

CCUBC	Canadian Council of University Biology Chairs
CUDBC	Conseil Universitaire des Directeurs de Biologie du Canada

CCUBC 2015 Annual Meeting Report

M Caldwell

Ascended to President – need VP –

Round table:

Laicie Samuels – UBC Van – Botany

30 research groups, 14 teaching faculty (shared with Zoo), 40 pdf, 26 staff, research intensive. Budget – mandated salary incr, 102% salaries – trying to cover with intl student tuition. 3 unfilled retirements, recent self-study document. Protocol from colleague – delegate. Rebuilding Plant Ecology. Res equipment – no funding after CFI Ops. Wieman initiative. Flex learning on-line. Useful for upper year students no re-visit? Small co-op pgm. CtrIntegr Res Learning and Teaching to train future STEM faculty. 1-term grad TAs. NSERC to buy in.

Roger Jacobs – Mac.

Budget pressure. Peoplesoft – problems. Reductions of Dept staff. Act based budgeting. Bums-in-seats, engineering worth more. Faculties \$ same in Science same as Arts, etc. 1st year lab on steroids – eg molecular biology. But losing techs and not able to replace. Dean asks to shut down labs. Space rental - \$300 per sq meter. Health Science stream and Life Science stream competing for pre-meds. Greenhouse issue. 30 fac, 90 grads, old bldg..competing with Toronto etc, especially in biomed. 1600 students in 1st year courses.

Mike Caldwell

Alberta – transition to NDP. Seems to be improving – request for cuts gone. Only deficit driver is COL increase. Large Dept – 65 Fac members, 5 Asst Profs. Retirement issues – encourage to retire. Res transition package – buy access to their lab for 120K (reduced salary) – after retirement. 220 grad students. 15-16000 undergrad registrations. 70 admin and teaching support staff plus 100 ‘trust’ staff. New Pres – Biol dept. Major Prof advertising – Ecology, Plant Genomics. UG MOOCS –Struggling to adapt for on-campus credit. Got rid of Res Interest Groups.

N Brit Columb. (delegate) Dezene Huber:

Six degrees – 120 stud each in Biol, BCH, plus smaller degrees – 300 total
Faculty labour dispute. Strike – faculty in Spring, lost 1 month of teaching. Ended after 2 weeks on Article 55 – arbitration. 24 faculty. Aging faculty.

Daniel Bouclair – UdeM

Chair 6 mo. Mtl – 4 Univ, 2 Eng, 2 French. 55K students. Largest unified franch campus in world. 14 Faculties – Biology in Arts&Science. Restructuring. Several ‘Biology’ Depts. Others in Fac of Medicine. Biol: 30 facposns. 2 currently being advertised. 7 new faculty. Generally replacing retirements. 500 ugrads total. 145 grad st and postdocs. 10 in Plant Sci institute – J. Botanique. Laurentian Field Station. Anticipated new bldg., 2019. Functioning budget cut 15%. Univ fees in Quebec very low – 50% of elsewhere. No res account deficits. Language – competition with McGill and Concordia.

Paul Marino – Memorial

Lots of joint/cross – goal to increase quantitative / analytical. 14 or 28 hired in past 5 years. Spousal hires have been converted into full positions. 3 streams. Terrestrial Biol program strong – donor in that area. Marine Biology weakest. Low tuitions. Small co-op program. Bldg under construction (less space). 7-year review. New govt – deficit from oil prices.

Judy Anderson, Manitoba.

Head since 2007. Diversity formed by merging former Depts. Convergence. 39 faculty members. 96 grad students, 250 majors. Combined review grad/ug. New high energy Dean. Teaching labs important but a challenge to finance. Fish Physiology recruitment. Early discussions about budget model. Also low tuition. Issue – managing accommodation for serious illnesses.

Heather Hunt – UNB St. John.

