



JACFA joins other public sector unions at a rally in downtown Montreal, on November 14, to press our demands of the Collective Agreement negotiations.

Our Current Needs for Resources Are Dire, Relief Will Require Mobilization

Tanya Rowell-Katzemba— History, Economics, Political Science; VP External

Across the CEGEP network, teachers are sounding the alarm. The demands of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic are bringing them to the end of their rope.

Teachers are reporting an increased workload associated with online teaching, leading to high levels of psychological distress. Work-related pressures are piled on top of the existing difficulties of

managing home and family life, in addition to the general stress brought on by this public health crisis. This article will provide an overview of the current state of teachers' working conditions with a focus on the particular aspects of our work that are being affected by online teaching and the COVID-19 pandemic. I will look into how teachers' emotional and physical well-being are being impacted by these new realities.

Continue on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1 Our Current Needs for Resources and Mobilization
- 2 Labour Relations Updates
- 6 College and JACFA to Iron Out Hiring Rules for Nunavik Sivunitsavut
- 7 Time to Revise Some Local Agreements
- 8 Possible Upcoming Changes to the Health Insurance Plan, Fall 2021
- 10 A Call to Action: Reflections on Systemic Racism, Culture and Education
- 11 Saying the "N Word" in Class, What's the Big Deal Anyway?
- 12 New JACFA Executive: Maria Mastorakos



Labour Relations Updates

Ethan Mombourquette—Mathematics; Director

College Making More Training Sessions Mandatory

In recent years, we've seen a sharp uptick in the number of training sessions that the College is making mandatory for some or all teachers. This began in 2016-2017 with the Emergency Measures training, where many teachers who did not participate had warning letters placed in their personnel files. There have been three more notable examples recently:

1. The training on departmental responsibilities, which was optional when it began in 2018, has since been made mandatory. All departments are supposed to have completed this training by the end of this academic year.
2. For the first time last year, all faculty were required to complete the "It Takes All of Us" training on sexual violence in the workplace. Training on this topic will need to be repeated by all teachers yearly (and will be periodically updated).
3. Last year, the College began holding mandatory training sessions for departments' hiring committees to inform them of their roles and responsibilities before they actually begin the hiring process.

While the right of the College to make training on topics directly related to our work mandatory is not in question (particularly government-mandated sessions like those on sexual violence), we have some concerns about the efficacy and timing

of some of the training sessions that the College plans to hold during the COVID-19 crisis, and the potential repercussions for teachers who are simply unable to participate right now.

Missed Permanence/ Departmental Disruption Highlight Need for General Offer of Service

Once again this semester, a teacher missed out on the opportunity to become permanent because they didn't apply for a surprise mid-semester posting in time to be considered for the position. Moreover, the workload allocation process in their department was disrupted, since the teacher who was awarded the post was below a number of other non-permanent teachers on the seniority list, and must now be given full-time work for the year before all other non-permanent teachers.

While in this particular case the mix-up should (hopefully) not have lasting consequences within the discipline, similar situations certainly have done in the past. And all of this turmoil and upheaval is due to a simple fact: the system by which our non-permanent teachers are forced to explicitly exercise their hiring priority for every single posting, every single semester, regardless of timing, is wasteful and broken, and needs to be replaced. For the last four years, JACFA has been putting pressure on HR to work with us toward having a General Offer of Service (see previous editions of *The Advocate* for more details). Last

year, the pressure finally began to bear fruit, and we began to meet with the College to try to produce a workable arrangement. The process was interrupted by the onset of COVID-19 in March, but has at last resumed. It is our sincere hope that we can find common ground with the College on this issue, so that situations like the above can finally be put to rest.

Until that time however, please let this serve as a reminder to all non-permanent teachers to set up notifications from CV Manager (a warning: sometimes they end up in your "Junk" or "Other" folders), and to apply for every posting in your discipline, regardless of its contents. It's a bad system, but for now, it's all we've got.

Five-Year Evaluations of Teaching Postponed

At JACFA's request, the College has agreed to postpone all regular five-year formative evaluations of teaching until at least next year. This means that, if you were scheduled to be evaluated this year, you will now be evaluated the year that evaluations resume. In like manner, if you were supposed to be evaluated next year, then you'll be evaluated the year after evaluations resumes, etc.

However, two types of evaluations of teaching will continue (with a modified questionnaire that takes into account the online teaching context in which most of us find ourselves):

(Continued on page 3)

1. The evaluations for new teachers in each of their first, second and third semesters,
2. Administrative evaluations, wherein the College asks for a special evaluation as part of an investigation of a complaint against a teacher

If you have questions about evaluations of teaching, or if your Program Dean informs you that you will be subject to an administrative evaluation, please contact the JACFA Executive .

