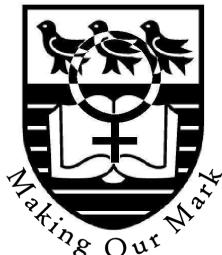


Purple Prose

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PP Editorial



Dear Everyone,

It is difficult to believe we are at the end of the semester already. This spring term got off to an exciting start for the Caucus with the **Informed Opinions** workshops on media relations that took place in January. Given the evaluations filled out by the participants, both the community and academic workshops were a resounding success. Many were effusive about the content learned as well as the talents of the facilitator, Shari Graydon. In addition, 4 of the women from the academic workshop have since written op-editorial pieces for various newspapers in British Columbia.

I was among this group and can offer my own positive experience with the intense media exposure that followed. The Caucus would again like to thank all of our sponsors for making the workshops possible. The Informed Opinions project continues its not-for-profit work of promoting women's voices in the media. Please visit informedopinions.org for more information and to read the published opinions of the UVic participants.

The Caucus was also very pleased to co-sponsor a panel on prostitution and women's equality to mark the 100th anniversary of **International Women's Day**. The session was an energetic and energizing forum discussing recent international developments in sex worker-friendly regulation of this industry.

Another springtime activity has been our participation in consultations surrounding the renewal of the University's **Strategic Plan**. In addition to participating in face-to-face meetings with the Planning and Priorities Committee, the Caucus sent a letter outlining our input for the renewal to the Committee as part of its call for written submissions. In it, the Caucus highlighted the everydayness of the chilly and even toxic **climate issues** that women and other marginalized campus groups continue to face, suggesting steps that University can adopt to address these systemic and ongoing issues. You can read the text of the body of our letter in this issue.

One of the concerns we highlighted in our submissions was the need for greater responsiveness to the **care-giving** role that many women academics assume in their personal lives. The need for increased full-time childcare spots for pre-school children on campus has been a prominent issue in this regard for the Caucus and wider campus community. In this issue, one of our members, **Eva Baboula**, adds the issue of the planned **kindergarten closure** of Centre 5 at UVic's Childcare complex to this discussion.

I am very pleased to include an update from the **Faculty Disability Caucus (FDC)** in this issue. **Victoria Wyatt**, one of this year's Co-Chairs, details the work the FDC has undertaken this year in regard to strategic planning and general advocacy around disability issues. For those unfamiliar with the FDC and the valuable work it does, Victoria provides a very helpful summary of recent activities and how to get further connected to the FDC.

This issue also contains new book reviews by **Lynne Van Luven**. Like last year, Lynne introduces us to some non-fictional gems just in time for **summer reading**. I have been inspired by past reviews to pick up something outside the range of my regular reading regime and have greatly benefitted from the selections. I hope you will be similarly enticed by the reviews in this issue.

Finally, I am delighted to introduce you to the **incoming Chair** of the Caucus, Dr. **Janni Aragon**, from Political Science. Janni is a fantastic academic citizen and the Caucus is very luck to have such a capable, vibrant, and engaging leader to guide its activities over the next two years. Please join me in welcoming Janni to this new role and thanking her for her commitment to the Caucus. You can read more about her background and ideas for the Caucus in the feature interview in this issue. Janni has also contributed her reflections on the recently released **MIT's Report on the Status of Women Faculty in Science and Engineering, 2011**. As you may know, reports from MIT on this subject in previous years galvanized change well beyond MIT both in the United States and Canada in terms of women academics in these fields. Janni shares her recent blog entry on this subject with us.

As this is the last issue of Purple Prose of my term as Chair, I would like to extend sincere **thanks** to the Steering Committee members from this year and last for all of their work planning Caucus activities. Working collaboratively with many of you was a pleasure. I also want to thank the Caucus' student assistants, Brianna Green for this year and Xue Dong for last, for all of their organizational work. Both made the handling of so many administrative details a much smoother process than it otherwise would have been.

Thank you also to you the readers of Purple Prose and all of you that have participated in the life of the Caucus and/or represented the interests of women and other underrepresented equity groups in your units. What may seem like small and individual efforts on a daily basis do accumulate and reverberate to others until one day a **systemic difference** is made. Thank you for this work that so often goes unacknowledged.

