

Break the Silence

Lisa Smith & Selina Tribe

If you menstruate, you can relate to the following scenario: one adult whispers to another about the need for a basic necessity, a period product. Stigma surrounding menstruation is pervasive and discretion is second nature in order to avoid shame and embarrassment. Further, society continues to place the burden and cost of menstruation wholly upon women's shoulders, asking them to deal with it quietly without offending other people, employers, or taxpaying citizens. Any evidence of menstruation in public spaces is kept carefully cloistered away in private spaces, such as waste receptacles in the women's washroom stalls and double-locked dispensers with paywalls of 50 cents to two dollars. Product dispensers require exact change for a single tampon or pad, and in this case, if you do not have exact change or if the dispenser is empty, you are redirected to security to request a product!

Menstrual stigma reinforces the notion that periods are private issues. Yet in a society that claims to promote equitable relations and recognizes women are not confined to the home, this belief is no longer justified. Women do business every day, and work in all professions. It is time for workplaces and society to adopt policies, practices, and the broader social and cultural changes that support the period equity movement. We argue that periods are public issues and that supporting period equity is an important way for labour unions, administrators, and governments to advocate for their stakeholders.

What is Period Equity?

Period equity is the idea that, like other normal excretory functions (urination, defecation), periods should be acknowledged and considered for the sake of the individual and the public at large. Menstruators should have access to supplies and supports they require that allow them to get on with work and life regardless of class, sex, gender, race, and so on. This might include:

- ❑ free, easy, and reliable access to period products (including both disposal and reusable options);
- ❑ the capacity to take period leave;
- ❑ adequate financial support through extended health benefits that can assist with menstrual cramps (for example, acupuncture,



Menstrual blood is the only source of blood that is not traumatically induced. Yet in modern society, this is the most hidden blood, the one so rarely spoken of and almost never seen, except privately by women.
— Judy Grahn

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English Dept.

Douglas College Faculty Association
PO Box 2503
New Westminster, BC, V3L 5B2
Ph: 604-527-5166 Fx: 604-520-1496
www.dcfca.ca/facultymatters

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FM Committee

Graham Rodwell (Editor)
Charles Odoom
Glen Stanger

Contributors

Bill Archibald, Wilhelm Emilsson,
Arsineh Garabedian, Shamsa Jessa,
Chris Maguire, Eamonn O’Laocha,
Lisa Smith, Kim Trainor, Selina Tribe,
Melanie Young.

Layout & Design

Jon Paul Henry

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From the Editor

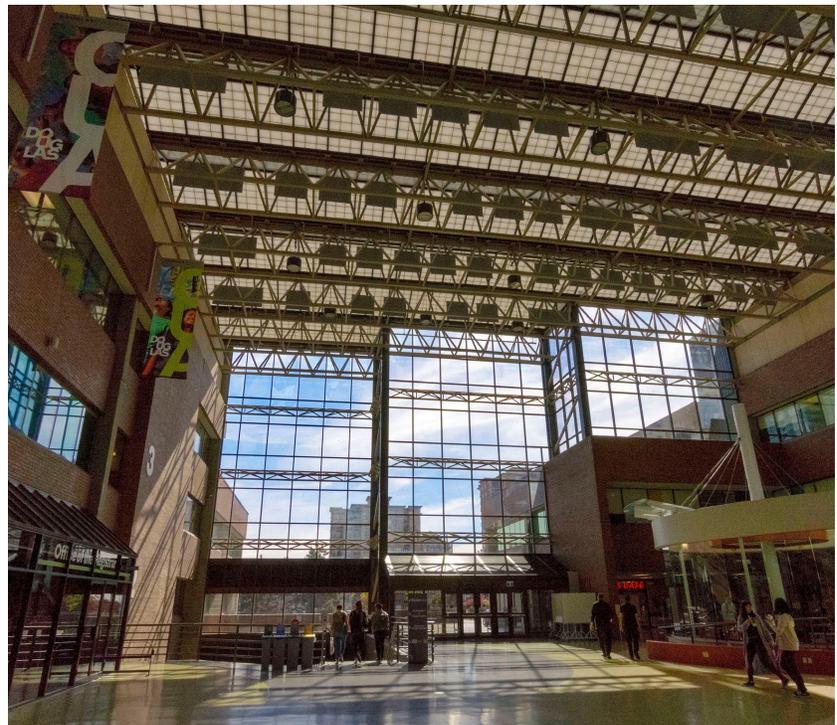
Graham Rodwell

These are extraordinary and stressful times. I am hugely impressed how all members of the Douglas College community are finding ways to endure and support each other in the face of the great uncertainty generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nonetheless, here is our latest edition of *Faculty Matters* for you. Hopefully it will promote thought and discussion. The articles were nearly all started several weeks ago in a more relaxed era, but the issues that they raise will continue to be important after the present crisis has passed.

Many thanks to the FacMat committee: Charles Odoom and Glen Stanger as well as to Nancy Earle, Leni Robinson and Chris Maguire, each of whom provided invaluable help with editing, and Jon Paul Henry, who did the layout. Our thanks also to the many contributors who all delivered as promised!

We are hoping to have a summer edition. If you have any thoughts about an article, please contact me at rodwellg@douglascollege.ca.



Breaking ... *continued from P1*

pelvic floor physiotherapy, etc.).

Such measures include progressive and informed policies in occupational health and safety, as well as advocacy and education.

Period Equity Is Labour Equity

Labour union advocacy is key to securing equity within the workplace. Labour unions have already played a vital role in securing the rights of workers related to bodily functions, e.g. toilet breaks and space/time for pumping breast milk. Recent data from *Statistics Canada* indicates that the average Canadian woman spends 33.2 hours per week of her life (up to 65+) at work.[§] With periods lasting from 5-7 days every 28-day cycle, that equates to menstruating on 17-25 percent of working days.