JACFA Reaches CRT Agreement on Continuing Education Course Acceptance Delays

Last year, there was a discussion between JACFA and the College on how long in advance a Continuing Education teacher is required to commit to teaching a course, to the exclusion of Day Division work. The College wanted a very advanced commitment, to the order of three months, because sometimes it can take so long to find teachers qualified and willing to teach in the AEC programs. JACFA argued that since Day Division work is so much more beneficial to the teacher, that more flexibility was necessary.

In the end, it was agreed by both parties (details found [here](#)), that the default delay for accepting a Continuing Education course would be four weeks before the start of the course, with special provisions for courses that are offered within four weeks of starting. Our hope is that this will balance the needs of AEC programs in Continuing Education with the great benefit our teachers receive from teaching in the Day Division, rather than in Cont. Ed.

We had planned to present this agreement at our most recent GA, but ran out of time. It will be brought to our next GA.

Members participating in the province-wide “Ressources à Bout” campaign.





Our Current Needs for Resources Are Dire...

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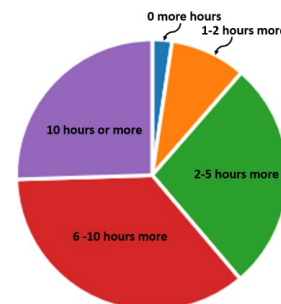
The efforts at the provincial and local levels that the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ, our union federation) and JACFA are undertaking to address these problems will also be discussed.

Au Bout du Rouleau: a Snapshot of Teachers' Current Working Conditions

Since the beginning of the fall semester, delegates from teachers' unions at FNEEQ Regroupement CEGEP have been reporting worrying trends among their members. As the majority of colleges across the network are using either a fully-online or a hybrid (online and in-person) model to deliver courses safely, the general sense on the ground is that a significant number of teachers are on the road to burnout due to the pressures associated with teaching during this public health crisis.

In order to get a more detailed picture of what exactly is creating this increased pressure on teachers, a handful of faculty unions from the

Regroupement CEGEP took the initiative of conducting a survey of teachers across the network regarding their current working conditions. The survey was conducted between September 21 and October 12 and more than 2,400 CEGEP teachers responded on a voluntary basis (the JACFA Executive had already begun conducting our own local survey of members at the same time as this network-wide initiative was getting started). The data collected confirms what union reps have been noticing on the ground: teachers are reporting an increase in their workload because of online or hybrid teaching and are expressing distress as a result. The majority of teachers responded that most teaching-related tasks are taking much longer to accomplish in the current context: adapting our course material and pedagogy; course preparation; following up with and supervising students; adapting the way we evaluate student learning; grading students' work; and *stage* supervision. In addition to our teaching duties, the survey data shows that many tasks related to department coordination are taking longer. While teachers are in general dedicating more time – often twice or three times more – to their work than under normal circumstances, a large number of teachers



are at the same time reporting a compromised ability to do their work at a satisfactory level. Perhaps the most worrying statistic is that half of all respondents reported moderate to serious levels of psychological distress (using the Kessler-6 scale).

The JACFA Executive also conducted a survey of faculty to get an idea of how working conditions have changed for us locally. Some of our results are similar to the network-wide survey, notably the fact that most tasks are taking teachers longer to accomplish. Over 35% of JAC teachers report working an extra six to ten hours per week, while over 25% report an increase of more than ten hours per week compared to a typical semester.

Qualitative data indicates that many teachers are experiencing increased

Selection of Comments	%
Quantity of additional prep work has increased	65%
Time devoted to student consultations– more time consuming/ more 1-on-1 chats/ too many emails+ chats+ MIOs	56%
Spending much more time marking	36%
Lack of engagements from students (Camera's off, etc.)	32%
Reports of physical and emotional distress	12%

Selection of comments from the JACFA survey (% is out of a total respondents (250)). Full survey results available on the JACFA website.

(Continued from page 4)

levels of physical and psychological stress and strain since we began online teaching, and many report concerns about the quality of education we are delivering to our students as a result of this format. 32% of respondents report frustration that so many students are keeping their cameras off, and that this makes it very difficult to gauge the level of student engagement. It is also interesting to note that, on the other hand, there are some teachers (just over 5% of respondents) who observe positive aspects of online teaching. As the poll was conducted over a month ago, it is possible to imagine that things that were already causing stress may well have worsened as the semester marched on.

At the JACFA General Assembly of October 1st, teachers' working conditions during COVID-19 were a lengthy topic of discussion, eliciting a collective outpouring of shared experiences since last spring. Concerns ranged from stress and feelings of isolation among teachers and students, to misgiving about how the administration deals with teachers' expenses resulting from working from home, to balancing our desire to deliver quality education with our preoccupations about our students' mental health.

