

March 19, 2015

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What's Behind New Labour Militancy at BC Universities?

"Faculty are unionizing in an attempt to improve their own wages and working conditions, but also to offset the increasing influence of the market in higher education. This is evident in increased pressure on faculty to conduct research in partnership with big business, increased focus on job training over critical thinking, and more teaching conducted by low-paid, sessional staff rather than full-time tenured faculty."

"We seem to have adopted the general view that the university is not so much an academic place - quiet and isolated from the great pressures of society - as it is a kind of business," Bill Bruneau, former head of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, recently told the CBC."

[The Tyee, March 19, 2015](#): "What's Behind New Labour Militancy at BC Universities?" By Tom Sandborn

"The bulk of faculty associations across the country are now unionized. As a former president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, Bruneau believes the trend is a reaction to the so-called 'corporatization' of universities. UNBC Faculty and staff at the University of Northern B.C. are on strike. The outstanding issue is a wage gap. (B.C. Government) B.C.'s latest budget saw a reduction in total operating grants for post-secondary institutions from \$1.846 billion to \$1.832 billion. The drop is part of a three-year government plan to reduce funding for colleges and universities by \$50 million. Despite the cuts, the government argues that it has sunk billions into the province's aging post secondary capital infrastructure. Bruneau says reduced funding has forced university administrations to concentrate on attracting money from business and donors by keeping rankings high, publishing groundbreaking research and running a tight financial ship. And in a parallel to private industry, it has also meant an increased reliance on casual labour.

[CBC News, March 15, 2015](#): "University strikes and why unions are storming the ivory towers," by Jason Proctor

[Prince George Citizen, March 19, 2015](#): UNBC strike over - for now

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U of T TA Strike, Undergraduate Walkout and a Tentative Agreement

"The University of Toronto and CUPE 3902 have reached a new tentative agreement."

[CBC News, March 18, 2015](#): "CUPE, University of Toronto reach new tentative deal Students walk out, demand partial tuition refund,"

"Tomorrow, Friday, March 20 from 3-6pm at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, CUPE 3902 Unit 1 members will vote to determine whether to send the tentative agreement reached between the Unit 1 bargaining team and the University to a ratification vote of the entire bargaining unit. Voting will be conducted by secret ballot.

The University encourages all teaching assistants, lab assistants and demonstrators, and course instructors to attend the meeting, learn more about the deal, and cast their vote on whether this tentative agreement goes forward to the full Unit 1 membership for ratification. This strike will not end quickly without a ratified agreement. We would appreciate your assistance in encouraging all CUPE Unit 1 members to learn more about the offer, attend the meeting, and let their voices be heard. "

From: Angela Hildyard, Vice-President, Human Resources & Equity; Cheryl Regehr, Vice-President & Provost

"The students' union at the University of Toronto has planned a noon-hour walkout on Wednesday in support of striking teaching and graduate assistants and to demand a tuition refund for cancelled labs and tutorials."

[thestar.com, March 17, 2015](#): "U of T students plan walkout in support of striking teaching assistants. Students' union plan lunchtime rally to demand tuition refund in light of cancelled labs and tutorials, and even classes, because of strike.

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Open Letter from Faculty, Emeriti and Librarians of the University of Toronto

"The financial stresses on the University are not new to this strike. Chronic provincial underfunding means that Ontario universities are teaching more students per full-time faculty member with less money per student than are universities in any other Canadian province.

These are truly challenging problems facing the future of higher education. The administration, faculty, and students should be coming together to address them.

For these reasons, we call on the University administration to commit to the bargaining table and provide a fairer funding package and better conditions for work and study."

