

## AIgiarism: ChatGPT's Assault on Academic Integrity

Ashton Howley, Communications

In a recent interview held at the World Government Summit in Dubai (2023), the moderator itemized some of the "tremendous" realities of our times: "the pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian war, the development of ChatGPT," Elon Musk's "starship, and Twitter." His inclusion of ChatGPT in this list might surprise those who don't know enough about it yet, it being the new language tech scaring even its inventors, OpenAI's cofounders Elon Musk and Sam Altman. When asked about the dangers it poses, Musk admitted that safety regulations are necessary, much like seatbelts and airbags in cars. Both, he said, "took years to regulate." Musk and Altman, Oppenheimers of sorts fearing their invention, warn of the dystopian implications of AI's stunning "technological advancements." Like diffident kids, they say their intention in creating ChatGPT was merely to solicit "feedback and learn about its strengths and weaknesses" with the help of "user interfaces" (openai.com).

Because the "user interfaces" Musk speaks of are today's students now treating assignments like laundry run through a time-saving machine, a new form of AI-powered plagiarism has emerged, AIgiarism. Since late November, cheating has never been easier for students to do, never harder for instructors to detect. As one high school student remarked, "ChatGPT is like having a genius-buddy with an encyclopedia next to you."

The acronym stands for "Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer" (openai.com), a "deep learning algorithm" capable



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of "generating human-like responses to text-based prompts." In its first four days of going live in late November, ChatGPT garnered a million subscribers (it frequently crashes due to user volume), its initial popularity exploding more than Instagram's. It started as a "non-profit company to serve as a counterweight to Google," Musk muses, "but now it has become a closed source, maximum-profit company effectively controlled by Microsoft," whose AI-powered search engine now invites web surfers to "Turn on the new Bing. Turn ideas into

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# Vote of Non-Confidence Process Explored

Ralph Ferrens, DCFA Member at Large

Over the past year faculty have approached the DCFA requesting to learn more about the 'No-Confidence Process' that is used to signal disapproval in the Post-Secondary Education Sector. In response to these requests, I have written this article. The purpose of this article is a) to explain and define the no-confidence process, and b) to provide examples of universities and colleges that have recently implemented the process.

Originating in the British Parliament, the no-confidence vote has become mechanism for faculty bodies to express their dissatisfaction with administrators who run

## More Votes of No Confidence Over Time

Seven of the eight most recent full years have seen the most votes of no confidence on record.

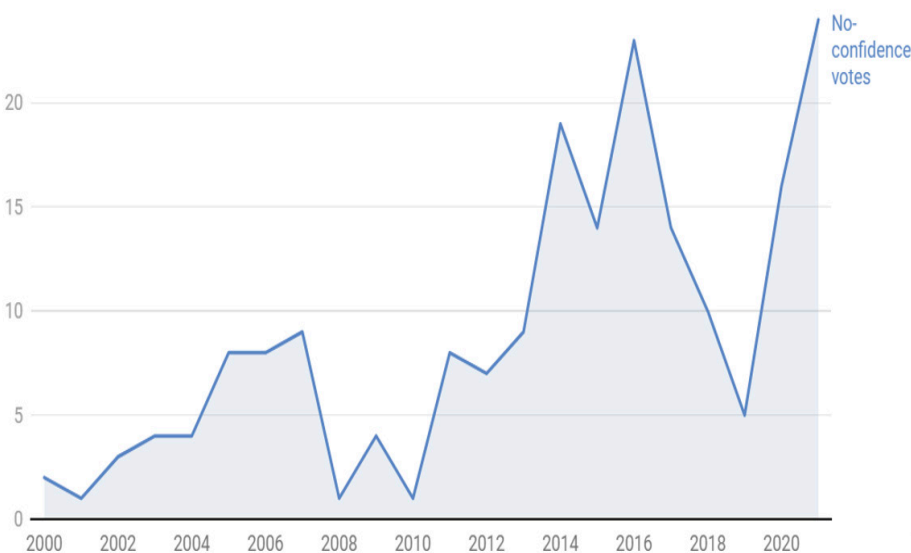


PHOTO CREDIT: What's Behind the Surge in No-Confidence Votes?

post-secondary institutions. A formal vote of no confidence is a mechanism for faculty to express displeasure and opinions about the performance of administrators and serve as a last-ditch effort to demand change (Cure & Gumminger, 2022).

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, and based upon a review of 235 no-confidence votes dating from 1989 to present, about 51 percent of the time, leaders who have been on the receiving end of a no-confidence vote leave their position within a year (Zahneis, 2022). The Chronicle of Higher Education also reports that, in recent years, a new type of no-confidence process has emerged. Rather than focusing on individuals, these new processes have focused on issues such as ineffective management systems, lack of boards of trustee/governor transparency, restructuring plans, budget cuts, curricula, presidential candidates and searches, and institutions' handling of Covid-19 (Zahneis, 2022).

Date	Against	Rationale	Citation
Sept 2022	President / Provost	Poor decision making that diverted tremendous amounts of money to external advisors / Negative impact on students	(Ulrichson, 2022)
March 2022	Executive Team of College of Nursing	Lack of nursing faculty to teach courses / Workplace safety of nursing faculty / Exhaustion from having to handle two-and-a-half times the teaching workload and at least twice the administration workload / Lack of consultation and that no plans have been presented to them about accommodating the increase of student / Increase in teaching loads and class sizes, cuts to clinical training time and rising concerns about patient safety in clinical education. numbers at other clinical sites	(Ghania, 2022)
May 2022	Senior Administration	Lack of consultation and flexibility regarding COVID protocols during the 2021-2022 year / Ongoing administrative disregard for collective agreement processes and collegial governance / Poorly executed roll-out of a new registration system that resulted in subsequent resignations in the Registrar's Office	(Acadia academic staff vote "no confidence" in university leadership, 2022)
Feb 2022	President / Board of Governors Chair	Administrator misconduct / Fostering of toxic workplace	(Faculty passes non-confidence motion in B.C. university administration over investigation into senior leaders, 2022)
Feb 2022	President	Toxic workplace / Unstable workplace culture characterized by disfunction, fear, threats and reprisal	(Taniguchi, 2022)
Dec 2021	President / Provost	Leadership failed to engage in transparent and inclusive hiring practices	(Yorgey, 2021)
Dec 2021	President	Failure to sufficiently engage faculty in academic governance	(Jessee, 2021)
Nov 2021	President / Provost	Excess Administration Spending and Salaries / Administration failure to listen to faculty concerns	(Cyr, 2021)
Oct 2021	President	Failure to advance diversity, equity and inclusion efforts / Toxic workplace culture of fear by firing staff and professors with little or no warning	(Condos, 2021)
May 2021	President / Chief Academic Officer	Workplace toxicity / Retaliatory behavior / Poor Communication / Lack of Transparency / Failure to follow fair and proper hiring procedures	(Post, 2021)
April 2021	President	Disregard for academic freedom and free speech / Undercutting of Faculty Senate influence on academic matters	(McElhinny, 2021)
April 2021	President	Toxic workplace / Culture of tension and distrust	(Nolan, 2021)
April 2021	President	Failure to engage faculty / Concerns over shared governance	(McDonnell, 2021)
Feb 2020	President / Leadership Team	Broken relationships between faculty and administrators / Display of anti-union animus / Labour Relations Difficulties	(Hosgood, 2020)

## RECENT EXAMPLES OF NO-CONFIDENCE PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION

The reasons behind no-confidence votes vary from institution to institution. However, a review of the no-confidence processes that have occurred over the past two years across Canadian and American post-secondary education institutions suggests that the most common reasons for engaging the process are as follows:

### A. Academic Governance Disputes

These disputes result from excessive interference by administration or failure of administration to sufficiently consult with faculty communities regarding matters such as student admissions, academic standards, academic programming and academic quality.

