

news from CUASA

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On July 1, 1987 former President of CUASA, Muni Frumhartz, retired from Carleton University. On behalf of the Association, President-Elect George Neuspiel attended Muni's retirement dinner to present Muni with a small token of the Association's gratitude for his lengthy and varied service, not only to CUASA but also as President of OCUFA.

Printed below is the text of Muni's address at the dinner, which we are delighted to be able to share with all those colleagues on whose behalf he has, over the years, played a prominent role.

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST . . . AND FAILED¹

MUNI FRUMHARTZ

As they say in the heady language of survey research: friends, colleagues, and others. If none of the above, skip -- somewhere, and before it's too late.

During the past few weeks a considerable number of possibilities has been suggested or has occurred to me concerning what I might do at this stage in the proceedings. Should I say nothing or should I tell all? Should I use the occasion for a last hurrah or for a last harangue? Should I emphasize anecdotes or should I search for principles and tendencies. Should I, as someone suggested, share with you the wisdom distilled from experience that I have or must have (after all, what else have I been doing?) accumulated over the years? Or should I, as someone else appeared to suggest, throw all academic caution to the winds and put myself -- in public yet -- through a "debriefing" that would at least reveal the mysteries of the past thirty years?

I propose, one way or another, to share with you a limited number of observations and reminiscences concerning at least some of the preceding, principally in relation to Carleton. Inevitably, these will be sometimes brief, but always fragmentary and undocumented.

It isn't only time that prevents me from undertaking a larger and fuller agenda. I'm afraid it's also a matter of talent and, more especially, of the combination of the two. But there may be more to it than that. Perhaps you shared my reaction to the televised plenary sessions of the recent National Forum on Post-Secondary Education and the volume of stale, trivial and self-serious statements they generated. In other words, it may be that, at least at this stage and -- dare I say it -- at least in Ontario and in Canada as a whole, we really don't have much to say to one another concerning the exigencies and the possibilities of post-secondary education.

In any event, to return to the particular case of Carleton and to my experience within it, I've been forced at least toward the conclusion that, far from yielding a richness of experience and wisdom, the span of almost ten years elsewhere before coming to Carleton, and of over thirty years since, imposes -- to my surprise -- multiple and reinforcing blinders. One finds oneself forgetting, despite what they say about the relation between age and long memory; one finds oneself sloshing about in the wash of successive waves of nostalgia; and, if that weren't enough, one finds

¹ A somewhat edited address by Muni Frumhartz at a recent dinner marking his retirement from the University.



oneself seized by the pretensions of proprietary claims to attention. But let us persevere anyway.

I first heard about an academic place called Carleton during the spring of 1956 while on one of the periodic visits to my family in Toronto with which I had punctuated my by then nearly 11 years in the U.S. As I frequently did on such occasions, I dropped in at the "Economics Buildings" of the University of Toronto to see who among my former professors might be around.

One of them, as it turned out, was in his office and, during our conversation, he mentioned that there was an opening at a place called Carleton College in Ottawa that might be worth looking into. Since he was the person who some years earlier had offered to recommend me for a job in the Maritimes (I no longer remember where) and who, when I declined the compliment, asked: "How come you people never want to go outside the major metropolitan centres in central Canada?", my reaction was probably not quite so gracious as it might have been. However, the fact was that a low salary on a limited term appointment at Hunter College amid the expensive attractions of New York was no longer the exciting prospect that it had been for a time. At the very least, he suggested, it wouldn't hurt to get in touch with a John Porter who was a one-person department of Sociology at Carleton and, meanwhile, to go see Claude Bissell, the President-Designate, who had yet to move from the Province's to the Nation's Capital.

That is what, in fact, happened: I spoke to Claude Bissell (I think also to Paul Fox), wrote to Porter, visited Carleton, met and had brief conversations with the Dean-cum-Acting President and a few faculty, was fed by the Porter family, and, either that very day or soon thereafter, was offered and accepted a lectureship at \$4300. It was all very quick and very informal. It was also, in ways that I couldn't -- and can't -- entirely sort out, very attractive to me.

