

Active Voice

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NEWSLETTER OF THE YORK UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION

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Acting affirmatively

past ■ present ■ future

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Acting affirmatively—past, present, future

This issue of *Active Voice* was prompted by recent troubles around long-standing equity issues YUFA faces.

In 1999: a bitter dispute among the membership about what affirmative action proposals should be ratified before bargaining commenced, and the resulting new contract language, which finally instated affirmative action for visible / racial minorities, Native people, and persons with disabilities. In 2000: findings about York's chilly climate from both health & safety focus groups and interviews with new faculty. In 2001: an "Open Space" forum at which moving beyond whiteness was identified as one of YUFA's top three priorities, a new report on delays and barriers in career progress, and the founding of YUFA's Race and Queer caucuses by the Equity Committee. And now, in 2002: several contested hirings.

When the first meeting of the Race caucus was announced, YUFA received an anonymous email suggesting that YUFA's progress toward

economic goals would be hindered by calling attention to internal divisions..

We beg to differ. These divisions must be taken up for YUFA, as a collective, to advance. Thus, this issue of *Active Voice* names and addresses some of the many questions of how to act affirmatively.

It opens with three analyses stressing the need for affirmative action by Jody Nyasha Warner, a group of YUFA members in the South Asia Studies programme (Himani Bannerji, Shubhra Gururani, Ananya Mukherjee Reed and Ian Smith), and Richard Chait and Cathy Trower, who are faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Because our Collective Agreement speaks to issues of race and racism primarily through affirmative action clauses, we follow with a summary of the history of affirmative action in the CA by Katherine Bischooping. Brett Cemer then provides a collection of statistics on affirmative action and candidate pools. YUFA's progress, or lack thereof, is analyzed by YUFA members from

across the university - Arun Mukherjee, Paula Wilson, Harry Smaller, Peter McKinnon and Jody Nyasha Warner. Walter Whiteley then outlines proposals for collective action.

Finally, this issue takes up questions of how to act affirmatively beyond the hiring process. Teferi Adem proposes a rethinking of academic freedom; Ratiba Hadj-Moussa, Barbara Rahder and Hira Singh address the backlash against non-Western ways of knowing; Darla Rhyne summarizes chilly climate issues in her 2000 study; and Monica Mulvihill outlines the YUFA Equity Committee's initiative around bias in teaching evaluations.

We hope these pieces will inspire you to act affirmatively.

—**Katherine Bischooping** (Information Officer) & **Jody Nyasha Warner** (Equity Committee Co-ordinator and Guest Editor)

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All the senior management at York is white, able-bodied, middle-class.

Funding formulas favour male-dominated departments, e.g. Computer Science has an average salary of \$95 068, while female-dominated Nursing has an average salary of \$71 406.

For faculty with disabilities, the level of accommodation York provides does not allow full participation in the academy. When we have not enough sign language interpreters available, is it any surprise we have fewer than three deaf faculty members despite the presence of a Deaf Education programme?

In the last two years alone at least four departments across York have had angry words and letters of protest written to call hiring committees on their lack of true commitment to equity for racialised minority applicants.

Racism, sexism, heterosexism and ableism continue to exist. Period.

Mothers (and fathers) are still pressured by vestiges of a patriarchal academic culture to shorten (or abandon all together) parental leaves, keep their family needs hidden, and feel guilty if asking for scheduling or other accommodations.

Alternative ways of knowing and being are brought to the university by faculty from diverse cultures, enriching the learning environment for all of us.

The curriculum still has a distance to go before it is truly global and inclusive—when Dionne Brand is as celebrated as Robertson Davies and Arpita Singh is studied as much as Pablo Picasso and Canadian history is taught from multi-perspectives starting with a First Nations viewpoint, we'll be there.

In the words of our past Affirmative Action Director Rinaldo Walcott, York needs Affirmative Action because “across this country people of colour academics continue to be passed over for tenure stream positions even though we are as qualified as any. At a university like York that claims to have a tradition of liberal values it is extremely striking to see how those liberal values have produced a largely white faculty”.

Visible minority faculty in many departments report being overburdened by service and graduate mentorship roles since they serve as the token “diversity” representative for many an initiative—there are too few of us to go around!

Equity has not been achieved when a queer faculty member has to wait years before her tenure is achieved because students anonymously question her lesbian feminist course content. She is asked to defend herself to the university's lawyer.

Why Affirmative Action? Because ...

Jody Nyasha Warner (Guest Editor; YUFA Equity Coordinator)

Aboriginal faculty members can't be reported in our employment equity data because there are only five at York. We should be hanging our heads in shame.

Complaints from female academics say male voices and male styles of communication are still taken as more authoritative and garner more respect.

The Canada Research Chair program replicates past hiring biases with so far less than 17% of these positions going to women. No one even bothers to count the number of visible minorities, people with disabilities, and GLTB folks who are getting these positions.

In dress and speech and style York is still a very monotone place. Check out department meetings across campus!

Over 30% of our students are of colour and they should look at the front of their classrooms and see their diversity reflected.

Now is the time to live up to our public image as a hip, innovative, diverse and progressive university—we've come a long way but we're only part way to the finish line.

South Asian religions & cultures short-list protested

Himani Bannerji (Sociology, Arts; Executive Comm., South Asia Studies), **Shubhra Gururani** (Anthropology, Arts; Executive Comm., South Asia Studies), **Ananya Mukherjee Reed** (Political Science, Arts; South Asia Studies), & **Ian Smith** (Languages, Literature & Linguistics, Arts; Executive Comm., South Asia Studies)

This winter the Humanities Division has a hiring in Religious Studies with an ad asking for people who work on South Asian religions and cultures, “broadly interpreted.” We used that phrase to move the position away from one that would focus solely on textual works, to social and cultural issues and comparative religions of the region.

Of the over forty applicants for the job, they will be interviewing four white women ... not a single person of colour was selected, though quite a few applied. And what's also a problem is that the four short-listed candidates don't match the job description. We wanted someone with a notion of South Asian culture in the last 200 or 300 years, but all of the short-listed candidates do what we'd call Hindu scriptural, or Vedic, Studies. That is, they are philologists and Indologists who are primarily studying Sanskrit and the Hindu religion in the 3rd to 1st millennium BC, though one has a small amount of expertise in Buddhism and another in Sikhism. But

nothing of Islam and no comparative studies? This ignores the fact that India is the 2nd largest Muslim country in the world and that a large number of students of South Asian origin at York University come from that background. In other words, it construes South Asia as India, India as Hindu, and Hinduism as understood by European Orientalism. It's exactly

“it construes South Asia as India, India as Hindu, and Hinduism as understood by European Orientalism”

what we wanted to avoid when we designed the South Asia Studies programme.