200 students – smaller UNB campus. Chemists merged into Biol, now 19 faculty. (13 Biol). 180 students- Concern budget – provincial budget poor and # high school students down.

Robert Barclay – U Calgary

Last year (5 year) . 60 Faculty. One Biology Dept. 140 majors, 6 degree programs. Accredited Biol program. Plant Biology was on chopping block but re-vamped to more molecular and rejuvenated. 200 grad students. Budgets looking better than expected but still cut taking salary into equation. 5% cut submitted. New Dean – working well. Question of 1st year labs – versus expense (TAs and staff). Curriculum review – course expectations. Curriculum mapping. Lots of flipped classes – teaching awards. “Microburdens”. Regulatory and security issues increasing.

Mark Bernards – Western

2nd term. 1700 students – Science. 1st year Biol 2000+ incl health science program. B. Med.Sci program – upper year (elite program). Split with Fac Med. Hon degree with a dual major – with minimal 4th year courses. 36 regular faculty. Western Integrated Science Program. Some lab-only courses but need an equivalent for Field Biology. Decanal review – top down hiring in order to raise faculty research profile – emphasizes senior hires. Not really part of long term strategic planning – ‘special’ some with limited teaching roles. Staff hiring freeze, including retirement replacements. TA funding artificially high grad student pop bc of TA funding.

Pat Gulick – Concordia

International student population. Teaching in English but can take final exams in French (rare). No med school. 22 tenure track, 2-3 teaching faculty. Part-time sessionals. 10-15% budget cuts. Voluntary retirement program towards service positions (not faculty). Consistently hiring over past through years – currently recruiting 2 positions. Fac Arts& Science – 30 Depts. “Top” senior faculty teach 1st year.

Paul Bentzen – Dal

Largest Dept in Science. Dal – 18,000 students. Small, large (research intensive) university. 38 faculty but 11-12 are Lecturers. Med sciences program as separate pgm. Old dept – median age 58., (Instructor/Lecturers younger). No institutional plan for renewal. Marine Biology increasing (esp female). Competition for new faculty positions. Biology has low avg teaching load (under 2). With admin positions – effectively 21 faculty positions active, and aging. Life Sciences Centre – decaying. 8th floor greenhouse being renewed (glass panels).

Susan Bjornson, St. Mary's

200 Biol Majors. Located on 1 city block. Msc program underway and PhD being approved. Many international students – suffering from overseas economies. 12 Faculty + Lecturer. Diversity in hiring – 2 recent hires female. All courses have lab component. Budgets cut a little bit. Fall Break starting this week (Remembrance Day).

Mazen Saleh – Laurentian

Sudbury – Mining town. Good restoration. Biology Dept – environmental restoration. Fac Science Engineering and Architecture. N. OntSch of Medicine. Adv Med Research Inst of Canada. Biomed program. Ecology, Zoology. 13 Faculty, 2 full time teaching. 50 MSc students. Cross-appointments and adjuncts. New VPR. New 1st year Biology lab. No research deficits possible.

Suzie Currie – Mt. Allison

Primarily undergrad – 2400 students. 10 grad students in Biology/Biochem. 10 faculty. 1 retirement – renewal not clear. Outcome definition and mapping – esp skills. Evolution at the foundation. New 1st year course – including labs. Course for non-majors. 2nd year core. Dept streams. – cooperative with other programs (eg Bioch, EnvirSci). Infrastructure – new ventilation system. Maybe new building in the dreams.

Dave Law – Lakehead

Aqu toxicology, ecology, micro, forest. 2nd 3-year term. 6000 undergrads. 200 undergrads. Thunder Bay and Orillia. Very distant. Med school, Law fac, Science – 10 depts. Biology held enrolment but overall drop in education students because of 2-year B.Ed. affects whole budget. 2 research positions parachuted in. struggling for dept support. Required 1-term course in aboriginal content. Aboriginal ethnobotany course (with lab). 1st year seminar series – 20 selected students. Have their own stats course under development.

