In the fall of 2012 New Brunswick universities were forced to disclose salary information of top administrators for the first time. The new information raises several important questions regarding the differences between compensation increases for administrators versus other employee groups at the universities. While provinces such as Ontario and Nova Scotia require universities to disclose salary information for top earners, the data in New Brunswick has emerged through a Right to Information request.

New Brunswick's publicly funded universities and municipalities became subject to the new Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act in September 2012. The Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations (FNBFA) was quick to file a Right to Information request in September, and by December all four universities had released some version of the requested information.

"We're glad the university administrations have finally responded to the Right to Information requests we filed at the beginning of September," states Dr. Rick Hudson, President of the FNBFA. "But unfortunately, it looks like they still have trouble answering simple questions." Hudson is referring to the fact that the Right to Information request referred to information regarding all forms of compensation, which would include things such as salary, car allowance, housing allowance, bonuses and performance pay, interest-free loans, etc. However, some universities have only made available total compensation figures, without elaborating on the breakdown between salary and other forms of compensation.

In the case of Mount Allison University, exact figures for the President's total compensation were not released. Instead they included $24,999 ranges for each year, and one can ascertain from the data that these ranges rose by $25,000 each year between 2007/2008 and 2011/2012. Thus, the President's overall compensation has risen from the range of $205,000-$229,999 in 2007-2008, to the range of $305,000-$329,999 in 2011-2012.

The first complication with interpreting the data arises from the fact that one does not know how much of the President's compensation falls within these ranges. In addition, these figures represent overall compensation, which would include compensation not directly related to salary, such as housing allowance or extended medical benefits. When asked for more precise information on these numbers, Mount Allison has thus far declined to comment.

It is worthwhile to examine pay increases for other employee groups within this context. For example, both CIPE Local 2338 and 3433, representing non-academic staff, settled for 2% per year in the last round of negotiations with the University. Some employees in Local 3433 - those in their first five years on the job - would also receive step increases in pay, to boost the 2% to roughly 4.5%, but the rest would receive 2% only. For example, a member of Local 3433 in one of the middle pay grades could have seen a rise in salary on July 1st, 2012 from $27,005 to $28,478.

Current President of CIPE Local 3433, Sarah Kardash, comments, "It's frustrating to see large compensation increases for the President of Mount Allison when the amount we receive may or may not even cover inflation over the length of our latest agreement." Kardash also notes, "Salary levels in general are a major concern for our membership."

Faculty have historically fared better at Mount Allison, with the last round of bargaining yielding roughly 2.5% increase. However, this would be added to incremental increases in the previous year and members receive, unless they are already at the top of the scale under their designation.

Faculty members in the 2012-2013 academic year have salaries ranging from a low of $58,000 to well over $100,000, with the bottom 20% of faculty making less than half of the median. Assistant Professor, to a high of $140,473 for those at the top of the full Professor scale. The latter would be those who have worked their way up the steps for 25 years or more.

Hudson, also an executive member of the Mount Allison Faculty Association (MAFA), comments on the newly released data: "Every year, the universities say, 'Gee, we have no money to hire more professors or raise their salaries to be more competitive within Canada.' But then they give huge increases to the top."

Within a broader context, rising compensation for top university administrators conforms to larger trends in the Canadian private sector. Executive pay has escalated at a rate far beyond that of average workers in recent years. For example, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives claims that in 2010 compensation for the 100 highest-earning CEOs on the TSX increased by roughly 27%. This is in contrast to incomes for most other Canadians, which according to Statistics Canada have remained relatively stagnant, when adjusted for... (continued on page 2)