York will have hundreds of students, we're sure, who want to do Vedic Studies! It's really a lost appointment for the South Asia Studies programme. It's a loss for the small, struggling and dedicated group of faculty who teach in it. For the large number of students of South Asian origin—many from countries other

than India—this appointment represents a betrayal. The university is passing up an opportunity to help them reach a broader understanding of their heritage.

We are totally opposed to the short list. We wrote letters to the Chair, Douglas Freake, and the Dean, Robert Drummond—copied to the Academic Vice-President and the President. So did members of community groups, YUFA's Race Caucus, and the YUFA Equity Committee.

We met with the Dean, who seemed sympathetic to our arguments about race, Orientalism and contributions to the South Asia programme. He also agreed that it was indeed problematic that the Division refused to pay attention to concerns raised by a dozen or so scholars of the region and that he would make sure that, in future hires, stake-holding programs were represented on hiring committees by more than one token member. He mentioned that in the new Collective Agreement, women and visible minorities had equal status in the affirmative action provisions, and he felt that the Humanities Division may not have correctly interpreted these provisions. However, all that said, he felt it was not appropriate for him to intervene. It's really a lost appointment from our point of view.

Professors at the colour line

Richard Chait & Cathy Trower (The Project on Faculty Appointments at the Harvard Graduate School of Education)

As the academic year gets underway at our nation's colleges, the student body will be fairly diverse—about 56 percent women, 11 percent African-American, 8 percent Hispanic and 6 percent Asian-American. But after more than 30 years of affirmative action, the full-time faculty will be far less varied.

Most remarkably, the percentage of African-American full-time faculty members has remained virtually stagnant over the last 20 years, changing from 4.4 percent in 1975 to 4.9 percent in 1997; now, as then, almost half of these professors teach at historically black institutions. And though the percentages of Hispanic and Asian-American full-time faculty members have doubled, they still make up a small proportion—about 2.6 percent Hispanic and 5.5 percent Asian-American—of the total.

Women, as a group, have fared somewhat better. The proportion of women among full-time faculty members doubled between 1972 and 1997, to 36 percent. But the proportion of women with tenure has increased by a mere percentage point, from 38 percent in 1975 to 39 percent in 1995, while the gap—20 percentage points—between the proportion of women and men with tenure has remained the same. Moreover, women make up only one-quarter of all full professors, earn considerably less

than men at every rank and hold a disproportionately high number of part-time and non-tenure track positions.

The academy has long attributed the slow progress in diversifying faculty to a “pipeline problem”—an undersupply of women and minorities enrolled in graduate programs. Yet women now earn 42 percent of conferred doctorates, and minorities earn 17 percent. The more stubborn

“since universities have long prided themselves on being champions of tolerance & reform, one might expect them to have a better track record”

problem is that the pipeline often empties into uninviting territory. Numerous studies, including our own, have shown that women and minority professors still experience social isolation, subtle and occasionally overt prejudice, a lack of mentors and ambiguous expectations. Small wonder then, that according to a 1999 study, women and minority doctoral students are less likely than white male doctoral students to want to be faculty members.

Since universities have long prided themselves on being champions of tolerance and reform, one might expect them to have a better track record on faculty diversity. But the prospects for self-correction are bleak. Apparently, change will have to be initiated from the outside.

If, for example, a civil rights or feminist group widely disseminated a report card or ranking of the faculty

compositions, broken down by race and gender, of the top colleges and universities, these schools might be spurred into constructive competition to improve. Or what if U.S. News and World Report included faculty diversity as a factor in its influential rankings? A tumble down that ladder would certainly get the attention of a university's president and professors. More provocative still might be a boycott by top-ranked high school ath-

letes and students of the one university, within each major athletic conference, with the worst record in faculty diversity.

These tactics might seem merely symbolic, but similar efforts have worked in other industries, like television, where after

public criticism and protests by the NAACP, the networks were coaxed into hiring more minority actors, writers and producers.

Regrettably, without this kind of external pressure, the professoriate is likely to remain relatively homogeneous even as the student body becomes more diverse. Neither students nor scholarship would be well served by this trend. Worse, the disparity would foster the misimpression that women and minorities are capable enough to learn in college but not to teach and do research there.

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Thanks to Amin Mawani (Schulich) for bringing this article to our attention. — eds

Affirmative action creeps forward in YUFA's Collective Agreement

Katherine Bischooping (Sociology, Arts; YUFA Information Officer)

The Collective Agreement (CA) is a daunting text, written by fractious committees for an audience of lawyers. Although it is not always an inviting read, its language comes alive daily, in the possibilities and constraints that shape our working lives. In particular, its affirmative action language shapes who we hire, from whom we learn, what we can learn, and who “we” are.

This article provides a condensed history of how affirmative action developed in our 15 Collective Agreements. In it we see that affirmative action language in our CA has developed fitfully: long delays are interspersed with sudden leaps in progress; equity-seeking groups move from invisibility to visibility at greatly differing rates; and accountability provisions inch forward.

The early years: affirmative action for Canadians and landed immigrants

In YUFA and the Board of Governor's fledgling CA, 1976-78, the only references to affirmative action in hiring procedures were to “ensure that reasonable care is taken seek out qualified female and Canadian candidates” (12.16). Among substantially equal and qualified candidates “the Canadian candidate shall be recommended for appointment” (12.20)

In the second CA (1978-79), “landed immigrants” are added to clauses referring to Canadians. (Some years later, the term “permanent residents of Canada” was substituted.)

No advances in affirmative action were made from the third CA (1979-1981) through the sixth (1983-84).

Affirmative action for women

It is in the seventh CA (1984-1985), that the first sign of interest in devel-

oping affirmative action for women appears. YUFA and the Board of Governors agreed to establish an unfunded “Joint Study Committee on Affirmative Action for women, to develop proposals for defining, identifying and correcting under-representation of women in academic units of the university and in academic ranks”. (12.20(b)) That committee was to report by April 1985.

But in the eighth CA (1985-1987), we see that the parties had

“the ninth CA (1987-89) contains a flurry of new language pertaining to affirmative action—for women, only”

dragged their feet. The Joint Study Committee's deadline was extended to April 1986.

The ninth CA (1987-89) contains a flurry of new language pertaining to affirmative action—for women, only. In units with fewer than 30% women, among substantially equal candidates, women who were Canadian/permanent residents were to be preferred. In the absence of any qualified Canadian/permanent resident candidates, women were still to be preferred over other substantially equal candidates. However, in units exceeding the threshold percentage of 30, affirmative action did not need to be taken.

This procedure was to be developed in units' first affirmative ac-

tion plans, which were to “show [the unit's] willingness and ability to conform to procedures guaranteeing affirmative action for women, and to demonstrate that [the unit] has followed those procedures in its search and selection process.” (12.21(b)(iv)) This clause had somewhat weak accountability provisions, as it did not identify exactly who would be responsible for assessing whether procedures had been followed.

