

# CUASA COMMUNIQUÉ

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## **It's Not Broken – So What Are They "Fixing"?**

Perhaps encouraged by the ongoing implementation of Banner®, the administration is planning to scrap our past practice of scheduling at the level of departments and units and to replace it with scheduling by an off-the-shelf software package to be run centrally.

In late December, one of our members made us aware that the administration was going to replace the past practice of scheduling by departments and units at Carleton with InfoSilem®, a centralized timetabling system. At our first meeting of CUASA Steering in early January, we discussed the matter and took our concerns to the first meeting of the Joint Committee to Administer the Agreement (JCAA). And this is **what we were told**:

Carleton University had already purchased InfoSilem® and was proceeding to implement it in Fall, 2006. A trial was expected to run in parallel with the usual scheduling for Fall, 2005. The reasons offered were the need to maximize use of the physical plant and to provide students with their timetable earlier. No consultation had been solicited from academic staff prior to purchase. Consultation was being sought only on specifics of implementation by Assistant Provost Brian Mortimer, who was visiting departments and other units. The system was touted as benign, one that works well in other universities, and that provides room for choice of teaching times and leaves slots open for research.

I, together with CUASA President-Elect Edward Osei Kwadwo Prempeh and Past President Thomas Kunz, have been checking with colleagues at other universities about InfoSilem®. Many of you have e-mailed me or talked with your Council representatives. The issue was raised from the floor at the last Council meeting in late January.

## **What have we learned?**

Contrary to what we were told by the administration, some universities have already abandoned their proposed implementation of centralized timetabling altogether; others have negotiated very strict guidelines about its implementation in their Collective Agreements in accord with many of the concerns that I'm hearing from our members. In other words, **you are right to be concerned** about the imposition of a centralized timetable for all the reasons you've been telling us at CUASA.

## **What concerns CUASA members?**

Centralized scheduling is an unwarranted disruption of past practice. Centralized scheduling is to be imposed unilaterally with no honest consultation or discussion of the costs versus the benefits, only damage control disguised as consultation after the fact. Centralized scheduling limits the ability of academic staff to direct our own research, teaching and administrative lives as competent and committed professionals. Centralized scheduling ignores the needs of those with parental and eldercare responsibilities. Centralized scheduling is counterproductive and regressive, yet more evidence that we are being reduced to cogs in the increasingly corporate university machine.

## **What comes next?**

CUASA will:

- ✓ listen to members' concerns about how this would affect you
- ✓ continue research on how this has played at other institutions and report regularly via our Newsletter
- ✓ raise the matter regularly at the Joint Committee to Administer the Agreement as well as at our own Steering and Council meetings
- ✓ bring speakers to campus from other institutions to discuss with us the ways in which centralized timetabling is affecting their working conditions
- ✓ take forward grievances if the system is imposed in an arbitrary way that infringes on the rights of academic staff to pursue their teaching, research and administrative responsibilities
- ✓ examine the contract language at other universities that have adopted centralized timetabling to ensure that if we are forced to bring this to the bargaining table in 2006 we have strong guarantees that allow us to do our work
- ✓ share information with Chairs and Directors such that they can initiate motions that limit the implementation of InfoSilem® in ways inappropriate to their unit and to opt out where they see fit. [This has already taken place in FASS]
- ✓ keep checking on e-bay to see if there is a market for used copies of InfoSilem® and report our findings to the administration. It's the least we can do! ☺ And maybe they'll give us a deal if we throw in Banner®!

If you want to know more about the Senior Administration's plans with regard to the Centralized Timetable Project, check:

[http://www.carleton.ca/ses/central\\_timetable\\_project.html](http://www.carleton.ca/ses/central_timetable_project.html).

For more information about CUASA's position, or to provide feedback to us, please contact your CUASA Council Rep. Also feel free to e-mail me with your thoughts and concerns at [fcherry@sympatico.ca](mailto:fcherry@sympatico.ca)

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