

# APUO

ASSOCIATION DES PROFESSEUR(E)S DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA  
ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

## **Report presented during consultations held by the task force on the School of Government Studies Project, Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 (Location: DMS 12113)**

### **Introduction**

This report seeks to present the position of the Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa (APUO) with regards to the issues affecting the collective agreement and accompanying processes outlined in the Plamondon report. Although APUO's purpose is not to develop an autonomous position regarding the academic content that might be taught in the prospective School of Government (SG), we do consider it necessary and constructive to disseminate questions, comments, and concerns expressed by our members, as well as positions adopted by various collective units and departments; insofar as such concerns have been communicated to us. Similarly, APUO believes that it is both responsible and required to comment on this report and its process in relation to the differentiation policies put forward by the Government of Ontario, the strategic mandate agreements, and the financial situation of the University as indicated by the Board of Governors and recent financial statements for the academic year.

As expected, APUO will ensure that the collective agreement is thoroughly and fully respected, and will support its faculty members and associated departments, particularly professors from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), the School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS), the School of Political Studies (SPS), as well as those in the Department of Criminology.

In addition, APUO is prepared to have a meeting with the employer, should one be required. According to the Plamondon report, "It may be necessary to slightly modify the collective agreement in order to have greater flexibility of employment."(19).<sup>1</sup> APUO considers this latter statement to be an important issue with regards to the collective agreement, and therefore to APUO itself.

Finally, APUO finds two quick days of consultation to be insufficient for full and authentic participation of its members. These two days should not be confused with an authentic consultation process in which true participation occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations have been translated from French to English.

### **Fundamental Challenges for the Collective Agreement**

In recent years, the employer has engaged in several discussions with potentially large donors to build a new school or professional faculty, now referred to as the School of Government (SG). Its mandate would be particularly focused on applied research in public policy and providing professional training for students, “the leaders of tomorrow” for careers in the public service.

The University of Ottawa already has several well established departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences focused on governmental studies (the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), the School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS), the School of Political Studies (SPS), and the Department of Criminology), as well as other units with professors whose interests are directly linked with public policy both in terms of research and education.

Thus, a larger discussion and reflection on practical ways to sustain and develop this existing expertise, while increasing interdisciplinary collaboration, would certainly be a welcome initiative for a number of members of the APUO.

Nonetheless, APUO remains concerned about the lack of transparency and genuine consultation linked with the SG project. It has been almost a year since President Rock started promoting this new school in public arenas, during which time APUO requested that the university adopt a decision-making process that included open, inclusive and collaborative consultations.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, rather than create such an open and transparent consultation and decision-making process, the employer chose to ignore APUO’s request and instead acted in a top-down manner with very little transparency.<sup>3</sup>

During this process, the employer retained the services of an external management consultant in March of 2013 (Bob Plamondon from Plamondon and Associates – please see: <http://www.bobplamondon.com>) to work on this project. The first step for Plamondon was to write a report that would establish the vision for the prospective SG. This report, which was initially submitted to the President and is currently being evaluated by a task force also created by the President, was sent January 13, 2014 to Deans and to the Directors of departments that would potentially be affected - instead of being shared with the entire university community, or at least APUO members.

Almost immediately after the report’s publication, APUO received multiple questions, comments and complaints from members in those potentially affected units. They

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the letter written by the President of the APUO to President Rock, March 4th, 2013 : [http://www.apuo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/APUO-Letter-to-President-Rock\\_SofG.pdf](http://www.apuo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/APUO-Letter-to-President-Rock_SofG.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> In fact, the principle source of information for the APUO and its members until now has been *The Ottawa Citizen* (for example an interview conducted the President, publishing August 11th, 2013).

requested that APUO carefully examine the report, the project itself, and the process in order to identify the issues affecting the collective agreement. They then asked APUO to work with the employer to ensure that this currently privileged process, as well as the possible SG, be fully respectful of the collective agreement and the fundamental principles of academic freedom and collegial governance.