A new YUFA-Employer committee—the Affirmative Action Committee—was formed that would approve units' plans. This committee was also to evaluate units' practices, albeit from quite a distance and could “recommend to the President that an appointment not be made when a units' plans or procedures did not meet the Committee's standards for affirmative action.” (12.21(b))

Finally, the contract funded the position of an Affirmative Action Director, who was to serve as a resource person for units and the Joint Implementation Committee.

The tenth CA (1989-91) made cosmetic changes to the affirmative action programme for women, such as specifying how to count jointly appointed faculty toward the threshold percentage and requiring that units name affirmative action representatives to develop the plans.

Affirmative action for the “designated groups”

It was in the eleventh CA (1991-92) that YUFA and the Board of Governors finally voiced the possibility of affirmative action for three other equity-seeking groups—members of visible/racial minorities, aboriginal persons, and persons with disabilities—referred to as the “designated groups” by the Federal Contractors' Program.

A committee was struck that

(Continued on page 8)

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was to “design and report to the Joint Committee on the Administration of the Agreement, a programme of Employment Equity for the designated groups as per the Federal Contractors’ Program. The parties agree to implement a programme of Employment Equity consistent with the affirmative action obligations to female faculty within one (1) year of ratification of the 1991-92 Agreement” (12.25).

But in the two subsequent CAS (1992-1996 and 1996-99), no such programme had been implemented, although YUFA and the Employer increased the threshold percentage for affirmative action for women to 35 percent.

During the 1997 strike, interests had been coalescing around a wide range of equity issues—pay equity for women, salary anomalies in the membership as a whole, and affirmative action for racialised groups, Native persons, and persons with disabilities. YUFA instituted an Equity Committee, who produced a comprehensive set of bargaining proposals, including development of affirmative action.

These proposals bore fruit in the 1999-2001 CA ... eight years after the parties had first identified the issue in the contract and 22 years after the first Collective Agreement.

The overhauled AA programme

The “Canadian/permanent-resident-first” rule still applied. Within it, in units with at least 40 percent women, a member of a designated group was to be appointed unless another candidate was demonstrably superior. In units with less than 40 percent women, among substantially equal

candidates, the strongest priority was to appoint women from the designated groups, followed by other women or men from the designated groups.

Affirmative action plans were to be revised accordingly and job ads were to invite applications from all of

“these proposals bore fruit in the 1999-2001 CA ... eight years after the parties had first identified the issue in the contract and 22 years after the first Collective Agreement”

the designated groups, as well as women. Moreover, units with fewer than fifteen percent women were to develop more pro-active affirmative action plans.

The Appointments article also included a statement that “the parties confirm a joint commitment that discrimination should not exist or arise for women, members of visible/racial minorities, aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, gay men, lesbians, bisexual and trans-gendered persons” (12.20).

Finally, this CA also made accountability for conducting affirma-

tive hiring clearer. Units’ affirmative action representative would now be “responsible for monitoring the hiring process” (12.23a) and not only helping to develop plans. The Joint Affirmative Action Committee also would annually audit short-listings and appointments, and might organize workshops to inform chairs, hiring committees, and tenure & promotion committees about “collective agreement provisions, principles, objectives, recent history and best practices with respect to employment equity” (12.24a).

However, gaps in accountability continued: the offering of such workshops by the Joint Affirmative Action Committee, and attendance at them, was not mandatory, and affirmative action monitors were not actually required to sit on hiring committees.

The current plan

The 2001-2003 CA contains a few changes in provisions for affirmative action, most of which aim at strengthened accountability: workshops on employment equity are to be offered (no longer “may”); affirmative action representatives are now to be “strongly encouraged” to attend such workshops; each hiring committee must include a person responsible for monitoring affirmative action procedures; and procedures for identifying members of designated groups were to be determined by units, rather than centrally.

But, is it working? The following articles provide statistics and analyses of YUFA’s progress toward affirmative action goals.

New data puts affirmative action & employment equity in context

Brett Cemer (staff)

HOW IS YUFA doing in reaching its affirmative action and employment equity goals? Tables 1 and 2 show the latest figures compiled at York for YUFA as a whole.

The more detailed affirmative action statistics presented in Table 2 for women are not available for other affirmative action groups. Race/ethnicity is not among the data collected on individual YUFA members by the Employer.

Recently published data from the National Center for Education Statistics of the US Department of Education (NCES) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) serve as useful points of reference for evaluating affirmative action and employment equity for faculty at York.

Of particular interest are doctoral degrees conferred by recipients' race/ethnicity (currently available only for the US) and sex, by field of study (Tables 3, 4, and 5).

Taken together, the statistics are suggestive of the North American "supply" of new teachers and re-

searchers, especially with the recent relaxation of (but not elimination of) "Canadian-first" regulations.

First, York employment equity practices look rather appalling in Table 1. Although racial/visible minorities made up 15.8% and 31.6% of Ontario's and Toronto's population respectively in 1996, by 2000 YUFA's membership only achieved 10.3%. U of T and Ryerson have obviously done much better than York, pulling the percentage of Toronto-based professors up to 15.1%, in spite of York's poor showing. As well, while 2.8% of the Canadian population is aboriginal, YUFA included only five members (0.4%) who identified as aboriginal.

Affirmative action for women presents less dramatic but still significant challenges. At the outset, it should be pointed out that several units who look bad in Table 2 have actually been shrinking during the period. This is especially true of Glendon.

But in other cases, the story is more disturbing. About a third of Business graduates are women (Tables 4, 5), but Schulich has only managed to increase its number of

women from 16 to 19. While about 25% of North American Mathematics graduates are now women, Math has not managed to increase its proportion above 17%—only *one* woman hired by Math during the period is still at York. While about a quarter of graduates in Chemistry are women, the York department has only one woman. More than one-sixth of Computer Science graduates are now women, yet at York only three of 37 computer science professors are women. Equally puzzling, while about 30% of new North American philosophers are women, York's department has managed to shrink its proportion of women over the past nine years.

In this regard it is worth noting that, of appointees who were hired between 1998 and 2001 and are still at York, only 49% are women. Does this constitute "acting affirmatively"?

On the bright side, about half of York's academic departments (including three of the newest units) are now more than 40% women, up from about a quarter in 1992.

