

The Fall of the Faculty

The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters

by Hans Skott-Myhre

This review first appeared in the January 2012 (Vol 59 No 1) edition of the CAUT Bulletin (Canada's Voice for Academics). ('Benjamin Ginsberg' – The Fall of the Faculty-The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters. Oxford University Press, 2011; 264 pp; ISBN: 978-0-19978-244-4, cloth \$29.95 USD – Reviewed by *Hans Skott-Myhre) Reprinted with permission.

Benjamin Ginsberg's book is a well articulated scholarly polemic against the increase in the scope and influence of administrators and bureaucrats within the academy. It is an important book for anyone interested in issues such as the importance of faculty governance, academic freedom, and faculty control over their own teaching and research. Ginsberg tells us his book sounds a warning cry that could signal actions to avoid the calamity of what he terms, "administrative blight." However, he warns that it may "come too late for some victims."

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Although the book is written from an American context, there is a definite resonance for the Canadian academy. His claim that institutions are “mainly controlled by administrators and staffers who make the rules and set...the priorities of academic life,” has not fully taken hold in Canada, but appears to be well on the way. Indeed, there is no doubt that administrative growth at Canadian universities and colleges has far outstripped growth in the ranks of faculty.

Ginsberg traces the gradual erosion of direct faculty involvement in the management of the academy in the United States. He notes that, until the last 20 years or so, faculty members held administrative functions on a short-term basis. It was assumed such faculty would return to the professoriate in short order, having fulfilled their service as administrators.

As a result, the author argues that presidents and provosts were highly dependent on the faculty to manage the university. This dependence insured that faculty had a voice in the development and vision for the institution. The short-term nature of their involvement kept their focus on the centrality of quality teaching and research. Ginsburg argues the fact that faculty, as short-term managers, never lost sight of their own pedagogy and scholarship led to the development of U.S. universities as premier institution of secondary education.

He contends this focus has been lost for many U.S. universities in the shift from a faculty perspective to a managerial perspective. This difference in perspective is central to his overall argument that faculty should control and lead universities and colleges. Ginsburg proposes that for faculty, the university exists as an institution that promotes their teaching and research. Alternatively, administrators and managers see teaching and research as a

way to fund and support the institution. In short, for faculty, the university is a means by which teaching and research are accomplished, while administrators see teaching and research as a means to sustain the university as an institution.

Ginsburg traces the development and growth of the managerial class in the academy illustrating both its influence and tactics through numerous empirical examples. Again, while the context is largely U.S. (there are some Canadian examples), the trends and issues brought to light are relevant for North American and European institutions of higher learning. In particular, the author explicates strategies for the growth of administrative influence and its impact on faculty governance and voice. The fascinating and horrifying aspect of this section of the book is that I recognized each tactic being deployed both at my home institution and elsewhere.

The tactics outlined include the use of budget crises as a justification for significant restructuring of the institution. He makes the case that these budget crises may have some basis in fact, but they seldom reasonably link to the “reforms” being implemented. In fact, the administrative solutions proposed often exacerbate the underlying budget problems.

Ginsburg points out that costs for administration and capital expenditures almost always grow, while funding for the core mission of teaching and learning almost always shrinks. He suggests this growth is a logical outcome. Administration will always seek to grow itself if it is staffed by people whose career path is management. This is why he feels shared governance structures cannot function under current conditions in which management and administration is no longer the province of faculty. If administration is largely self-sufficient in having the personnel and the budget to manage and administer the university, they have

no motivation to take faculty concerns into account.

This is the foundation for what the author terms the all-administrative university—one in which faculty have no significant role except as contract labour who produce piece work, such as on-line courses, and then move on. If this is the goal of ever-expanding administration then there is no need for shared governance.

The author also notes strategies such as study commissions and strategic plans are largely borrowed from managerial business models. As these exercises have little to do with research, scholarship or pedagogy, their deployment by administration gives them an arena in which managerial expertise trumps the centrality of the academic core mission. While such plans pay lip service to the academic mission, their true function is the spread of hierarchical corporate models of management in which faculty take the role of workers subjugated to the will of management.