Addressing the Problems

Since last spring, FNEEQ has been relaying to the government the urgent need for additional resources to help CEGEPs deal with the problems that have been unleashed by COVID-19. In September the *Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur* (MES) unveiled a new budget annex (S-120) injecting an additional \$30 million into the network to palliate the myriad issues colleges are facing. While this is a

welcome injection of resources, both teachers' unions and college administrations agree that this is not enough money to address our collective problems. On top of that, while the budget annex has guidelines for how the additional funding must be disbursed, it is left up to local unions to negotiate as best they can with administrators to ensure that the appropriate resources be used for teaching activities. This can be a significant challenge for teachers' unions who have strained relationships with their local administrations, and in several cases administrators have not consulted with their teachers at all before deciding how to use the funding.

At John Abbott, a portion of S-120 teaching funds have been earmarked for the COVID Accommodation and Support Teacher program (CAST). Departments have been asked to apply for some of this funding to help address the pressures that faculty are experiencing while teaching during COVID.

To respond to the worrisome conditions teachers are currently faced with, delegates at the Regroupement CEGEP meeting of October 8th-9th passed a motion that mandates our FNEEQ representatives to demand a 20% workload reduction for teachers during the Winter 2021 semester. That would be the equivalent of approximately \$120 million from the government. With teachers sounding the alarm across the network, and armed with data from the national survey, FNEEQ officially made our demand to the ministry on October 26th. FNEEQ representatives are also part of a new exploratory working group, with representatives from FEC-CSQ and CPNC (representatives from the MES and Fédération des CEGEPs), to find common solutions to the problems emanating from COVID-19 in colleges across the network.

Mobilizing to Make Ourselves Heard

While the need for sufficient resources to face the challenges of teaching during this pandemic is obvious to most of us on the ground, it will take significant mobilization on the part of CEGEP teachers to secure the resources we are demanding. This mobilization needs to happen while we simultaneously carry out new collective agreement negotiations, which are currently stagnating. This is a significant challenge, especially due to the current context in which we find ourselves. The usual methods we use to express our collective voice are rendered more difficult, or sometimes, even impossible in our current predicament. That being said, we must also look at how this health crisis — and the myriad problems it creates — draws attention to the importance of quality public services. Never has Quebec society been more acutely aware of the social cost of years of underfunding hospitals and CHSLDs, for example, or of the alarming deficit of public mental health services. Similarly, the plight of CEGEP students and teachers is in the news nearly every day, and parents and students see the toll that our current working conditions are taking on the quality of education we can deliver. This can also serve to draw attention to our collective agreement demands, which seek to address existing problems that have simply been aggravated by the current pandemic teaching conditions. We can harness this heightened social awareness, and adapt our mobilizations to the COVID-19 reality. We can fight to win, not just for ourselves, but for our students' education and for the right of all Quebecers to well-funded, fully functional public services.



College and JACFA to Iron Out Hiring Rules for Nunavik Sivunitsavut, Program for Nunavik Students

Stephen Bryce— Geography; VP Internal

Since the Fall 2017 semester, John Abbott's Continuing Education department has operated Nunavik Sivunitsavut (NS) in partnership with five Inuit regional organizations, including the Kativik School Board.

NS offers a one-year entry program for Inuit students in Montreal consisting of five General Education courses per semester: English, Humanities, Physical Education, Inuktitut (which replaces French in the program) and a complementary course. The program seeks to ease the transition of Inuit students to college studies as well as to life in the "South". The courses focus on Inuit and circumpolar history, politics, governance, culture, and language, exploring global issues from an Inuit perspective. The teachers in NS are John Abbott employees who fall under the faculty collective agreement. The long-term goal is to see NS become an independent institution able to give credit courses and programs.

Initial Attempts at Setting Hiring Guidelines

Before this program started, the John Abbott administration and JACFA discussed how this new program would operate regarding the faculty Collective Agreement, in particular about hiring and hiring priorities. NS wanted to ensure that the teachers hired were

committed to the program and not just non-permanent teachers without a full workload in the disciplines. It was also suggested that Inuit candidates should be given priority where possible.

No formal local agreement was signed, but certain hiring practices were eventually established for NS. These include a modified Cont.-Ed hiring committee (two faculty from the discipline, one Program Dean, HR, and Cont.-Ed members plus an observer from NS). In addition, the hiring criteria are different from in the Day Division. NS jobs are posted with the requirements that candidates have a "demonstrated experience directly related to the subject matter" which varies from five to nine years depending on the scholarship level (which can be as low as a high school leaving certificate). They must also demonstrate "knowledge of and commitment to culturally relevant, sensitive and appropriate pedagogy" as well as of "Inuit culture, history, society and rights".