Table 1. Percentage of YUFA members in designated employment equity groups, by classification, with Toronto, Ontario, and Canada comparisons

	YUFA members (2000)				University Professors (1996)		General Population (1996)		
	All	Contract	Probationary	Tenured	Toronto	Ontario	Toronto	Ontario	Canada
Aboriginal	0.4%	0.0%	2.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	1.3%	2.8%
Racial/visible minorities	10.3%	12.2%	19.1%	8.7%	15.1%	12.3%	31.6%	15.8%	11.2%
Disability with Effect on Employment	7.8%	4.9%	8.1%	7.90%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
n	1155	61	187	901	n/a	n/a	4 263 757	10 642 790	28 528 125

Source: York University Centre for Human Rights & Equity; Statistics Canada, 1996 Census

Table 2. Performance with respect to Affirmative Action goals for women, in 1992 and 2001, by unit

		1992		2001		Change
		n _{unit}	female	n _{unit}	female	
Exceeding goals then & now*	Fine Arts Dance	12	83%	11	91%	8%
	Libraries	41	76%	37	70%	-6%
	Glendon French	28	71%	15	60%	-11%
	Education	24	67%	40	65%	-2%
	Atkinson Soc Work	10	60%	13	69%	9%
	Arts French St	32	59%	22	59%	0%
	Arts Anthropology	12	50%	17	47%	-3%
	Glendon Psychology	8	50%	7	43%	-7%
	Arts Lit, Lang, Ling	43	49%	40	45%	-4%
	Arts Soc Sci	41	41%	50	50%	9%
Atkinson Arts & Letters	41	41%	29	45%	4%	
Not okay then, but okay now!	Arts Sociology	35	29%	37	57%	28%
	Fine Arts Visual Arts	25	24%	21	48%	24%
	Fine Arts Theatre	17	24%	19	47%	23%
	Arts English	37	32%	37	46%	14%
	Atkinson Psychology	13	31%	11	45%	14%
	Arts/Sci Kine & Health Sci	35	31%	30	43%	12%
	Arts Psychology	56	27%	62	42%	15%
	Glendon Philosophy	9	33%	5	40%	7%
	Arts Ctr Acad Writ	3	33%	5	40%	7%
	Fine Arts Film	11	18%	15	40%	22%
Used to be okay ... but not anymore	Glendon Poli Sci	8	38%	8	38%	0%
	Atkinson Admin St	23	39%	26	31%	-8%
Still not okay, but above average improvements	Arts Geography	23	9%	19	32%	23%
	Atkinson Soc Sci	31	19%	23	39%	20%
	Glendon Economics	9	11%	4	25%	14%
	Fine Arts Music	14	14%	15	27%	13%
	Atkinson Anly & Info Tech	35	17%	25	28%	11%
Environmental St	27	26%	33	36%	10%	
Still not okay, and below average improvements	Arts Economics	34	6%	31	13%	7%
	Arts History	42	19%	39	26%	7%
	Science Earth/Atm Sci	8	13%	11	18%	5%
	Schulich	64	25%	63	30%	5%
	Arts Math & Stats	42	12%	42	17%	5%
	Arts Humanities	48	31%	48	35%	4%
	Science Chemistry	25	0%	24	4%	4%
	Science Physics / Astronomy	26	4%	25	8%	4%
	Science Comp Sci	23	4%	37	8%	4%
	Arts Poli Sci	34	26%	38	29%	3%
	Glendon English	22	23%	16	25%	2%
	Science Biology	31	19%	29	21%	1%
	Arts Philosophy	18	33%	17	29%	-4%
Glendon History	13	23%	6	17%	-6%	
Glendon Sociology	12	33%	6	17%	-16%	
New units	Atkinson Nursing			15	100%	
	Arts/Atk/Gle Women's Studies			4	100%	
	Fine Arts Cultural St			5	60%	
	Atkinson Health Pol & Mgmt			4	50%	
	Fine Arts Design			5	20%	
Totals		1155	31%	1154	39%	8%
	* Goals for Affirmative Action for women were 35% in 1992 and 40% in 2001. Note: Units with three or fewer (then or now) not shown					

Source: Academic Employee Relations, York University

Table 3. Doctor's degrees conferred by U.S. Title IV degree-granting postsecondary institutions by race/ethnicity and field of study: 50 States and District of Columbia, academic year 1999-2000

Fields of study	White non-Hispanic	Black non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian / Pacific Islander	American Indian / Alaska Native	Race / ethnicity unknown	Non-resident alien	Total
Area, ethnic and cultural studies	124	19	7	8	2	24	33	217
Biological sciences / life sciences	2780	104	139	419	8	166	1251	4867
Business management and administrative services	640	54	17	61	5	42	374	1193
Communications	235	20	10	3	1	4	74	347
Computer and information sciences	289	15	13	56	0	29	375	777
Conservation and renewable natural resources	209	4	4	6	2	7	114	346
Education	4773	780	254	171	43	198	611	6830
English language and literature / letters	1230	67	47	56	6	70	152	1628
Foreign languages and literature	486	8	74	41	1	47	258	915
Health professional and related sciences	1664	109	57	235	8	81	522	2676
Liberal/general studies and humanities	67	6	2	2	1	2	3	83
Mathematics	466	16	12	70	2	34	506	1106
Multi/interdisciplinary studies	267	20	7	19	3	14	54	384
Parks recreation leisure and fitness	102	3	2	3	1	2	21	134
Philosophy and religion	419	18	15	15	1	38	80	586
Physical sciences	2016	68	69	201	14	182	1466	4016
Psychology	3323	220	216	181	30	177	163	4310
Public administration and services	366	56	16	24	2	13	60	537
Social sciences and history	2494	192	122	156	16	235	880	4095
Theological studies and religious vocations	1044	182	25	97	1	40	254	1643
Visual and performing arts	751	30	21	47	1	55	222	1127
All fields	26471	2147	1243	2297	155	1661	10834	44808

Note: Percentage comparisons are not included because of "Non-resident alien" category.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (December 2001), *Postsecondary Institutions in the United States: Fall 2000 and Degrees and Other Awards Conferred: 1999-2000* (NCES 2002-156).

Making sense of the statistics: commentaries on affirmative action & employment equity at York

We invited several YUFA members to comment on the preceding statistics. Here are their thoughts ... —eds

The figures hide more than they tell

Arun Mukherjee (English, Arts)

There is a curious and unsatisfactory asymmetry between the statistics about York's women faculty and its other designated group faculty, leaving one with the impression that the figures hide more than they tell. From the detailed information provided on women faculty, it is clear that, while there is still a long way to

go and while there are tremendous inconsistencies among the academic units, there has been significant progress in a number of departments. The summary data about the other three designated groups allow us to draw only some broad conclusions.

The table dealing with the racial minority faculty (Table 1), for example, tells us that 10.3% of YUFA members identify themselves as racial minority. They comprise 8.7% of the tenured faculty, but 19.1% of the probationary and 12.2% of the contract faculty. Although contract jobs mostly end up as dead end streets, one may feel somewhat cheered by the figure of 19.1% given for the probationary faculty. But my cheerfulness is diluted by the thought that these 19.1%, i.e., 36 out of 187 of probationary faculty, may not even fully replace the number of racial minority faculty who are on the verge of retirement.

York looks bad when compared with other Toronto as well as Ontario universities who have a total of 15.1% and 12.3% racial minority faculty respectively.

