

A Clash of Academic Cultures

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Because of the nature of academia, each year there is an exchange of academics across the northern border of the United States. Some Canadians gain employment at American universities while a number of Americans accept positions at Canadian institutions. In the past, the exchange to the south has been much greater than that to the north. Canadian policy dictated that foreigners only be considered if there were no sufficiently qualified Canadian candidates. Imagine my surprise when in the spring of 2002, I received two on-campus interviews, and both were at Canadian universities. That in itself is not the surprise, but after all, I am an American citizen who is a trained historian. In addition, I teach the untrendy subject of U.S. military history.

Although the job market in the U.S. has been tough for historians, it has loosened up a bit in Canada because of the large number of recent retirees. As a fairly recent graduate with little experience on the academic interview circuit, I headed to Canada twice in the spring of 2002 for interviews. I thought that my first interview had gone well. While I had done my best to sell myself as the best candidate for the position, the department did little to sell itself to me. I did not even receive a tour of the campus, which I thought was a bit odd. I was given a map and told that I could walk around myself, but since the weather was miserable, I declined to do much beyond investigating the library.

During my second interview, the department did a better job selling itself. The members made a big point of emphasizing the importance of collegiality. Although some of the questions seemed a bit odd, I thought that the interview had gone fairly well. I did learn, however, that three Canadian historians had already been rejected for the position and that the other two prospective American interviewees had withdrawn their names from consideration. That did not mean, however, that I would automatically be offered the position, but apparently the university was not opposed to the hiring of Americans who were more qualified than the Canadian candidates. In fact, several months later, I learned that the French department had hired an American scholar. While I could not really put my finger on it, there were some things about the interview that left me with a feeling of uncertainty.

As the next few weeks passed, I became increasingly worried about my pros-

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pects for the upcoming school year. After graduating with my Ph.D. in December of 1998, I had spent the next year and a half teaching in two adjunct positions. In March 2000, I had unexpectedly received the offer of a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in military and strategic studies from International Security Studies at Yale University. By late spring 2002, I knew that my post-doc would soon be ending, and I had had no on-campus interviews at universities in the U.S. I had, however, had the two in Canada. My future was by no means secure. I continued to send out my *curriculum vitae* for one-year positions, while I waited to hear from Canada. Finally, I received a phone call and an offer for a tenure-track position at the University of Guelph. My second interview had paid off. I was given a few days in which to ponder my decision.

I considered my options, which consisted of only one firm offer and the possibility of having made the short list at two military institutions in the United States. Because neither was a tenure-track job, I decided to accept the position at the University of Guelph. That is when the fun began. It certainly did not help that the uneasiness that I had experienced earlier resurfaced once I had accepted the position. Several weeks later, I received my contract. When I read it, I was puzzled by the following paragraph:

Under Article 14 of the Special Plan Agreement between the University and the University of Guelph Faculty Association, you will be required to pay membership dues to the Association. However, you may decline membership in the Association, to have your dues redirected to a beneficial use that is set by the Administration and the UGFA on an annual basis (e.g., Library acquisitions budget, scholarship or bursary funds.) (Please refer to the Special Plan, Article 14 for complete text.)

When I read this paragraph, I was confused. Membership in the Faculty Association had not been mentioned during my interview. I was suspicious because the contract said that I would be required to pay dues, but I knew nothing about the organization. In fact, during my interview, the chair of the history department had volunteered the information that the faculty was not unionized. I immediately sent an e-mail to the dean, in which I requested clarification. I received a response a short time later from the chair of the history department. He confirmed that the faculty was not unionized. He said that the Faculty Association negotiated salaries and contracts with the administration and that the dues were approximately \$33 a month. The chair's response did not lessen my confusion. It appeared that the Faculty Association functioned as a union. Despite my concerns about the misleading information that I had been provided, I decided to sign the contract and to decline membership in the Faculty Association until I learned more about the organization.

Once I had officially accepted the position at the University of Guelph, I began to make arrangements for my move to Canada. The University of Guelph is located in the town of Guelph, which is about an hour southwest of Toronto.