Labour movement activism has already been an important part of the period equity movement in BC. Tampon Tuesday, now known as the Period Promise Campaign, operates under a partnership between the United Way and the Canadian Labour Congress:

Period Promise has garnered incredible community support, especially from the Labour movement. Unions like the Health Sciences Association, CUPE locals and teachers' unions, as well as Labour councils, are leading the way in improving access to menstrual products.[†]

The focus of the campaign is period poverty, with the goal being to “collect and distribute donations while advocating for free menstrual products in common spaces. ... Menstruation products are a basic necessity. But if you’re living in poverty – or vulnerable in other ways – access to tampons, pads, cups or menstrual underwear, can be challenging.”[†]

Health, Safety & Dignity

If you menstruate, it is highly likely that you have often needed a period product at work because menstruation is unpredictable. There is no bladder to hold the blood and wearing tampons or

pads to catch the start of period flow is not medically recommended due to risk of infection and toxic shock syndrome. Once a period begins, easy access to pads and tampons in the restroom is essential. Further, menstrual flow simply cannot be ignored, or it only gets worse. Ready access to menstrual products means faculty and staff stay engaged at work and teach classes on time without sudden absences or embarrassing situations derailing a workday.

Most people do not realize that workplace health and safety laws require restrooms to be equipped with and supply basic necessities, for example,

We're talking about half the population. Our issues aren't all the same, but whether you're dissecting it by poverty or gender or any issue that affects things like access, participation, equality, justice, democracy – [menstrual equity touches] all those things.

– Jennifer Weiss-Wolf

hand soap, toilet paper, hand towels, and urinals. These items are considered “essential” and regulated such that institutions are required to provide them at no additional cost to the individual user. Employers in BC should be aware of Section 4.85(3)(c) of the BC Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations that states employer-provided restrooms must be equipped with all the supplies necessary for their use. Many employers are contravening the OHS regulations when menstrual products are absent from restrooms or only provided through a pay wall.

The Tampon Tax

In Canada, up until very recently tampons and pads were taxed as luxury items. The Canadian Menstruators, a group of political advocates who worked to remove the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on period products, estimate, “the government collected approximately \$36,398,387.00 in government sales tax” in 2014 alone.[◇] They note, this is the cost of uteruses doing what “they

do naturally.”[◇]

Items that are deemed essential and exempt from luxury tax include incontinence products, cocktail cherries, human sperm, and wedding cakes. It is worth noting that even with the removal of the GST in 2015, period products in Canada are still subject to a host of hidden taxes *vis-à-vis* trade tariffs.[♠] The situation is even more dire in the United States, where most states continue to profit handsomely from the “tampon tax” and advocates continue to fight for its removal.

Canadian Advances

In 2019 in Canada, federal, provincial, and municipal governments have begun to make tangible legislative and policy changes to support period equity. In February 2019, the New Westminster School Board became the first school district in Canada to provide access to free menstrual products in girls’ and universal restrooms. In April 2019, BC became the first province in Canada to do the same. Putting menstrual products in school restrooms keeps 250,000 students engaged in class and extra-curricular activities and reduces period shame for everyone.

Numerous jurisdictions and organizations across the country from Victoria to Halifax have followed suit. This year, the city of New Westminster, a signatory to the Period Promise campaign, will run a pilot project offering free menstrual products in select public buildings. These progressive policies build on grassroots advocacy and the public’s growing recognition that periods are normal and should be accommodated.

Menstrual Products on Campus

At Douglas College, period products can be purchased in women’s restrooms at a cost of up to 50 cents per item. Our recent audit of Douglas College campus restrooms revealed that 25 percent of menstrual product dispensers do not work properly. The four floors of gender-neutral multi-stall restrooms

[§] Statistics Canada (2007), *The Canadian Labour Market at a Glance*. “Average hours usually worked.”

[†] Period Promise: <https://www.periodpromise.ca/pages/about>

[◇] Canadian Menstruators: <http://www.canadianmenstruators.ca/>

[♠] Moffat, Mike (10 June 2015). “The ‘tampon tax’ is gone, but the ‘tampon tariff’ lives on.” *Macleans*.



*Menstrual Research Institute at Periods, Politics, and Beyond.
Lwft to right: Dave Mitchell, Sakura Furukawa, Elsa Guardia Chacon, Lauren Fri-
esen, Selina Tribe, Lisa Smith, Rim Gacimi, Ana Brito.*

in Anvil Office Tower have no dispensers at all, nor do any of the men's restrooms. This means women are not wholly served by using Anvil's gender-neutral restrooms and that menstruating trans- and gender queer folk only have access to period products in the female-assigned restrooms.

Another place to get period products on campus is the Bookstore, where a limited range of tampons and pads can be purchased at inflated prices. Anecdotal reports indicate that many faculty members keep "secret" stashes of period products in their offices for their own personal use and to assist fellow colleagues, staff, and students. Individuals should not bear the burden of providing the supplies they require because employers cannot be bothered to recognize the needs of their employees. People should be able to access period products, just like toilet paper, in any restroom on campus and without arbitrary barriers.

Supporting Period Equity

At the Douglas College Faculty Association (DCFA) AGM in April 2019, members enthusiastically supported a pilot project to install three free-vending period product dispensers, one on each campus and one at Anvil, and to fund the stock of period products for one year. Since then we have discussed the matter with Facilities, who have been receptive to the idea of accessible menstrual products on campus. They have ascertained that existing machines can be modified to dispense for free and are

currently looking into the feasibility of providing free supplies in the restrooms.

