

news from CUASA

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BENEFIT NOTICE

In accordance with Article 40.3 of the collective agreement, one-half of the cost of increased premiums for the Blue Cross Extended Health Care Plan (EHC) will be passed on to employees by altering the amount paid by employees toward OHIP premiums as follows:

effective as of the August 30, 1988 paycheque, employee contributions will be increased from 50% to 58.59% which means that you will pay an additional \$2.56 per month (single rate) or \$5.11 per month (family rate).

This increase in employee contributions is the result of two factors. First, the company paid out more money than it took in in premiums in the past fifteen months. Second, we have agreed to a change in the type of drugs covered by the plan and have moved from what Blue Cross calls "Formulary One" drugs to "Formulary Three" drugs so that "Life sustaining non Rx over the counter" drugs will be covered.



Your August paycheque will reflect this change.



PUBLICATION COSTS AND UNIVERSITY POLICY

The following article is taken from the results of a survey on how publication costs are handled at Canadian universities by Thomy Nilsson and Ann-Marie McInnis of the Psychology Department, University of Prince Edward Island.

A number of scholarly journals have publication fees that they expect to be honoured by the researcher's institution. Publishers do not expect institutions to comply simply on the basis of altruism. Since publications represent the single greatest factor in the reputation of an institution, it seems appropriate for the institution to contribute to the publishing process. For some institutions, publications also prove profitable in terms of products, patents, and industrial patronage. Some may question the appropriateness of institutional publication fees for most university research, which has no immediate commercial value. Yet the need for a distinction becomes less clear if a parallel is drawn between a commercial institution's mandate to be profitable and a university's mandate to disseminate knowledge.

Some journals state they will consider waiving the publication fee when it cannot be honoured by the institution, but the American Institute of Physics, for example, also states that this will delay publication. Considering the enormous personal effort that has gone into most projects by the time a report is written, researchers are understandably loath to jeopardize or delay publication.

In 1986-87, to prepare recommendations for a policy on these matters, the Faculty Association of the University of Prince Edward Island conducted a survey of other universities to learn their policies on honouring publication fees. A questionnaire was sent to faculty associations at 46 universities across Canada. Twenty-seven universities responded. Of these, only 11% had an actual policy on publication fees. Nevertheless, slightly more than half (52%) indicated that publication fees were assisted to some degree. Many (42%) replied that researchers were expected to use their grant funds for such costs. The following summarizes other findings from the questionnaire:

- Only 11% of the respondents felt that their university's present practice on honouring publication fees had a positive effect on its reputation, and 15% felt it had a negative effect. Forty-eight percent reported that their university's practice or lack of practice on this matter had no effect on academic reputation.

- There was a direct relationship between a university's practice on honouring publication fees and how that practice was perceived to affect academic reputation. Those universities which perceived a positive effect on academic reputation also had more assistance provided than those which perceived a negative effect.

- Among those universities which did not provide any assistance for publication fees, 54% did not answer the question of how this affected their reputation. Thirty-eight percent felt it had no effect on academic reputation, and 7% (1 university) reported a negative effect.

- Five universities honoured all publication fees. Two universities assisted about 50% of their fees; and 1 estimated 10%. At another university the portion assisted varied from 0% to 100% depending on the department. Respondents at 5 universities which provide assistance did not reply or acknowledged that they did not know how much of their total publication fees were assisted. The remaining 13 universities provided no assistance at all.

- The amount of assistance per publication varied considerably. As noted above, 5 universities honoured all publication fees, but 3 of these limited the amount per publication to an average of \$400. Four assisting universities did not answer this question. At 1 university the amount varied depending on the department. At the remaining 4 assisting universities the average amount was "20% or \$200" per publication.

- There was no specific limit to the amount of assistance available to each faculty member per year at 4 universities. At those universities which specified a limit, the average "2 1/2 publications or \$250" per faculty member per year. Five of the 14 assisting universities did not answer this question. However, comments indicated that the total amount or to the number of eligible publications.

- Where assistance was provided, full-time faculty were always eligible. Half of these universities also provided assistance to part-time and temporary faculty; 36% to academic staff; 21% to technical staff; and 29% to post-doctoral fellows and graduate students. Undergraduate students, who presumably would have no access to grant funds except through a faculty member, were eligible for assistance at only 2 universities.

- Where assistance was provided, it was always available at 29% of these universities. A first-come-first-served basis operated at 36%. Need was determine factor at 29%. Only 1 university considered the rank or reputation of the researcher. Three universities (21%) were unable to specify how the assistance was provided.

- Of those universities where publication fees were assisted, 36% did not stipulate what types of costs were covered. Twenty-nine percent stipulated that the journal must be refereed, and another 29% indicated that page fees but not reprints would be assisted. One (6%) indicated that no assistance was given for any special fees such as figures, photos, or alterations.

- At those universities which provided assistance, the decisions were most often made by a faculty dean (19%) or a university committee (12%) and 38% of these responders did not know how the decisions were made.

- There was no assistance available for graphics work at 23% of the universities. At 33% of the universities graphics technicians were available, but their time and materials had to be paid for by the faculty member.

Universities turn out two tangible products for society: students with degrees, and scholarly publications. While there is substantial administrative commitment to ensure that degrees are duly imparted, provision to ensure publication of scholarly work was totally lacking at nearly half of the responding Canadian universities. Even at those universities which did assist publishing costs, the assistance was frequently haphazard. At 28% of these universities it was not known how much money was available; at 36% it was not known who decided these matters and what types of publication costs were assisted; and at 38% the assistance was first come, first served. Altogether, only one university in ten appears to have any formal policy regarding costs. Why are publications so neglected?

At those universities which provided no assistance for the costs of publishing, 38% reported that this had no effect on their academic reputation. Only one of these universities acknowledge a negative effect. However, more than half of the universities without publication assistance did not answer the question on how this affected their reputation.

A tendency to overlook a problem here is aided by another factor. The individual researcher's professional attitude towards his or her work hardly permits avoiding publication even if it presents a financial strain. We suspect that more than one researcher has met the costs of publishing out of their own pocket when grant funds were exhausted. Since the research usually gets published one way or another when universities don't honour publication fees, this helps hide the problem.

The questionnaire indicates that universities stand to benefit by providing more assistance with publication costs. More assistance was clearly related to a positive influence on their reputation. Indeed, full assistance and a readiness to facilitate in every way the publication of knowledge would appear to be only consistent with the university mandate.

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