



Office of the Chair and Graduate Chair

## DPES 2012-9 Farewell

From: William A. Gough, Chair and Graduate Chair, DPES

Date: June 30, 2012

Dear DPES Community

It has been an honour to serve as Chair and Graduate Chair of the Department for the past two years. The opportunity to do so was unexpected but nonetheless richly rewarding. For those of you who celebrate Christmas, it is like finding another present under the tree, tucked away at the back, unanticipated, and in some respects more special because it was unanticipated.

The role of the Chair is a special one and I have grown personally as a result. In many respects the Chair acts as a facilitator, nurturing new ideas and revitalizing existing ones and putting to rest some that had outlived their appropriateness. Recently I was cleaning out some detritus from my car and I tossed the detritus into our City-of-Toronto-issued garbage bin. As I did so, the garbage bin hissed. It has been a challenging week with a number of vexing issues to resolve. I thought what a week, even the garbage bin! Later when small children had been safely stowed away, I investigated. I turned the bin onto its side and opened the lid. Out scampered two young raccoons, trying unsuccessfully to look nonchalant. One of them disappeared into the neighbour's yard, quickly out of sight. The other however made the near fatal mistake of ducking under a fence onto to our patio. There in waiting was our rescued-from-Attawapiskat Husky who had been dreaming of such an opportunity for several years. I leaped into action, although jaws were firmly gripped on the kit's neck by the time I made it on the scene. I pulled her off. The kit was in shock but after half an hour recovered and departed.

So, why the story? To me the raccoon kits symbolize the ideas that a Chair can facilitate. Sometimes all that is needed is to lift the lid and let the idea emerge and flourish. For other ideas, resistance can be swift and aggressive. The Chair's role in this instance is protect and nurture the idea until it is fully formed. This can require intensive intervention as well as sustained effort.

I am confident that the new Chairs, Bernie Kraatz and Roberta Fulthorpe, will fill their roles as departmental chair and graduate chair, respectively, in exemplary fashion. Of

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course, they will have a different style from me and resolve issues in a manner consistent with their strengths and skills. I am also confident they will build on the successes we have had together over the past two years and in addition will take the department in new exciting directions. I have pledged my fullest supporting in helping them in their new roles. I do look forward to spending more time on my vice-decanal duties and especially spending more time mentoring my graduate students. I am keenly interested in the success of each departmental member and look forward to continuing to participate in this success in appropriate ways.