The Douglas Student Union (DSU) has been providing free menstrual products for the past 15 years in all women's restrooms, universal restrooms, and the main reception area in the DSU building. They also offer free products at the David Lam campus at the DSU kiosk.

No one expects to pay out of pocket for toilet paper or soap because they are essential for comfort and cleanliness: period products are no different.

More recently, the DSU has signed the United Way's Period Promise campaign, while Douglas College has failed to do so. Free products can also be found at Aboriginal Student Services and at the Wellness Centre. Initiatives to provide accessible menstrual products, where individual members or unions absorb the cost, are a step in the right direction, yet not enough people on campus are aware of where to find these free items. Further, the cost of the items should not be paid by individuals or unions. No one expects to pay out of pocket for toilet paper or soap because they are essential for comfort and cleanliness, and period products are no different.

What's Next for Period Equity?

Period equity is about unfettered access to period products, but it is also about so much more. Easy access to period

products is one step on the journey to eliminating menstrual stigma and bringing periods out into the open as public issues. Labour unions can play an important role in moving the issue forward and we encourage DCFA members to get involved and informed about the changes they can make, both big and small.

If this issue moves you, there are many ways to get involved. Encourage Douglas College to become a signatory on the Period Promise campaign. Individuals can write or talk to their MPs, MLAs, and municipal representatives at city council, parks boards, libraries, private and religious schools and tell them how important accessible menstrual products are to education, workplace efficiency, public health, and personal dignity. Learn more about events run by Douglas College's soon to be established Menstrual Research Institute, co-directed by Lisa Smith and Selina Tribe, as well as the research projects our research assistants are engaged in, which include examining cultural stigma, investigating barriers to access, doing historical work, and more.

On March 10, 2020 our group hosted BC's first ever period fair, featuring tabling from an array of entrepreneurs, advocates, researchers, and activists involved in the period equity movement, as well as panels of speakers. The event drew over a hundred people to the college and will become a regular fixture in the annual calendar.

The simplicity of the solution for period product access, in terms of social justice movements, is truly the stuff of dreams. There is an issue, there is a solution, and it is simple: make sure menstruators can get what they need, when they need it, regardless of who they are. The broader work of moving period equity forward is the work of years. We encourage you to take a small but important step forward – to make sure period supplies are free for all Douglas College community members – together with us and many others working for change.

jm

Ask A Steward

Melanie Young
VP Stewardship, DCFA

Question

There is one course in my Department that I used to teach but I haven't taught for 5 years now. The course curriculum has been revised and now includes a new technological component. In a review of QTT criteria, the Selection Committee asked me whether I had training with the new technology. Can they remove me from the list until I show that I have been trained?

Answer

No. A Selection Committee cannot remove a QTT designation. It is up to the faculty member to maintain currency in their field (see Articles 8.01 and 9). To remove a QTT designation has implications for job security.

Question

Can I have a course taken off my QTT list if I don't want to teach it anymore?

Answer

Maybe. The Selection Committee can decide to remove

a QTT designation upon request, but there should be a very good reason (e.g. an accommodation), both because it has implications for job security and because it can have an impact on faculty scheduling and the needs of the department. It is recommended that the Department and the Selection Committee agree in writing to some parameters around this.

Question

A new course has been created recently in my Department. The Selection Committee has set criteria for becoming QTT for this course. Can the Selection Committee give me a QTT designation for scheduling purposes if I agree to meet all the criteria before teaching the course?

Answer Yes. It is recommended that in such a case there be a written agreement as to what PD has to occur, by what date, and how it can be demonstrated. Again, it is recommended that the Department and the Selection Committee agree in writing to some parameters around this.

Question

Can a Dean approve a QTT designation in an emergency situation without consulting the Selection Committee?

Answer

No. It is the responsibility of the Selection Committee to determine QTT designation. 

The Importance of Being Civil

Shamsa Jessa, Science & Technology

Every public organization requires a clear mission, proper values, well-defined objectives and strong leadership, and a college is no exception. What some forget is that an institution also requires nurturing and care, and this does not always come easily. In a place of learning, we must invite and welcome discourse and debate, as divergence of thinking lies at the core of the advancement and dissipation of knowledge. Indeed, the Values Statement of our College emphasizes, "creative and critical thinking and the will to challenge and be challenged" in the belief that, "all voices need to be heard". Our shared values ask that we listen respectfully; they denote academic freedom and, notably, they decry any restriction of free expression. They stand as ideals for us all to strive for, even to take pride in.

Disagreement will occur, but it need not denote disrespect. With the disparate Departments and Faculties and other groups in Douglas College, the need for respect and civility is paramount. We should strive for collegiality. The term has a special meaning, as it denotes the cooperative relationship among and between colleagues. Within the word lie also the ideals of empathy, kindness, mutual respect, and tolerance. Respect for those with differing opinions must be not only

interwoven into our organization's philosophy but they should permeate the working units that make up Douglas College, from individual students and their instructors all the way to the College President. We must never allow a lack of agreement to squelch another human's freedom to say or write what they believe.

Take for instance, the DCFA. We are an association, a group of people working together towards a set of common goals, and we need unity and solidarity to act effectively. This is crucial. We have the capacity to do an immense amount of good when we choose to work together. During challenging times, like the kind we currently face, this capacity gets lost in the dust of battle. Conflicts escalate when we forget to listen to others, to accept the differences of opinions that so often drive and foster academic growth. The result of such animosity? Energy is wasted, individual members suffer, productivity decreases, and stress pervades these hallowed halls. We must endeavour to nurture all relationships, repair those in need of attention, and in general behave collegially. Otherwise, we will miss out on the entire point of what it means to be truly educated. 