[Open Letter from Faculty, Emeriti and Librarians of the University of Toronto](#)

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Guts: Canadian Feminist Magazine

"When we selected the topic of "women's work" for our second issue, we did so knowing that the division of labour among men and women persists as a central feature of gender inequality in Canada and abroad. At home and in the workplace, women's work remains chiefly undervalued. Not only do we continue to bear the brunt of childcare and domestic work (a recent Parliamentary [report](#) showed that "while women and men work the same number of hours for pay each day, women spend almost two hours more per day on unpaid work"), we still earn, on average, 30 percent less than our male peers. The disparity is even more glaring for women of colour, who earn [55.6 cents for every dollar](#) earned by white men. An independent and openly accessible publication, GUTS operates as a volunteer-run magazine.

With contract, temporary, and part-time work as the new normal in the labour market, production of the magazine has largely taken place during the hours once reserved for domestic chores, leisure, and social activism. Now that our lives are increasingly compartmentalized into waged and unwaged work, we are realizing first-hand that the opportunities for organized resistance are severely limited."

And so, this is the work - the work of unmasking "equality" within an exploitive waged economy that upholds toxic social relations which oppress and undervalue women's work - that *GUTS* aspires to engage in.

In Solidarity,
GUTS

[Guts: Canadian Feminist Magazine, Issue 2, "Editorial Note: Women's Work"](#)

[Guts: Canadian Feminist Magazine, Issue 2,](#)

Guts: Canadian Feminist Magazine [website](#)

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The Negative Effects of Income Splitting: PBO

"The Harper government's income-splitting plan will benefit just 15 per cent of Canadian households, and will encourage some workers" particularly women to leave or stay out of the labour force, according to a new report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer."

"In the analysis released today, the PBO said middle and high income households will benefit most from Family Tax Cut gains. The report says the FTC benefits a "relatively narrow" segment of the population."

[Global News, March 15, 2015](#): "Income splitting to drain workers from labour force, particularly women: PBO"

"Prime Minister Stephen Harper sarcastically wished his political opponents "good luck" if the New Democrats and Liberals campaign on a promise to scrap the Conservatives' income-splitting measure."

[thestar.com, March 18, 2015](#): "'Good luck' trying to reverse income-splitting, Stephen Harper tells opposition," by Les Whittington

[Parliamentary Budget Office, March 17, 2015](#): The Family Tax Cut (18 pages, PDF)

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Fall of the Forestry Industry

"Resolute Forest Products is shutting down the newsprint mill in Iroquois Falls, Ontario, a move that will result in the loss of 182 jobs , continuing to erode livelihoods in a town of just 4600. The forestry company essentially built Iroquois Falls a century ago and was its largest employer. Like many other single-resource towns in the north, Iroquois Falls is losing its population to larger southern cities. The Agenda looks at the deep structural problems facing our northern economy, and how other small towns in Ontario face the same circumstances."

[The Agenda with Steve Paikin, March 11, 2015](#): Small Town Shut Down, Video Length: 38:56

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The Log-on Degree

"In 1976 there were only half as many college bureaucrats as academic staff; now the ratio is almost one to one. No wonder average annual fees at private universities have soared to \$31,000 in 2014, a rise of around 200% since the early 1970s (see chart). Each new graduate in America is now about \$40,000 in debt. People who take costly arts degrees may end up poorer than if they had never been to college."

"Digital technology can make college cheaper without making it worse, says Michael Crow, the president of Arizona State University (ASU) in Phoenix and co-author of "Designing the New American University". This idea is not new. For a few years now, massive open online courses ("MOOCs") have enabled universities to beam lectures to wide audiences for a tiny marginal cost. The problem has always been that taking a MOOC is not the same as attending college in person. MOOCs are cheap, but students cannot bump into each other in the library and swap ideas, chit-chat or body fluids."

"Even Harvard, long a digital resister, has softened a bit. From this year, its master's course in public health can be done full-time, part-time or in intense bursts. For much of it, students do not need to be present on campus, so long as they gain the required course-credits. That touches on another idea that could change the way other courses are taught, paid for and accredited: the SPOC (Small Private Online Course)."