Scott Ramsay – Laurier

Young group of faculty 15.5 positions. 1 retirements. New bldg. for cold region water science, CFI/NW Territories, with roof greenhouse. Health issue – was able to fill in last minute. Lost technician in budget cut. Facing cuts for this year. Act based budget – shadow to Faculty level. Scheduling process – now handled by registrar. Will not assign lab times first – unresponsive.

Ken Wilson – Sask.

Part of U15 – res intensive. Has every professional school. But Biology not part. Also federal and provincial institutes on campus. 22 faculty (2 in senior admin) 80 grad students. Low participation rate in Univ in country – alternate blue collar careers. Large indigenous pop. Goal of 15% Indigenous fac and staff. TABS budgeting model – push budgeting to College level. ASAP – Aboriginal Students Advancement Program.

David Bird – Mt. Royal delegate

Completed review – some recommendations agreed, some not. Hiring faculty. Dean stepping down.

Line Lapoints – Laval

Fac of Science – some biology in Med, Forestry, etc. So focus not on Biochem, etc. Research-oriented 24 fac members. 5 CRC's, 2 other Chairs. Arctic and sub-arctic research. Some sessional Lecturers – not used often. 6 techs, 3 admin. Bldg renovations. Temporary moves for reno's. 3-year pgm (CEGEP). 320 students. MSc/PhD in Biol and one in oceanography.

Gary Saunders – UNB Fredericton

Big fish in small pond. Largest program, enrolment, etc. haven't been hit as hard with budget cuts. Effective strength 26 faculty – generally young-mid-age. 5600 undergrads. Aquatic Bio, Eco-Evo. How to handle pre-meds? Strike – faculty. Chair's council formed ad hoc to bypass Deans. Now expanded to Academic council, with student reps. Intermediary between faculty and upper admin.

Moira Galway – St. FX.

Under 4000 undergrads, variety of grad students. 10 faculty, 6 lab instructors. 2nd 3-year term. Strike in 2013. Now in Strat Planning phase. Way ahead of University. Large turnover of upper admin. Lost institutional history. New health science colloquium across disciplines as cohorts. 40 students approx. 50% arts and science. Including 1-term service role in the community. Objections from applied health departments. Spearheaded by Psychologists (now Deans). Dept operating budget down 30% since 07-08. New VPAP interested in %age of teaching budget – 70-80% lab based.

NSERC: Guillaume Sabourin

NSERC 2020 strategic plan:

5 key areas:

1. Foster Sci and Eng culture in Canada
2. Launch the new generation of scientists
3. Build a diversified and competitive research base
4. Strengthen the dynamic btw discovery and innovation
5. Go global

Open Access:

- deposit in public repository
- OA journals
- University based repository

Funding on or after May 1, 2015.

Audit - ? probably mostly honour system.

How to pay for it? Eligible expense but no new money.

Can use the final manuscript if journal allows.

NSERC Mandate: revised /clarified guidelines on what is funded by each federal agency.

Program News:

No new team grants – all apps are individual. Current grants are honoured but can't be renewed. All new apps are individual Discovery Grants.

Discovery Development Grants:

No direct application

Fall just under the funding cutoff. Need to be from smaller institution. (determined by amount of NSERC funding). 57 awards of \$10k/year.

Are there better ways of defining 'small'. Discipline based within 'large' university?

Currently a 5-year program subject to reassessment.

Requiring some sort of support from institution (to be defined).

Research Portal/CCV

RTI on the portal with Discovery, CGS, etc.

Working on the rest – timetable for implementation.

CCV unwieldy to change. Some improvements have been made and a consultation group is active with researcher input.

Discovery Frontiers

New Materials for Clean Energy

Other emerging opportunities – haven't decided for 2017. Consultation underway

Scholarships – PDF now \$45K per year, up 5K (benefits left up to HR policies of institution – Revenue Canada has defined PDFs as employees so institution responsible for benefits. What about a research allowance?