May you all have a wonderful summer term and please accept my best wishes for all of your endeavours and pursuits.

Maneesha



*Artwork in This Issue Provided Courtesy of
Marion Evamy*

Marion attended the University of Victoria from 1979-1983, graduating with a degree in psychology. Thirty years later, Marion established her own art gallery in Oak bay as a full time artist/painter. Infused with radiant jewel toned colors and unique applications, Marion's paintings portray mystery and whimsy, evoking memories of the European Expressionist era mixed with modern California/Southwest influences. With strong graphic characters, pattern and texture, her works are always searching for that elusive sentiment between turmoil and harmony. Marion defines her style as "chameleon" with subject matter and painterly approach changing regularly – but the works are always recognizable by the color palette she loves to use! Collectors include patrons prominent in business and politics as well as many fine people who appreciate Marion's freedom and colourful approach to art!

Book Reviews

By: Lynne Van Luven

As I write this during Reading Break, on the second day of our February “Big Snow,” I’m thinking that one of life’s great pleasures is looking forward to holing up with a good book. By the time you read these brief reviews, the snow should be long gone. But I hope these recommendations linger on.

***The Memory Palace: A Memoir* by Mira Bartok (Free Press. 305 pages, \$28.99)**

American artist and children’s author Mira Bartok has delivered a riveting read in her first book for adults. But then, she has exceptional – and unfortunate – subject matter. *The Memory Palace* traces not only Bartok’s re-invention of herself after a near-fatal car accident but also the story of her reconciliation with her long-lost mother, Norma. Norma Herr was 19 and a lovely, skilled pianist when she was diagnosed with schizophrenia. As the disease yanked away her mental stability, her fears for her two daughters escalated, along with her paranoias. Eventually, in order to have a little peace of mind, both sisters moved away from their home city and changed their names. But Norma’s disease progresses and she eventually ends up homeless.

“Even now, when the phone rings late at night, I think it’s her. I stumble out of bed ready for the worst.” So Bartok describes the lingering trauma in the wake of her mother’s death in 2007, showing how deeply schizophrenia’s fingers can stretch into the psyche of anyone who has coped with the disease in a loved one.

The Memory Palace: the reader encounters snippets from her mother’s journals and diaries along with the author’s own memories as well as scenes and anecdotes from her childhood. The result is a book that is difficult to adequately describe but completely enthralling to read. One is left amazed at the stamina of all three women, and at the wonder of the sisters’ reconciliation with their mother before her death. This is not a happy book, yet it is proof of the resilience of the human spirit and leaves one strangely hopeful.



***One Story, One Song* by Richard Wagamese**
(Douglas and McIntyre, 216 pages, \$29.95)

Ojibway author Richard Wagamese is living proof that life is what you make of it. Wagamese, who has been on the UVic campus this semester as the Harvey S. Stephenson Lecturer in the Department of Writing, is a prolific author and storyteller. His latest non-fiction book is a collection of . . . I

guess observations and ruminations best describes

them . . . short chapters in which the author comments upon every-day events around him. *One Story, One Song* is full of insights into how he has decided to navigate the world – given to bouts of solitude, in concert with nature, but linked to a supportive partner with whom he lives in Kamloops, B.C. and a larger community of activists spread all across the country.

Wagamese is honest about his uneven start in life, and he could still understandably be bitter about his unhappy early foster care and his subsequent rough years on the street. Instead, he revels in his bond with nature and his love affair with the word. Check out his memoir, *One Native Life*, for more of the same.

Book Reviews Continued...