The university had about 16,000 students when I was there. The university's strength is in the sciences, particularly in the vet school. The campus is fairly spread out. The history department had approximately fifteen full-time and part-time faculty members. The department participated in a Tri-University graduate (i.e., masters and Ph.D.) program with Wilfred Laurier University and the University of Waterloo.

Once I arrived in Canada, I slowly began to learn more about the policies of the University of Guelph. I found many of them strange. In fact, certain procedural and, in some cases, ethical, questions involving tenure, promotion, examination, and grading practices quickly came to trouble me. For instance, a great deal of power lay in the hands of students, who enjoyed a surprising degree of academic latitude from the administration. I was required to submit a copy of my syllabus several weeks before the beginning of the fall semester. I had been given some guidelines, but none of them addressed attendance policies. Because I was used to having an attendance policy, I included one on my syllabi. When I submitted my syllabi, I did not receive any feedback; therefore, I assumed that everything was fine. A short time later, I had to attend new faculty orientation. During the orientation, I learned that according to established university policy, I could not have an attendance policy and that I could not penalize students for failing to attend class. Several students pointed that out to me when I handed out the syllabi, which had already been printed when I learned about the attendance policy.

The new faculty orientation was enlightening in a number of ways. We had a session with a number of undergraduates, who noted that their involvement in extracurricular activities occasionally prevented them from attending class. They stated that they were grateful when their professors provided them with the notes that they had missed. I had always thought that it was the student's responsibility to obtain the missed material from another classmate. Since some of the students obviously expected their professors to provide them with the material when they missed class, I had to identify my policy on the matter. I encouraged my students to make a friend in the class if they did not already have one. I noted that neither I nor my teaching assistant would provide the missed material and that it was the student's responsibility to find another way to obtain it.

Addressing student responsibility in obtaining missed notes was easy, but handling some of the other university policies was not. During the course of the three-day orientation, one of the presenters indicated that each department kept an examination file. The presenter identified two reasons for the creation of an exam file. The first was to prevent the professors from recycling examination questions. I had no problem with that particular reason. I did, however, have a problem with the second reason, which was to provide a file that students could view upon request, particularly if they were making up the final examination or some other test. I realize that some professors do not

have a problem with returning examination papers, but some of us do. I generally have a separate answer sheet, which I return to the students. I do not, however, return the examination paper. I got into that habit when I was teaching several sections of the same course in the same semester. It made it easier to ask similar questions on the exams that covered the same material.

I was not sure that I liked the idea of students having access to copies of my exams, but we were inundated with so much information during those three days of orientation that I forgot to ask my chair about the policy. I was reminded about it several weeks later when I was attending a workshop about the online grading program and the submission of grades that was conducted by a woman from the dean's office. During the workshop, she told us about a number of policies, including the one concerning the exam file. That policy came up in the course of her explanation of the university's incomplete policy. According to established policy, an instructor has to submit an incomplete form for every student who fails to take the final exam. It does not matter if the student has been attending class or has missed other assignments or exams. For example, during my first semester, I had a student who only attended class twice. The first time was when I gave the first exam; the second time was when I was conducting a discussion of a book about which they had written a review. Although this student did not attend another class or take the second exam, I had to submit an incomplete form because he missed the final. According to the dean's representative, if the student supplied the appropriate documentation and the incomplete was approved, he could make up the final exam the next semester. Before taking the exam, he could go to the department and ask to see copies of other exams, especially finals, given in this particular course. When I heard this, I remembered my previous objection to the exam file. I must note, however, that when I had the occasion to ask the chair of my department about the exam file, he denied knowing anything about it. The reason for my inquiry shall become apparent later.

As I noted earlier, the workshop conducted by the dean's representative focused on the submission of grades. Before noting that policy, however, I should identify the grading scale at the University of Guelph. According to the established scale, all students who receive a grade above 50 pass. The scale includes plusses and minuses. The scale is as follows: 90-100 (A+), 85-89 (A), 80-84 (A-), 77-79 (B+), 74-76 (B), 70-73 (B-), and so on. Below 50 is failing. Student reports include number, not letter, grades. According to the handbook that I received at the beginning of the year, instructors are encouraged not to submit grades ending in 9, even when the grades are below 40, because students can, and frequently do, request a reassessment of the grade. Consequently, I made a conscious effort to round up or down to avoid having to post a grade ending in a 9.

