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Editor: Virginia Gillese

Pete Seeger – Rob Wiznura

While he is a personal hero and has been one for a long time, I am not going to give a rundown of his remarkable life, for that has been done on various platforms all week. I am going to address some things that we can and should learn from Pete.

Think small. Pete refers to the “teaspoon brigade.” He uses the analogy of a seesaw with a heavy weight weighing down one side and a bag on the other side with people putting in teaspoons of sand. It seems ridiculous—what can a teaspoon do?—and then, suddenly, one day the seesaw crashes over and people wonder “how did that happen so quickly?”

We are all in the teaspoon brigade with our students and with our world. Administrative types can crush large things, but they have a hard time controlling the small.

Another thing that we can learn from Pete is to take the long view. He went from facing incarceration for contempt of the House of Un-American Activities to being

feted by the President of the U.S. Things take time. As Lee Hays of the Weavers used to say, “This too shall pass.”

Finally, maybe you don’t play the banjo or guitar, but the idea behind Pete was always to democratize things. Most of the thundering silence is self-imposed. Embrace your voice. Sing out. Write out. Speak out. Maybe your voice will find itself in a letter, a poem, a song, an essay, but do find that voice. We need it.

Pete always liked to find a moral in things, so I will end with a moral from the song “Talking Union”: “Take it easy, but take it.”



BARGAINING

The bargaining survey has been released! Please make sure that you let us know what you want the bargaining committee to work towards in our proposals.

The link to the survey is:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CUPEBargaining_2014

The survey will be open until February the 12th for you to complete.

The Outsider – The VOICE of the TUTOR

Call Centre – Rob Woznura

We have filed a grievance and had the first informal meeting with AU about their shift to the call centre model in science. By the way, please do call it a call centre and avoid their ridiculous “student success centre” terminology. As Dumbledore says, we should call something what it is. The added advantage is that it really annoys advocates of the call centre model when we call it a call centre.

We will be continuing this fight, of course, for the implications are rather serious for us all in terms of our students, our own work satisfaction, and our pay. We don’t need to be shy about being concerned about our reduction in pay. We are marginalized in many ways, and being paid appropriately for our expertise and experience is NOT something we should be ashamed of. When CEOs and university presidents and government senators are asserting that they are worth it, we shouldn’t be backing down because it might look like we are only preserving our own interests. We should be paid appropriately for the work we do.

Don’t be afraid to speak out on the issue to your coordinators, your deans, your MLAs, the public at large. The institution *needs us, relies* on us for the bulk of the work done. Be proud of the work you do.

A NEW WAY TO BE PAID – Rob Woznura

AU is going to bi-weekly payments as of next January. This has some serious implications for tutors in particular, and this shift requires some awareness and preparation on everyone’s part.

First, to recap how tutors are currently paid. Part of your pay *anticipates* work done and part reflects what was done a long, long time before. For example, in your recent pay statement, you will see pay for block and pay for marking in separate columns. Given that we are paid on the 15th, half of the block pay covers the rest of the month. That is, you are paid *in advance* of that work. Thus, half of the block pay covers the first two weeks of the month and half *anticipates* the coming two weeks. The marking pay is from the previous month, with the cut-off the 20th.

The future attempts to reconcile these more accurately: at least that is the reasoning given (more accurately their new software cannot accommodate the current structure). Thus, each pay will reflect only *what has been* done. On the plus side, that means the marking will no longer

reflect the long ago and will reflect more recent work.

The catch is this: we will not be paid on the 15th of January next year. The first payment we will receive will occur, I believe, on January 21st, but that will reflect all work done up to and including January 6th. So the first payment will have a very small block pay (only from January 1 to January 7) but a significantly bigger marking pay (Nov. 21-Jan. 7). The next payment on February 4th will include block pay from January 6-21 and all marking done in that time, and so on forward.

There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages to biweekly payment: there are two “big” months of three payments every year, but distributing the whole year across 26 payments makes each payment smaller. Thus, you need to prepare and get your ducks in order. At least AU has given us sufficient warning of this change, allowing us all to prepare so that we are not scouring food banks next January.



CUPE General Membership Meeting

Saturday February 8th AND Saturday March 8th

9:30 A.M.

AU Edmonton 10011 109 Street

Teleconference Available

Furlough Days – Rob Wiznura

You are all paying for 5 days off, so *please* use them. You have until July 1st to take off 5 business days. As you have already paid for them, there will be no decrease to your pay (other than those blasted furlough deductions each month). So take a break.

Note that, come July 1, those deductions disappear. That was the deal.

RSP

I was certainly happy to see the total in my RSP that AU had to put in, but that's because I filled in the forms and applied for it. Don't let AU sit on that money: it's yours. **Fill out the forms.**