For anyone whose university has experienced a branding campaign, Ginsberg’s demonstration of the importance of image polishing to the administratively focused university will be disturbingly familiar. Similarly, the use of managerial buzzwords and overarching importance of the administrative fad of the moment as the core of a university provost’s or president’s address to the faculty will strike a chord.

Unfortunately, the book is marred, at times, by Ginsberg’s obvious disdain and profound dislike of managers and administrators as a class. Although he goes to some length to note that he has known good managers and administrative staff, his anger about the incursion of administrative values and practices into the academy can lead to excessive

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Faculty *cont'd from page 2*

polemic. This colours two main chapters in unfortunate ways.

The first is a chapter on what Ginsberg claims is an appropriation of the academic left by administrative forces. What he then delineates is what he feels is an inappropriate expansion of identity politics and the agendas of women, people of color and sexual minorities into the world of pedagogy. This is dicey territory and the case he might make here is tainted by his annoyance about aspects of what he terms the academic left and the rule of administration. The second problematic section touches on corruption in the ranks of administrators. Unfortunately this trend, while disturbing,

doesn't warrant the length of exposition and detracts from his main argument.

The next chapter on academic freedom and the history of the development of the tenure system in the U.S. is excellent and well worth a careful reading. The close ties between tenure and academic freedom and the recent assaults on tenure by administrators are empirically supported.

In the opening to the book, Ginsberg states that he intends for this book to offer a prescription against the disease of administrative bloat. In the final section he offers detailed suggestions for boards, the media, alumni and faculty as well as parents and students. His suggestions are pragmatic, including having an elected faculty member on the board

of trustees, enforcing conflict of interest provisions vis-a-vis board members and the university, vigorously resisting administrative accountability measures of faculty pedagogy, and ensuring that media analysis includes administrative bloat as a factor in coverage of struggles in higher education, to name a few.

In the end, the author leaves us with the possibility that it may be too late to reverse this process in some places. He also offers hope that if we can become aware of how this is occurring, we can resist the trend and maintain the core mission of the university. This book is clearly an important tool in the latter process. ▼

**Hans Skott-Myhre is president of Brock University Faculty Association.*



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In Preparation for Bargaining...

Please Remember:

Send Local 556 an email with your:

- Name
- Status (Full-time or Partial-load)
- Category (Faculty, Librarian, Counsellor)
- Division/Department
- Campus
- Private, secure (non GBC) email
- Private (non GBC) phone number

Send the info to:

j.stellings556@gmail.com

President's Message

by Tom Tomassi

At the outset, I want to thank all of you who have participated in the recently sent out 'Negotiations 2012 College Faculty' survey. The sole purpose of the survey is to gather information from the grass roots across the province, to determine the membership views of what is important to them (us). Amongst other things, the survey should also give us a good regional indication as to what is important in different areas of the province. Your response to the survey will be summarized at the local level and brought forward at the General Membership Demand Setting Meeting scheduled for February 23, 2012. As the issues that have surfaced are brought forward, you will be given the opportunity to be part of the process of formalizing and prioritizing them and if time permits, create the appropriate language to validate the demands. The Local will be sending out the survey again in a different format, in an effort to increase the

participation. If you have already completed one, please do not do it again. For those of you who have not yet had an opportunity to do so, please take a few minutes to complete it and send it back.

Although we are at the beginning stage of the bargaining process, we need to be cognizant of the fact that negotiations are incredibly complex. Although ideally, both the Union and Management Bargaining teams should be playing in the same sand box to build a castle, the reality of the process, however, is quite the opposite. The major stumbling block begins with the legislation that governs the bargaining of the Community Colleges. With the changes in Bill 90, the adversarial stand is even more pronounced and we all experienced that by the 'imposed terms and conditions' in the last round of bargaining.

We are all aware of the fiscal constraints that the province is faced with; having

said that, the Civil Service of this province isn't responsible for the incurred debt and should not be expected to bear the brunt of the burden of clearing it off the books. I believe that we have in place a well-versed, balanced and responsible bargaining team, that will, during the process of negotiations, be mindful and respectful of the wishes of the membership in this province while moving the membership's agenda forward.