[The Economist, March 14, 2015](#): "The Log-on Degree,"

[PayScale, March 5, 2015](#): College ROI Report: Best Value Colleges

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How Robots & Algorithms Are Taking Over

"Since replacing human labor with machine labor is not simply the collateral damage of automation but, rather, the point of it, whenever the workforce is subject to automation, technological unemployment, whether short- or long-lived, must follow. The MIT economists Eric Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, who are champions of automation, state this unambiguously when they write:

Even the most beneficial developments have unpleasant consequences that must be managed. Technological progress is going to leave behind some people, perhaps even a lot of people, as it races ahead.

Flip this statement around, and what Brynjolfsson and McAfee are also saying is that while technological progress is going to force many people to submit to tightly monitored control of their movements, with their productivity clearly measured, that progress is also going to benefit perhaps just a few as it races ahead. And that, it appears, is what is happening." (*The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies*, 2014)

"As Paul Krugman wrote a couple of years ago in *The New York Times*:

Smart machines may make higher GDP possible, but they will also reduce the demand for people including smart people. So we could be looking at a society that grows ever richer, but in which all the gains in wealth accrue to whoever owns the robots."

"As *The Economist* reported in early 2014: Recent research suggests that substituting capital for labor through automation is increasingly attractive; as a result owners of capital have captured ever more of the world's income since the 1980s, while the share going to labor has fallen."

[New York Review of Books](#), April 2015: "How Robots & Algorithms Are Taking Over," by Sue Halpern

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Human Resources Is Not There to Protect You, They're There to Protect the Company

"We're not saying you should completely distrust HR, but HR should never be your first step if you have a problem. You can't always expect discretion unless it's specifically guaranteed, and your complaint will likely work its way back to the person at the root of it. Instead, try to resolve your differences and issues independently, before asking someone else to get involved. It may be harder, and sometimes not worth it, but learning how to be assertive and handle office issues yourself will serve you well for every subsequent problem that crops up or job you ever have."

[Lifehacker](#), March 2015: "The Company You Work For Is Not Your Friend," Alan Henry

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Hardest Working City is a Nightmare for Some

"The impact that crazy work hours and crazier commutes has on the New York City workforce, unsurprisingly, affects lower-wage workers and mothers the most. As Stringer's press release points out, "While employees in higher paid sectors can afford to live closer to the City's core in areas well-served by mass transit, lower-wage workers increasingly live in neighborhoods outside the city's job core forcing them to spend more time commuting and less time with family."

"If New York City is going to symbolize the American Dream, we can't be a nightmare when it comes to long work hours and commuting. Our residents deserve better. We need to give New Yorkers a 21st century transit system and better utilize women's skills so that they don't have to choose between work and family."

[Gawker](#), March 2015: "Study: New Yorkers Work Hardest, Have Longest Commute, Live in Hell," by Dayna Evans

"Stringer calls the data in his report a "one-two punch for lower wage workers, who get paid less and travel longer to get to work." And for all workers, Stringer adds, the data suggest that, "employees in the Big Apple get paid less than it appears on an hourly basis, because their commutes are significantly greater than anyone else in the country. New Yorkers are dedicated, ambitious and tough, but to compete in the 21st century we need to expand our transit networks and advance policies like flexible work arrangements and predictable scheduling."

[Fortune](#), March 18, 2015: "Only in New York: the 49-hour work week," by Daniel Roberts.

[NYC Economic Brief](#), March 2015: "The Hardest Working Cities," Office of the New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer

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American's Perceptions of Social Mobility: Research Roundup

"In his 2015 book *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, Harvard's Robert Putnam points to a growing youth "class gap," whereby the life chances and outcomes for children seem to be increasingly correlated with their parents' education levels. Over the past 30 years, the advantages of upper middle-class children have increased significantly, as their degree of access to resources and enriching experiences has increased. At the same time, lower-income children's corresponding access has plateaued or been reduced, as their family units and surrounding communities provide less support."