After a meticulous analysis, APUO concluded that both the report and consultation process raised fundamental issues and significant challenges for its members, such as:

- Recommendations that have a direct impact on the collective agreement, particularly:
  - Recognition (art. 3.1)
  - Management Rights (art. 5.3)
  - Collegiality and Consultation (art. 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.1)
  - Academic Freedom (art. 9)
  - Language Requirements (art. 11)
  - Appointments (art. 17.1)
  - Cross-appointment of Academic Staff (art. 17.4)
  - Transfer and Secondment (art. 17. 6)
  - Tenure and Promotion for Faculty Members (art. 25)
  - Compensation (art. 41)
- An obscure and unclear process that to date does not fulfill the minimum requirements for real consultation and is in opposition to collegial governance and academic freedom. For example:
  - There has been no formal open consultation process, fora or collective discussions, despite requests made by the APUO in March of 2013.
  - Of the 53 people chosen to have an individual meeting with consultant Bob Plamondon, it should be noted that:
    - Only 17, less than a third, are regular professors (including Directors of departments but excluding Deans who represent the employer);  
And of these:
      - Five professors from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (including the Director);
      - One professor from the School of International Development and Global Studies (the Director);
      - Three professors from the School of Political Studies (the Director, one professor from Political Science and one professor from Public Administration);
      - One professor from the Department of Economics (the Director);

- One professor from the Department of Geography;
  - Two professors from Common Law (including the Director of the Institute of the Environment and one member of a task force created by the President);
  - One professor from the Faculty of Education;
  - One professor from the Telfer School of Management;
  - Two professors from the Department of Biology.
- Only ten out of the 53 people interviewed were women - barely 19% of total participants – and only two of the 17 professors were female.
  - Fifteen people, almost as many as all 17 professors interviewed, were from outside of the university, including retired federal public servants, presidents of survey companies, journalists and external members of the Board of Governors.
  - Three were members of a task force created by the President for evaluating the project put forward in the report.
  - Nine participants were from central administration – the same number as professors from departments directly affected by the School of Government.
- Transferring established and well-known programs (along with students) to the School of Government without notifying professors cultivates ambiguity regarding their future – must they move with the program or do they simply stop teaching?
  - The operating budget, which is in deficit without accounting for research funding from professors and graduate students, suggests that research revenue will be used to finance the administration of the School of Government. This challenges the principle that research funds are for research as opposed to administration. Professors and students are not donors.
  - The “Crossroads” initiative, presented as a “flag-ship company of the SG”, represents an attack on academic freedom: professors and graduate students would become part of a system of feudalism because they would be forced to consider private and political sector interests, imposed by business leaders, non-profit organizations, analysts/leaders in public policy, and ex-politicians (19) in their teaching and research. Each of these groups would be represented on the Advisory Committee, which allocates research funds; in this context, academic members - but not necessarily professors (19) - would be a minority. As a result, the principle of peer review would be completely removed in the “Crossroads” initiative. It is imperative that should there be an SG, it will be independent of private and political interests, and consequently the private sector and governmental organizations should not participate in the selection of research projects.

- In the strategic mandate agreements proposed by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities of Ontario, the employer pronounced three objectives for the University of Ottawa (7):
  - *First objective:* Innovation in teaching and learning
  - *Second objective:* Ensuring the future of Ontario through the training of highly qualified individuals and ensuring the transfer of new knowledge.
  - *Third objective:* Bilingualism and the Francophonie.APUO found mention of the “School of Governance” (sic) in texts related to the second objective. However, this goal does not require the creation of a new structure nor does it require the dissolution of existing departments and faculties. Regarding the last objective, should there be an SG, several APUO members have brought to our attention that in the current proposal, it will not only be unable to fulfill this objective, the SG would take us even father off-course from achieving it.
- Further to the point above, APUO does not see how the Plamondon report and an eventual SG follow the differentiation policies put forward by the Government of Ontario.<sup>4</sup> According to the government, due to its limited budgetary resources and inability to continue investing in post-secondary education to the same degree that it has in the last decade, it will be looking to invest in well-established institutions. It has stated, “Our primary objectives are to consolidate the strength of well-established institutions, and allow those institutions to function in a complementary way that allows students’ affordable access to professional training programs and university programs that will allow them to prosper in today’s world” (6). This consolidation process by the Ontario government is achievable without the creation of a new structure or institution, i.e. without the transfer of existing programs, students and professors.
- The “consultation” was both hasty and very limited; it included a mere 15 hours in two days, in addition to the fact that consultations were held only 8 working days after the report was circulated to Deans and Directors of concerned departments. Yet the external consultant, Plamondon, was hired in March of 2013 (more than 10 months ago) and the President started the public promotion of the school on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 (nearly 2 years have passed).<sup>5</sup> Figure 1 on page 9 of this document visually represents the known steps of the process linked with the creation of the SGS thus far. This process leaves much to be desired, as it is not possible to adequately reflect on a possible SGS (or any other project) as long as people who can contribute to the project are left aside.