Retooling the Humanities: The Culture of Research in Canadian Universities, edited by Daniel Coleman and Smaro Kamboureli (University of Alberta Press, 312 pages, \$49.95)

All across the campus, departments and faculties are revisiting their components of the Strategic Plan as we all rethink how the University of Victoria should constitute itself for the next few years. What better time to happen upon Retooling the Humanities, a collection of essays by academics from across the country -- from Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver to Dalhousie University in Halifax -- who address the strengths and pitfalls of academic research. Editors Coleman and Kamboureli define "retooling" as "re-equipping and redesigning," something we all need to do constantly if we are to "keep abreast" in our areas of study. The book gives artists and humanities scholars a place to argue for, or against, such imperatives as SSHRC grant policies, cultural nationalism and knowledge as a market commodity. The collection itself is the result of three conferences that were part of the TransCanada project spearheaded by Smaro Kamboureli (who taught for many years in the Department of English at UVIC and is now at the University of Guelph) and held in Vancouver, Guelph, Ontario, and Sackville, New Brunswick, from 2005 through 2009. I doubt you will agree with all of the essays in this collection, but I'm sure you will be challenged by several of them! Furthermore, most of them are refreshingly jargon-free.



Thank you!

The Academic Women's Caucus appreciates the support it has received this year for its various initiatives and programs from the Office of Research Services, VPAC, UVic Communications, the Centre for Co-operative and Community-Based Economy, as well as the Faculties of Education, Fine Arts, Law, Sciences and Social Sciences.

Introducing Janni Aragon, the incoming Chair of the Academic Women's Caucus

Please tell our readership a bit about yourself

A) What you did before you came to UVic?

I am an American and was teaching Political Science and Women's Studies courses at San Diego State University and the University of California. My partner is Canadian and we decided to relocate to Victoria for a better of quality of life for our family. He also has family on the Island and in Vancouver.

While I was teaching in the US, my courses varied from Sex, Power and Politics to American Politics courses. I also taught a course on the United Nations and spent more than a year as the Director of the Model United Nations Program and the Director of Internships. These quasi-administrative positions allowed me to work closely with undergrads and I came to realize that I enjoyed mentoring and advising.



B) How would you describe your experience at UVic so far?

I have had a great experience at UVic. For my first three years I was a Sessional Instructor in Political Science and Women's Studies. I am now finishing my second year as a Senior Instructor in the Political Science department.

C) Please tell us about your research, teaching, and other interests.

I am currently co-editing an introductory women's studies book with Dr. Annalee Lepp and Dr. Heather Tapley of the UVIC Women's Studies Department. The book is going to be 50% or more Canadian, which will make the book unique.

I have a few projects on the go and am looking forward to revisiting them this Summer. One is related to pedagogy and teaching the 'Net Gen. Another is collaborative project putting together a voter guide for the upcoming BC election. We are borrowing from the National Action Committee's voter guides. What makes this project so exciting is the opportunity to work with two UVIC students (Veronica Harrison and Caitlyn Pal) and Susan Bazilli of the International Women's Right's Project.

My next project will combine my interests in Feminist Theory and Popular Culture to engage the Twilight series through an intersectional lens. I also would like to revisit some research about young women's activism online. One area of interest of mine is social media and activism.

As far as my teaching, I am a Senior Instructor and I normally teach three courses in the fall, three in the spring, and two in the summer. What this means is that for the two main terms I am the course manager for the Worlds of Politics and also teach numerous other courses, like Gender and Politics, Gender and International Relations, Feminist Political Thought, American Politics, and Youth Politics. During this summer term, I am excited to teach a new seminar—Politics and Popular culture.

*Interview with Janni Aragon continued...***Have you been involved with University and academic governance work before?**

To date my service has been focused on the department level, the faculty level or within the discipline of Political Science. I am one of the three Undergraduate Advisors in the Political Science Department. I am looking forward to my upcoming role as the next Chair of the Academic Women's Caucus (AWC). In the discipline of Political Science, I have been on caucuses for women and Latina/os. I am currently finishing my term as the President of the Caucus for Women and Gender Justice with the Western Political Science Association.

What are some of the current challenges you see facing academic women?

One of the major challenges for academic women is work and life balance. Women still serve as the primary caregivers in households, so balancing work life and home life can be challenging. So many find that they are caregiving to parents or elders, too. Speaking to other women academics anecdotally, it seems as if women are expected to carry more service heavy roles in their departments, too.

What are some of the activities you have planned for the Caucus next year? What will your priorities be?

I am looking forward to having a fruitful chat with the current AWC Chair to discuss this. At this time, I think that the AWC can help lead the December 6th events. I have also had early conversations with UVic Communications to try to increase the profile of women academic on campus as experts in the larger community.