It certainly wasn't the salary, since almost any amount would have brought me to Carleton. Nor was it the buildings or the site -- a large, old, sprawling, ugly, but, I suppose interesting, principal building (the former Ottawa Ladies' College) at First and Lyon, plus a new small building (the Library) plus one (or two?) old houses. The new -- Rideau River -- campus and its first three buildings or parts of buildings (Tory, Paterson and MacOdrum) had to wait for three years. And probably it wasn't the student body either that attracted me to Carleton. I recall the faculty's worries about quality and, even more, our collective concerns that Carleton was too much the educational equivalent of a neighbourhood restaurant

or, to put it another way, our concerns that too many students simply dropped in for an hour or two at a time for their regularly scheduled classes and, therefore, could not or would not benefit from the academic ambience that we, the faculty, were providing.

Perhaps one other point deserves a comment, if only because of its more general applicability. My decision to come to Carleton was in no way an escape from the United States. In its various forms McCarthyism was still widespread, and as pernicious as ever, certainly at the colleges and universities, but it hadn't touched me directly. There was even a kind of bravado in living and working as an alien in the U.S. at that time, but I think, in retrospect, that that was immaturity more than anything else.

On the other hand, the decision was even less a return to "my native land," not if you had grown up as a Jew in Toronto during the Thirties and early Forties. In other words, I came to Carleton because it represented an at least minimum salary at an attractive place with prospects, both institutional and personal.

So why was Carleton such an attractive place, not simply at that particular moment, but for a good many years thereafter as well? Certainly, size was a factor. In 1956, as far as I can remember, there were about 600 full-time and 800 part-time students. On the other hand, to take a single example, faculty in the social sciences numbered a scant dozen (i.e., about one-third of the current Department of Sociology and Anthropology). We were, for the most part, in our early to mid-thirties, with shared experiences and similar career trajectories. Many, for example, were enjoying their first regular academic appointment. Similarly, many of us were preparing and delivering most of our courses for the first or, perhaps, the second time. There was a good deal of flexibility and openness, and relatively little structure, whether in academic or in organizational terms.

Two additional elements made their own contribution to gathering these strands together. The first was a broadly-based commitment to openness and accessibility, as expressed, on the one hand, in a special (not preferential) attention to continuing education and, on the other hand, in the part-myth and part-mission of "easy in, hard out." The second, for a time at least, was the relatively stronger commitment to institution than to discipline or department.

So much for a rewriting of history laced, inevitably, with nostalgia. I've probably exaggerated the aspect of pervasive tranquility. For example, the Board's neglect or disinclination to consult the faculty

on the selection of a new President in 1956 (Claude Bissell) had left a residue of resentment which was activated two years later, when Bissell unexpectedly returned to Toronto and had to be replaced through yet another search. As a further example, while the general principle of the Common First Year continued to be widely supported, its particulars were periodically questioned and changed, a point to which I shall return.

While these events and the larger tendencies they reflected soon began to dominate the academic scene, for the moment the tides of change were running in other directions. What was really happening from the middle of the Fifties to -- more or less -- the end of the Sixties was growth on all fronts and among all estates of the University community. Where growth was perhaps somewhat more limited was in the academic programs -- i.e., the sheer number and array. For the most part, the proliferation of centres, schools and institutes, as well as of graduate work and research units, came later.

This was, in other words, a period of confidence, and probably of success, in what we had been and were doing. At least, so it seemed. In any event, the confidence and success proved to be shallower than had generally been assumed.