Over the three years NS has operated, there have been relatively few labour relations issues around hiring. Those hired have included some full-time permanent John Abbott teachers, some non-permanent and retired teachers as well as outside candidates. As of this year, the John Abbott seniority list will indicate teachers who have been hired only by an NS hiring committee without the usual Day Division qualifications with the annotation "NS" rather than "CE".



A Local Agreement on NS Hiring, Take 2

Recently, JACFA and the College decided revisit the question of NS hiring, in part because no local agreement was reached during the first attempt, and also because the cast of characters has changed both on the administration and JACFA sides; there is no one who was directly involved in the NS discussions in 2016-2017 left in HR, the academic administration or on the JACFA Executive. Both parties have therefore agreed at CRT to look into coming to an agreement to formalize the practices established over the past three year, described above.

In addition, earlier this semester the administration informed the JACFA Executive that the Cree Regional School Board is interested in setting up another entry program based on NS model. It is therefore necessary for us to establish by agreement what this means in terms of faculty hiring.

Time to Revise Some Local Agreements

Stephen Bryce

The renegotiation of our faculty collective agreement is also an opportune time for us to take a look at some of our local agreements with the College to see if they need to be updated. The JACFA Executive would like in particular to look at two existing and one new local agreement this year:

- **Academic Council**—in general, this agreement is working well. One area we would like to revise is how faculty representatives on Council committees are elected. At present, the whole Academic Council votes on who faculty reps will be. However, other areas (administrators, professionals, support staff and students) do not allow faculty to play a similar role in selecting their committee representatives. The JACFA Executive would therefore like to have faculty reps on Council's committees chosen only by the faculty members of Academic Council.
- **Program Committees**—this agreement needs to be updated to include the new faculty program committee coordinators that have been added in the three large multi-disciplinary pre-university programs: Social Science, Science and Arts Languages and Communication (ALC). In addition, we would like to consult with faculty about whether the distinctive model currently in place for the Liberal Arts and Arts and Science programs (where all teachers of courses in the program are members of the program com-

mittee) is still one that they wish to maintain.

- **Methods Committee**—the current way we administer multi-disciplinary Social Science Methods courses (QM, RM, and ISS), with a "Methods Committee", is not recognized by our Collective Agreement. Since the Methods Committee does not constitute a "department", it does not legally have the power to approve course outlines, do grade reviews, assign and schedule courses, etc. The JACFA Executive would like to make a new local agreement to legally define the roles and responsibilities of the Methods coordinator, committee and those of Methods teachers. This might then be able to serve as a model for multidisciplinary courses in other areas (e.g. 502 courses in ALC) where there are similar issues.

These agreements have been put on the Labour Relations Committee (CRT)'s workplan for this year. Meetings with the administration as well as consultations with faculty will begin this semester.

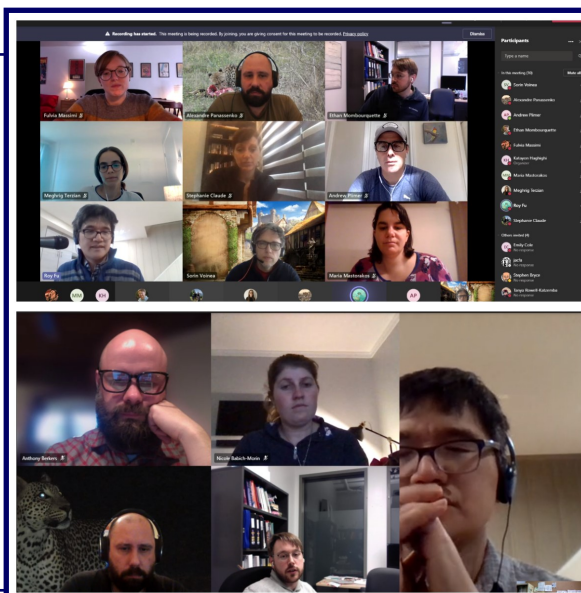
JACFA New-Teacher Orientation

Like most things at work these days, the JACFA new teacher orientation was moved on-line.

Participation however did not appear to be dampened by the new format. We welcomed seven new(er) teachers to two 30-minute sessions.