Applied Research

Eamonn O'Laocha, Business Management

Much of my professional life has been spent wrestling with problems and opportunities in highly complex and dynamic social contexts. In my earlier professional career as a software programmer/analyst, my focus was on the creation of software solutions in messy, contentious, and often very poorly understood situations. What we initially presumed to be a simple coding task, without fail would mutate into a warped confusion of organizational politics, technological incompatibility, and twisted logic. In order to accomplish our objectives, we were forced to abandon our logical schemas and algorithms in favour of an ad hoc stringing together of hard-won technical excellence in the interests of work-a-day user considerations. This disappointment, however, gave way to a keener interest in how my work was used than in its intrinsic form and elegance. I increasingly found greater satisfaction in the creation of rough-edged solutions that were well used than in well-coded solutions that gathered dust. I learned to abandon the abstract excellence of the elegant technical solution for the more pragmatic accomplishment of the workable solution.

These early work experiences taught me the value of engaging with users and partners on their own terms. I became less precious about my own contribution and expertise and more open to and appreciative of others' perspectives. The messiness of this work introduced me to the world of open, complex, and dynamic systems. I had been initiated into their workings through painful days and months of teasing requirements out of users and cobbling mismatching information systems together. We (the team and I) became accomplished in developing highly rigorous and pragmatic approaches to working rapidly in complex situations to get work done ... it was how we got paid!

What I have since realised is that our approach to this work is typical of open systems applied research. Our work was done as a team, temporarily constituted, with each of us borrowing from the others to get a better steer on an evolving, multi-party, dynamic situation.

Later, I became more involved in scholarly pursuits and academic research. I found myself drawn to investigating and attempting to understand complex and messy problems. The purpose of my work had changed, even if the context remained familiar. Now I worked with a view to better understand. My role was that of an outside observer who was no longer engaged in the cut and thrust of solution development. It was an uneasy transition from engaged actor to detached onlooker. This more academic approach taught me patience and distance. I learned to practice the art of letting things play out. This skill was not purely intellectual; it was primarily an emotional and social overcoming of the need to make things right and calm the waters, roles I had occupied when a participant in these situations. The academic approach led to a diligence and rigour in understanding the context of work that went beyond the immediate presentation of a situation to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of organizational phenomena and how

they play out through work. My initial focus of seeking theory that could immediately validate action slowly gave way to an appreciation of the value of theory as a lens for understanding, of theory as enhanced perception and increased situational sensitivity.

This leads me to my take on applied research. I see applied research as a combining of pragmatic workable solutions together with considered, broader, and deeper perspectives of theory. For me, it is a dance between the lens of theory and the wisdom of practice, each moving in and out of focus as required in order to progress our applied research agendas.

It has been my good fortune throughout my professional life to have had one foot in practice and the other in theory. In truth, I have never been inclined to separate one from the other. With my academic hat on, I will happily argue that to do so is a contrivance manufactured to meet the needs of a priestly few who elevate theory above all — those residents of the fabled ivory tower.

With my practice hat on, I will pointedly remark that, as professionals, we are thinking individuals who need to work, survive, and thrive in a reality that rapidly and unequivocally validates and responds to theoretical and practice errors in no uncertain terms. This feedback can be fast, furious, and painfully corrective.

I have great sympathy for the perspective that states: "Theory without practice is empty, practice without theory is blind" (Kant, *attrib.*).

For me, applied research is the happy marriage of theory and practice. It is the space in which theory informs the practice that informs theory. This virtuous circle has, for me, the added attraction of the dual impact of the work I do. Applied research at its best informs theory and enriches practice, and it does so by delivering value to each. The theoretical impact is delivered through publication (papers, conferences, books, and course content development) and the practice impact is delivered in the specific outcomes of the applied research engagement, realized at the coalface of practice.

The question of how we see knowledge and how we use knowledge cannot

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our logical schemas and algorithms in favour of an ad hoc stringing together of hard-won technical excellence in the interests of work-a-day user considerations. This disappointment, however, gave way to a keener interest in how my work was used than in its intrinsic form and elegance. I increasingly found greater satisfaction in the creation of rough-edged solutions that were well used than in well-coded solutions that gathered dust. I learned to abandon the abstract excellence of the elegant technical solution for the more pragmatic accomplishment of the workable solution.

be separated from the applied research approaches we take in uncovering, creating, and using knowledge. Working with partners whose frames of reference, areas of expertise, and approaches to knowledge creation, sharing, and use differ significantly from ours requires we take both a step back and a step down.

The step back allows us to broaden our view and add value to the partnership through our semi-located relationship and slight distance from the opportunity or problem at hand. The step down allows us to re-position ourselves as learners as opposed to teachers, so that we may better and more deeply understand the nuances of meaning and action in this very particular, very local space. By stepping back and stepping down we begin the applied research journey of discovery with our partners. We travel light, leaving our presumptions and ready-made solutions behind, ready to embrace the possibil-

ity of learning and eager to participate in the co-creation of something new and valuable.

Applied research also allows us the opportunity to co-work with some of our students in a more “real” context. I have found that relationships with students develop and strengthen when we work side by side on applied research. I have also found that those students who have worked alongside me on applied research projects become the strongest advocates for its use among their peers, a testament to the value they receive from these initiatives.

If you are interested in applied research at Douglas College, please contact me: I would love to meet and talk with you. I am currently engaged in a number of applied research projects that you might find of interest and benefit. Please feel free to reach out!

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Us and Them

Wilhelm Emilsson, English Department

These days two quotations sometimes pop into my head. One is the famous beginning of Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*: “Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning.” The other is from Buffalo Springfield’s “For What It’s Worth”: “Paranoia strikes deep / Into your life it will creep.” Perhaps what follows explains why these words are sometimes on my mind.

