we can work

toward greater understanding of the issues and of each other. And we can cultivate a willingness to learn new ways of working together to protect not only our own island but one another's domains as well. We've laid some of that groundwork with the *Advocate*. It is our hope that you can continue to build on it as we look to the challenges ahead.

## *WLUFA Congratulates our Colleagues who are Retiring:*



**Richard Walsh-Bowers**  
Psychology



**Sharon Brown**  
Librarian



**Viviana Comensoli**  
English & Film



**Richard Elliott**  
Mathematics



**Paul Heyer**  
Communications



**John Laband**  
History



**Michael Pratt**  
Psychology



**Carol Stalker**  
Social Work

*Please join us to celebrate their contributions at the annual  
Spring Wine & Cheese  
and  
Recognition of Retirees Social  
at the Hawks Nest  
Thursday, April 16th @ 3:00 p.m. following the AGM.*

## **WLUFA Annual General Meeting**

*The Turret*

*Thursday, April 16th @ 1:00p.m. to 3:00p.m.*  
Agenda and Reports have been sent to your faculty email.