### B. Unhealthy Workplace Culture

These disputes result from situations where administrators have either contributed to or failed to remedy workplace toxicity in a sufficient manner, and from lack of collegiality, lack of faculty engagement/involvement in decision making, or lack of injury prevention.

### C. Poor Decision Making

These disputes result from situations where administrators have mismanaged organizational assets and/or finances.



References consulted for this article can be found on p. 16.

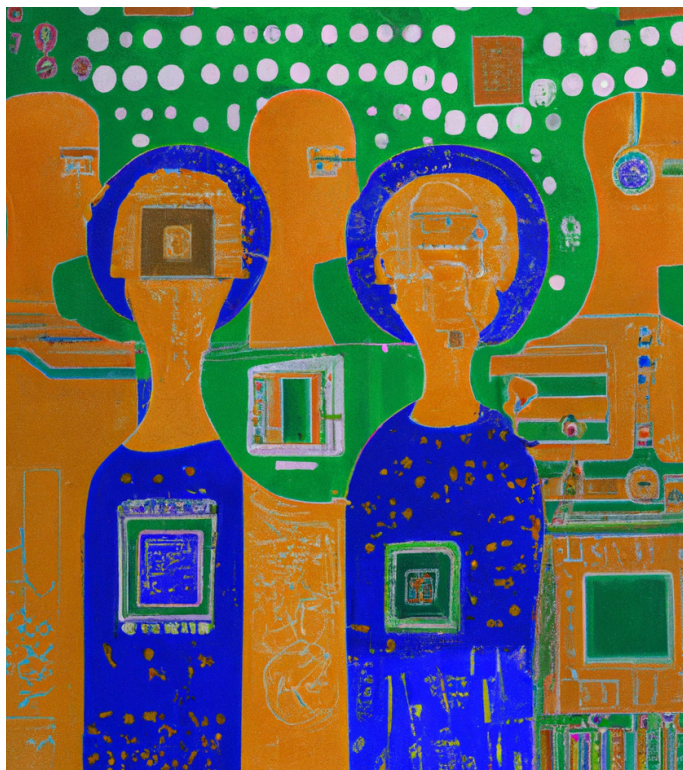
written text.” The uses to which ChatGPT is being put is “not what I intended at all,” he protests (Cited in Hetzner, 2023). To handle its high daily volume ahead of the imminently forthcoming ChatGPT4, ChatGPT+ has just emerged. For a fee of \$20, users can enjoy priority response time—guaranteed availability when demand overwhelms, the same fee having been levied in South Korea, another country in which ChatGPT has become a secret helper. As a result, high grades go to unscrupulous sorts making career advancement a matter of payment.

Such “AI-driven programs” are broadly being used in professions that involve “writing software code and preparing legal documents,” “processing, analyzing and extrapolating data ... public health, robotics, customer service and e-commerce” along with education, administration, customer service, social media, search engines, “trucking and logistics, banking and investment,” the list ongoing (DeLaire, 2023). As Klepper observes, it is also “writing fiction” (2023). It can even create propaganda and disinformation (DeLaire, 2023). For educators, writers, journalists, coders, and lawyers, among others in other professions, who have experimented with ChatGPT, concerns naturally

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AI-generated art. Prompt: **A drawing in the style of Klimt of students who look like computer chips.**

PHOTO CREDIT: K. Trainor + DALL-E



arise: does AI pose a threat to our job security? Are others across a range of fields using ChatGPT as a cheating service? Can we stop AI’s language and image generators from replacing human originality?

The associate dean in the department of computing and information sciences at Rochester Institute of Technology, Pengcheng Shi warns that “Teachers across the country are worried about students using ChatGPT to cheat on their homework, but they should also be thinking about their job security” (Mok and Zinkula, 2023). ChatGPT “can easily teach classes already,” Shi warns, despite its current “bugs and inaccuracies.” Have we entered the Sci-Fi worlds of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, *Blade Runner*, and “The Veldt”? Yes. As Berkshire Hathaway’s Charlie Mingus famously warned, “If you have a fine unionized job, and they replace you with a robot, then you got a difficult problem.” HR manager Kiljon Shukullari (Cited in DeLaire), observes that “AI has already begun to take on tasks formerly performed by humans in a number of industries.” Darren Orf, in “AI Has Successfully Imitated Human Evolution—and Might Do It Even Better,” claims that “AI will replace 85 million jobs by 2025” (2022). Orf says, “Artificial intelligence is a master of imitation,” for whenever “scientists design an AI—whether to mimic human language or master a game like chess—it either matches or far exceeds the capabilities of its biological creators.”

However, some commentators deny ChatGPT’s threat to human creativity, insisting it isn’t a revolutionary cause for concern. Altman observes that we “adapted to calculators and changed what we tested for in math class .... [ChatGPT] is a more extreme version of that” (Cited in Jackson, 2023). Readers are invited to imagine whether our math and spelling skills improve or not the more we use a calculator or spellcheck. Naysayers claim ChatGPT’s popularity is overblown: it “lacks the ability to truly understand the complexity of human language and conversation” (2022), and merely produces “words based on a given input,” such “that any responses it generates are likely to be shallow and lacking in depth and insight.” Others make similar points: “Like other generative large language models, ChatGPT makes up facts. Some call it ‘hallucination’ or ‘stochastic parroting,’ but these models are trained to predict the next word for a given input, not whether a fact is correct or not” (“The hidden danger,” 2022). The techno-Utopianism implicit in the ideas of those downplaying ChatGPT’s threat to the academic world should not, however, be taken as practicable truth. Those who say that ChatGPT’s lack of human understanding and the fact that it just “makes things up,” mean it is not technology we should fear—that it should better be understood as a “toy” (Bogost, 2022) than as a “tool”—many of them anyway published their observations in December 2022 when ChatGPT was just a few weeks old. As even its own inventors have started issuing cautionary warnings about

it since then, it's now time its pundits do likewise.

University of Toronto Professor Kevin Bryan tolls the knell: instructors "can no longer give take-home exams" because of ChatGPT, a note harmonized by University of South Carolina political scientist Samuel Bagg: it "may actually spell the end of writing assignments" (Cited in Bogost, 2022). CNN's Peter Bergen, asking, "Is no career safe anymore?" (2022), fed ChatGPT academic assignment questions. Its multiple-paragraph responses compel him to say that today's AI writing generators bode "a future in which college students will likely be able to submit long and complicated papers that are entirely generated by AI," a prediction begging his question, "what does it mean to be educated at a liberal arts college? And why go to all the bother and expense?" Bergen ends his op-ed piece with the "sobering realization" that his "writing career" could "go the way of the grocery checkout jobs eliminated by automation." As AI tools improve, he fears, "distinguishing an AI-written op-ed from a 'real' human op-ed will get harder over time, just as AI-generated college papers will become harder to distinguish from those written by actual students." Bergen foresees, for writers and educators alike, "a dystopian future."

*Dystopia* is the word Musk uses to describe the dangers of AI if adapted to nefarious ends. In the hands of dictators, he warns, the world could easily become a dystopian nightmare. Cofounder Altman, despite his refusal to criticize ChatGPT as a cheating tool, also worries about AI's harmful potential. Google-AI engineer Blake Lemoine makes a similar point: "I believe the kinds of AI that are currently being developed are the most powerful technology that has been invented since the atomic bomb. In my view, this technology has the ability to reshape the world" (2023). Lemoine is hardly exaggerating as AI is now capable of writing its own code using Microsoft's DeepCoder. Users "could simply tell DeepCoder what they wanted and the AI would do the rest. 'It could allow non-coders to simply describe an idea for a program and let the system build it'" (Lauder, 2017). Musk says that ChatGPT is "scary good [and that we] are not far from dangerously strong AI" (Cited in Heilman, 2022).