When I chat with my colleagues at the College, we will occasionally say to each other things like “The College is doing this” or “The College is doing that.” This will often be followed by a critical, or a tongue-in-cheek, remark. Then one fine morning, I thought, “Wait a minute! Why do we say that? Why do we see the College as something other than ourselves?” In the above examples, when we say the “College” we mean the “administration.” But is “the College,” the “administration”? Aren’t faculty a part of the College? Some may say words don’t matter, as long as we know roughly what we mean. But I think most of us agree that words do matter. Words shape what we experience and who we are. Does it make sense to talk about the “College” as something that we aren’t really a part of? This use of the word sets up a division that, arguably, isn’t there. In the end, we are the College, and the College is us—all of us, faculty members, students, administrators, and staff.

Ultimately, we have the same goals. We are a part of an institute of higher learning, with all the privileges and responsibilities that come with that. Now a Marxist would say that what I’ve just written is bourgeois trash and that the faculty, like all wage earners, are suffering from the condition of alienated labour. I must confess that even though I’m as progressive as the next person, I can never quite convince myself

that teaching the things I love and grading assignments that I designed myself puts me in the same category as a factory hand in nineteenth century Manchester or twenty-first century Detroit.

Stalinism?

Another fine day, I was talking to a colleague about an administrator. We both disagreed with the administrator. Then my colleague said that the administrator was like Stalin. At first, I thought this was a joke. As someone who enjoys irony and black humour perhaps too much, I’ve certainly made my share of bad jokes about the Central Committee, purges, and Gulags. I said to my colleague, “You’re joking, right?” It turned out my colleague wasn’t joking. My colleague really believed that the administrator was like Stalin. This led to some conflict between us because, while I found the comparison absurd and offensive, my colleague found me politically naïve.

The comparison of the administrator to Stalin made me think more about what I was starting to see as an increasing polarization in the College between instructors and administrators. This was a few years ago. Perhaps it’s just me, but I feel that this polarization has increased. Obviously, a certain degree of tension between instructors and administrators is inevitable. We are a part of the same College, but we belong to different groups, different tribes, if you like, within the institution. The psychologist Noam Shpancer writes:

human beings are herd animals, profoundly tribal and desperately social. We survive and thrive only in well-coordinated groups. We must care about what others think because we depend on cooperating with others for, well, practically everything. From birth, we are wired to elicit

caregiving from competent others around us. We are wired to alert others to our needs and desires and to respond to others' presence. Our deepest needs are for love, attachment, connectedness, and support. Even your sense of self is derived largely from (and sustained by) your interactions with others. You're made in the image of your tribe.

As we all know, when you belong to a group there is a tendency to see another group as a competitor, or—and it doesn't take very much for this to happen—as an enemy. Tribalism is always just around the corner. We focus on differences between our group, “Us,” and another group, “Them.” For instance, as instructors, we tend to overlook the fact that administrators are sometimes former instructors at the College and that sometimes they return to being instructors. One theory is that when instructors become administrators “something happens to them.” According to this theory, the structure of “the system” makes them tyrannical. I have never asked the people who believe this if they believe they themselves would transform into draconian bosses if they suddenly became administrators. Somehow I think they don't believe the theory applies to them, but I could be wrong. I used to partly believe in the something-happens-to-them theory, but over a period of time my experiences, and a colleague who offered an alternative view, proved me wrong. Does power really corrupt? Maybe it just reveals who you are.

When you belong to a group, it is easy to get caught in the trap of Either/Or thinking. We are good; they are bad. They must be punished! It is dangerous and immoral not to do so! End of story. In my experience, life at the College didn't used to be as intense as it feels now. These days, for some of my colleagues, it seems that pretty much everything the administration does is a part of some evil scheme. Those who don't see it that way are viewed by this group as too jaded to care, too simple or uninformed to realize what is going on, intimidated by the administration, or having gone over to the “Dark Side.”

Polarization affects us all. We can either deal with this Us and Them

worldview, or live with a permanent Cold War. If we are not ready for a Cold War, what is to be done? What I think we need to address collectively and individually is the Us and Them mindset that exists at the College. In my view, this mentality is characterized by a master narrative of suspicion and resentment towards the administration, as well as those faculty members who are perceived as not wanting to “challenge the administration,” or who are branded as “collaborators.” I can assure you that these are all words that I have heard used about our colleagues by other colleagues.

What's the Plan?

I sometimes wonder what the administration's master plan is, according to those who see them as always up to no good. Even if the administration somehow managed to wrestle all the power from faculty through the implementation of a cunning plan, it would not make them any richer, since their salaries are fixed. Is the administration perhaps like the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*? Does the administration want power for its own sake? “Power is not a means, it is an end,” says O'Brien to Winston Smith in Room 101. He goes on:

One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now do you begin to understand me?

But we are not in Oceania, are we? “Not yet!” I suspect some of my readers might say. “Don't be such an innocent, Wilhelm!” All I can say to that is that we are a public institution. We are not a factory, a company, or a One Party State. Recently, a colleague said to me, “We are supposed to be a public institution, but I don't think we are anymore.” I must admit that I was so surprised when I heard this that I couldn't reply. Afterwards I thought, “In what way are we not a public institution anymore? What has changed? I don't get it.” I realize that we are impacted by market forces – and

we must be vigilant about this – but so are all public institutions, and that does not make us Douglas College, Inc.

How we view the world has consequences. The most obvious example of the Us and Them worldview at our College is the BC Supreme Court lawsuit the DCFA has filed against the administration. According to my understanding, the case is about whether the Registrar's Office overstepped its authority by setting term limits for faculty who serve on Education Council. Was this lawsuit necessary? In one of his bargaining bulletins, our VP Negotiations, Glen Stanger, writes that one “point of view is that a court action is viewed as an attack that damages the relationship to the point that the willingness to engage is compromised.” He adds:

My own view is that the court petition is separate from bargaining and should have little effect if we bargain as professionals. I have experience with the bargainers on the other side of the table and my opinion is that they are very professional.