What are you most looking forward to in your role as Chair?

I look forward to doing what Maneesha and Lynne did before me and ensure that women academics know that there is this Caucus that represents them. I am only one person on the AWC Steering Committee, so I am looking forward to working with the committee and planning useful workshops and events.

Is there anything else you would like to share or tell the readers?

I would like to remind my colleagues that the AWC's events are a great place to network and establish connections outside of your home department.



Renewal of the Strategic Plan: Input from the Caucus

By: Maneesha Deckha

The Academic Women's Caucus responded to the Planning and Priorities Committee's call for input last month with respect to the renewal of the University's Strategic Plan. Below is the text of the central issues we identified in relation to University's request for feedback in its discussion document entitled "Renewing the Vision". This document outlined specific Strategic Issues on which the Committee asked for input. Our submissions directly correlated to several of the identified issues. In particular, our submissions below addressed the specific question posed under "A Diverse and welcoming learning community" as to "What further initiatives are needed to continue to engage our university community in bolstering our commitment to a diverse and welcoming educational and research community?"

The following were our main suggestions and comments:

Addressing Diversity at the Micro, Everyday Level. One way to expand the current repertoire of campus services and programming related to equity and diversity is an initiative that promotes recognition that systemic injustices affect campus life and dynamics and those in positions of management and administration need to be persistent in efforts to identify, mitigate and eliminate these effects at the ground level. Too often, these effects are experienced at a personal level, and are difficult for others to perceive and validate as diversity-related; these dynamics are often misunderstood and privatized as personality problems. The individuals at the receiving end of these dynamics suffer without departmental, faculty or other support to recognize and address the exclusion/marginalization for equity and diversity reasons. The AWC has heard from a number of members about their ongoing adversities in this regard. Concerns implicating race and disability, interacting with gender, have been repeatedly voiced.

The University must be pro-active in recognizing and addressing the micro-dynamics of systemic issues that affect individual instructors' everyday lives. A simple step is to acknowledge these dynamics, thus sending the institutional message that these dynamics need to be remedied. Another step is to offer a venue for anonymous input about the existence of such dynamics and their toll on the instructor's career and well-being, through, for example, a comprehensive survey. From the input of the survey, targeted intervention could then occur. A third step is to affirm the enrichment that marginalized groups bring to our campus. This step seems to be particularly important with respect to the presence of people with disabilities in their units. With such pro-active measures, the need for individuals to self-advocate and the stress and anxiety that often brings, will reduce.

Uprooting Exclusionary Networks in Units. The AWC has received anecdotal evidence spanning many years about departments and units on campus where established networks and cliques exist that pose barriers and impediments to instructors coming from non-traditional groups. AWC members have experienced networks that exclude on the basis of gender, race, and ability. These exclusions can take the form of bullying, academic undermining, academic isolation, devaluation of research, non-objective performance reviews, exclusion from decision-making, etc. They go beyond the more traditional and quantifiable forms of systemic discrimination for female instructors such as pay inequity (which, of course, must also be investigated/addressed). In some cases, the effects have been so severe that members have had little recourse but to move units or resign.

These networks and the exclusionary effects they produce need to be uprooted. This is undeniably a difficult task. Again, the University can position itself as a leader by addressing these problems instead of permitting them to continue. One step is to simply acknowledge the problem rather than minimize it. Another step is to educate administrators about this problem and the importance of supporting marginalized unit members when they take the courageous step of raising the issue in their units. Creative conflict resolution strategies, perhaps guided by an external facilitator/mediator, should then be deployed.

Renewal of the Strategic Plan: Input from the Caucus continued...

Supporting the Academic Caregiver. Many of the University's staff, instructors and students, especially the women in these groups, are primary caregivers for a dependent. For our members – academic women - being responsible for the care of children, aging parents, or other adult individuals with care needs and managing a professional academic life is a serious challenge. The deleterious effects on caregivers' careers and well-being from being primary caregivers are well-documented. To the extent that caregiving is a highly gendered issue in society, these deleterious effects represent a systemic issue of gender inequality, which the University's own policies require it to address. The University should be a leader in the recognition that affordable, accessible and high quality daycare, eldercare, and supports for caregiving in general constitute an equity and diversity issue and are vital to the well-being, equality and success of these groups in academic life.