Harmonized CGS program aims for 2018. How will non-medical areas be protected? Councils will retain their share but centralized application/review system.

Industrial scholarships being terminated.

Women in Science and Engineering initiative

Increase for paid parental leave for students/pdfs (father or mother) to 6 months

L-Oreal-UNESCO program

Gender disaggregated statistics

Q: programs to hire new female Assistant Profs? Rather than senior Chairs. Could stretch \$ much further.

NSERC Website changes

DG Review process

Binning process, 2 step binning process plus cost of research.

Not used in Life Sciences – more for Physics.

Peer Review: Conference Model.

12 PE groups, some people move between rooms for individual applications depending on content of application

Warning: Not encouraged to change Eval Groups because of higher dollar funding- success rates are probably lower.

Eval Groups:

Members (1st step) and Exec Committee (2nd step).

Exec Com meets at the end to distribute \$ into the bins.

Joint reviews: If guest comes from another eval group.

1500 applications typically for the 3 life science groups, about ½ the total # apps received.

DG Results:

Early Career (within 3 years) ECR

Established Res (ER) renewal or new.

ECR: 65%, ER-Ren 82%, ER-new 38% (whole competition)

In Life Science – a little lower % age for ECR but amounts higher.

Use Google: “Discovery Grant Competition Results 2015”

Overall DG funds available roughly stable taking inflation into account.
Success rates fairly stable overall over past 6 years.

Accelerator Supplements:

32 total for Life Sciences (total 125 overall)

RTI – Slots assigned to Institutions for internal reviews.

Some Universities are not using their whole quota

Program: \$25m, 33% success rate at NSERC. Generally larger requests in new model.

Topics for potential Discussion:

- advocacy
- mentoring/transitioning/succession planning.
- Pre-med programs
- Field Biology
- Gender issues
- Aboriginal – truth&reconciliation
- 2nd year core.
- Additional course credit for lab intensive courses
- Professional Biologist designation
- Hiring of international faculty/postdocs.

Session 4: Scott Ramsay

Online learning

Ontario – e-campus portal for students to have access to online courses from University and Colleges. Allow students to pick courses and can count as equivalencies at different schools. Supported by Govt of Ontario funding. Encouraging partnerships between institutes or between units within institutes.

Online offerings as new revenue streams in new budget model.

Potentially income from students who wouldn't normally be reached.

Transitional courses – bridging to University.

Non-majors or general public interest.

Online courses Discussion points:

Relationship to MOOCS (not usually for credit).

Caldwell:

Partner with delivery service – ie Coursera or Webex.

Can do introductory course for free. Same course has a on-campus iteration for 1 credit. No F-2-F time, regular tuition like any other course. 800+ students taking it.

Next course – Paleo 201 – MOOC + F2F time including lab + TA time. 3 credit course. Much smaller 50-60 students.

Production can be very expensive for high quality. \$500K. Took 1 year.

30,000 students. Partnering with Guelph (?) for Intro Cell Biology.

Credit equivalencies with other Universities listed on portal.

Western:

Catch up courses. Summer offerings. Re-takes for students who fail. (Doesn't always work for weak students).

Manitoba:

Compressed 3-week online vs. F2F. Different group. Doesn't reduce enrolment to offer both.

Mt. Royal –

What about quality control? Especially as they affect higher level courses.

How is final product screened for quality? Based on extensive detailed proposal.

Gulick (Concordia):

Feedback? Especially with feedback, exam monitoring.

Completion rate? Chat room 'office hours'. Exam network for proctoring.

IP for online courses – most places, it resides with University. Some places, developer has the right to teach it the first 3 times. Has to be some sort of engagement. Not just a web page.

Issues of evaluation of electronic courses.

Who gets the funding: Mostly not the Dept. Some incentive if enrolment is incremental. Proportional to enrolment?