Once I had determined the grades, I did not just submit them to the registrar's office. According to policy, I posted the grades to a program called

Winmarks. I then forwarded the grades to the woman in the dean's office who had conducted the workshop. After she received the grades, I would go to her office and complete the appropriate incomplete forms and then sign the grade forms. At that point, I had nothing else to do with the grades. She sent the grade forms to the chair of my department, who signed and returned them to the dean's office. Then the woman in the dean's office sent the grades to the registrar's office. According to this woman, however, the chair of my department had the authority to change my grades without consulting or informing me. I had a real problem with this, but there was nothing that I could do about it. Since the woman in the dean's office had been doing this for fifteen years, I did not question her version of the policy, nor did I question the chair of my department about it. The standard response when I had questioned some of the policies stated above was "that is how things are done at the University of Guelph." I had no evidence that the chair of the department had changed the grades that I submitted at the end of my first semester at the university. I do not know about the second semester. What bothered me the most about the policy was that the chair had the authority to change the grades. Never before had I worked at an institution where my grades could be altered without my input. In fact, I had always submitted my grades directly to the registrar's office.

I was particularly concerned about the issue of grades with regard to a course that I had to teach, and I use the term "teach" loosely, during the second semester. In September, the chair of my department informed me of my teaching schedule for the winter semester. (The winter semester at the University of Guelph was the same as the spring semester at many American universities.) I would be teaching the War & Society night course again, and I would have a World War II course, which was a distance education course. That was the first that I had heard that I would be teaching a distance education course. It soon became quite obvious that my definition of distance education was different from that of the university. Most of my students were actually on campus, not in remote areas that made it difficult for them to come to campus for lectures. A professor, who had recently retired, had designed the course, and as I learned later, the only changes that I could make were with the essay and research paper topics.

As I read over the course material, I began to have concerns with the organization. There were two assignments and a final exam. Each assignment had two options. For the first assignment, the student had to decide between participating in an online discussion group for the entire semester or completing two book reviews. Excerpts from the textbook and a reading packet provided the basis for the discussions. There would be five discussion sessions. Most covered a two-week period, and generally there was a different topic for discussion in each of the two weeks. For the second assignment, the student chose between a research paper or two short essays based on the readings for the course. The first thing that struck me was that if a student chose the book

reviews and the research paper, he could avoid reading any of the materials until he prepared for the final exam. In fact, if the student was not concerned about earning an A on the final, then he could do a minimum of preparation, which meant that he did not have to complete much of the assigned readings. In addition, I did not think that completing two book reviews constituted the same amount of work as participating in the online discussions. Much more reading, time, and thought went into participation in the discussions than in completing the book reviews. I could not, however, make any changes in the assignment or require students who chose the book review option to select the mini essays for the second assignment option.

Where I really had problems with this course, however, was with the grading. According to the course outline (syllabus), students who signed up for online discussions had to post a minimum of three to six times a week. I received a number of complaints from students about their discussion grades, but I based my grades on the number, as well as topic, of the postings. If a student chose to post six times in the second week, but did not post during the first week, then he/she received a zero for the first week, which was averaged with the grade for the second week. In addition, if there were two topics of discussion, one for each week of the session, I deducted points if the student failed to discuss the assigned topic for a given week. As far as I was concerned, part of the grade was based on whether or not the student followed directions. Several students did not agree.

I also encountered difficulty with students' reactions to my grading of their essays. To say that I was less than pleased with the first set of mini essays would be an understatement. I did not think that they were well written, and few students answered the question completely. Perhaps it is because I taught English grammar to middle school students for six years, but I do not consider a paper to be well written if it is not grammatically correct. Sentence fragments and run-on sentences plagued most of the papers. In addition, the students frequently used words incorrectly and displayed problems with regard to subject/verb and noun/pronoun agreement. In addition to the grammatical problems, many students failed to provide evidence in their papers to support their arguments. A number of students complained after I returned their essays. Only one of them, however, came directly to me. After sending me a disrespectful e-mail, this particular student came to discuss his grade. According to the student, his high school English teacher thought the paper deserved an A; I had assigned it a D. The student accused me of grading his paper too quickly. I pointed out that the number of comments that I had written on his seven-page paper demonstrated otherwise. He had placed a number next to each comment (i.e. awkward, run-on, explain, etc.), circled word, or question that I had written. He had noted at least seventy marks on his paper. Not all of my comments referred to grammatical problems. The student had failed to state the purpose of the paper or his thesis. In addition, he neglected to provide