While the table gives us the racial minority population of Ontario (15.8%) and of Canada (11.2%), it should have told us the racial minority population in Toronto and the GTA. Racial minorities form a far larger percentage of the population in this area. It is in this area that York is situated and draws its students from. A comparison of the representation of racial minorities in York faculty with the racial minority population of this catchment area would have been both more meaningful and revealing.*

I am completely dissatisfied with the aggregate figures; there is not much use I can make of these. In terms of affirmative action for women, we are given a department wise breakdown so we can see which departments have improved their representation of women and which have

Table 4. Percentage of doctoral degrees conferred to women by US Title IV degree-granting postsecondary institutions for selected fields of study in 1999/2000

Fields of study	Women	n _{all}
Area, ethnic and cultural studies	51%	217
Biological sciences / life sciences	44%	4867
Business management and administrative services	32%	1193
Communications	53%	347
Computer and information sciences	17%	777
Conservation and renewable natural resources	34%	346
Education	65%	6830
English language and literature / letters	59%	1628
Foreign languages and literature	59%	915
Health professional and related sciences	61%	2676
Liberal/general studies and humanities	51%	83
Mathematics	25%	1106
Multi-/inter-disciplinary studies	47%	384
Parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness	44%	134
Philosophy and religion	35%	586
Physical sciences	25%	4016
Psychology	67%	4310
Public administration and services	58%	537
Social sciences and history	41%	4095
Theological studies and religious vocations	20%	1643
Visual and performing arts	52%	1127
All fields	44%	44808

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (December 2001), *Postsecondary Institutions in the United States: Fall 2000 and Degrees and Other Awards Conferred: 1999-2000* (NCES 2002-156).

Table 5. Percentage of doctoral degrees conferred to women by Canadian universities in selected disciplines, 1998

Fields of study	Women	n _{all}
Anthropology	52%	44
Biology	35%	293
Business	35%	72
Chemistry	28%	234
Classics	50%	8
Computer Science	16%	74
Economics	18%	57
Education	61%	367
English	59%	105
Environmental Studies	41%	37
Fine Arts	40%	5
French	42%	38
Geography	31%	52
Geology, Oceanography & related sciences	23%	94
History	32%	81
Linguistics and other Languages & Literatures	56%	101
Mathematics	23%	121
Media Studies	50%	20
Music	30%	23
Nursing	83%	12
Performing Arts, Other	71%	7
Philosophy	29%	65
Physics	13%	171
Political Science	38%	76
Psychology	68%	261
Religious Studies	35%	31
Social Work	71%	14
Sociology	53%	76
All fields	36%	3976

Source: CAUT Almanac of Post-secondary Education in Canada 2002; Statistics Canada

not made any progress. I want to know how many of the racial minority faculty are women. Similarly, given the very low numbers of black women faculty, I would like to have a breakdown of the data in terms of ethnicity.

I want to be able to assess the performance of each unit. For example, I know that some departments do not have a single racial minority faculty, not even a token, and yet they fail to shortlist qualified racial minority candidates. In several recent hiring situations, when complaints were

“It is difficult to be sanguine when the university has set no goals and timetables for the hiring of racial minorities as it did in the case of affirmative action for women”

made to the Chairs and the Dean and other higher ups, such as the Vice President Academic and the President, a deafening silence was the answer.

It is difficult to be sanguine when the university has set no goals and timetables for the hiring of racial minorities as it did in the case of affirmative action for women. Obviously, it has had no difficulty in finding suitable women candidates, albeit mostly white, even though women comprised only 36% of the doctorates in Canada in 1998.

I am deeply perturbed by the dismal performance of the university as far as the hiring of aboriginal faculty is concerned. We have only one, or 0.90 tenured aboriginal faculty and four on probation. As a faculty member I know that we are not mak-

ing any special efforts to facilitate the way for aboriginal graduate students.

** The figures for the GTA were subsequently added to Table 1. —eds*



Improving ratios is not enough

Paula Wilson (Biology, Pure & Applied Science; YUFA Equity Committee)

The statistics for female/male faculty ratios in science departments (Table 2) are discouraging. Even more discouraging are the data that provide female/male ratios for graduating PHDS in Canada and the US (Tables 5 & 4), indicating that the pool of women PHDS in many science disciplines continues to be relatively small (see Physics, Math and Computer Science for example). Clearly more work must be done at the elementary, secondary, undergraduate and graduate levels. Affirmative action policies for hiring faculty will forever be hampered in the sciences if there are not enough women completing doctorates in science.

Is there any good news? Yes, if you look in the right place! For example, the percentage of females in the Biology department seems barely to have moved during the '90s, yet of the twelve faculty members who joined the department between 1996 and the present (including one non-YUFA member and additions that are too recent to appear in the data reported here), 50% were women. Perhaps a careful look at recent hires, excluding the male-dominated legacy of the '70s and '80s, would provide a better picture of where departments stand on affirmative action.

Regardless, simply improving ratios is not enough. It is also important for hiring units to create a supportive and welcoming environment for women, seeking out and removing any of the more subtle “barriers” to success that remain—creating new initiatives for accommodating women with young families would be a good place to start.



Why has progress been so slow?

Harry Smaller (Education)

Many thanks to YUFA for compiling and circulating the latest York faculty hiring stats, which compare the gender balance of faculty members in each academic unit in 1992, and again in 2001. These stats have been developed in the context of reporting on the Affirmative Action goals which were established in our collective agreement in 1991 (a goal of a minimum of 35% female faculty members in each unit), and which were strengthened more recently to a minimum of 40% women in each unit. (I also look forward to similar data in relation to hirings of Aboriginal people, racial/visible minorities and people with disabilities, categories of hiring which have recently been added to our collective agreement).

Based on these recent reports, York's 44 faculty hiring units can be divided into three main groups (Table 2). The good news is the first group—21 units that equal or (in most cases) exceed our minimum affirmative action goals. This list includes 10 units that were below minimum expectation in 1992, but that clearly saw fit to alter their hiring practices so that the gender balance of their respective faculty complements moved up to, and in many cases, beyond, the minimum agreed levels.

The middle group—consisting of six units—are still below the minimum standard of 40% women, but have at least improved their position over the past nine years. In some cases, they are now close to the mark, but in other cases there is still some distance to go.

Unfortunately there is also considerable bad news to report—a large group of fifteen units, which were not at an acceptable level in 1992, and which are still not there now! In fact, in most cases they have made little if any progress in this direction in the past nine years! Why is this? To be sure, a few of the small

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units have not been able to hire many (or any) new faculty members in the last decade, and they are obviously at a disadvantage in this respect. However, they are a small minority.

Let's take a look at the large majority of this unfortunate group. These twelve units range in size from 18 to 64 faculty members, but only one employed more than 30% women in 2001! The gender balance of the others ranged down to 4% female members, with five units (averaging 32 members each) still containing over 80% men. Why is this?