Picture 1— top row from left: Fulvia Massimi (HPR), Alexandre Panassenko, Ethan Mombourquette, middle row: Meghri Terzian (Computer Science), Stephanie Claude (HPR), Andrew Plimer (Physical Education)- bottom row: Roy Fu, Sorin Voinea (Business Administration), Maria Mastorakos

Picture 2— (clockwise from top left): Anthony Berkers (Physical Education), Nicole Babich-Morin (Chemistry), Roy fu, Ethan Mombourquette, Alexandre Panassenko





Possible Upcoming Changes to the Health Insurance Plan, Fall 2021

Alexandre Panassenko – Mathematics; Treasurer

Our health insurance plan is often the target or critiques or complaints: “It’s too expensive”, “It doesn’t have good coverage”, “My friend works for this or that company and their plan is much better”, etc. The first thing we should understand about our health insurance is that unlike the group insurance available in many companies, ours is NOT a benefit! Our employer does not contribute anything toward the cost of insurance, and we end up paying 100% of the premium costs.

Our health insurance plan offers three different levels of coverage (Modules A, B and C), which are also separated into four different types of coverage (Individual, Single Parent, Couple, and Family). Premium costs vary depending on the level and the types of coverage, and can be found [here](#).

Recent Reviews

It has been seven years since the modular health insurance plan was introduced in 2013. The CFARR (*Comité Fédéral des Assurances et des Régimes de Retraite*), which is the FNEEQ committee responsible to oversee the insurance plan and the retirement plan, was recently mandated to review how our current modular plan is doing. More specifically, CFARR wanted to know how it compares to other similar

plans (in terms of cost and coverage), and what could be done to try to improve it.

CFARR proceeded to do a comparative analysis of our plan with similar plans, that are found mainly in other public sector jobs. The results of that analysis may be a bit surprising: by and large, our insurance is slightly more expensive than other plans, but the coverage is slightly better. The main difference that emerged was at the level of the types of coverage: the Couple protection was non-existent in other plans, they only offer Individual, Single Parent, or Family coverage.

Is “Couple” a Worthwhile Category?

This prompted the CFARR to conduct an internal analysis of premiums paid vs. benefits received for the different modules and types of coverage. The results were surprising at first: members who were subscribing to the Couple coverage were claiming more benefits compared to the premiums they paid than the other types of coverage. Our actuary pushed the analysis further and found the reason for this. During a “typical” career, a teacher who starts will usually be younger and subscribe to the Individual coverage. Once the teacher forms a couple, they will migrate to the Couple coverage, but won’t stay there very long: they will soon have children, and move to Family coverage. They typically go back to the Couple coverage once their chil-

dren have left home, at which point the couple is older and will typically make more claims.

There has always been a stable ratio for the premiums of the different types of coverage: the Single Parent coverage costs 1.7 times the individual coverage, Couple costs 2 times individual and Family costs 2.7 times Individual. One suggestion has been to increase the ratio of Couple coverage while decreasing the ratio for Family coverage. This generated many reactions when it was mentioned at FNEEQ insurance meeting last year: some members felt that this was ageism, while others argued that they thought it was fair if older teachers in couple (therefore at the top of the salary scale) paid a bit more compared to younger teachers with a lower salary and dependant children. Another suggestion was to remove the Couple coverage altogether.

Equilibrium Between the Modules

Another aspect that was analysed was the ratios of premiums of the different modules. Modules A and C are usually compared to module B (which is used as a reference mainly because it is the closest to the health plan we had before the modules were introduced). These ratios have changed slightly over the past years, mainly because there were a few years for which the increase in premiums were not the same for all the modules. What came

out of that analysis is that the members who subscribed to Module C had a much higher benefits claimed to premiums paid ratio compared to those in Module A or B. This prompted an adjustment in the ratios, as well as the intention of keeping the ratios fixed in the future— meaning that all modules would always get the same increase in percentage.

Decisions Fall 2021

These recommendations and proposed scenarios will be discussed and voted on in the Fall of 2021. We are presenting them to you now so that you may reflect on them, discuss them with colleagues, or ask us for additional information.

The first proposal would change and fix the ratios between the different modules, compared to module B. It proposes that the premiums for module A cost 0.72 times the premiums for module B, while the premiums for module C would cost 1.25 times the premiums of module B. You can see the information in the table below, along with the current ratios:

	Module A	Module B	Module C
Current (members under 65):	0.72	1.00	1.16
Current (members over 65):	0.64 to 0.68	1.00	1.17
Proposed:	0.72	1.00	1.25

The second proposal addresses the different types of coverages. It proposes two possible scenarios, one that

keeps the four types of coverages while adjusting the ratios, or a second that merges Couple and Family cover-

age. The current ratios and the proposed ones in both scenarios are shown in this table:

	Individual	Single Parent	Couple	Family
Current:	1.00	1.70	2.00	2.70
Scenario 1:	1.00	1.50	2.25	2.50
Scenario 2:	1.00	1.50	2.40	2.40