Be aware that there will be regular communication with the membership at large from the Bargaining Team and the Local. If you know of anyone who is not receiving this communication, please let us know so that we can add them to the distribution list. ▼

Don't forget to visit our local website for more information: www.opseu556.org

General Membership (Demand Setting) Meeting for All Full-Time & Partial Load Faculty

Thursday, February 23, 2012

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Financial Building, 290 Adelaide St. East – Room 207

St. James Campus

If I Complain Online About Work: Can I Be Subject to Discipline or Discharge?

by Ed Larocque

If you make public statements (i.e. on Face book, Twitter, Email, etc.) that are:

- considered to be 'injurious to the business interest' of your employer;
- incompatible with the discharge of your duties as an employee, or;
- likely to be prejudicial to the reputation of your employer

Then, the answer is **YES**, you can be subject to discipline and/or discharge.

Below are a few examples of rulings made by Boards of Arbitration in Canada:

1. The distribution of a letter or document that directly criticized a supervisor was found to warrant discipline from the employer. The ruling stated that "such conduct undermined management's authority".

2. A school board employee's termination was upheld after the employee unknowingly appeared in on-line photos with sexual content. The arbitration award concluded that the photos created "a risk of loss of school business".

3. A case involving the termination of employment at an Ontario Community College stated: "Teachers hold a special position of trust"; thus implying that faculty will be held to a higher level of standards of behaviour and accountability.

The first two cases involved activities outside of the workplace. When you post anything on Facebook/YouTube/

Twitter/Email, etc, you are making a public statement.

Any award made by an arbitration panel is precedent setting and is used to support all future cases with similar content. It is clear that we do not have unfettered public discourse about workplace issues. Union officials, during contract negotiations, may be critical of management, as Arbitrators have determined that these statements are part of the bargaining process.

Advice:

Be cautious when using all forms of communication and particularly Social Media.

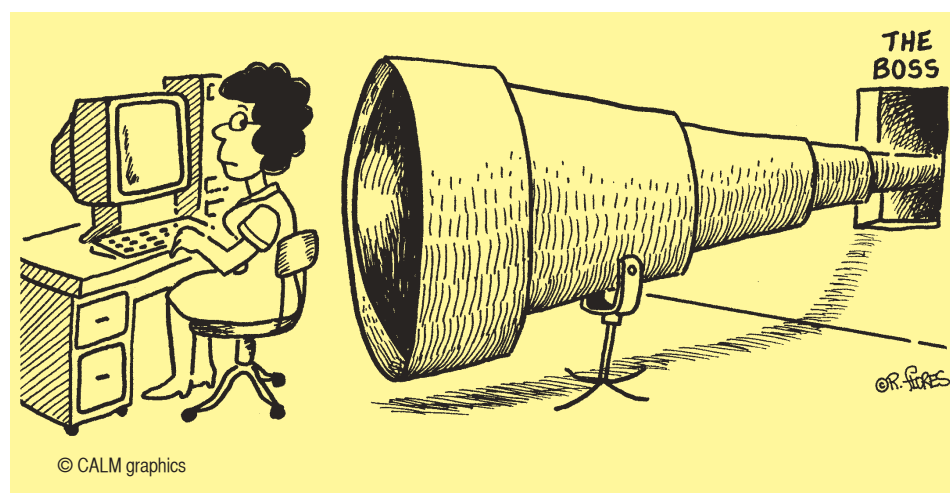
Do not publish anything negative about your students, supervisors, administrators, colleagues, working conditions, or contractors/suppliers to the College.



Repercussions can easily result if such actions can be proven to be injurious to the business interest of GBC, incompatible with the discharge of our duties, or likely to be prejudicial to GBC's reputation.

Do you have a right to complain?

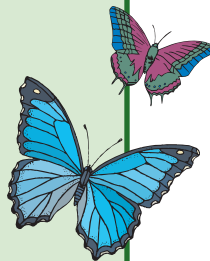
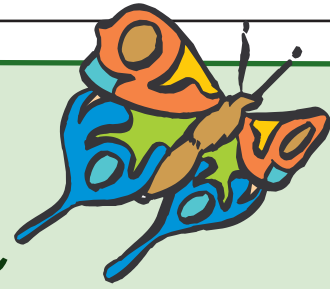
Yes, our Collective Agreement has very specific language on how to complain about workload, or workplace issues. For more information about the complaint/grievance process, please go to our website: www.opseu556.org or contact your union steward. ▼



THE GREEN CORNER

Greener PASTURES

by Jill Edmondson



I came across an interesting “econundrum” in the February 2012 issue of *Mother Jones*, and it’s an issue that will not be resolved anytime soon.