In the last nine years, these twelve units have hired a total of 130 faculty members who are still with us in 2001—of whom only 36 were women!—hired into units already much below the minimum standard for equity! Why is this? One unit in particular had no—repeat, no—women among its 25 faculty members in 1992. In the past nine years, it has hired eight new faculty, of whom only one is a woman! Another unit of 64 faculty had only 25% women in 1992. However, of the 23 hires that they have undergone since then, only six were women. The rest of these recalcitrant units demonstrated similar discriminatory practices. Why is this?

We know all the excuses (having served on the Affirmative Action Committee for three years, I certainly heard my fill): no women applicants; no “good” women applicants; “good” women applicants are few and far between, and they can demand any salary; our area of academic focus doesn't interest female academics; women are offered positions, but then turn us down; women are hired, but they only stay a few months; etc, etc. To be sure, some of these “explanations” may have some surface truth to them, but they hardly

explain what is really going on, under the surface. Myriad research studies have long since demonstrated the power of discriminatory barriers—very subtle, to be sure, but still very powerful—which can exist at all stages and levels of the hiring process. However, as the research also shows, conclusively, these barriers can be removed—when and where there are intentioned decisions to do so.

Why not at York? What kinds of messages are we sending out to

prospective students and their parents, to prospective candidates, and to the community at large? What kind of messages are we sending out to other colleagues and institutions—particularly those who have made it clear that they are working actively to ensure equity on their campuses?

Surely, York's scholarly research, teaching and development can only truly excel, if they result from the collaborative efforts of a truly diverse academic faculty, one which reflects equity in relation not only to gender, but also to the many aspects of diversity in our larger community.

Why has progress at York in this regard been so slow?

■ ■ ■

Working assiduously for affirmative action

Peter McKinnon (Theatre)

The increase in the proportion of women in our department from 24% to 47% (Table 2) was a result of our push from ten years ago. We adopted a policy of redressing the imbalance between men and women in the department. We have worked quite assiduously since then—in CUPE and

YUFA CLAS as well as line appointments—to make sure that we were working to redress the imbalance, notwithstanding qualifications, etc.

Since 1990 Theatre has hired five of their nine women, compared to two of ten men.—eds

■ ■ ■

Federal Contractors Program all talk, little action

Jody Nyasha Warner (Libraries; YUFA Equity Co-ordinator)

In 1986 the Canadian government launched the Federal Contractors program, which required companies and organizations with over 100 employees to create and report on affirmative action goals if they wanted to do business with the government. The program, which included universities, was supposed to help change the face of employees in this country so that more aboriginal people, women, visible minorities, and people with disabilities were included at the table (see Tables 1 and 2).

Turns out the program has been something of a flop. A study commissioned by Human Resources Canada found “Companies operating outside the program have done as well or better in adding these groups to their workforces”.

In the 1990s, the program suffered from severe staff cuts, which have been reflected in the lack of annual reports and compliance reviews being written. In fact, “No employers have recently been prevented from bidding on a new federal contract because of non-compliance, although many do little or nothing to fulfill their ... commitments”.

The study concludes that “Dramatic changes in this program are needed”. It's interesting to note that all the participating institutions have written policies and guidelines dealing with equity and affirmative action. But the gap between words and actions looks to be glaring.

All quotes from “Equity hiring program a

failure, study says" in Toronto Star, 13 July 2001, p. A03.



How can YUFA respond?

Walter Whiteley (Math & Stats, Arts; YUFA Contract & Grievance Committee)

Hiring is intended to operate within a confidentiality and trust that people will work in a collegial process, be clear in advance on the criteria, and respect the obligations towards affirmative action both in applying criteria in ways that respect the diversity of applicants and in seeking to positively increase the diversity of York.

In practice, this is not what happens. Most faculty, including myself, are not well equipped to even understand bias when it is in the documentation of an applicant's file or in our own responses to positions and expressions which come from different experiences than our own. Left alone, we will not effectively promote and generate the required diversity.

Serious academic disagreements about what is important, what work has lasting value, etc. plays into the debates. Very seldom do these debates remain abstract to specific candidates, who may be told they are unqualified, and to their supporters, whose work may be implicitly critiqued by one or both sides. [See the recent press discussions about the decade long 'war' in English at Columbia University.]

Moreover, many faculty are not committed to the Affirmative Action goals, but wish first to locate the file, which, in their opinion, is 'the best' and then manoeuvre within the rules, the process and the required reporting to obtain that outcome. At best, AA is neglected. At worst, as illustrated around the HRDC Canadians First rule, some units appear to use a 'demonstrably superior' criterion to select non-Canadians, even though the true rule refers to a 'qualified Canadians'—something that should not be a rapidly changing constructed

definition.

The administration appears to share both problems: failure to even comprehend how bias works its way through hiring processes and willingness to neglect AA or not aggressively support those efforts.

What is supposed to generate trust in the process is the monitoring systems from the unit plans, the hiring committee monitors, to the Deans, VP Academic, and the AA committee.

When these work, confidentiality can be maintained and the inevitable disagreements can occur without shattering the acceptance of the se-

"Time for some more assertive and supportive responses."

lected hiree or the continued collegial functioning of the unit and among units.

This trust appears to be breaking down, at multiple levels, on multiple issues (CUPE/non-CUPE; Canadian/non Canadian; racial/visible minority). Some issues (hiring of Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities) seem to have virtually disappeared!

The actual process has, this year, lacked effective training, and often lacked useful guidelines in the hands of people on the ground. Even today, months after the discussions started, the employer has not given effective guidance to units on Canadian/non-Canadian HRDC processes; units flounder with effective 'self-identification', and so forth.

All of this creates an atmosphere of distrust, in which the internal processes of units become subject to challenge from both 'non-majority' members of the unit process, from other members of the York community, and from lower ranked candidates or candidates told they are 'not

qualified'.

There are rumours and expressions of concern about a number of hirings this year, around a number of issues: visible minorities, Canadian/non-Canadian, narrow or broad definitions of field, ... With very limited information, due in part to intended confidentiality, what I hear suggests the possibility that units have made decisions, which some folk in the unit (sometimes in the hiring committee), some other York community members, and some applicants find cannot be justified by the criteria of the ads and the priorities and processes of the collective agreement.

The current system is breaking apart, and something needs to be done to establish a system that will gain respect and trust.

How can YUFA respond? Some possibilities include:

- Pressure on the administration in the Joint Committee on Administration of the Agreement to tighten application of AA criteria, including a true monitoring of "Canadians First" HRDC rules.
- Improved instructions and power for the joint AA committee, which can recommend that the Employer turn back certain recommendations.
- Publicity campaigns about hiring decisions and affirmative action concerns.
- Filing of grievances (group grievances), as pressure on the employer and an expression of the concerns of YUFA members.
- Membership education to improve process and training for the future.
- Moving to a higher standard of "affirmative action"—that is to make the increase in diversity a positive objective of the process, something which can be a positive asset for the applicant.