Educational outcomes. May depend on the student. UBC – compared but groups are hard to control. Final result in business model- smaller schools/courses would phase out local offerings. Control over equivalencies rests with home Dept (for now).

Could do CCUBC position paper on this topic – how it relates to the future of traditional learning. Why come to University at all if you can learn everything off the web.

Content versus new teaching techniques – soft skills, etc.

Activities can be built into online courses.

Active learning classrooms. Laurier has a new Science active learning room. \$95K spent to convert traditional lecture room to a dynamic situation – students can move around, dedicated smartboards on multiple tables. Capacity only slightly reduced – 50 to 42. Great for small groups, writing circles, etc. Flipped classrooms or other exercises. Really for small classes.

Problem based learning –discussions gradually build up a website with structured. Can track users by colour.

TitanPad. Can work with up to 60. (google docs only 10 or so).

Simultaneous editing.

Open mic

1. Paying for distributing/downloading lab manuals. Many places do.

2. Combined Lab courses – should they be worth more?

Increase # of credits with # lab hours per week.

Can be constrained by registrar – Mac only permits multiples of 3.

Consequence on tuition?

3. First year labs? Almost all of Ontario (except Laurier) has them.

Some professional programs look for 1st year labs. About ½ Chairs have full labs (every week) in 2 terms in 2nd year.

Virtual labs (commercial)? Some benefit – not as good a physical lab but could be useful in conjunction.

Huge expense but enlightened upper admin can see the benefit.

TA budget threatened to support grad students.

4. Advocacy –

CCR versus PAGSE

Could rely on our disciplines (CSZ, CSMB) for PAGSE.

Send a delegate to Science Policy Conference

Access points for funding council? Packages of ideas that could be submitted.

Useful to discuss with Guillaume from NSERC.

Write up points from this year's discussion to send to Guillaume and Mario Pinto.

6. Succession Planning

Encourage new people coming in – reduced or free meeting attendance.

More specific issues in the program.

Twitter feed for CCUBC – Scott Ramsay can set it up and populate initially.

'Workshop' for new Chairs, especially when new Chairs are expected.

Motion: Either identified Chairs who haven't started or new Chairs in their first year invite for no registration fee.

Seconded by Judy – Passed! (1 abstention)

7. Pre-med programs

Some med schools are requiring fewer courses

How to deliver a good Biology degree but keep pre-professional schools in mind

Health science – competes with other programs.

some professionals are delivering preps within the faculty (eg Nursing at Lakehead).

Related to Resource Allocation model – other faculties taking possession of 'Biology' courses.

Western – B. Med Sci – Basically a standard Biology program but labeled with Medical.

Education of high school students as to how to best position themselves.

8. Field Biology

Techniques in Field Biology course at Western without having to travel (additional fee).

Participation in Ontario Field Consortium but that can be costly. Not lecturing but could be local field experience.

UNBC – has a similar course.

Calgary – ecology majors have a required field course 2 weeks at Calgary field station.

Laurier – local based in Waterloo with daily excursions. 1-2 overnights. \$350-400.

Sask. Required for honours – going into 4th year. Univ field site. Field techniques. Partially through fee and Department subsidizes the rest.

Manitoba – modular field course – 3 modules = complete 3-credit course. Based on joining 3 researchers on their sites during the season.

Mac – owns a field site accessible by bus – learn field measuring techniques and restoration.

Alberta – 6 field courses – reducing them to 3 courses. New 3-month S. African field course.

Extremely expensive but full (22 students). Cost recovery. Leads to 15 credits.

Question of liability. Risk management. Students have to sign risk acceptance. Huge administrative/legal issue.

Concordia: Undergrad trip to Galapagos. Faculty member (volunteer) goes as an independent study course for credit.

Foreign workers:

Calgary, seems to be improving.

Concordia – just have to rank top 3 Canadians?

Still need labour market survey or could be through NAFTA if from US.

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