I understand and respect Glen's point of view. However, I would like us to consider that our relationship with the administration goes beyond this round of bargaining. I am not categorically against legal action, if a situation warrants it, but, in my opinion, it should always be a last resort. In my view, the Educational Council by-law revision process is what we needed to solve this issue. In addition, imagine if we just found out that the administration has sued our union. I know we would continue to conduct ourselves as professionals, but do you think our relationship with the administration would be the same as before?

What's going to happen with the court case is anybody's guess. Whatever happens, things will go on, but not as before. In our workplace, everything will feel just a little bit colder, just a little bit harder. I realize that, for some, this is not a bad thing. They believe the time has come to make a stand and fight the “Good Fight” against the Other. Us against Them.

Call me soft, but it seems rather sad that our union has chosen the fiftieth

anniversary of Douglas College to sue the College. But that is just one point of view. Speaking of standing up for things, by voting in favour of a motion to have the DCFA rescind the cease and desist letter that the DCFA sent to the previous DCFA president and, in addition, offer her a public apology, the regular members of the DCFA have shown that they are not afraid of freedom of speech – which is, of course, a vital component of academic freedom – and that they are not

afraid to stand up and be counted. We do not build solidarity by silencing one of our own. To quote Noam Chomsky, “If you’re really in favour of free speech, then you’re in favour of freedom of speech for precisely the views you despise. Otherwise, you’re not in favour of free speech.” One fine morning, someone may make a claim about a situation that you or I were involved in, and then we will probably not feel too good if we are prevented from presenting our side of the case. 

The DCFA Petition

Bill Archibald Sec. Treasurer, DCFA

There has been considerable discussion and debate in recent weeks about the DCFA

Petition to the BC Supreme Court challenging the right of the College Registrar to impose term limits on elected members of Education Council (EDCO).

It is important to be clear about the purpose of the lawsuit. The petition is *not* about the relative advantages or disadvantages of term limits for members of EdCo. What this lawsuit is about is who exactly has the authority to define term limits for EdCo members.

One major purpose of the College and Institute Act (C&I Act) is to create a clear division of authority and responsibility between college Boards and Education Councils. College boards delegate much of their authority to administrators. Where there are fundamental differences of opinion about these powers, the only way to clarify them is through a legal process, not through informal and undocumented meetings. The term limits protocol is one example of a disagreement over the jurisdiction and allocation of authority between EdCo and the Board. The Administration believes that the C&I Act gives the Registrar the authority to set term limits. The DCFA disagrees.

Why should faculty members care about this issue? Faculty members will care about this issue to the extent that they consider Douglas College to be an “academic” institution. The practice of academic self-governance is what distinguishes an academy from vocational technical institutes and training centers. The authority of an Education Council, as defined in the College and Institute Act, provides the basis for an “internal governing mechanism” for academic decision-making at Colleges in BC. The Act lays a foundation for the practice

of academic self-governance to encourage a set of behaviours that will create a culture of “collegiality ... the bedrock of university governance practice for centuries”.

Does Douglas College consider itself to be an academic institution? Academic self-governance has been embedded in the policies and practices of Douglas College long before I joined the College. Our core strategy for the last five years has been to fill “a niche between universities and colleges by combining the academic foundations of a university with the employer-ready skills of a college”. The expertise for doing this lies with faculty members.

The principle of self-governance supposes that faculty, along with other members of the academic community, use the legal authority of EdCo to design curriculum and maintain academic standards. It follows that this same principle applies to the design of policies and procedures related to those activities, such as placing a limit on EdCo members’ terms of service. The current review of our EdCo by-laws and procedures, eight years overdue, is an important example of academic self-governance.

At the last DCFA General Meeting a faculty member stated that the C&I Act currently imposes no term limits on elected members of EdCo. Hence, it may be the case that the law itself has to be amended to change EdCo term limits and neither the Registrar nor EdCo have the legal authority to do so.

The current lawsuit should answer these questions. A court ruling will establish clarity about the powers of EdCo and the Registrar, setting a legal precedent that will enable more effective governance at Douglas College as well as other colleges in BC. 

In Case You Were Wondering ...

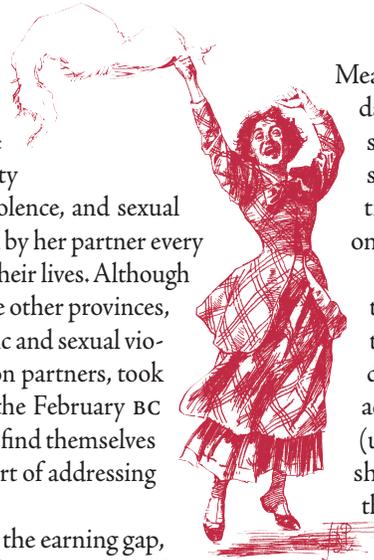
Arsineh Garabedian, Chair, Status of Women Committee, DCFA

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Equity Conference in February of 2020 in Ottawa inspired discussions on the concerns of many underrepresented equity-seeking groups including LGBT, disabled, and Indigenous faculty – all of which include women. Issues affecting women that were identified at the conference included under-representation, inequitable compensation,

casualization, and the lack of recognition for teaching and service activities and excellence, specifically for women at the intersections of multiple forms of oppression. The conference focused on organizing to bring about change through bargaining, grievances, member engagement and communications. Overall, the event was empowering and fun, unifying like-minded faculty from all across Canada.