[Harvard Kennedy School, Shorenstein Centre, Journalist's Resource, March 9, 2015](#): "How ideology distorts Americans' perceptions of social mobility"

Equality of Opportunity Project [website](#)

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Embracing the Future of Manufacturing, Technology, and Work

"Globalization, developments in technology, and new business models are transforming the way products and services are conceived, designed, made, and distributed in the U.S. and around the world. These forces present challenges -- lower wages and fewer jobs for a growing fraction of middle-class workers, as well as opportunities for 'makers' and aspiring entrepreneurs to create entirely new types of businesses and jobs. *Making Value for America* examines these challenges and opportunities and offers recommendations for collaborative actions between government, industry, and education institutions to help ensure that the U.S. thrives amid global economic changes and remains a leading environment for innovation."

Report resources:

- [Full report \(146 pages, PDF\)](#)
- [Report Summary \(21 pages, PDF\)](#)
- [Infographic: Making Value for America](#)

[The National Academic Press, March 2015](#): "Making Value for America: Embracing the Future of Manufacturing, Technology, and Work (2015)," by Nicholas M. Donofrio and Kate S. Whitefoot

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Why Workers Won't Unite

"Globalization and technology have gutted the labor movement, and part-time work is sabotaging solidarity. Is there a new way to challenge the politics of inequality?"

"So far, though, the fraught future of labor in the U.S. has notably failed to generate public protest on a significant scale. Nothing in American politics compares with the civil-rights crusade, the movement against the Vietnam War, or the labor wars of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Could that change? Might the future possibly hold a resurgence of the indignation about class disparities—and about the labor and economic circumstances they reflect that was once focused on the workplace?"

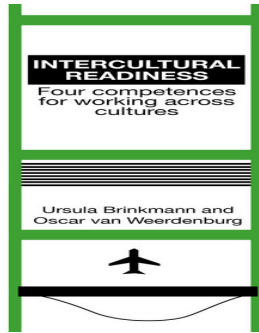
"Today, the labor movement's decline is widely considered an irreversible reality, the inevitable outcome of globalization and automation, and the norm for a postindustrial economy, hardly worthy of comment. When discussions turn to the glaring and still growing imbalance of power between working-class and elite interests in our political system, Republicans celebrate the free market and certainly don't invoke a return of unions. But neither do most Democrats. Why this is so, why it's a problem, and what if anything might be done to revive the politics of work, these issues are the subject of two very different books: the historian Steve Fraser's *The Age of Acquiescence* and *Only One Thing Can Save Us*, by Thomas Geoghegan, a longtime labor attorney."

"We live in an "age of acquiescence" unhappily facing similar problems, but no longer believing that we have any power to create or even imagine an alternative to the ascendancy of elites in an era of global competition."

[The Atlantic, April 2015](#): "Why Workers Won't Unite," by Kim Phillips-Fein

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Book of the Week



Intercultural Readiness: Four Competences for Working Across Cultures, by Ursula Brinkmann and Oscar van Weerdenburg. New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 220 p. ISBN 9781137346971 (hardcover)

<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/9992617>

e-book: <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/9423493>

It can be a challenge for global organizations to ensure that their increasingly multicultural workforce is working and communicating effectively across different cultures. Drawing on research from over 30,000 individuals from all over the world, *Intercultural Readiness* presents a model for assessing the four key competencies that

employees must develop in order to work effectively across different cultures; Intercultural Sensitivity, Intercultural Communication, Building Commitment and Managing Uncertainty. One of the first scientifically sound intercultural assessment tools, the Intercultural Readiness Check (IRC) helps organizations discover how well they work across cultures and in what areas their teams needed better training or support.

Combining their practical experience as intercultural management consultants with a decade of research into how to improve team-working and communication, the authors present practical strategies for how to develop these competencies and provide useful insights into the broader landscape of intercultural management. This book documents the many arenas in which academic freedom is in jeopardy and explores its legitimate limits."

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