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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to : [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/PolicyFramework\\_PostSec.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/PolicyFramework_PostSec.pdf), last consulted : 22-01-14

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to: [http://www.president.uottawa.ca/speeches-details\\_171.html](http://www.president.uottawa.ca/speeches-details_171.html), last consulted: 21-01-2014. For a visual representation of the known process and steps linked with the prospective school of government, please see Figure 1 on page 9.

Any changes, and the creation of a new school, undoubtedly affects disciplines such as the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), the School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS), the School of Political Studies Public (SPS) (these last two are especially affected by this new project), and the department of Criminology.

- A top-down rather than a bottom-up approach (favoured by the employer to this point), requires expertise and a high level of public information for it to be credible, if not appropriate. Unfortunately, the Plamondon report illustrates an absence of this expertise and tarnishes the credibility of this project. For APUO, this process exemplifies the latest manifestation of “managerialism” at the University of Ottawa. The university increasingly resembles a corporate organization where hierarchy prevails over the inclusion of professors, while favoring a small but growing number of administrators. It is imperative that we renew collegial governance through open consultations and a substantial decision-making process; this is especially important and fitting for an academic institution. In fact, the process which brought about the Plamondon report and the rapid two-day consultation seems to ignore lessons from the last round of collective negotiations; more specifically ignoring the capacity of mobilization amongst APUO members when faced with a project or proposition that appears inappropriate or insufficient.
- APUO also cannot ignore the fact that last fall the Board of Governors tabled a budgetary deficit, and that according to some, this may signal the beginning of a multi-annual recurring deficit. As a result, it seems particularly inappropriate to create a new structure whose impact on our teaching and research activities remains uncertain in the short, medium, and long term. Finally, it is equally important to underline the Government of Ontario in its flagship documents that state that “the strategic framework of Ontario with regards to its differentiation system within post-secondary education” insists on “two broad guidelines that support the differentiation process, whether strategic enrolment or financial viability” (6). One must admit that the SGS project poses serious challenges regarding the guideline of financial viability.

*In Summary:*

In light of the important feedback from members, as well as the issues identified in the Plamondon report affecting our collective agreement, APUO has sent an open letter to President Rock in order to underline the obligations the employer has under the collective agreement. Extracting elements from this letter, especially article 5.4.2.1 which deals with collegiality and consultation, “the employer agrees to proceed with appropriate

consultations with groups of members whose working conditions could be significantly modified by its decisions, unless circumstances do not permit to do so.”

It is apparent to APUO that this should specifically include professors from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), professors from the Public Administration Program and the School of Political Studies (SPS), as well as the School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS) and the Department of Criminology. Members of these units are heavily affected by the prospective SG.

Therefore, we urge the task force responsible for this project to promptly allow such members to directly express their points of view regarding this project in an appropriate and legitimate manner. This includes avoiding the rush to apply the conclusions found in the Plamondon report, and giving the members the time to fully discuss their concerns and collective viewpoints. The consultation held on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and January 24<sup>th</sup> of 2014, does not fulfill these two elementary criteria.

***Conclusion: Moving towards a Genuine Consultation Process***

Considering the significant risks involved in this project, it is important that we collectively provide the means and ambitions required to favour collegiality and genuine consultation; two fundamental cornerstones of academic institutions. Specifically, we must give time to all interested members of our university community to reflect, discuss and deliberate the suggested project and the issues raised; this will allow for a meaningful consultation process that can aid the committee and enrich the decisions that follow. We strongly believe that these latter elements cannot be achieved in a mere 2 days of consultations, and much less when those consultations are held 8 working days after the report was available to the public; yet, the initiative was proposed two years prior.

In conclusion, APUO underlines the fact that it is not a defender of the status quo. Rather it behaves as an agent of change; this has become even more evident following the last collective negotiations. APUO is both available and willing to discuss with the employer the issues raised in the Plamondon report and how they directly affect the collective agreement; namely the fact that this project “may make it necessary to slightly modify the collective agreement in order to have greater job and hiring flexibility” (19). As previously stated, the issues of job and hiring flexibility remain fundamental and continuous for APUO.

*The APUO Executive Committee*  
Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

### Appendice 1

Figure 1: Representation and length of the known steps linked with the process of the prospective School of Government (in months)