In December of 2019, the Status of Women Committee (SWC) set up a vigil and recognized the thirtieth year of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women at the David Lam and Anvil Centre. Thirty years later in Canada, women still face horrific rates of violence, and sexual violence in particular is on the rise. One woman is murdered by her partner every week and one in three women experience sexual violence in their lives. Although intimate partner violence affects working-age women, unlike other provinces, BC did not have paid leave for workers experiencing domestic and sexual violence. The BC Federation of Labour, in solidarity with union partners, took action that resulted in the NDP government to pledge in the February BC throne speech up to five-days paid leave for individuals who find themselves in such vulnerable situations. Although this pledge falls short of addressing the crisis, it is a step in the right direction.

Although faculty salary scales have helped in narrowing the earning gap, data from the 2016 Census still shows that across Canada, women in college faculties earn on average 18.6 percent less than their male counterparts - the rate is claimed to be higher when analysed with an intersectional lens. In colleges, there are relatively more women contract faculty (57 percent) and less regularized women faculty (49.2 percent) than men. To better understand the causes of such discrepancies we need to apply resources to gather data on faculty compensation (including discretionary pay) and the regularization process. The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators' SWC passed a motion in October of 2019 requesting funds to gather concrete data from each post secondary institution under FPSE.



Meanwhile, the absence of reliable data may mean that we have no set targets to meet, but that should not stop us from continuing to improve conditions on the ground.

To celebrate the 2020 International Women's Day in March, the SWC is hosting a workshop designed specifically to support academic women to say 'NO' to (unpaid) extra service. The workshop will help faculty identify the challenges to refusing such service requests that exceed in frequency those asked of their male counterparts.

The SWC is committed to exploring gender equity issues at Douglas College and to supporting women faculty who face ever changing daily challenges in an environment affected by internationalization, Indigenization, limited resources, and rising workloads. jm

Role Confusion

Chris Maguire, English Language Learning and Acquisition

In the current Collective Agreement between Douglas College and the DCFA, the Letter of Understanding (LOU) #12: Chairs and Co-ordinators dictated the establishment of a joint committee to review the tasks of these faculty members and to prepare a report for the Labour Management Relations Committee on the subject. The joint committee duly followed the mandate of LOU #12, which focused on identifying the tasks performed by Chairs and Co-ordinators, and its recommendations constitute valid data for future strategic planning. Unfortunately, the LOU neither tasked the committee to revisit the time releases devoted to the various faculty members in these roles, nor did it mandate the clarification of their roles.

There are over fifty faculty members currently serving as either Chairs or Co-ordinators in our college. Each Department, Discipline, or Program (DDP) is different, and time release allotments for faculty vary greatly, as do the func-

tions these Chairs or Co-ordinators serve. The multitude of dissimilar tasks that need to be done in the disparate areas in which faculty serve makes establishing standard operating procedures for these two jobs problematic. Not surprisingly, role confusion arises in the absence of such parameters, creating problems for faculty members. At the least, senior Management should consider drafting Terms of Reference or job descriptions to add to our college policy. There are valid reasons for doing this.

First, there is very little documentation to differentiate between the two terms, "Chair" and "Co-ordinator," here in Douglas College. Yet, one clear difference between a Chair and a Co-ordinator is that Chairs are elected, while Co-ordinators are selected. There is no real explanation of how this distinction came to be, nor why it persists. Without clear terms of reference to differentiate between these titles, and with such an overlap in tasks performed, it seems logical that if Chairs are elected, then Co-ordinators should be as well. At the very least, this discrepancy requires clarification.

The second reason has to do with clarifying, for the benefit of all faculty members, who is in the position of Responsible Administrator (RA). As Douglas has grown in the last fifteen years or so, administrators have increased in number even faster. We now have Associate Deans, even in areas that have not grown much, a change that raises questions around both rationale and cost. Deans and Directors at Douglas College all have capable secretarial staff who report to them, as well as faculty members serving as Chairs and Co-ordinators. The same goes for Assistant Deans. This raises other questions: How much do all these jobs overlap? Who is my immediate supervisor? The answer to the first remains a mystery to me, but as for whom we faculty should report to, it is of course to our RA, who is in most cases a Dean. Chairs and faculty members who are Co-ordinators for other faculty

members should never be considered bosses, nor should they be encouraged to behave as such. Some faculty members have reported being at the college for years before they realized that their Chair or Co-ordinator was not their immediate supervisor. This, too, begs for clarity.

It appears that we need some work done at the Senior Management level, and perhaps Chairs and Co-ordinators can hold the fort (whatever and wherever it be) until our leaders clarify this muddle. We all should know where we stand in the chain of command, but it gets fuzzy at times, especially for Chairs. There is even disagreement as to whether or not Chairs are administrators – one flow chart from a particular DDP in Health Sciences shows a chain descending from the President, down to Vice Presidents, then to Deans and Directors, and finally to Chairs. This suggests that faculty members report to other faculty members as superiors. At times, faculty work allocation is the task of many Chairs and Co-ordinators here at Douglas, even though the BC Labour Code considers these tasks administrative. To avoid misun-

derstanding or its ensuing conflict, those faculty who are generous enough to take on the often onerous roles of chairing or co-ordinating a DDP in our college should be given clear direction.

There's work to do here for us as well. Perhaps the DCFA, with help from the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators, can investigate the Labour Code as it pertains to our practices here at Douglas.

When interviewed about this lack of clarity, the DCFA Ombudsperson reported that much of her time is spent resolving issues between faculty members which involve questions around the roles, powers, and responsibilities of Co-ordinators or Chairs. This is telling, and should be a call for action.

When the LOU #12 committee revisited the overlap in decanal, secretarial,

and administrative duties performed by Chairs and Co-ordinators, it began to unravel this tangle. It seems very clear that we need to do more, though. Unravelling this knot might not be easy, but that should not prevent us from trying. 