sufficient evidence to support his discussion. Because he discussed several different topics within a single paragraph, many of which ran on for a page or more, it was difficult to determine the point that he was trying to make. In the end, he recognized that there were major problems with his paper.

Not all of the disgruntled students came directly to me. In fact, of the eighty students who enrolled in the course, only five or six ever came to my office. Several students, however, took their complaints to the chair of my department, instead of me. The chair and I discussed how I determined grades for the discussion postings and the first set of essays that I had graded. I noted the problems with the papers and called his attention to the message that I had posted online, in which I had identified what the students needed to consider when writing an essay. I did suggest that perhaps because this was a distance education course, the students thought that they would not be held to the same standards as in a regular course and they could earn a high grade with a minimum amount of work. My chair did acknowledge that possibility. Although he allowed me to defend my grading practices and to express my concerns about the course, as far as I know the chair did not send the students to discuss their grievances with me. If he suggested that they meet with me, none did.

On at least one occasion, a student sent a three-page e-mail to the dean, who forwarded it to the chair. I was called in to explain myself. Some of the student's complaints related to the structure of the course, which were beyond my control. For instance, some of the assigned readings listed in the course outline did not coincide with those listed in the course manual, neither of which I designed. Once that point was raised, I noted that I had become aware of the discrepancies and advised the students to do the best that they could. The student who had e-mailed the dean did not think that my response was appropriate. Other complaints reflected concerns that I had already pointed out in my previous meeting with the chair. The student also questioned the number of low grades on the first set of essays. I identified the problems that I had pointed out to the students earlier. When the meeting with the chair ended, I was unsure what the outcome of the student complaint would be. I did not hear another word about it. The student never came to see me, and I do not know how it was resolved.

During my first semester at the University of Guelph, I had to handle issues that had nothing to do with the way that I conducted my courses. Many of them were administrative. During my interview, I was told that I would have a light schedule during my first year. I would teach two courses a semester and would have no committee work. Because of my light load, I should be able to adjust quickly and devote much of my time to completing my manuscript for publication. Although I only had two courses, I began the first semester with 170 students. Luckily, I had a TA for each course. As I sifted through departmental memos at the beginning of the semester, I found a list of committees and who served on each. I was surprised to see that I was on the curriculum

committee and the awards committee, but I did not say anything. I was new, and I did not want to create problems from the beginning. Several weeks later, however, events prompted me to speak to the chair. Before doing so, I consulted my advisor from graduate school who suggested the best approach to take. Near the end of September, the chair of the department sent out an e-mail requesting volunteers to serve on an appointments (search) committee. Since I was already on two committees, I decided not to volunteer. About a week later, I received another e-mail from the chair. This one began, "Congratulations. You have won the departmental honour of being on the appointments committee for Canadian history." Following my advisor's suggestions, I went to see the chair of my department. Based on my understanding that my load was supposed to be light during my first year to allow me to make progress on a publication, I had not volunteered to serve on the appointments committee. I noted that I was already on two other committees. When he checked the list, the chair admitted that I was, but that neither committee did very much. He did, however, agree to take me off of the search committee.

I must admit that the chair was correct when he said that the other committees to which I had been assigned do little work. In fact, the curriculum committee only met once. What amazed me about the meeting was that two undergraduate representatives also attended the meeting. I never did learn how these students had been chosen. The primary topic of discussion during the meeting centered around proposed changes in the curriculum. As a new member of the department who knew little about the curriculum, I was not called upon to express an opinion. I was amazed, however, at the amount of influence of the two student representatives. The chair of the committee solicited their opinions on every issue. I sat there wondering about their qualifications for representing the vast number of students who attend the University of Guelph. The answer remains a mystery. At the next department meeting, the chair of the committee indicated the students' input with regard to the issues discussed.