The result of that second proposal could have an impact on the premiums for the optional Dental Insurance. When subscribing to the optional dental plan, members are required to take

the same type of coverage as their health insurance. This means that in the event scenario 2 is adopted and the Couple and Family coverages are merged, they would also be merged

for dental insurance. If scenario 1 is chosen instead, then the ratios in the dental premiums would remain the same. The current and scenario 2 ratios are:

	Individual	Single Parent	Couple	Family
Current:	1.00	1.88	2.00	2.88
Scenario 2:	1.00	1.90	2.40	2.40

At this point, these are only proposals, and it is entirely possible that the vote next Fall would result in status quo. However, should these changes happen, they would also be combined with the usual annual increase in premiums. It could undoubtedly result in a significant increase in premiums for some members. For that reason, it is also proposed that these changes be

phased in progressively over a period of four years.

These proposals will come to a general assembly in the Fall of 2021 to be voted on. Meanwhile, if you have any questions or comments, please send them to [Alex Panassenko](#)*.

* Alex is one of the executive members responsible for the group insurance file.



A Call to Action: Reflections on Systemic Racism, Culture and Education

Roy Fu– Humanities/Philosophy/Religion; President

Due to recent incidents coming to light in the criminal justice system and the public healthcare system, there has been a growing public acknowledgment of systemic racism in our society. While public exposés such as these represent a positive step in our efforts to eradicate racism, whether these recent developments actually lead to meaningful anti-racist progress will depend upon whether we can successfully remove cultural and structural barriers that impede wide-scale societal understanding of how and why systemic racism exists.

Key leaders and public figures, including our provincial government and legislature, continue to downplay and deny the existence of systemic racism, often using misinformed and false premises (e.g. “systemic racism doesn’t exist because not all Quebecers are racist”; or “calling out systemic racism prevents us from attributing individual responsibility”). At the same time, few mainstream journalists call out the falsehoods of such statements or press for accountability from those who spout them; it appears many journalists are not themselves well versed in how systemic racism manifests. Accordingly, we rarely see feature news reports in popular media that expose the workings of systemic racism as such. The public is left to wonder if naming systemic racism really matters, or even if it is a real thing; they are led to rely on the old adage that racism likely

exists because of a few “bad apple” racists— not because we are descended from a society built upon racist ideas.

Barriers to societal acceptance of systemic racism exist not merely because of certain individuals’ ignorance, or the political agendas of those in power. They exist because this ignorance is deeply rooted in the cultural structures of our society, in the stories we tell ourselves about who we are as a nation and a people, and in the media and educational institutions that perpetuate such stories.

We tell ourselves that Canadians and Quebecers are historically benevolent people, largely free of the racism found in the U.S., that colonization was a relatively peaceful process devoid of violence, and that we are an open and accepting country that welcome newcomers without reservations. These narratives fill our history books, the education system and popular media. They do little to acknowledge the fact that this country was actually built upon colonization violently executed by the likes of Residential Schools and Indian Act, that was built upon racially exclusionary, white-supremacist immigration laws and institutional policies, many of which lasted until 1970’s, and that it was built upon the legalized exploitation of racialized workers, in the past and in the present.

We find it hard to fathom the existence of systemic racism, because we tell ourselves stories that render it inconceivable.

Changing our societal narratives about racism is not a straightforward affair because of the systemic racism that currently manifests in our cultural and educational institutions, a legacy of our settler colony, white-supremacist history. This racism exists not only as the lack of institutional anti-racist expertise; it also manifests in the active institutional resistance to incorporate such expertise into the institutional culture, and accordingly, resistance to hiring people with such expertise. I have personally witnessed these latter tendencies, in the practices of hiring committees and in the institutional refusal of properly acknowledge racism and support anti-racist initiatives from employees. In the latter example, the institution would rather only talk about “multiculturalism” and “diversity” for the sake of not making anyone feel uncomfortable.

Such is the tenacious nature of systemic racism. It manifests in the cultural sphere: in the collective stories that we tell ourselves. At the same time, it manifests in the institutional-structural: the norms, practices and power structures of our institutions. Its eradication is rendered more complicated by the fact that the ridding of one manifestation depends on the ridding of the other, and vice versa.

Breaking this vicious cycle, while challenging, has not been impossible. On the cultural front, there has been significant progress over the past decades. An important body of work in literature, film and critical theory have emerged in Canada and globally, that have sought to acknowledge the

(Continued on page 12)

Saying the « N Word» in Class, What's the Big Deal Anyway?

Roy Fu

I would like to share a personal story, one that is not dissimilar to the recent incident that occurred at the University of Ottawa, which has stirred up a lot of media attention and heated debate. I think my story sheds a particular light on that debate; it also reminds us that the issue hits very close to home in terms of the kind of things that can happen in our classrooms.