As Douglas has grown in the last fifteen years or so, administrators have increased in number even faster

"Your House is Burning"

Kim Trainor, Department of English

In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its *Special Report* on the environmental and social impacts of 1.5 degrees of warming past pre-industrial levels on earth. As summarized by the *Guardian* – "The world's leading climate scientists have warned there is only a dozen years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people" (8 October 2018). Immediate action is both an existential and ethical necessity, and the IPCC has stressed the need for such action to occur within all levels of government, as well as within public and private institutions.

Gearing Up

To this end, at the last Federation of Post Secondary Educators' (FPSE) Annual General Meeting, an Ad Hoc Climate Committee was struck with a budget of \$50,000 in order to consider how FPSE might aid locals in addressing this emergency, and to advise on methods of implementing more sustainable practices within FPSE and local unions. Representatives from Kwantlen, Langara, Camosun, Emily Carr, Selkirk, Capilano, Thompson Rivers, Vancouver Island University, Vancouver Community College, and Douglas attended a meeting on Saturday 22 February 2019. The committee also

included four members of the President's Council. We reflected a wide range of disciplinary practices: Nursing, English, Geography, Environmental Sciences, Horticulture, Political Science, Economics, and Civil Engineering. In our initial roundtable discussion we agreed that there is great untapped expertise amongst faculty at our institutions that can assist in the transformation of their structures as we transition to a low carbon future, and that we need to become both allies with and mentors to our students, who are often leading the way in addressing climate change. It was also pointed out that we need all hands on deck; input and creative responses are crucial from all disciplines in order to join technical knowledge with creative passion.

Prior to this meeting, I sent a message to the membership requesting suggestions and feedback to bring with me. I shared these responses beforehand and discussed these ideas in person with the ad hoc committee (my deep thanks for such thoughtful and detailed responses from those of you who wrote to me!). Some members, including myself, were especially interested in SFU's detailed *Strategic Sustainability Plan 2020–2025* as a potential model for their colleges. As a potential smaller-scale model for a sustainability plan at the college level, I would also encourage you to look at the Camosun College *Sustainability Plan for 2018–2022*.

At our initial meeting, we came to realize that there are few

climate action committees at our locals, and that many of our colleges and universities have not yet begun to engage deeply with the climate emergency in terms of an institution-wide climate committee that goes beyond green roofs, recycling, and LED light bulbs; there is also a great concern that green rhetoric is masking inaction.

Taking climate action

We agreed that FPSE should declare a climate emergency, and encourage locals to adopt a similar declaration. We brainstormed possibilities for action, to fall within the categories of bargaining, advocacy, policy, FPSE/local practices, supports, and other. FPSE will be producing a document of our key suggestions, as well as the declaration, although I have not received it in time to include in this report. I've included here however a brief list of some of the highlights of our suggestions. A resolution was then passed to request from the Presidents Council a second meeting in the Fall to follow through on these suggested actions, and for FPSE to acquire the necessary equipment to facilitate video-conferencing, thereby limiting our need to fly, with its resultant heavy carbon footprint. Our hope is that the FPSE ad hoc committee should be made a standing committee, once the review of committees currently underway is completed.

FPSE is now currently working on the draft report of our meeting, including the wording for a declaration of a climate emergency, and our key recommendations. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has been pursuing similar actions for some years now. I will ask the DCFA to circulate our draft document to the membership when I receive it in late March. It will then be presented to the May 2020 Annual General Meeting in Vancouver.

As an immediate response to the FPSE ad hoc meeting, I presented a motion to the DCFA Executive Council to request its support in the creation of a DCFA Climate Change Action Committee (I'm calling it C3 for short; C3 refers to carbon fixation in plants), ideally to include representatives from all areas of our membership. A motion to strike this committee will be presented to the general membership at the March 23 meeting. The purpose of the (hopefully!) newly-formed DCFA Climate Action Committee will be to liaise with the college's Sustainability Committee, which is currently in the process of developing a new Sustainability Policy for the college. I have just joined this committee, which includes Nathalie Vigouroux of Earth Sciences and Siobhan Ashe of Sociology. The Action Committee will also liaise with FPSE's ad hoc climate action committee, provide leadership at the college with respect to the climate emergency, and make recommendations

and track implementation of sustainability initiatives at the college with a particular focus on advocacy, pedagogy, and teaching.

While the news on global heating is grim, it is important to acknowledge grief and then act on it as a source of potential energy. As Rebecca Solnit observed upon the publication of the IPCC *Special Report*:

The future hasn't already been decided. That is, climate change is an inescapable present and future reality, but the point of the IPCC report is that there is still a chance to seize the best-case scenario rather than surrender to the worst. Nathan Sharansky, who spent nine years in a gulag for his work with Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov, recalls his mentor saying: "They want us to believe there's no chance of success. But whether or not there's hope for change is not the question. If you want to be a free person, you don't stand up for human rights because it will work, but because it is right. We must continue living as decent people." Right now living as decent people means every one of us with resources taking serious climate action, or stepping up what we're already doing. (Guardian, 14 October 2018) jm

Further Reading

Camosun College, *Sustainability Plan 2018–2022*. <http://camosun.ca/sustainability/documents/SustainabilityPlanSept2014.pdf>

CAUT, *Confronting Climate Change on Campus*. <https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/en-climate-change-web.pdf>

IPCC, *Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees*. https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/SR15_Full_Report_High_Res.pdf

SFU, *Strategic Sustainability Plan 2020–2025*. https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/sustainability/About/Publications/SFU%20Sustainability%20Plan%202025_v1.0_date02282020_digital.pdf