I also received assignment to the awards committee. It turned out that I was the only member of the department assigned to that particular committee. I received no information about the committee and did not learn until April that it was a college-wide committee. During the school year, I received a couple of phone calls requesting information. Since I did not have any, I passed those calls to the department office. Near the end of the winter semester, I received short notice about a committee meeting. Because I was going to be at a conference out of town, I was unable to attend. I was, however, put through the hoops to gather information about a particular award and prospective candidates from the history department. Once I identified the award, I approached the chair, who nonchalantly told me that the history department would not be nominating anyone. I was a bit unsettled by the fact that he could have told me that from the beginning, but chose not to provide me with that information.

While having to serve on a couple of committees was not a major hardship, there was one issue that caused me great concern. During the new faculty orientation, one of the sessions focused on the creation of a Tenure and Promotion file. The presenters suggested that each new faculty member begin to create such a file and identified some of the materials that should be included in it, such as copies of course outlines (syllabi), copies of exams and other materials distributed to the class, calendars that indicated meetings with students, and so on. Following the advice offered at the orientation, I created a file folder, which I labeled "Tenure & Promotion." As noted earlier, a couple of months into the semester, I attended a workshop about the submission of grades, in which the presenter brought up the issue of the exam file. After the workshop, I became more aware of certain things in my department that I had not noticed earlier.

It was department policy to have exams printed at the copy center if a class included more than twenty-five students. Since my class sizes ranged from seventy to a hundred, I gave my exams to the secretary to send to the copy center. I did not really pay attention to the fact that the boxes had been opened before I received them. At one point, the secretary suggested that I make extra copies of my masters just in case something happened to my originals. I did not question her; I just made extra copies. After attending the workshop, I sent off another exam to be copied. When I received the box of exams, I noticed that it had already been opened and the master was not in the box. I decided to question the secretary. First, I asked about part of the order, because it was incorrect. Then I casually mentioned that the master was not in the box with the exams. She responded that she knew because she had taken it. I asked why, and she said that she had taken it for my file. I asked about the file. She said that it was for tenure and promotion and in case a student came for a makeup exam and I was not there. I immediately said that I did not want students to have access to anything in my file. If I had scheduled a makeup exam, I would be there. Besides, students making up exams did not take the same test that the rest of the class had taken originally. I asked for a guarantee that no student would have access to material in my file. She said that she would have to speak to the other secretary and the chair of the department. I agreed and returned to my office.

The more I thought about the situation, the more disturbed I became. I especially did not like the fact that my exams were in an open file cabinet. Anyone coming into the office could go into the file cabinet. Reaching a decision, I returned to the department office and informed the secretary that I wanted the exams from my file. When she started to object, I told her that I would speak to the chair about it. Consequently, she gave me the exams. I should note at this point that the only items in the file were exams.

A short time later, I went to see the chair of the department. I told him that I was disturbed by an incident that involved the secretary taking copies of my

exams without telling me that she was doing so. I explained the reasons that she had given me and then presented my position. He had no problem with what she had done. He denied knowledge of an exam file and said that it was department policy to create the tenure and promotion file for me. I replied that I had been told at orientation to create my own file and that no one had told me about the department's policy. His response was that I knew now, so what was the problem? Because I was uncomfortable about how this situation was handled, I said so and indicated that I was uncomfortable with the fact that I had no control over the file. He could not explain why my course outlines were not in the file. I asked if the policy for the secretary to create my tenure and promotion file was a written one. He admitted that it was not and said that perhaps he should send me and the other new faculty member an e-mail about the policy. The chair could tell that I was still frustrated when I left his office, but he could not understand why. He did not understand why I had a problem with how the entire situation had been handled.

A few days later, I received an e-mail that the chair sent to the entire department. In the e-mail, he indicated that it was "standard practice in the History (and the Philosophy) Dept for the front office to create a file for the teaching of each faculty member." He noted what the secretaries put into the file and then said, "Faculty members may also add material to the file at any time. This practice has been called into question and at least one faculty member in the Dept would prefer to take responsibility for creating, maintaining and submitting his/her own file." He then noted the procedure to follow if one wished to handle his/her own file. On the one hand, I was glad to see that I would have control over my own file if I wanted. On the other hand, I was bothered by two things. First, we had never directly discussed my preference in this matter. Second, it would not take the rest of the department long to deduce who had challenged the standard practice. I certainly did not want to be perceived as a trouble maker.