One instance of things coming rapidly unstuck was the abandonment in 1969 of the Common First Year. Briefly, the Senate Commission on Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, operating within a broader mandate from Senate, came to the conclusion that the system of "distribution requirements" (principally in Arts) had not only been brought into disrepute, but had also lost its logic and legitimacy. Better, the Commission argued, scrap the whole undertaking, rather than lay one patch here and another there. Joined with this was the Commission's endorsement of "free choice" as the operating principle of course selection in First Year but, to the extent possible, at other levels as well.

The proposal was debated and adopted amid some controversy, but was not seriously threatened. If memory serves, the opposition was relatively small; certainly, it was less vocal and less well organized than one might have expected. Even more, it was an opposition of individuals, rather than of academic units. Perhaps sharper and more durable divisions would have emerged had the Commission produced the more comprehensive program of academic reform that it had promised -- i.e., the design and implementation of a set of innovative course/program guidelines and proposals, reaching well beyond First Year. Not only did the Commission remain delinquent on this count, but the continuing growth in overall enrolments masked the

swings toward the social sciences, resulting from the removal of distribution requirements, as well as from the more pervasive shifts in student preferences which were taking place at the same time. In this way we could all live with the new dispensation. Redundancy and constraint had yet to be discovered.

On a personal note there was a good deal of irony in this particular episode. The years I had spent in the U.S. and, more especially, the five years on the faculty of Grinnell College were, among other things, a discovery of the American liberal arts college. As we used to say in the idiom of a decade ago, "It blew me away." Nothing in my earlier experience as an undergraduate at Toronto or as a graduate student at Columbia had prepared me for this type of educational institution or for the recurrent and wide-ranging debates concerning the place and the varieties of liberal/general arts in the American university. Indeed, this is what I saw, or thought I saw, during my initial visit to Carleton and the years immediately thereafter, and that contributed so much to the attraction it held for me. How ironic, therefore, that I should find myself, some years later in my role as Chairman of SCUTL, leading the attack on the Common First Year.

The end of the Sixties was also the time when, following the Duff-Berthel Report, Carleton and most other universities in the country implemented their own version of reform in university governance. As it happened, what started as a substantial broadening of the structures and processes of participation for faculty was soon extended to students in response to a growing, but comparatively still moderate insistence on "student power". I shall touch on this topic later.

The third instance of a potentially sharp deviation from the process of things simply unfolding came in the mid-Seventies, under the combined impact of financial stringency, administrative fumbling, and an absence of opposition, when CUASA, which had already been in existence for some years as a faculty association, was certified by the Ontario Labour Relations Board to bargain collectively on behalf of full-time faculty at Carleton. Collective bargaining was soon extended to other groups as well, so that the whole campus became unionized. Again, a certain amount of anger and bad feelings, and a couple of short strikes (not by the faculty), but little that was seriously disruptive and lasting. To put it in one version of our uncommon language, unionization proved to be integrative and adaptive.

I want now to say something about the Department. It is, and has been for much of its existence, a difficult department to manage or even to comprehend. Two disciplines and multiple degree programs for each, as well as some range of the

multiple paradigms and orientations associated with each of the disciplines, provide ample ground for expecting problems and strains. The Department's size and, at times, its rapid rate of growth in both student and faculty numbers have only contributed to a situation of fragmentation. For some years it was widely held that the period of particularly heavy faculty recruitment had so disrupted the normal processes of socialization that it would take some time for the damage to be repaired. Possibly so. I recall a conversation about a dozen years ago with Archie Malloch, at the time the Chairman of CAUT's AF&T Committee: "What's the matter with sociologists and anthropologists anyway? Virtually every department in this country, except yours in fact, is in trouble and turmoil. Is this the discipline or the people?"

I couldn't and can't answer that. One thing that is clear is that it has been to our advantage and credit that hiring has been a wide-ranging and eclectic activity. Quite another matter is the almost perverse disinclination to attend to the processes of collective decision-making and to the mechanisms and practices that might perhaps override an individualism of convenience.