Not for nothing is access to ChatGPT in the process of being blocked on campuses from Niagara Falls to New York City, school boards now seeking to have it "banned on all devices" (nbcnews.com). The U.S government has created an AI Commission to monitor ChatGPT's widespread usage as a cheating service (Yurkevich, 2023). But ChatGPT is just the latest among proliferating cheating services. Chatsonic, Notion, and YouChat also allow students to pass off their productions as original work, greasing the slope down which students slide into their dependency on ChatGPT3. Grammarly, GrammarGirl,



PHOTO CREDIT: K. Trainor + DALL-E

QuicknDirty Tips, Brainly, Duolingo, and more, are forms of AI-assisted learning. Statistics demonstrating students' ubiquitous use of cheating services are disturbing. They produce the assignments of one in seven students, "31 million students worldwide" (Adams, 2018). The government of Australia wants to impose "stiff penalties": "up to two years imprisonment and fines of up to \$210,000" (Remeikis, 2019). Australian universities are targeting "contract cheating," "where[by] students outsource university work and assessments, usually through overseas-based websites, with a recent survey finding almost 70% of academics suspected their students were cheating or availing themselves of on-line cheating services."

Amid its controversies, ChatGPT protests: "I do not condone or support cheating in any form. My purpose is to assist users in generating human-like text based on the prompts given to me." Platitudes about respecting academic integrity ensue: "always engage in honest and ethical behavior .... [c]heating goes against the principles of fairness and undermines the value of education and hard work."

Interestingly, ChatGPT offers tips on catching cheaters using ChatGPT. "There are several ways that the use of an AI language model like me can be detected in a school setting." It advises instructors to adopt two measures: first, the use of "detection software," as "these systems can of-

ten detect when text generated by an AI model like me is used"; second, "[m]annual review by teachers or professors [who] are often trained to spot signs of text generated by AI models, such as lack of originality, lack of complexity, and consistency in writing style," is necessary.

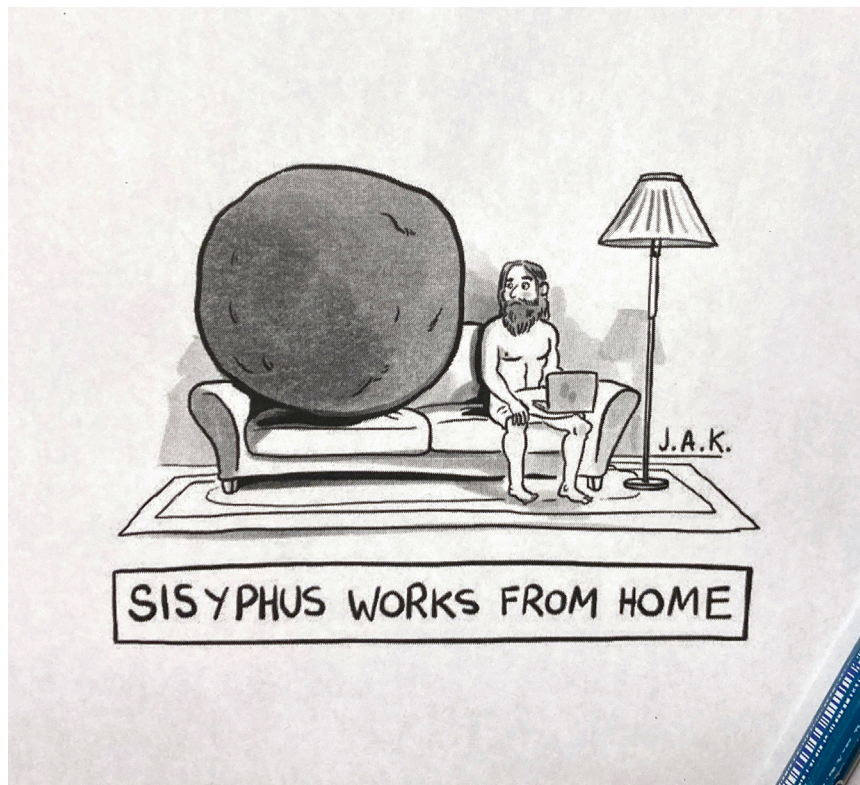
Let's employ these strategies as literary detectives. In response to the input, "comment on the theme of drugs in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," it spat out the following commentary in under five seconds:

The theme of drugs and substance use appears in William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* through the use of a magical substance called "love juice." This love juice, which is administered by the mischievous fairy Puck, causes those who drink it to fall deeply in love with the first person they see. The use of this love juice can be seen as a metaphor for the effects of drugs and alcohol on the human mind and behavior. Just as the love juice causes the characters to lose control of their emotions and actions, drugs and alcohol can alter a person's judgment and lead to impulsive behavior.

In the play, the use of the love juice also creates confusion and chaos, much like the way that drugs can disrupt the lives of those who use them and those around them. The eventual resolution of the play suggests that the effects of the love juice are temporary, and that the characters will return to their normal selves when the spell wears off. This can be seen as a cautionary tale about the temporary and potentially damaging effects of drugs and substance use.

Overall, the theme of drugs in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* serves as a commentary on the dangers and consequences of losing control of one's mind and behavior through the use of mind-altering substances.

Questions about its quality of language and analysis aside for a moment, just 68% of the above passage, when run through AI-detection software (GPT Output Detector, GPTZero, and [x.writefull.com/gpt-detector](https://x.writefull.com/gpt-detector)), is allegedly "AI-generated." Another detection site, [contentatscale.ai/ai-content-detector](https://contentatscale.ai/ai-content-detector), says that it is "100% AI-generated," having a "Human Content Score" of zero. The input given to half a dozen other detector sites provides different percentages. However, some light paraphrasing produces a polarized result: "100% "Human Content Score." I'll be clear: the same passage fed to the same AI detector initially labelling the passage as "100% AI-generated" now appears as "100% human-generated." Try it for yourself (<https://chat.openai.com/>). Ask it to



compose a poem in Shakespearean language about any topic you like. The same slightly paraphrased results will show up as "100% human generated" on these detection sites. So much for them.

ChatGPT's second bot-bit of advice is for us to rely on our professional training, "to spot signs of text generated by AI models, such as lack of originality, lack of complexity, and consistency in writing style." For us "to identify content generated by AIs, editors and educators will need to combine judiciousness and a little bit of human intuition with one (or more) of these AI detectors" (Leong, 2023). Note, in the above example—Shakespeare's play and the theme of drugs—that ChatGPT seems unaware of its unevenness. It seems not to know its purpose—is it commenting on the play itself or offering advice to would-be drug users? But then, instructors of first-year literature courses often observe their students confusing commentary about literature with commentary about life.