Things settled down after the flap over the tenure and promotion file. During the academic year, the department conducted a number of searches. The current chair was stepping down, and the search committee had to find a replacement. Initially, the committee considered two candidates, both of whom were members of the department. One of the candidates had been nominated by another department member; the other candidate nominated himself. Each candidate gave a presentation to the department. Although I did not feel that I knew either candidate well enough to support one over the other and would not be allowed to vote because I was not on the search committee, I attended both presentations. Following the presentations, I had reservations about both candidates. Twice I was approached by a colleague who wanted to know which of the candidates I supported. I declined to support either candidate, but I came away from the encounters with the distinct impression that the department did not want the dean to consider an outside candidate. As long as the

department presented a united front behind one candidate, the dean probably would not insist that the committee consider an external candidate. In fact, that is exactly what happened. Although I did not express my opinion, because of my experiences to that point, especially with regard to the tenure and promotion file, I did not think that it would be a bad idea for the committee to consider another person who was not connected with the department.

In addition to the chair search, the department conducted three other searches to fill positions in Asian, Latin American, and Canadian history. Three to four candidates were considered for each position. One of the people who made the short list for the Asian position was a man who was filling a one-year position in the department. He ultimately received the job. While the Asian search, which was conducted in the fall, went smoothly, the other two raised some ethical concerns in my mind. Both searches occurred in the winter semester; the search for a Latin American historian happened first.

When the department met to obtain recommendations for the short list for the Latin American position, the appointments committee recommended four candidates. The department approved the list, and the committee scheduled the on-campus interviews. Following the interviews, the department met again to hear the committee's recommendations. First, the committee recommended that the list be reduced to three. I found the committee's second recommendation unusual, and I wondered if it was ethical. The committee supported two of the three candidates and proposed that one be offered the position that had been publicly advertised. The committee suggested that the chair approach the dean about the creation of a bridge position between history and environmental studies. If the dean approved the second position, it would be offered to the other favored candidate who had conducted environmental research, as well as studies on Latin American historical topics. I wondered how the department could offer a tenure-track job when it had not been advertised. I was surprised to hear that the dean approved the position, both candidates had been offered a job, and both had accepted.

The search for the Canadian history position was even stranger. The appointments committee again recommended that four candidates be interviewed. Two of the candidates already worked at the university. Candidate One, who had come from Calgary, had accepted a one-year Canadian position and was teaching for the history department at the time. During the previous year, Candidate Two had applied for the one-year Canadian history position, but had lost it to Candidate One. He had found a position at the university in another department. As the meeting progressed and the four potential candidates were discussed, I realized that the committee had arranged Candidate One's on-campus interview before the department had even voted on the short list. Although I wondered what would happen if the department did not approve the recommended short list, it did not happen. The prior arrangement of Candidate One's interview was not the only strange thing about this search.

Because Candidate One was teaching Canadian history, he had to give a lecture in a different class on a non-Canadian topic. The other three candidates lectured on a Canadian history topic in Candidate One's class.

After the department meeting, I had the definite impression that Candidate One was the favored candidate for the position. By the time the interviews had occurred and the department met again, however, something had changed. The committee came prepared to offer its recommendations for the hire. First, the committee again suggested that one of the candidates be taken off of the list. The department accepted the recommendation. Then the chair of the committee said that the committee had ranked Candidate One in third place and had ranked the final two candidates as tied for first place. Because the department had to present one name to the dean, the committee chair requested that each of us rank the three candidates.