As a footnote, I might add that, here and in Malloch's question, I am not urging a department that feeds on the quiet life. On the contrary, I think it possible that we have missed the boat on this score. We have tended to defer and to dampen the controversies that have from time to time arisen. That is also, of course, true of the University as a whole.

Finally, there are some issues I would like to raise, but far more briefly than they require. I shall say nothing about the economy and the state in relation to post-secondary education, except to note that, by about 1970, the earlier human capital approach had run its course, with the recognition that the sheer amount of education did not, in fact, yield the rates of return that had been expected and promised. Some educational programs and arrangements were, in fact, financially more productive than others, hence the later emergence of an emphasis on highly qualified manpower, research complexes and industrial parks, and centres of excellence.

More recently the state has been making its own contribution to an increasingly economic definition of higher education -- for example, through its use of matching grants and other devices designed to bring research and training into line, as well as through a heavy-handed rationalization intended to drive down their cost. Moreover, the state, at both the provincial and federal levels, has been relentlessly engaged in an increasingly interventionist role in relation to the universities.

For their part, the universities, who should know better and who might be expected to remember their earlier experiences in harness to the senior partners, have been academically tripping through temptation, hoping that the price will turn out to be right.

Dwight Eisenhower, not a great President of either the United States or of Columbia University, probably had some reason, when he left the White House, to warn against getting too involved with the military-industrial complex. At this point in his career, he wasn't, as I recall, particularly preoccupied with post-secondary education, but he surely must have been concerned about the steering effects and the appetite for resources which the complex continued to generate at the universities as well as in other sectors.

With this as broad context, and as applicable to individual institutions as it is to educational systems, I would argue that the forms and means of accessibility are very much related to the structures and processes of governance. However, even if Martin Trow is not altogether correct in identifying access as the master-concept in analyses of post-secondary education, access acts with and on other variables, such as program, pedagogical style and, certainly, governance, to shape both institutions and systems. Specifically, both -- at least in the postwar period -- need to be seen from the standpoint of whether and how they have contributed to the democratization of the university and perhaps even of the society as well.

In a recent interview with This Week at Carleton President Beckel described the University in the following terms:

Carleton has a unique mission and a distinctive character which has evolved from our historical roots and founding principles. . . . From the beginning Carleton was committed to the principle of accessibility . . . and we have not lost sight of this important founding principle.

The responsiveness in Carleton's early to middle years to the various types of part-time students would seem, in some measure, to support that. In addition, as I noted previously, my own encounter with "easy in, hard out" during my very first years at Carleton left the impression that something legitimate, even if a touch self-congratulatory, was clearly intended. An alternative view that has surfaced from time to time locates our open-admissions policy in the self-interest that is produced by inadequate public and private funding. I find that far too harsh. Closer to the mark is a variety of other limitations that attach to, and perhaps distort, Carleton's policy on accessibility.

First, as Burton Clark has taught us, an open

door can easily become a revolving door. To prevent that, we must provide a certain energy in recruitment and a certain strength in support (not purely financial) that operate before and beyond the first year. At Carleton in recent years, on the contrary, our policy governing accessibility has been favourable, but largely passive.

Second, even worse, "easy in, hard out" can be transformed into "easy in, easy out" -- a result of too many students, too few books, too much marking, too little counselling, etc., through the whole litany of current complaint.

Third, to extend the analogy a little further, we forget too easily that the blocks to accessibility are situated also at the multiple interior doors the student encounters -- courses, programs, degrees, and so on -- and something has to be done about them.

Finally, a policy on accessibility requires participation and consent by Senate, not on details, but not only on philosophical grounds either. On that score, our record is not exactly exemplary. In respect to accessibility, as well as other matters that a university must deal with in its corporate capacity, the assignment of educational philosophy to Senate and of virtually everything else to the senior administration (the division of labour apparently advocated by the President elsewhere in his This Week interview) inevitably places effective decision-making over a wide range of policy and practice in the hands of the latter. The history and uses of Section Registry will serve as one example.