Silence has been tried and found wanting. Time for some more assertive and supportive responses.

Academic freedom and freedom of expression: human rights, anti-racist, and inclusive perspectives

Teferi Adem (Centre for Race & Ethnic Relations)

This is a presentation given at the YUFA forum on "Academic freedom: union & equity issues" in May 2001. —eds

"The mission of York University is the pursuit, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge ... We test the boundaries and structures of knowledge. We cultivate the critical intellect ... we are dynamic, metropolitan and multi-cultural ... we encourage bilingual studies, we value tolerance and diversity ... we explore global concerns ... [we are] committed to academic freedom, social justice, accessible education, and collegial self-governance ..." Tentanda Via: the way must be tried. (York University Mission Statement, as of August 1999)

When I was approached to participate in this panel discussion, as an administrative member of the University, I formulated my own critical approach in order to focus on some of the phrases and other critical words from the University's mission statement, stated above.

Furthermore, the fact that the organizers of this panel are members of the York University Faculty Association also made me think twice about what I plan to share in this panel. First of all I would like to thank the organizers, for including our Centre and myself on this panel. This presentation is mainly based on my own reflective, observational, and diverse professional experiences over the last 30 years. As a former York student, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as an Advisor at the Centre for Race and Ethnic Relations for the last nine years, I am pleased to be part of this discussion, as I feel that I have quite an intimate knowledge of our Institution.

As most of us here know, is-

sués related to Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression have been interpreted and discussed by many individuals and academic and non-academic institutions for many years in the past. I believe, it will continue for many more years.

Of course, there are diverse perspectives and contexts, that have been brought forward for many years by individuals, groups, communities, and at times by different institutions. And, the debate continues! Therefore today, I would like to share my thoughts, not simply as an individual, but also as a member of this higher learning centre, with its diverse populations. I am here also to share with you the Human Rights perspectives that call for: inclusion, accommodation, dismantling historical and contemporary barriers, promoting equity and equality amongst and between different people, understanding and respect for diversity, and promoting basic rights, self-worth, and dignity for individuals and groups.

Therefore, as we see ourselves being part of what has been called these days a global village, my critical analysis of academic freedom and freedom of expression will take a wider perspective. However, I would like to draw your attention to the particular context of York University, in Toronto, Canada. My critical views let me see the concept called "freedom", from the point of view of our heterogeneous population in Toronto, where more than 180 ethno-linguistic community members have been attempting to coexist side by side as equals. Then, as we get closer to the phrase called "academic freedom", my critical views are integrated with my "lived experiences". Over the last 30 years, I have attended educational centres—in rural Africa, under the absolute monarchy and feudal system that catered missionary training and education (it could be interpreted as an indoctrination); under a military

dictatorship, again in Africa; in the former Communist Eastern Europe, under a single political party system; in a predominantly Muslim country, yet practising a multi-party system; and finally here in Canada, within the liberal, pluralist, free market, and individual-centred capitalist system.

It is quite interesting to analyse and note the difference between homogenous (exclusive systems) and heterogeneous (inclusive systems), as related to all kinds of freedoms, that have been practised or curtailed. Speaking from an anti-racist context, I believe, any meaning of freedom that excludes people from full participation, because of their different/diverse ancestry, gender, sexuality, disability, class, ideological or spiritual beliefs, or that violates basic rights of so-called "others", is not a "freedom". From a human rights perspective, the ideals of academic freedom presuppose, I believe, equality between subjects, whose main purpose is to meet as equals, at least as persons, and debate and discuss ideas and certain actions freely, as equals.

Of course, when we say "as equals", we don't mean that everybody at the University is the same. We have students, Teaching Assistants, faculty members, support staff, and administrators. They all have their respective locations, whereby their social status is different, relative to their different positions and backgrounds. Their ancestral backgrounds are from First Nations and Aboriginal peoples of Americas, North and South. Others belong to the ancestral backgrounds from Africa, Asia, Europe, and other indigenous peoples' areas. They are females and males, lesbians and gay men, transsexual and trans-gendered, young and old, persons with physical and mental disabilities, poor and rich, local and global, with diverse practices of spirituality and other ideological and belief systems. This is our reality of to-

day's university campus in Toronto, in particular at York, which I know the most. And, they all are here to learn, to research, to teach, to work, to administer, to share residences or to visit as guests.

But, they all are persons with shared interests, needs, and even wants, within the University and externally. Moreover, when we start thinking about freedom in general, and academic freedom in particular, we may also have to pay particular attention to the practical meaning of diversity that would critically examine the following: the heterogeneous make-up of our community members, the historical significance of the past, and the current level of inequity, discrimination, and harassment experiences of some of our community members (not all!). It is also equally important for all of us, to be reflective and critical, when it comes to the main reasons why we all are here, at the centres for higher education (not simply to criticize, insult, put down, or demean and denigrate each other). Yes, we cannot forget that, historically, certain ideals of "Freedom of Expression", theoretically, as well as action wise, were used to justify slavery, to promote "racism" and anti-Semitism, to colonize countries, and continually exploit and oppress the marginalized, and those who do not have equal socio-economic, and political power. Some of these practices were put into actions in the past, with the blessings of some university scholars, who believed in the "supremacy" of one group over the other. Some of them continue, until today, to promote the "social Darwinian" ideas of social hierarchy and survival of the fittest.

Certain "verbal expressions", in the forms of "hate propaganda", have been often translated into "physical expressions" of fighting. Words may not kill people or may not harm them physically. Yet, we have witnessed in the past as well as in the present, how certain verbal or written expressions have been literally translated and used, as some commentators call them, "fighting" or "warring" words, which ignite violence, aggress-

sion, and hate. Then, can we as intellectuals, here at York University, say or fully agree to say, that there is no "limit" to any forms of expressions in university campus here or elsewhere? Some scholars contend from time to time that it is okay to create an uncomfortable classroom climate or chilly climate that would poison the learning and working environment for everyone. Having heard concerns over such issues again and again, can we say it is possible to have "unfettered" rights or freedom to express ourselves anyway we want? Is

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been called these days a
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making "fun" of a group, or using racist and anti-Semitic jokes as a pedagogical tool, okay in the classroom without contextually deconstructing? Similarly, should written material that carries openly "excluding" information about certain identified groups to be used as a curricular source be studied by all students, including those who feel harassed by such material, unless that material is deconstructed, to include all students?

Here, I am not suggesting any ideas that would interfere in our academic debates or doing research as freely as possible as intellectuals. Of course, our main purpose for being

part of the "academy" is searching for "truth". We have to verify certain "facts" that support our quest for finding the "truth". I believe there is no need to limit diverse approaches to "knowledge", as long as the contexts, perspectives, and approaches acknowledge the fact that we are working with, and talking about diverse and different peoples. In the final analysis, as members of the academy, their interests are similar. Those similarities we share are by-products of our openness and willing to accept, accommodate, and integrate our differences and diverse backgrounds.