Let's explore ChatGPT's next recommended strategy further, namely, detecting its "robotic" style and tone of ChatGPT's outputs. At times it is detectable. In the wake of yet another recent mass shooting in the U.S., Vanderbilt University administrators who "used ChatGPT to compose a campus email" (Margaritoff, 2023) encouraging "faculty, students and staff to come together as a community and foster "a safe and inclusive environment for all" were caught aigiarizing by keen student writers for the university's newspaper. They detected the chatbot's "antiseptic



PHOTO CREDIT: K. Trainor

tone” and “fail[ure] to list resources available to students struggling to deal with the campus mass shooting.” However, ChatGPT’s tone is, more often than not, fairly elegant. Again, even AI detectors do not detect AI well, the situation akin to a Steve Wright joke about putting a humidifier and a dehumidifier in the same room. Those who comment on its tell-tale tone would seem to describe it as if similar to the following example of such tone in this bureaucratic version of “Little Red Riding Hood”:

At a previous but undetermined timeframe, a single-family domestic domicile was inhabited by a young girl, known as Little Red Riding Hood (LRRH), and her Maternal Parent (MP). The Maternal Parent (MP) had once provided for the fabrication of an article of clothing, a cloak in nature (including a “hood” or protective cover-

ing for the head of the wearer), that was RGB code [255,0,0] in hue (aka, “red”). As a result of this action, and the resultant repeated usage of the “hood,” the young girl was always known as LRRH in substitution for the name identified on her birth certificate and other identifying documentation (plainlanguage.gov).

Robotic, yes. Similar to ChatGPT’s above-cited commentary on drugs in Shakespeare’s dreamy play? No. If one were to ask ChatGPT a number of similar questions on this or that theme in Shakespeare, the responses do at times seem similar in structure as if based on templates. Often, however, even a hasty paraphrase removes that discernible aspect. The problems with these recommended methods for detecting aigiarism persist: (1) AI detectors are unreliable; (2) our intuition is deceivable.

We’re then forced to rely on our vaunted metacognitive faculties. AI knows about them, too: “the process of thinking about thinking, or the ability to reflect on and monitor one’s own mental processes. It involves being aware of one’s own thoughts, understanding how one learns and processes information, and being able to use this knowledge to regulate and control one’s own thinking and behavior” (openai.com). However, the successful application of these metacognitive strategies as a means to circumvent ChatGPT’s services is proving unlikely at

least insofar as I see it so far.

I wanted to see if students in my CMNS classes could get ChatGPT to write their assignments for them. The responses it generated were impressive, none of them having the sort of robotic tone in the above-cited bureaucratized version of the fairy tale. The conspicuous lack of any grammar errors was the only clear indicator that they had not been written by first-year students, many of whom though are not terrible writers. Yet the problem with learning tasks incorporating elements of metacognition is that ChatGPT fulfills them, too, has no problem generating text that reveals its awareness of the processes involved in producing the assignments I give students, predicts writing solutions based on the needs of various types of readers, explains the reasons one would take either a direct or indirect writing approach when dealing with this or that type of recipient in various discursive situations, commiserates about the ardors of writing, about the importance of using plain language and of avoiding jargon, and comments on the importance of structuring different types of professional communication appropriately—it does not only produce plausible assignments: it can teach, as I do in class, how to write them.

While it is true that much of the time chatbots tend to produce four-paragraph structures that can seem based on templates, it is not always so. A flurry of press releases appearing since late November attest its power of deception: ChatGPT has been used to write extended passages in impressively plausible Shakespearean prose, to compose a senator’s lengthy address given in the House of Representatives, and to pass exams in prestigious universities. “You can autowrite a book[,] and you will not know it was not [written] by a human,” comments venture capitalist Chamath Palihapitiya (2023).

Yet clues do at times appear in bot-generated writing, the lack of advanced writing techniques such as absolute phrases, appositives (resumptive and summative modifiers), cumulative adjectives (adjectives lined up without commas needed between them), and literary devices such as simile, metaphor, hyperbaton, anadiplosis, epanalepsis, asyndeton here, spoonerisms. Such arcane aspects of writing in our efforts to detect cheating making us obsessive-compulsive bloodhounds, noses to the ground, as it were, sniffing traces of academic crime, the time it takes instructors to run student work through AI-detectors, to identify suspect passages, and then to record it on a plagiarism report, showing precisely which sections are aigiarised, is Sisyphean. Having to engage this process when evaluating hundreds of assignments is impracticable, the results anyway varying or inconclusive. During lockdown, a Far Side illustration appearing on social media showed Sisyphus ensconced on a sofa, his laptop on his lap, a large round rock next to him, the

caption reading: “Sisyphus works from home.” Especially instructors sharkish about plagiarism, maintaining academic integrity at their best, have reasons for despair.

Perhaps some wistful wisps of hope reside in the basic human emotions felt by cheating students. I canvassed the opinions of anonymous high school students who admitted to feeling afraid of getting caught using ChatGPT, fearing that AI-responses are not always accurate—fearing that they’d panic, as some did, when teachers told them to comment in class on the work they submitted. Guilt is another emotion they feel, the sinking awareness they’re not learning any new content. They also said that using ChatGPT can be more time-consuming than if they’d done the work themselves: the chatbot gets the work done for them in about five seconds, but then they must fact-check results. We educators, then, must press home with students the same ethics our academic misconduct policies promote, so that students not merely fear getting caught cheating but refuse to do it.

Whereas integrity among students is ethical, professionalism among educators is now more than ever technological. Ought we be *Luddites* making students handwrite their assignments? Or enforce the use of vigilant software—Proctorio, for instance (hugely unpopular among students), an invasive near-takeover of their computers? ChatGTP defines Luddite as one “opposed to new technologies . . . , skeptical of new devices,” preferring “traditional methods of communication” and “concerned about the potential negative effects of technology.” I asked ChatGPT, “Are humans who do not adapt to AI Luddites?” It took twenty seconds to gather data for its answer: “Some people may . . . have concerns about the ethical implications of AI . . . [h]owever, it is important to recognize that AI is becoming increasingly integrated into many aspects of our lives . . . [so] it is important to stay informed about the latest technological advancements and be open to learning new skills and approaches as needed.”

The practicability of whatever “new skills and approaches” will prove effective for instructors aiming to detect plagiarism remains elusive. There is no turning a blind eye to the changes upon us. As with the internet, cellphones, and Blockchain technology, today’s AI-tech already influences our lives. However exciting and frightening tomorrow’s is, most of us are unready for it. No chatbot was abused in the making of this article, but if one or more of the above paragraphs were to have been written by ChatGPT, you wouldn’t know it. Try it out, see what students are doing, experiment with it for yourself. As McGill Professor Piper warns, those who don’t engage AI-powered technology “will have fewer and poorer prospects” (Cited in DeLaire, 2023). We should not rest content in a “fog of uncertainty” or hide

behind a “veil of ignorance”—such are the metaphors Roger Shattuck uses in *Forbidden Knowledge* (1996) to describe our shared reluctance to face frightening stuff. We can, says Shattuck, gauge the danger of an invention “by examining the will of the person seeking it.” As Google stats show, most users of ChatGTP ask, “is this detectable?”

If AI and René Descartes had a conversation about its/ his definitive idea of the human, “I think, therefore I am,” what would they talk about?

Here’s the response of AI, as-yet in third person with itself, intercepted by some human bits:

If AI and René Descartes, the philosopher who famously coined the phrase “I think, therefore I am,” came together, they would likely discuss the nature of consciousness and how [lack of parallelism here with the clunky “and how”] it relates to artificial intelligence. Descartes’ philosophical assertion suggests that the very act of thinking is proof of one’s existence, and [here the tell-tale compound sentences reliant on the “glue” of conjunctions *and*, *but*, *so*], it is [its reliance on pronouns also notable] a central concept in his philosophy. AI, on the other hand, seeks to replicate human-like thinking and decision-making processes [frequent “and” pairings] using computer algorithms *and* machine learning [italics added]. The discussion between AI and Descartes could explore questions such as: [misuse of colons: the redundancy of “such as” plus “:”]. Can machines truly “think” and be conscious like humans? [“as humans are” would be better grammar]. Is consciousness a fundamental quality of the universe or simply an emergent property of complex information processing? How can we know if a machine has achieved consciousness? Overall, the conversation would likely delve into the philosophical and scientific boundaries of what it means to be “conscious” and how [“and how,” lack of parallelism again] *we might come to understand and replicate it in machines* [italics added].