Despite limited resources, the University can still generate creative solutions to provide accessible childcare spots and other caregiving supports for the campus community. For example, the University could have a support person dedicated to helping employees navigate the labyrinthine home and community care system in caring for an elder, and the complicated network of services available for children with disabilities. Additionally, they could provide financial and administrative support for respite services. Support for caregiving through recognition, flexibility, and care spots and liaison services to community resources would distinguish the University in this critical area important to so many instructors. This one feature could help retain leading faculty and researchers especially those at the junior and mid-career levels, whose career development the University has indicated it will be focusing on in a climate of constrained hiring.

* * *

Indeed, all of the topics and recommendations above are related to creating better awareness of the situated nature in which lives are led. Frank discussion of systemic inequalities, attention to how they materialize in institutions despite best intentions, and education for those in decision-making positions about their adverse effects on marginalized members of the academic community, are goals the AWC strongly recommends the renewed Strategic Plan set. Creating an environment that embraces difference requires critical thinking and reflection at all levels about power relations and how they circulate. While the conversations that lead to the goals above may be difficult to start, the end results should enhance the University's position with respect to multiple issues identified in the discussion document. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide these recommendations. The AWC looks forward to engaging with the Committee and other members of our community as the Strategic Plan takes shape.



Reflections on Equity on Campus: Good News at MIT

By: Janni Aragon

I read the latest MIT Report on the Status of Women Faculty in the Schools of Science and Engineering with interest. To see the original report go to <http://web.mit.edu/fnl/women/women.html>. I remember reading the original report from 1996 that caused some shockwaves through higher education. For most women in academe, we are quite familiar with the “chilly climate” and pipeline issues. When the report came out, I was in graduate school but already researching women in Political Science with what would become my dissertation. I read the first report with keen interest and looked to MIT as being a “worst” case scenario, given that the institution was a preeminent institute of technology.

For those not familiar with these terms, let me back up and explain. The Chilly Climate refers to “The Chilly Climate” articles (1982, 1984) by Roberta Hall and Bernice Sandler. Hall and Sandler first wrote, “The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?” in 1982 under the auspices of the Association of American Colleges (ACE). It was published by ACE in 1982 as part of the Project on the Status and Education of Women. In the article, they talk about the multiple ways that women scholars are made to feel as if they are imposters in academia by the institution, social mores, and overall gendered expectations.

These points all translate into a different environment for women in the classroom. They note that women students are implicated in this by the lack of women faculty as mentors and as examples of role models who have “made” it. In 1984, they wrote, “Out of the Classroom: A Chilly Campus Climate for Women?” which was also published by ACE as part of the Project on the Status and Education of Women. In this report, they deal more explicitly with the multiple ways that women are treated or face the “chill” on campus with colleagues, administrators, and other institutional proceedings. In each report, the authors list recommendations to counter the chilly climate in the classroom and on campus.

Simply put, their articles referred to the atmosphere in academe that women academics perceived as unfriendly to women, let alone their respective research. The articles covered the varied areas of concern in and outside of the classroom for both women students and faculty. Furthermore, women academics felt the chill more if their research examined women.

Particular to the women at MIT, they were dealing with several concerns and some of the most visible ones were the dearth of women faculty in the sciences and engineering. The vast majority of the faculty were men. The environment was also one that did not view women faculty with the same level of respect at all levels of the pipeline—from undergraduate students up to full professors. The culture at MIT was one that was not supportive of women and the study also found that women faculty were underpaid compared to male faculty.



Reflections on the Equity on Campus: Good News at MIT continued...

The latest report finds that women have made some inroads. In some cases the numbers of women faculty have doubled. But, we still see that in some colleges women are less than 20% of the faculty! I was reading the latest report and thinking of Virginia Valian's book *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women* (1999) and remembered that it is harder to change the hearts and minds of people. Changing policy is not easy, but to actually change normative opinions about people is part of the policy change project. I am not going to discount the work that MIT has put forth, but it saddens me to think that incoming graduate students are whispering that women were accepted into the graduate program based on affirmative action. Unfortunately, these conversations also influence the ways in which some students and faculty look at women faculty—are you here to make the numbers better or do you deserve this job. This idle gossip feeds the culture that the Reports are attempting to respond to. The latest MIT Report then is another example of how our work is still unfinished.