We all know that global warming and climate change affect ecosystems. Changes in temperature affect plant and insect life, fish stocks, water levels, and so on. As a result of climate change, some species find their food supplies limited or even depleted. So far, you’re probably aware of all this.

The question is: What do animals do when they have no food? The answer is: They move on to another field or forest where they can get what they need to survive. Seems simple enough, right? Unfortunately, for some species, it’s not so easy to relocate, and therein lies the problem.

For some creatures, moving to a new ecosystem in which their needs can be fulfilled may not physically be possible. *Mother Jones* gives the example of the Karner blue butterfly, which was once plentiful at Indiana Dunes National Park, along the shores of Lake Michigan, but this is no longer the case. Climate change, in tandem with urbanization, has lessened the food supply. The next closest area that offers the kind of ecosystem

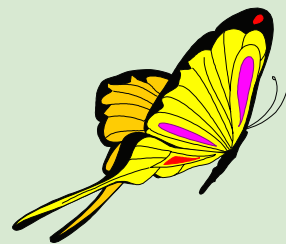
in which the Karner blue butterfly can survive is about 100 miles away, and the Karner blue butterfly—with wings about the size of a dime—cannot fly that far.

Other examples include the key deer, an endangered species found only in the Florida Keys, or the pika, a mountain dwelling herbivore that looks like a cross between a mouse and a rabbit. Like the Karner, these animals are having a difficult time surviving in their usual locales, but moving on to, ahem, “greener pastures” is not so easy. The key deer can’t just swim to a new more, hospitable island, and the pika is too small to make the trek to other mountains to find new food sources.

Some conservation biologists and ecologists have started to tout the idea of “assisted migration,” in which people relocate a species with the intention of creating a new, permanent home for creatures that are threatened. Assisted migration doesn’t just involve fauna; it may also be done with flora, as was the case a few years ago with the Florida torreya. The population of these coniferous trees, found only in the Florida panhandle, was in steep decline because of pathogenic microbes until seedlings were planted in North Carolina. This may seem like a good idea, but the practice is not without its drawbacks. Essentially, it forces the presence of invasive species, and inva-

sive species have long been blamed for threats to biodiversity. As well, assisted migration may only offer a temporary solution: new homes may not remain hospitable indefinitely. Thirdly, some species may simply not survive the move. Finally, assisted migration raises some interesting legal issues as it essentially contravenes the overarching principles of existing legislation such as the Wilderness Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The scientific community is divided over the issue; for every “pro” there seems to be a corresponding “con”. What scientists around the world do agree on, however, is that action is needed sooner than later.



Response to:

“Students with Disabilities and the Duty to Accommodate”

by Mandy Byrnes, M. Ed., Disability Consultant & Coordinator and Stephanie Bourke, M.S. W., Learning Strategist.

Response to the article by Paul Miskin in the previous issue of The Vocal Local (Issue #5.2).

As faculty members (Counsellors) in Disability Services, we would like to take this opportunity to respond to Paul Miskin’s article entitled ‘Students with Disabilities and the Duty to Accommodate’; which appeared in the December 2011 issue of *The Vocal Local*.

The article was correct in noting that there has been a steady increase each year in the number of students requesting accommodations. This is a reflection of our expanding student body and the diversity that George Brown College embraces. We agree that it is accurate to note that the support systems for these students have not kept pace with increasing enrollment. Disability Services and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services provided on-going support to 1,800 students in the last academic year. We have seen a 58% increase in registration in our department since 2007 and yet we have not received any additional allotments for staffing.

It is important to be aware that Disability Services is not associated with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) as mentioned in the article. Rather, our department was established to ensure that under the Human Rights Code of Ontario and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms students are able to receive an accessible education. The AODA is important legislation, but it does not pertain to the actual teaching and learning experience nor the accommodation process.