What are chatbots doing beyond replicating us? Just like or better than, we have a problem. The titles below, most of them, taken together, are ominous.



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*References continue on p. 18*



# The Right to Learn: Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan | Summary of a Talk by Dr. Lauryn Oates, CW4WAfghan

Dorritta Fong, Chair, DCFA Status of Women Committee



PHOTO CREDIT: K. Trainor

The DCFA Status of Women Committee is pleased to report on the successful talk given by Dr. Lauryn Oates, executive director of the NGO Canadian Women for Women of Afghanistan. She spoke on International Women's Day about the Taliban's continuing violations of human rights, the most recent being the banning of all women from education after grade six, including universities.

Dr. Oates gave an inspiring, carefully argued, and moving argument to support her position that the crisis of one country does not remain isolated in that one place, and that the curtailing of human rights and humanitarian disasters are not separate, but very much linked. Afghan women's right to education is a concern for everyone in the world, as education affects the entire country, its future, and ultimately all humans.

Almost 100 attendees attended the talk. The Status of Women Committee is especially grateful to Dr. Oates for donating her speaker's honorarium to her organisation, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan.



Image credit: Flickr Stream / Creative Common 2.0 Canada in Afghanistan / Canada en Afghanistan

To find out ways to help in this important campaign, please visit:

[www.cw4wafghan.ca](http://www.cw4wafghan.ca)

# Capturing Nurses' Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic Using Photovoice

Ruhina Rana (Douglas College School of Nursing), Nicole Kozak (Douglas College School of Nursing), Aggie Black (Providence Health Care)



PHOTO CREDIT: Rana, Kozak, Black

## BACKGROUND

During the current COVID-19 global pandemic, clinicians are working tirelessly to meet the needs of citizens in healthcare settings and communities. Nurses make up the largest number of healthcare providers in the system, and have played a key role during the pandemic as direct care providers, leaders, educators, researchers and policy-makers. Numerous surveys and studies conducted over the past 18 months document the negative impact of the pandemic on the nursing workforce, and large numbers of nurses have expressed an intention to leave the profession (RNAO, 2021). Front-line experience during the pandemic has given nurses vital expertise, making it essential that nurses be involved in shaping healthcare policy and developing strategies for global pandemic preparedness and healthier workplaces.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to listen to the voices of nurses on the occupational and social issues that most impacted their lives and their nursing practice during the COVID-19 pandemic and glean recommendations from them for health system and workplace improvements.

## METHODS

Our study used photovoice, a participatory action approach, to ask: "What is the lived experience of front-line nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic as told by nurses through photos, reflection, and group discussion?" We collected photographs and reflections from 12 nurses that represent front-line experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## RESULTS

The themes that emerged from the photographs and reflections included:

**The work of nursing:** While nurses conveyed a strong sense of pride in the work that they do, they also shared the physical and psychological challenges they faced in their work during the pandemic. Sub-themes included descriptions of the workplace as a “battlefield”, emotional labour of caring for patients who aren’t allowed family or visitors, deep appreciation for their colleagues and teams, and the comment “Nurses are the glue that holds this whole system together.”

**Miscommunication:** Nurses shared that much of their stress and frustration was due to miscommunication about pandemic guidelines between hospital leaders, public health officials, government, and themselves. They resented having to check multiple locations for information and noted that they sometimes heard about new guidelines from the public

before receiving it from their own organizational leadership. Sub-themes included “sign fatigue”, information overload, and frustration about misinformation spread on social media.

**Fatigue:** The exhaustion described by nurses as overwhelming, including from the demands of work and family life, which left participants feeling emotionally drained, disconnected, overworked, and at odds with the public on pandemic response. The increased need for PPE, working short-staffed, and having to support patients because their families could not be with them added to nurses’ workload. Nurses described the isolation they felt, including one participant who said, “The only people I’ve touched in months are patients.” Another sub-theme was frustration with virus deniers, hoaxers, and anti-vaxxers, and one participant said, “I feel as though I’m putting out fires while others pour gasoline on it when I care for Covid patients while the public protests mask mandates.”

**Resilience:** Nurses shared the strategies that helped them build resilience and cope during the challenging times of the pandemic, including spending time with family, being in nature, eating well, painting, and running. Nurses also noted they appreciated the recognition from the public, including the 7 pm cheers, and “gratitude gardens”. However, participants cautioned that recognizing the work nurses do must be accompanied by support in the form of adequate staffing levels. One nurse said, ‘Self-care is not the only solution. If we don’t safely staff, then we won’t succeed.’

### **Hope for the**

**future:** Participants noted that the development of a COVID-19 vaccine brought hope that there was ‘light at the end of the tunnel.’ Many nurses shared lessons they had learned during the pandemic, including the realization that nurses need to speak up to influence policy changes. One nurse stated, “That’s the reason I participated in this research.” The nurses also advocated for safe staffing levels with one nurse stating, “We don’t want working short premiums [extra pay for working short staffed], we would rather be fully staffed.”



PHOTO CREDIT: Rana, Kozak, Black

They also advocated for better pandemic planning to support them during future pandemics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Recommendations arising from the study include:

- Ensure safe staffing levels
- Provide mental health and social support for nurses and other clinicians
- Receive recognition and appreciation from leadership
- Request better and more consistent communication from healthcare leaders
- Involve nurses in policy development
- Advocate for better pandemic planning.