The recommendations in the latest report address the need for: diverse recruitment and hiring strategies, responsiveness to care work concerns, better mentoring for junior faculty, monitoring service commitment, tracking faculty salaries, dealing more effectively with harassment, more transparency with policies, better prepared mentors, and better educated senior faculty and department heads. These recommendations are all important for us to consider. We need to be vigilant and make sure that our own home campuses are treating women faculty in a fair manner.



Opinion: UVic's Kindergarten and the Childcare Debate

By: Evanthia Baboula

My son is at the UVic kindergarten (Centre 5) and we learned (quite by accident) a few weeks ago that the kindergarten program - 2.5 hours daily integrated into the full-day daycare schedule - is closing down at the end of June. Apparently one of the problems is that there are not enough children to fill the available spots now that public schools are running full-day kindergartens. The move is also meant to compensate for the expansion of spaces for children up to five years old. The expansion is very desirable. But the loss of the kindergarten is serious and regrettable. My son was on the waiting list for four and a half years before we heard he was accepted in the program and Centre 5 proved even better than I had heard.

Apart from all the fun the children have, they have been taught to read and write, add and subtract (a very pleasant surprise), and there is much attention to the individual needs a child may have. They are doing an excellent job over there and it is a great pity to sacrifice one good thing for another while avoiding the commitment of appropriate resources.

The VPAC's office has made available relevant information which has come out of the work of the Working Group on Child Care Expansion, a group that was formed after the UVic Childcare Action's Group successful letter-writing campaign to the University's Board of Governors in 2009 to bring attention to the insufficient number of childcare spots on campus. This information may be accessed at <http://web.uvic.ca/vpfin/about/UVic child care expansion memo and report.pdf>.

While there does now appear to be more concerted attention to childcare from the University, the value of Centre 5's kindergarten is underplayed. Certain points should be noted:

1. One of the key priorities in the mandate of the Working Group was to "propose various business models for the development and operation of new services that do not reflect an increase in institutional operating subsidy currently set at \$510,000 annually". While one can appreciate arguments about financial constraints and difficult times, it looks like a discussion on 'expansion' was misplaced since it was explicitly tied to no further commitment of resources. Essentially, the strategy appears to have involved the internal moving of pieces rather than an increase of the available facilities and programs.
2. Given the high quality of the kindergarten program and the difficulty we had to get my son into it, I find it difficult to accept that falling numbers are so detrimental as to necessitate closure of the program. Surely such a successful program could be advertised to the wider community and function competitively against other private kindergartens.
3. The above document on childcare talks about 'recommendations' throughout (noting the need to take urgent decisions) but it looks like the closure is a fait accompli.
4. The recent developments mean that some of the teachers will lose their jobs at the end of June. That is of concern even if one could argue that more employment opportunities are arising in the public school environment (are they?).
5. Finally, the above document allocates thanks to the Working Group, highlighting the lead consultant "for the hard work, dedication, and commitment that was invested in developing this report". I would like to suggest that we extend our appreciation to the fantastic work that the people at Centre 5 have been doing with our children and voice concern over the dissolution of a great program.

Centre 5 is a wonderful component of the University's childcare services. Let's work to keep it.

Faculty Disability Caucus Activities 2010– 2011

By: Victoria Wyatt



The Faculty Disability Caucus greatly appreciates the invitation to discuss our recent activities in *Purple Prose*. The Caucus works to increase awareness on campus about issues related to visible and invisible disabilities and chronic illness. It seeks to have input towards university policies and procedures regarding disability and chronic illness. It provides information to UVIC faculty, librarians, sessionals and other employees about such policies and procedures, and about relevant provisions of federal legislation and the Framework Agreement. It offers information and support to individuals who are seeking accommodation for a disability or chronic illness, or who are navigating medical leave and LTD processes. Because disability and disabling illness can enter anyone's life at any time, the Caucus is pertinent to all employees. It works on behalf of all academic staff and librarians as well as faculty members. The Faculty Disability Caucus has been active since the spring of 2004.