As Faculty members in Disability Services, our role is to meet with students and understand their disability-related challenges and barriers they may encounter; assess documentation pertaining to their disability; and, make recommendations about reasonable and necessary accommodations both in and out of the classroom environment. Disability Services is not responsible for providing accommodations per se; rather, we are here to ensure that our students’ right to accommodations is protected. The Student Accommodation Profile that we prepare in conjunction with our students is our recommendations based on our assessment need; our education and experience; as well as established best practices utilized in other Provincial colleges. Faculty in Disability Services are a resource that assist other faculty to implement accommodations in a manner that is consistent with the above laws and that also respects the academic integrity of the program. It is up to the College to ensure that the resources exist to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations. If not, the students are in a position to pursue a Human Rights complaint against the College on the basis of non-accommodation.

The accommodation process is a partnership between the student, the Professor, the Disability Consultant and the College as a whole. We rely on the relationship with our colleagues to bring problems with accommodation process to our attention. This benefits all of us, as it gives us the opportunity to address when accommodations are not appropriately provided. Since our Professors

are the experts on their courses, we need to know when accommodations are in conflict with demonstrable course outcomes and competencies.

It is always easy to identify negative anecdotes about when services do not work, but we assure you that these few anecdotes are not reflective of the vast majority of student and faculty experience. In the three scenarios that were described in the aforementioned article, two of them were the direct result of the labour dispute, that resulted in Support Staff’s legal strike. Our Support Staff play an integral role in the scheduling of interpreters and note takers. As for concerns with the lack of technology in the classroom for closed captioned videos, we fail to see how this relates to Disability Services as this and many other services used by students with disabilities are not managed or staffed by Disability Services’ portfolio.

The article also addressed note taking. We would like to state that this semester our department provided roughly 9,000 hours of note taking services for our students. Are there problems with this accommodation? Sometimes. But given the magnitude of this service and the fact that the employees are students themselves, one can expect the odd problem to arise.

The article closes by stating that; “working together, we just might devise some solutions for these seemingly intractable challenges”. The author is absolutely right; but the first step to achieving this

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goal is communication. The College Community needs to understand who we are and what our role is. We need to strengthen our partnerships to not only solve problems, but to identify potential challenges before they occur.

The Faculty in Disability Services always has been open and eager to meet with individual faculty and departments to discuss the accommodation process and troubleshoot any problems that have occurred. In the past, Faculty in Disability Services have offered workshops through Staff Development; however, often these are attended by very few people, or are cancelled due to lack of enrollment. As faculty, we need to ensure that the College provides all of us in Disability Services, and the college as a whole, with the resources and support that is required to meet the needs of an ever increasing diverse student body. ▼

Respectfully,

OPSEU Local 556 Members
Mandy Byrnes, M. Ed., Disability
Consultant & Coordinator

Stephanie Bourke, M.S. W., Learning
Strategist.

As mentioned, we welcome the opportunity to meet with Faculty individually or as a group. Please feel free to contact Mandy Byrnes, Disability Services Coordinator at mbyrnes@georgebrown.ca.

LOCAL 556 SCHOLARSHIPS

There are several scholarships that Local 556 makes available to our students. More information on these scholarships will be made available to all our faculty in the very near future.

Please keep an eye out for the info!

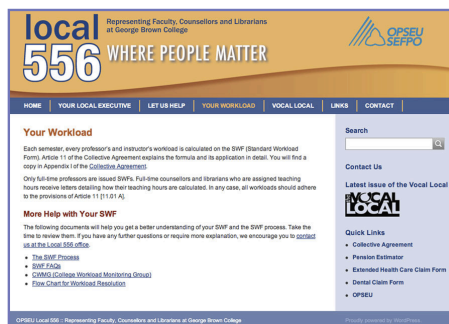
GBC's 20th Annual Labour Fair

**Unions = good jobs, democracy, sharing the wealth,
justice, equity, hope, the weekend**

Monday, March 19 – Friday, March 23, 2012

**Remember your #1 spot for
employment info...**

opseu556.org



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The Vocal Local is a publication of the George Brown College Faculty Union, OPSEU Local 556. It is intended to provide information and stimulate discussion among its members. We invite your participation and welcome your contributions. We reserve the right to edit for libel, length and clarity.

Send your comments, articles, letters, praise, etc. to:
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