



October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009

### The Tenure Question. . . Again.

An editorial in the Oct. 26, 2009 issue of the Telegraph Journal continues a campaign of misinformation against the university professors of this province that began when they opposed and ultimately defeated the "polytechnic" idea. In this instance, the editorial proposes that the cost of developing new academic programs "be defrayed by moving away from the costly and outdated notion of tenure". Instead, New Brunswick universities should offer "high-profile, short-term academic appointments such as research chairs, visiting fellowships and other contract positions."

Tenure is the guarantee that full-time professors can teach and research without fear of reprisal in areas and ideas that might be unpopular with the various forms of institutional power that define capitalist democracies.

Tenured teachers and librarians are in a position to benefit society by advancing views that might incidentally annoy politicians, dismay university administrators and even outrage media pundits. In a province where a single cluster of enterprises dominates the economy and the print media to an extent unparalleled in the known world, is it not in the public interest that at least one group have the ability to stand up to the powerful without job retaliation?

And suppose New Brunswick did abolish tenure. Suppose professors could be dismissed as easily as, say, newspaper reporters. In the competitive world of academic recruitment, what "high-profile" professors would seek appointments in the only public universities in Canada where teachers did not have the possibility of job security? New Brunswick universities would attract only those who could not secure jobs elsewhere and soon our graduates would have degrees that lacked credibility.

How unfortunate it is that many in positions of public responsibility refuse to acknowledge the real problem with our universities: the effect that 20 years of systematic under-funding of core operations has had on the quality and accessibility of higher education. Sometimes they even seem unaware of what universities actually do.

Sincerely,

Linda Lequin  
President  
Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations (FNBFa)

[linda.lequin@umoncton.ca](mailto:linda.lequin@umoncton.ca)

[fnbfa@nb.aibn.com](mailto:fnbfa@nb.aibn.com)

(506) 458-8977