The U of O affair is a story of many layers. I wanted to use my story to highlight the strong systemic-racism currents that I perceived.

This story was originally part of an email exchange I had with colleagues at FNEEQ.

« Il m'est arrivé une fois une situation similaire, dans mon cours sur le racisme, *Ethical Questions in Racism*, à John Abbott.

D'abord, un peu de contexte: Une question importante que je pose régulièrement à mes étudiant(e)s, c'est l'utilisation du mot «N...» pourquoi c'est tabou, mais en même temps pourquoi on l'entend dans les chansons rap, etc., etc.

Avant cet incident, pour un effet dramatique, je prononçais le mot propre, au lieu de dire «the N word». Jusqu'à un certain point, je n'ai pas eu d'objection ou de protestation des étudiant(e)s.

Mais une fois, une étudiante noire m'a approché après une présentation pour dire que mon expression de ce mot lui a fait très mal, et en effet elle a objecté mon utilisation. Je me suis excusé tout de suite de lui faire mal. J'ai expliqué mes intentions et dire que j'allais y réfléchir pour la prochaine fois.

Après cet incident, j'ai fait un bout de réflexions et j'ai décidé de ne plus prononcer le mot dans la classe. Mais j'ai ajouté l'histoire de cet échange avec l'étudiante à mes futures présentations sur le sujet.

J'ai pris ma décision non pas parce que j'ai regardé l'étudiante comme une cliente, mais plutôt comme un être humain. Ce genre d'échanges humanistes arrive souvent: quelqu'un dit quelque chose qui fait quelqu'un d'autre du mal. On lui demande d'en arrêter en expliquant la douleur causée par les mots. Si la demande est raisonnable, on l'accepte.

Pour moi, la demande était tout à fait raisonnable. Comme quelqu'un qui a expérimenté la douleur causée

par les dégradations racistes, je suis bien consciente des manifestations de cette douleur, qu'elle peut toucher très très profondément, et elle peut être provoquée facilement par les mots déclencheurs, indépendante des intentions et du contexte de leur expression.

En tant que professeur qui enseigne le racisme, je connais aussi très bien le rapport de pouvoir lié aux mots dégradants, et leur effets sur la marginalisation des gens racisés dans l'histoire, ainsi dans le présent. En plus, l'ignorance sociétale de ces effets politiques et personnels, notamment dans nos institutions de l'éducation, est un exemple du racisme systémique majeure.

En outre, je n'ai eu aucune raison pédagogique pour refuser la demande. En utilisant le substitut, « the N-word », je ne compromets aucune objective pédagogique. La liberté des expressions ne signifie pas qu'on peut dire n'importe quoi dans la classe. Partout dans notre société, ils existent des limites collectives sur la parole, dans la classe, dans notre famille, entre des amis. La question soulevée par ce cas, c'est : qui est autorisé à définir les limites dans nos institutions et dans notre société? En plus, est-ce que nous allons écouter quand les voix marginalisées nous invitent à repenser les limites?

Comme c'est probablement déjà évident, je raconte cette histoire pour répondre à certains de vos commentaires, pour dire que je crois que le vrai enjeu ici n'est pas la marchandisation de l'éducation ni une question de plaire les étudiant(e)s; le libre-échange des idées, il me semble, n'est pas vraiment menacé, même par l'interdiction d'un mot. Ce qui sont vraiment mis en question, ce sont les privilèges et le pouvoir de certain(e)s professeur(e)s d'agir comme ils le veulent, comme ils pouvaient toujours agir.

Et surtout, ce cas n'est pas un épiphénomène du racisme systémique. De faire écouter les institutions des expériences et des volontés des personnes marginalisées et les faire changer en conséquence, à mon sens, cela comprend la cœur de la lutte contre le racisme systémique.» ■



(Continued from page 10)

place of colonialism and racism in Western history and incorporate it into our popular imagination. They include works by feminist, anti-colonial and cultural studies theorists such as bell hooks, Frantz Fanon, and Edward Said, documentary films by filmmakers such as Alanis Obomsawin and William Dere, and novels by authors such as Thomas King, Joy Kagawa, and Esi Edugyan. In spite of the institutional barriers, many of these works have made their way onto post-secondary reading lists and curricula. With greater

effort placed on removing institutional barriers, their influence can be made to extend to all levels of education and society at large.

On the institutional front, progress in removing organizational barriers has been painfully slow in the education and cultural sectors, not unlike in other sectors of society. Nonetheless, recent protests sparked by the stories of systemic violence in the criminal justice and health systems have effected an uptick in goodwill and openness amongst the general public and from institutions to talking about and addressing systemic racism as a social ill.