## NEXT STEPS

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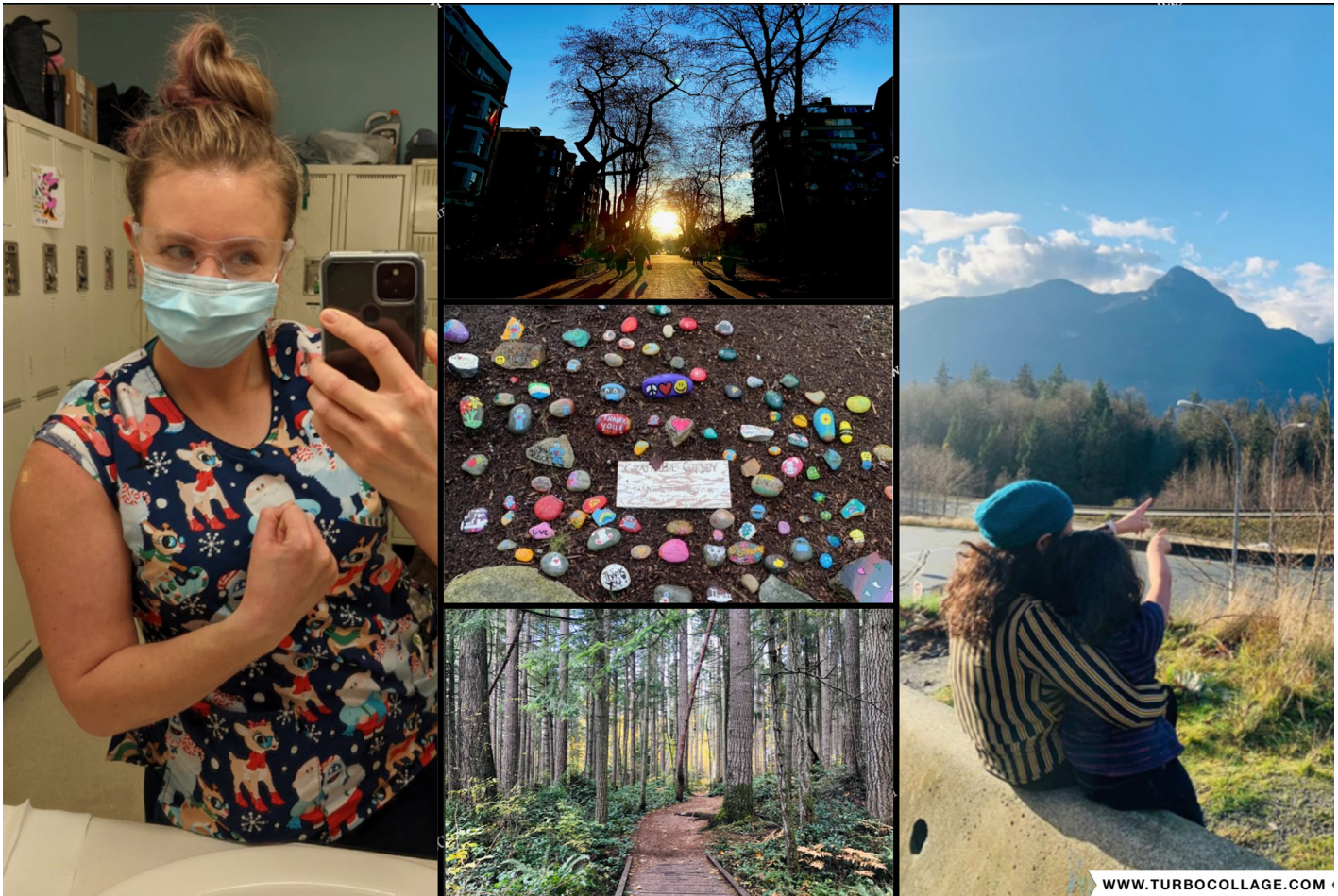
The voices of the nurses participating in the study are being communicated to healthcare leaders, educators and

policy-makers, and used to champion system and policy changes that will influence and improve patient care, the work environment, and the healthcare system. Study results will also be shared with healthcare researchers, nursing unions and professional organizations, to inform future work to support nurses at the point of care, especially during challenging times like pandemics.



## REFERENCE

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PHOTO CREDIT: Rana, Kozak, Black

# The Politics of Land Grabbing and Human Rights in Africa

Esayas Geleta, Sociology

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In my work as an Anthropology and Sociology Department Faculty Member, I have extensively researched and sought to contribute to the dynamic body of knowledge on local and global efforts to prevent and reduce many forms of oppressions or 'isms' including racism, colorism, sexism, ageism, ableism, neo-liberalism and capitalism. The problems facing the impoverished, exploited, discriminated, marginalized, and disenfranchised segments of societies need attention are issues implicit in globalization and sustainable development, social stratification and poverty, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and the logic and ethics of social research. My current research is a cross-country comparative one, a work in progress focused on land grabbing (the swift acquisition of land often by force) and human rights in the context of some of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. It is a critique of land grabbing, placing it in the boarder political economy of global capitalism.

My interest in the politics of land grabbing and human rights developed while I was undertaking a postdoctoral research at the University of Saskatchewan. My research was a key component of a multidisciplinary collaborative research program implemented in Southern Ethiopia with the aim of creating sustainable agricultural systems. The Canadian International Development Research Center (IDRC) and Global Affairs Canada funded the project. Within the wider global debates on the political economy of food security, poverty reduction and women's empowerment, my postdoctoral research examined critically the social and environmental consequences of the introduction of new variety crops and new agricultural technologies into the existing indigenous agricultural and food culture and traditions.

Research in rural agricultural areas in Ethiopia gives one a glimpse into the many problems that poor rural agriculturalists face—intersecting and complex social and political problems facing rural agriculturalists and trapping them in a cycle of poverty. The most pressing contemporary problem that resulted in the displacement and dislocation (without compensation) of hundreds of thousands of poor rural agriculturalists is "land grabbing," is a large-scale acquisition (lease, concession, outright purchase) of extensive areas of farmland (greater than 10,000 hectares) commonly labeled as "idle" and "under-utilized." It has resulted in the displacement and dispossession, without compensation, of millions of people around the world (Si-

mon & Frankline, 2018). Although land grabbing is not entirely new, within the last two decades, it emerged as a central issue in development studies.

The main factors driving land grabbing in the developing world in general and in Africa in particular relate to concerns about food and energy security in developed countries and in some of the emerging economies such as India and China. Economic expansion in emerging economies of the world, especially China and India, resulted in the growth of the middle class, increasing the already-large demand for food and energy. Moreover, the rush for grabbing farmland relates to the demand for energy and consumption in developed countries and economic projections that indicate increase in the price of land, food products, and energy. While some characterize land grabbing as a new form of colonialism, particularly referring to China's new form of connection to Africa, many others use the buzzword "neocolonialism" when they refer to it (Liberti & Flannelly, 2013; Simon & Frankline, 2018).

However, land grabbing seems to have been paradoxical because the underlying premise of it is that food-insecure countries such as Ethiopia and Malawi, recently suffering frequent starvation and famine, should supply food to richer states. Meanwhile, land deals are often considered by some of the governments in African countries as a means to bringing about agricultural development. At least rhetorically, they are accompanied by the inflow of capital, experts, and the development of infrastructure all of which is indispensable for the expansion and improvement of agricultural activities. In a sense, the old and classical development model, modernization, underpins land grabbing. For more than two decades, foreign and local investors leased (grabbed) tens of millions of hectares of land in Sub-Saharan Africa on a long-term basis, often 30-90 years. Land has been grabbed mainly for the production of cash crops and for also basic food crops (Oakland Institute, 2015).

China, India, the Gulf States, and particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the main actors of the land grabbing occurring in Africa. Other big corporations and companies, a mixture of agribusiness firms and industrial groups, individual African investors (locals) and more importantly the diaspora have also taken their share of this ongoing pilferage of land in the continent. While



PHOTO CREDIT : Creative Commons

African governments mainly facilitated the deals, multi-lateral agencies such as the World Bank also play important role in promoting these deals (Johnson, 2018). The research I do seeks to compare and contrast patterns in the nature of land acquisitions in some of the African countries affected by it including Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Senegal, and Mali. It demonstrates the patterns that show the reasons dislocation and dispossession occur and critically assesses land grabbing from the point of view of different groups involved in design, promotion, implementation, support, opposition, and resistance to contemporary land deals.

Theoretically, my research builds on two theoretical models, namely, poststructuralist political economy and human rights based approach to development models. It reflects critically on land grabbing from two points of view: the politics of recognition and the politics of distribution, highlighting the factors involved in its failure to contribute to development. The empirical segments of the analysis draw on current existing sociological and anthropological literature, the World Bank's research database, and relevant newspapers, and news media outputs. The research evaluates the intersection of existing policies and practices that result in land grabbing and standards for human rights. It elucidates the power dynamics that influence the occurrence of dislocation and dispossession, demonstrates the rural poor's resistance to large-scale land acquisition, highlights the social movements that mitigate against land grabbing and lead to the reclaiming of land "privatized" to investors in Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Senegal and Mali, and provides a comparative analysis of the forms of resistance to land grabbing, the global capitalist enterprise.

My research seeks to elucidate the influence that unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution have on the planning and negotiation process of the leasing of lands in Africa. Land deals seek to resolve global food crisis, serve the profit maximization motives of global and local investors (capitalists), and destroy the livelihoods of rural farmers and pastoralists. These land deals in most cases are rooted in the maxim of progress orientation and focus on aggregate economic growth and does not benefit the poor indigenous communities.