During the past academic year, Co-Chairs of the Faculty Disability Caucus have been Pamela Moss (Studies in Policy and Practice, pamelam@uvic.ca) and myself (Victoria Wyatt, History in Art, vwyatt@uvic.ca). I have represented the Caucus on university committees and panels; Pamela actively advises on these and other activities, and serves as administrator of the Faculty Disability Caucus discussion listserv (see below). Both Co-Chairs are available for consultation with employees who need information about policies and procedures. A discussion of our more public activities during the past academic year follows here.

In 2010-2011, a primary area of focus has been accommodation. Issues include the need for more employee access to information about accommodation, more transparency and clarity about the process, more campus-wide education about provisions in the Faculty Framework Agreement and federal legislation regarding accommodation, and more inclusion of faculty as presenters/panelists in university-sponsored training workshops for chairs and deans. As Co-Chair of the Faculty Disability Caucus, I have sat on several committees and have been pleased at their awareness of the urgency of disability and accommodation issues. While I participated actively in discussions, I was not responsible for their initial decisions to emphasize accommodation. I am sorry that the problems are so pervasive that they are well identified by myriad sectors of the university population. At the same time, I am encouraged that many parties are now calling attention to them.

This year I also have represented the Faculty Disability Caucus on the University Human Rights Committee (UHRC), which advises the President. In this capacity I served on Employment Equity Advisory Group (EMAG), a subcommittee of the UHRC. EMAG defined disability and accommodation as one of the themes to highlight this year to higher administration. Accordingly, the UHRC presentation to the President this spring pointed out the need for an improved process of accommodation, for educational workshops that include representatives of the Faculty Disability Caucus and/or the Faculty Association's Disability Committee, and for clearer understanding of and support for invisible disabilities. An explicit discussion of some of the issues followed the formal presentation.

Faculty Disability Caucus Activities Continued...

As Co-Chair, I also represented the Faculty Disability Caucus on the Provost's Diversity and Equity Steering Committee. The committee chose disability and accommodation as one of the themes to emphasize in its consultation with the Planning and Priorities Committee in March. I made a short presentation focusing on the Strategic Plan's stated goal of inclusion and diversity, and the importance of supporting people with disabilities as valued contributors to that diversity. I also spoke about the need for a more effective accommodation process, and explained some problems associated with the current need for self-advocacy.

In March, I participated as a panelist in the panel "When, What, Who, Why, and How of Disability and Self-advocacy," sponsored by the Vice-President Academic's Office. The panel focused on problems that arise when students, staff and faculty members with a disability or chronic illness must serve as their own advocates when seeking accommodations and other appropriate supports.

Co-chairs of the Disability Caucus have both served as liaisons with the Chair of the Faculty Association Disability Committee so that the Caucus and that Committee can support each other in our goals. Throughout the year I attended meetings of the Faculty Association Disability Committee as an invited guest. I also provided input to the Faculty Association Equity Committee as they were drafting their Equity survey, which they recently circulated.

Co-chairs have sought training opportunities to increase our understanding of legal rights and of issues. In February I attended a CUPE workshop on "Duty to Accommodate." In April, I attended a luncheon sponsored by CanAssist and Grace Wong Sneddon, Advisor to the Provost on Equity and Diversity, in which a panel of students presented their experiences related to self-advocacy. An animated discussion followed.

The Faculty Disability Caucus does not have regular meetings. It communicates periodically via a discussion listserv. People interested in joining the list can do so by contacting the Faculty Disability Caucus at fac-dis@uvic.ca, or the list moderator, Pamela Moss, at pamelam@uvic.ca. As noted above, Co-Chairs are available for consultation; one need not be a member of the discussion list to contact us.

The Faculty Disability Caucus normally has co-chairs to share the work. If you would like to serve as a Co-Chair or become involved with the Caucus in some other way, please contact either Pamela Moss (pamelam@uvic.ca) or me (Victoria Wyatt, vwyatt@uvic.ca).