The last point raises the related issue of governance. As I recall, the publication of the Duff-Burdhal Report in 1966 took something over two years to translate and adapt into the "New University Government." Perhaps the principal changes introduced in this way were to be found in Senate, which became, in fact but not strictly by formal arrangement, an elected body with a majority of full-time faculty. Students were brought in, at their own insistence, by inclusion with faculty members for election at the successive levels of university governance (e.g. from Faculty to Senate). Provision was also made for Senate and the Board to exchange some of their members and regulations were adopted for the selection of administrative officers from chairs up, the President and the Chancellor to be chosen by a joint arrangement with the Board.

Within a few years Senate struck what came to be its two principal committees -- the Senate Academic Planning Committee and the Senate Budget Review Committee -- as well as a considerable array of lesser ones. As a result, not only had Senate become

more broadly representative but, for a time at least, more powerful.

To pick up another strand, by this time (the mid-Seventies), CUASA had been certified and had incorporated some of Senate's principal documents into its own contracts (e.g., one on tenure and dismissal). In this way, the unease and conflict that might have produced a three-way conflict (CUASA, Senate, and Executive) or one based upon a probably shifting coalition between two of the actors arrayed against the third was resolved through accommodation and withdrawal from the fray.

What happened, I think, and this has to be sorted out and filled in more clearly than I am doing, was this: Since Senate had already supplied some of the major ingredients of a suitable contractual settlement, CUASA and the Executive (or Management or Administration) found they could settle things at the bargaining table on the basis of a limited agenda (largely terms and conditions of employment), which had never preoccupied Senate anyway. That is, Senate had made its contribution sometime in the past and could be allowed or encouraged to go its own way or, at least, to rest. The Senate Executive (not the Executive of previous mention) undertook, as it were, to make the hit on behalf of the senior administrators and recommended to Senate that it abolish the Senate Budget Review Committee and, instead, that it devote an annual meeting of Senate to budget review, accompanied by perfunctory statements by budget managers and a deluge of numbers and pages. Senate agreed. The Senate Academic Planning Committee, on the other hand, has held on to its increasingly unclear mandate, only to find itself inundated in largely routine matters. So much for a system of shared authority.

As an aside, the contents and tone of the preceding were not intended to convert. It's too late for that. What I wanted to do was to sketch a process and a state of affairs that might be captured by the following: If Duff-Burdhal and NUG hadn't already happened, they wouldn't, at least not now.

One chapter that belongs to this account is the rejuvenation of the deans. From a time when they were first among equals, they appear to have acquired surprising resources of authority and power. There is little reason to see this as some form of plot or coup. It runs deeper than that. In other words, what the faculty and the organs they control have lost, they have given away. Much the same can be said, although for different reasons, about students.

The problem, if it is that, is structural rather than personal. The competition among faculty and the

dependence upon deans for scarce resources -- grants, space, time, special arrangements, etc. -- is a competition nonetheless. Fuelled by career pressures and the broader processes of privatization, it distracts attention and commitment in relation to other things. It also permits and even requires others to take care of what we used to consider our collective business. One is reminded of Pogo: "We have met the enemy and they is us."

As they say, the end. One point that I have deliberately omitted till now is this: In my public life, if that isn't too pretentious, I've certainly experienced frustration and disappointment from time to time, sometimes more often than I would have liked. I've certainly lost more votes and decisions than I've won, if that is the appropriate measure.

But I've also been particularly fortunate in I won't say contributing to, but in participating in, the variety of collectivities in the broad sphere of governance with which I have been associated. I am, therefore, grateful for the opportunities that some of you here and some others elsewhere have provided. And I am grateful also for having been able to join with these opportunities my principal academic and intellectual interests in politics and higher education.

Finally, I want to thank those of my colleagues and, perhaps even more, those members of the support staff who arranged this event, those of you who have spoken so warmly and, of course, the rest of you who have come to join with me.