Of course, goodwill and openness alone, while helpful to cause, will not rid us of the systemic racism that has been centuries in the making. It will take the hard work of institutions and individuals to educate themselves about our racist history and its subsequent shaping of contemporary systemic barriers. It will also take the hard work of executing a plan to purge the barriers, by changing institutional cultures and organization. Only through such actions can we effectively uproot systemic racism and truly break free from our racist past■

Meet New JACFA Executive:

Maria Mastorakos

Allow me to introduce myself; I'm Maria Mastorakos, the newest member of the JACFA Executive. Keep reading to get to know me a little better.



Maria & her dog Faraday

I came to Montreal in 2002 to study Mechanical Engineering at McGill. After graduation, I worked for a few years as a project engineer in the West Island. The corporate life not being for me, I went back to school, packing up and moving to Winnipeg to do a Master's degree in tractors (a.k.a., Biosystems Engineering with a focus on agricultural machinery). After I completed my graduate degree, I was homesick for my adopted home and came back to Montreal. I did a bit more graduate research and eventually started teaching at John Abbott in 2015 in the Physics department.

If there was one thing to know about me, I guess it would be the fact that I'm the type of person who joins the JACFA Executive during a pandemic. There was an opening on the Executive and I've never been shy to jump into a situation where help was needed, no matter how "atypical" or out of the ordinary the circumstance. The Union Executive seemed like the best place for me to focus my time in order to help us all survive our current working conditions. As the Secretary, some of my duties include coordinating surveys as well as sitting on various committees, such as the Mobilization Committee and the Column D Committee.

I'll be honest, it's been a unique challenge for everyone navigating the introduction of a new Executive member when we are rarely physically together. The learning curve is always steep, and the pandemic poses particular challenges. I am fortunate that the returning group of executives had an excellent working dynamic already established and are incredibly welcoming and generous with their time. Despite our current circumstance, I am looking forward to the year ahead to integrate myself more fully into the Executive and take on more tasks, and hope to do so for years to come■

Welcome! Congratulations! Thank you!

The JACFA Executive would like to welcome all of our new colleagues who joined the faculty recently, to congratulate those who received their permanence this fall and to thank retirees for their many years of service.

Newly hired:

- Maurice Andraos, Business Administration
- Nicole Babich-Morin, Chemistry
- Wilms Baille, Bio-Pharma
- Anthony Berkers, Physical Education
- Damian Bowman, Nursing
- Judith Bridgwater, Nursing
- Stephanie Claude, H/P/R
- David de Koos, Business Administration
- Alain Deraiche, Police Tech
- Edouard Fontaine, Professional Theatre
- Michael Haaf, Computer Science
- Don Lamsen, Nursing
- Ryan Martin, H/P/R
- Fulvia Massimi, H/P/R
- Ivan Miloslavov, Computer Science
- Benjamin Mumme, Physical Education
- Paolo Pelle, Engineering Tech
- Darcy Raymond, Business Administration
- Denis Rinfret, Computer Science
- Jordan Stansbury, Nursing
- Meghri Terzian, Computer Science

Permanence:

- Scott Armstrong, Physical Education
- Ferenc Balogh, Mathematics
- Jennifer Beauvais, English
- Polina Belts, Nursing
- Bonnie Boileau, Nursing
- Neil Briffett, English
- Marianne Campeau-Devlin, French

- Julien Charest, History
- Elisha Conway, Theatre
- Belinda Gare, Graphics and Web Design
- Bruce Gilchrist, English
- Sabrina Gloux, Anthropology
- Verna Grizzle, Nursing
- Antoine Herlin, Mathematics
- Bettina Hoffmann, Media Arts
- Veronica Horlik, Visual Arts
- Bronwen Lloyds-Hughes, Physical Education
- Ed Lyon, Business Administration
- Derek Maisonville, H/P/R
- Magdy Meimari, Business Administration
- Julien Morency, Political Science
- Alberto Sanchez, H/P/R
- Sandra Supinski, Nursing

Retirees:

- Illiria Bicovnik Carnevale, Media Arts
- Carmen Bruneau-Patry, French
- Suzanne Girard, Media Arts
- Richard Guillotte, Nursing
- Alain Jomphe, Police Tech
- Maureen MacCuish, English
- Janet Morrison, Nursing
- Thierry Neubert, Economics
- Carla Salvati, H/P/R
- Robert Seely, Mathematics
- Minko Sotiron, History
- Suzanne Tremblay, French
- Lori Weber, English



Editor: Roy Fu

Advocate logo: Steve Lunny

Layout: Katayon Haghighi

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Photos from recent demonstrations where JACFA participated. Top and bottom right: Zombiie rally in front of the Ministry of Education building in Montreal. Center and bottom left: CSN rally at Place des Festivals.

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