Before the vote, however, the committee members presented reasons for their recommendations about the three people. When considering the candidates' teaching abilities, they admitted that the students had ranked Candidate One first. Despite that, they ranked him third because they deemed his current research project as too narrow. When another member of the department pointed out that Candidate One had a published book, which had received a Canadian book award, they responded that it did not matter. They were not interested in past accomplishments, only in current and future projects. Perhaps I have the wrong idea about a candidate's qualifications, but I thought that all factors should be considered. The committee members also admitted that Candidate Two had difficulty relating to the graduate students in his meeting with them. The chair of the department suggested that Candidate Two was shy and that he would eventually develop a good relationship with the graduate students. I found the whole discussion odd, but things became even stranger before the end of the meeting.

During the course of the discussion of the top three people being considered for the position, something about Candidate Three struck me. The department was hiring a person to teach Canadian history. The person had to have a record of research of Canadian topics. Although she majored in Canadian history in graduate school, with the exception of her published dissertation, which was a biography of a Canadian doctor, all of Candidate Three's research had revolved around medicine and technology in North America. Several of my colleagues questioned whether or not Candidate Three could be considered a Canadian historian. When the discussion ended, the department proceeded to rank the candidates – (1) Candidate Two, (2) Candidate Three, and (3) Candidate One.

Once the department had ranked the candidates, the committee made an additional suggestion. The members had determined a way in which the department might be able to request that the dean hire the top two candidates, despite the fact that only one position had been advertised. The chair of the

department, who was a Canadian historian, would be going on sabbatical during the 2003-2004 academic year. He would be retiring the following year. According to the committee's proposal, the dean would offer Candidate Three a one-year position, which would then become a tenure-track position when the chair of the department retired. I was amazed. One of my colleagues raised an interesting point. If the dean approved the two positions, but one of the candidates declined, would Candidate One automatically be offered the job? This sparked another debate, the proposal that Candidate One be offered a position should one of the other candidates decline, and a vote. Thirteen members of the department were at the meeting. The chair of the department only voted in the event of a tie, but he had indicated that he opposed offering the job to Candidate One if one of the other candidates declined the job offer. I chose not to vote, but then my vote would not have counted. I would have supported offering Candidate One the job, because it seemed to me that the members of the committee were going out of their way to prevent Candidate One from being offered one of the positions. The vote was 6-5 against. Had I voted, it would have been a tie. I am convinced that the chair would have voted against the motion. The dean approved the committee's proposal. She offered the first position to Candidate Two, who accepted, and the second position to Candidate Three, who declined. Candidate One did not receive an offer.

I realize that every department has its own way of conducting a job search. I did not, however, think that departments generally advertised three positions and then hired for four positions. It would have been five positions if the second Canadian historian had accepted the position. I have not served on a search committee, but I was under the impression that the normal process for hiring was different from what I had witnessed. I thought that the process proceeded as follows. The dean approved the position. The department ran an advertisement, and the search committee reviewed the applications and recommended a short list. After the short list was approved, the department arranged the interviews. The candidates came to campus. Then the search committee made its recommendations to the department, which voted, and the chair gave the results of the vote to the dean. Although the history department at the University of Guelph followed this procedure for the initial three positions, it did not for the others. I was bothered by the entire process.

Every new job requires some adjustments, and I experienced my share of them. Although my colleagues' rather cold welcome was a concern to me, the bigger issues revolved around the aforementioned policies of the university. I very quickly realized that the students at the university had a fair amount of power and were not afraid to exercise it. That was demonstrated by their willingness to bypass me when they had grievances. The liberal grading scale fostered an atmosphere that suggested the students could earn high grades without much effort. The policies that concerned me the most were the existence of

an exam file, the way that my tenure and promotion file had been created, and the grade submission process.

All of these issues raised ethical concerns. The way that two of the job searches were conducted in the history department did not eliminate those concerns. Consequently, I made the decision to return to the United States.

I do not regret my year at the University of Guelph. It was an important learning experience. It taught me to ask different questions when I went for subsequent job interviews. The experience made me reevaluate my approach to education and decide what was important and what was not. As I look back on it, I am not sure, though, of the extent to which my experience at Guelph reflects what goes on more generally at Canadian universities, or, indeed, whether the academic indifference there is greater or less than is the case at American schools.

Robert Pack, the poetry coordinator for this journal, has informed us of the availability of his new book of verse, *Elk in Winter* (Chicago) and of his *Belief and Uncertainty in the Poetry of Robert Frost* (New England).