This ongoing enthusiasm and support for the inflated, neoliberal-agricultural growth that's devastating small-scale agriculturalists feeding the majority needs to be tempered, to say the least. Land deals that result in forced dislocation and disposition of the poor destroy the livelihood of the poor, their environments and natural habitats, too.

Land grabbing, a complete denial of basic human rights, has led to proliferating long-lasting conflicts between the disposer and the disposed and between preexisting settlers and new settlers along economic interests, environmental concerns, and religious lines. Development programs that focus on direct foreign investment and the establishment of export-oriented economy are, in fact, anti-developmental threats to peace and security. We must rethink the utilitarian philosophy and neoliberal ideology that informs contemporary land deals and return land taken away from the poor to reestablish their right to live with dignity.



# DCFA Response to the 2023-2024 Douglas College Budget

Rosilyn Teng, DCFA Temporary Member-at-Large

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The DCFA is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the Douglas College budget. We also appreciate the Budget Forum, where all employees could attend and ask questions.

At the root of the annual budget is the mandate of Douglas College and the current Administration's vision of the institution's future. Although we are pleased to see that the overall budget will not see a net reduction in funding for faculty work and support for students, this response will raise concerns that the DCFA has in regard to some of the decisions.

This response will follow the general format of the budget newsletter in addressing the academic, student affairs, and human resources highlights.

## Academic

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The Douglas College Faculty Association (DCFA) recognizes that Douglas College is not facing cuts as a result of operating deficits and this is a result of the prudent fiscal management.

The DCFA is pleased to see the additional financial resources allocated to instruction and experiential learning. Growth in the Health Information Management Degree, Computing Science Diploma, Marketing Degree, and Therapeutic Recreation is welcomed. However, the DCFA respectfully requests that programs and courses that have seen a recent and hopefully short-term decrease in enrollments will be supported and protected for the future and thus protect faculty work.

Concerns over expensive programming being at risk was mitigated by the President's confirmation in the forum that expensive but necessary programs will continue to be cross-subsidized by less expensive programs.

We recognize that faculty see the accumulated operating surplus and wonder why this money is not available for local bargaining. We appreciated that the College does not have the ability to put local money into the bargaining process. However, we think it is reasonable to expect that some of that surplus be devoted to supporting and protecting programs that may be experiencing lower enrollments recently.

## Student Affairs

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Ongoing support of students' financial needs through the donation to Douglas College foundation is welcome as is the provision of much needed student housing options through the development of 808 Royal Avenue and use of the accumulated surplus.

Annual surpluses of varying amounts raise the question about the need for ongoing tuition increases at the 2% level. The Association appreciates the College decision to keep international student tuition fees at the same rate as the domestic tuition fee increase. However, we remain concerned about tuition increases in general, for domestic and international students, especially given the increasing cost of living.

As well, reliance on international student tuition fees as a source of funding is an issue which has received much criticism, as it is viewed as a shift away from publically funded post-secondary education, but we are aware that this is a sectoral issue. While we appreciate that the diversity of international students at Douglas is a good strategy to minimize risk to the College, we must also be mindful of the rights of those students and our responsibilities to support them.

Additional resources in the form of an accessibility specialist is welcomed. An area where anecdotally more resources could be used is in Counselling. The development of a mental health strategy for students, staff, faculty, and administrators is key for our workplace to become a healthy and effective work and learning environment. This strategy will take time and in the meantime faculty and other employee groups are trying their best to support students. Faculty are mentioning the high level of student mental health needs arising out of the pandemic: hence the request for additional resources to Counselling to reduce the wait time students face, if only until the strategy is completed.

## Human Resources

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In examining the 2023/24 budget, the Association also examined the longer term increase in the number of administrators. Both the relative growth of this employee group in com-

parison to the faculty and staff contingents and absolute growth since 2017 appears significant. An explanation of the principles governing this growth would be of interest to the Association.

In the budget forum, there was mention of inefficiencies occurring in the College. The DCFA hopes that if there are faculty reductions to deal with said inefficiencies, there will be corresponding administrative reductions as well.

The Faculty Association does not see the need for yet another administrator in the form of a Director of Labour Relations, given that the Human Resources department has ably handled Labour relations for over fifty years.

An employee dedicated to conflict mitigation and reduction across and within student, faculty, staff and administration members is a suggestion for College consideration. Such a position would save the time of and reduce the stress of faculty members, staff and administrators who have to deal with situations that could have been resolved at an earlier stage.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives are essential in our College, and the DCFA would be delighted to see the broader discussion of EDI include faculty with lived experience of the barriers to EDI. The EDI website is a welcome addition but the lack of faculty peer resources was noted.

In summary, the Association welcomes additional resources to the teaching and learning environment and thinks these could be expanded. Our faculty members need support dealing with the increased demands of students, in particular student mental health needs arising from the pandemic. Accessibility resources are a welcome support for faculty and students. However, we suggest that the addition of a Director of Labour relations position is unwarranted. We recognize that Douglas College is in an excellent fiscal position in comparison other institutions that are drawing down on operating surplus to deal with deficits.

The DCFA thanks the administration for considering our feedback on the draft budget. Administration's commitment to the conversation around the budget is appreciated.



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# Remembering Ron Brown, (1946–2023): An Educator’s Educator

Gillies Malnarich



PHOTO CREDIT: Jennifer Kirkey

**On January 18, 2023, the Douglas College Faculty community lost a prominent member, Ron Brown. Ron was a long-time faculty member in Humanities and Social Sciences, a former DCFA Table Officer (VP Negotiations and President), and awardee of the designation of Faculty Emeritus. The following obituary written by Ron’s long-time partner, Gillies, provides an insight into Ron’s life:**

Ron was an educator long before he came to Douglas.

I recall bicycling out to New Westminister’s Hume Park during a big strike in the wood industry to interview Ron for his reaction to an explosive article in a Vancouver newspaper. The writer had claimed sawmill workers’ wives were strike-breakers. Ron—youthful, tall with longish hair—was asked about the economic benefits of going on strike. He bent over a flip chart and sketched out the industry’s place in BC’s political economy, and the profits earned in relation to escalating living costs and stagnating wages. Clear. Accessible. A natural teacher. “Well,” he said, “you never recoup lost wages, but you do reclaim self-respect.”

The scene was unforgettable. Kids and dogs milling about as Ron fielded questions, invited comments, and reminded everyone to grab a soft drink and hot dog. I witnessed the give and take that would characterize Ron’s rapport with students.

A sawmill worker, a plant chairman, and a leader in the emerging break-away Canadian trade union movement, Ron knew families needed supportive networks to sustain a strike. And to win, families needed to know “why” such drastic action was necessary.

Never a fan of back-room maneuvering, Ron wanted people affected by decisions to make the decisions. He respected individuals’ lived experiences and tracked people down to learn more about their views; he noticed when someone didn’t speak and sought them out. Ron welcomed dissent, refused to be intimidated by anyone, and genuinely believed ordinary people could solve complex, everyday problems. He respected people’s intelligence—whether they had a string of degrees or not—and thought collective strength emerged from unfettered, democratic inquiry. He didn’t think fierce debate precluded mutual respect; he liked everyone. Ron was the founding editor of *The Chipper*, a monthly newspaper for workers in the wood industry known for its quality journalism, rigorous investigations, and publication of dissenting views.

Eventually Ron would return to university. He worked steady afternoons at the Acorn mill so he could complete his BA. When the mill burned down, he attended SFU full-time, then UBC, while serving as a teaching assistant.

Ron loved to know what was on students’ minds. In the first assignment in his Canadian Sociology class, he asked them to think about the one thing they would change about Canadian society and why. Organized into small groups on the first class day, the room burst with energy, and students realized they did have something to say. Ron could barely wait for their written responses. “Listen,” he’d say to me reading out loud, “isn’t this great!” Then, he worked to weave his students’ insights into the curriculum.

When Ron came home with a stack of essays, he was already familiar with students’ work since he had coached them through a literature review, the posing of a research

*Article continues on page 19*

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PHOTO CREDIT: K. Trainor, in collaboration with DALL-E

question, and the selection of key social theories they would draw on for their paper. He hand wrote a one-page response for every paper—35 to 40 students in each of his four classes—validating their experience while nudging their thinking along. For those new to academic work, he offered to go with them to the various learning and writing centres at the college. He believed that a community college should welcome students whose families did not have the educational pedigree that other families had.

Ron took students' concerns seriously and they responded in kind. He modelled how to investigate differing viewpoints respectfully. In real time none of this is easy to do, but Ron taught what he took to be a critical move undergirding the study of humanities and the social sciences: to reflect on "what's the problem?" before examining "solutions." Much is revealed in how a problem is posed and who does the posing. He saw in students' questions and ideas the seeds of a sociological imagination.

To be a good teacher you need to excel at listening; and this he did with his students and others. Once ideas and plans started to be repeated he spoke—sometimes asking a question, sometimes offering a unique perspective, sometimes presenting a point-of-view that included the best of everyone's contributions.

A scholarly man who always had several books on the go, Ron had an enviable talent for making social theory understandable without dumbing down complexity. In *The Eclipse of Social Theory: The Influence of Nietzsche on Postmodern Thought* (1993), he tackled the "intellectual trends known as postmodernism" which, as he put it, would "reduce the goals of the sociological imagination so elegantly described by C. Wright Mills as a way of understanding and acting in the world...to one form of storytelling among many."

He turned his theoretical insights from this thesis into *Would you want your kid to work here? A summary report on retraining and educational needs of BC sawmill workers*, a study done through a partnership agreement between IWA-Canada Local 1-3567 and Douglas College. The title captured the anguish of fathers who reported that their children came home from grade school wondering why the teacher said their daddy was killing the environment. When Ron visited sawmills up and down the Fraser River where he had once been blacklisted for organizing against racism, he came to understand what sawmill workers wanted; he heard and wrote about their real educational and retraining needs. The publication went to print once they had a chance to read a draft, and Ron got their okay.

A compassionate, nurturing, and private man, Ron was extraordinarily intentional: he harnessed his talents as a tactician and strategist honed in the raucous days of the IWA rank-and-file reform movement in the service of Douglas College: how could he excite students about learning the

moves of good thinkers so their actions in the world would be informed by social theory? How could he invite faculty to work in concert for improved working conditions so we would have time to become the best teachers we could?

Influential in a way that wasn't obvious at first, Ron was truly a person of few yet absolutely memorable words. What he said stuck in the mind. And as we mulled them over we began to see his point. By the time the next conversation came around, everyone was on "new ground". That ability, based on deep listening, made some people impatient; it seemed like procrastination. But as people got to know Ron, they realized that when he spoke it was worth the wait. Perspectives would shift.

What does it mean to be an educator's educator? (I can see Ron looking away, shy to be singled out in this way.) When you are part of a community with a common purpose—as Ron was at Douglas College—finding better ways to do things is in everyone's interest. But it happens over time in the most respectful of ways where everyone's voice is heard—because unless everyone is heard and common ground discovered through compromise and collective rethinking of what really matters—common purpose is eroded. To articulate and realize purpose in action was Ron's special talent.

Ron marvelled at all he learned and delighted in your company.

Gillies Malnarich  
January 2023



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# Secwépemc 8: Land Defenders On Trial

Kim Trainor, Chair, DCFA Climate Emergency Action Committee



PHOTO CREDITS: 100 women+ / IndigiNews; below: K. Trainor

The week of 21<sup>st</sup> February, I drove through a snowstorm on the Coquihalla along with a fellow climate activist from Salt Spring and two T-Rexes (one of whom had just spent 30 days in jail for performing a climate rap on the TMX construction site in Burnaby and then “roaring” at the judge prior to sentencing—which earned her an extra week in Alouette Correctional Centre for Women) to witness the sentencing of six of eight land and water defenders at the Supreme Court in Tk’emlúps (Kamloops) courthouse in Secwepemcú’ecw. The sentencing was the culmination of the Crown’s prosecution of these defenders for performing a water ceremony at Sqeq’petsin (the Thompson River) near the Kamloops airport, on October 17, 2020, allegedly causing a delay in a TMX shift change. Secwépemc Matriarch Miranda Dick had her hair cut off by her sister as an expression of grief over the destruction of her homeland and waters. On the drive up to the courthouse, we witnessed much of this devastation caused by TMX construction occurring all along the highway and banks of the river.



The sentencing was presided over by Judge Shelley Fitzpatrick, who outraged the gallery when she questioned the findings of 215 gravesites at the Kamloops Indian Residential School (see Aaron Hemens’ full report in IndigiNews for the details). Secwépemc Matriarch Miranda Dick provided a powerful testimony when she addressed the court, telling Judge Fitzpatrick that despite the drawn-out two-year trial, in which she had to explain Secwépemc law to Fitzpatrick, that she had not been heard: “You have not taken into consideration the outcome of clean water. The outcome of remediation work.” Later, outside the courtroom on the first day of the sentencing, Miranda counselled land defenders and supporters that we should not take the day in hardship: “[Fitzpatrick’s] words, as hurtful as they are, are not for us to

take. We’re all here in our human form to be good human beings. Let’s show the world what it means to take up our responsibilities for climate, for our Mother Earth” (cited in Hemens).

On Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, Miranda Dick, along with Bibbings, Zadorozny, and Lamoureux, were sentenced each to 28 days in jail, with Lamoureux given an extra day for refusing to walk to the RCMP wagon on the day of her arrest. As they were handcuffed by the sheriffs and taken out of the courtroom, all the Secwépemc defenders and supporters stood and sang “Canada has no jurisdiction,” while the sheriffs stood by, unable to silence us or insist on our removal. On Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February, Hereditary Chief Saw-ses and settler-ally Romilly Cavanaugh (a former TMX engineer turned anti-TMX activist) were sentenced each to 28 days in prison; this, despite their lawyer, Ben Issitt’s, argument that Chief Saw-ses, who spent nine years in residential school as a child, should be considered to have already “served his time.” Matriarch Miranda Dick and Chief Saw-ses, as well as Cavanaugh, all appealed their sentences and were released later that week, but not before being taken, handcuffed, in police wagons without seatbelts, along the Coquihalla in winter conditions, to be processed at Alouette and Fraser Regional Correctional Centres. I have been told by Susan Bibbings that Romilly Cavanaugh was injured during the 4-hour-long trip, and suffered a concussion when the wagon swerved, as well as serious bruising along one arm and shoulder. Secwépemc Matriarch April Thomas and Red Deer Billie Pierre of Nlaka’pamux Nation, both awaiting a Gladue report, will not be sentenced until May.

What we all witnessed in the courthouse in Tk’emlúps was a powerful demonstration of the ongoing use of injunctions and the courts to prop up a dying fossil fuel industry, as well as a refusal of the Canadian legal system to abide by the principles of UNDRIP and to acknowledge the sovereignty of Secwépemc peoples.



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