I believe that Academic Freedom has been used as a very important means to accomplish our objectives, which are learning, researching, and teaching. Then, one may also add one of the most important phrases, namely, "mutual respect", to make sure that our students learn what they would like or want to learn, and to make sure that our faculty members have a right to teach what they would like or want to teach. I think an inclusive academy promotes the importance of knowledge-based activities as two-way traffic, which respects guidelines that are very important for everyone's safety and well-being. Universities are locations for peaceful co-existence, respect for diversity, and promoting both differences and similarities at the same time.

I don't think we can use academic freedom, at this time in our history, as a tool that would incite violence. Yes, in the best interest of peoples of the world, we have been using it in the past and at the present. And, we will continue to use it in the future, as a protective or defensive tool that will respect inter-sectionalities in the lives of diverse peoples of the world. I believe as intellectuals, we also have social, civic, and moral responsibilities to expose "untruth" and hateful propaganda.

At the same time, we also have obligations to challenge what some thinkers have been calling it these days: The Traditionally Harmful Practices (THP). I recently came across this phrase from educators in Africa,

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who had to teach and learn at the same time, so that certain traditionally harmful opinion and practices would be prevented through inclusive education. Some such harmful practices, through written words or physical expressions, have been used to camouflage truth. People of the world have been divided, conquered, and oppressed by those who would pursue their own freedom at the expense of the loss of the freedom of others.

From an anti-racist perspective, within the context of human rights, racism as an ideology of “divide and oppress”, as well as a means of promoting hate, has been continually challenged for many years in our society. Racism has been applied to violate people’s basic rights, because of differences in their ancestry, colour of skin, and other physical, social, and cultural identities. Such an ideology was, and it still is, mainly based on an artificial sense of power inequality, with the intention to classify peoples as belonging to a “superior” or an “inferior” status, simply on the basis of ancestral backgrounds. But, some recent scientific findings tell us that we all belong to the same ancestral roots. Yet, some thinkers still think and express that certain groups of people have an extraordinary entitlement to have all the rights, including freedom to express it, while denying the same for others. Even when we look back to the original proponents of academic freedom, we may end up finding their origin being that of European ancestry, males, and of course free, but not equals, because the academy also has its own intellectual hierarchy. Again, the meaning of universal truth was also derived from what has been accepted as “truth”, only amongst and between similar-minded “men”, mainly from dominant ancestral, ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds (I said “men” intentionally, as men have been dominant groups in many societies and they continue to be as we talk here.).

Those of us who attempt to use the conceptual positivity of academic freedom to challenge the insidious

nature of social, economic, and political inequities, have been harassed by some thinkers, who would classify us as “mind/thought police”. Based on the subjective experiences and objective reality of the affected people (which includes me personally as a person of African ancestry living in North America), we still live in an academic environment which has much work to do in terms of representation. The present day academy, though comparatively progressive, still reflects itself and continually lim-

“People of the world have been divided, conquered, and oppressed by those who would pursue their own freedom at the expense of the loss of the freedom of others”

its access to those who have been historically excluded. Access is still limited in our society, based on race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, age, belief systems, and other visible or invisible forms of exclusionary methods. In the year 2001, we still do not have representative curricula materials, faculty members, graduate students, and researchers in our higher education centres. This is still another area for those who struggle for an inclusive academy.

In concluding my presentation, I will go back to the York University Mission Statement, and pose some questions for thought, in the light attributed to the conceptual meaning of “Academic Freedom”. You can use these questions to interrogate yourselves and imagine what

the answer would mean if operationalised in your own classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, research centres, seminars, conferences, and committee work here at York University and elsewhere.

- Is academic freedom designed to assist us to pursue, preserve, and disseminate knowledge, exclusively for reserved groups and their framework of thoughts, or it is intended to include, those who have been historically excluded?
- When we are attempting to test boundaries and structures of knowledge, are we testing to keep away those who are already outside the boundary, or is the idea to expand the boundaries and promote inclusions?
- When we think of cultivating the critical intellect, is it possible to create a critical thinking, when the classrooms and/or the lecture halls are not welcoming of the diverse ideas for critical intellect?
- When we talk about being dynamic, metropolitan, and multicultural, is academic freedom there for us to promote such dynamism and multiculturalism, or it is there to reflect unicultural points of views and to silence different ideas and experiences?
- When we say that we encourage bilingual studies, are we expanding the ideals of academic freedom, or are we simply promoting certain ideas of “interest groups”? (Here, the so-called interest groups are Canadians of the Francophone backgrounds). As some thinkers often contend, is diversity, in the forms of bilingualism and multiculturalism, problematic for freedom of expression?
- Is valuing tolerance and diversity curtailing academic freedom, or does it contribute to its expansion and inclusionary meanings?

- Does exploring global concerns, committing ourselves to social justice, and working towards providing accessible education, limit or expand the whole meaning of Academic Freedom, and Freedom of Expression? Or, does it impinge on our Academic rights?
- Can a collegial self-governance take place while one colleague

feels personally “superior” to the other, contrary to the universal declarations of the human rights code? In other words, do the ideals of academic freedom understand, respect, support, and promote the ideas of collegiality, even though some of the colleagues are people of diverse ancestral, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, and class backgrounds?

- Is not the purpose of “Academic Freedom” to include those individuals and community members, who have been historically, systematically, and in some cases, intentionally excluded from equal participation in the arts and science of learning, teaching and researching, as equals?

Thank You.



“Like it or not, York is in the West!” — three responses about ways of knowing

We asked three faculty members to react to the following quote from a response to the YUFA 2001 Bargaining Questionnaire.—eds

“I have no [equity] concerns here, except that I feel my union should not waste its time with these issues. If someone at York is concerned if their “non-Western way of knowing” is evaluated fairly they should have thought of that before they accepted a job here. Like it or not, York is in the West!”—a YUFA member

Barbara Rahder (Environmental Studies)

Working to promote equity and fairness at York is apparently a waste of time to at least some YUFA members. Disturbing as it is, what I appreciate about the quote above is that it finally makes the prevalence of a “Western” bias at York University explicit. At last, the pretence of objectivity normally claimed by “Westerners” is gone. The speaker’s underlying assumption is clear: if you thought York would evaluate “non-Western ways of knowing” fairly, you are wrong.

What this quote suggests to me is that YUFA needs to do much more to educate its members about the detrimental impacts of “Western” bias within the university community. A “Western” bias in hiring committees and tenure and promotion committees can have serious implications for academic programs, for curriculum, for student retention, and for scholarly careers. A “Western” bias devalues and excludes both the knowledge and the people deemed outside this mainstream. A lack of diversity among those hired, tenured, and promoted limits everyone’s opportunities to learn about different ways of seeing and being in the world. As York’s graduate and undergraduate students

become more diverse, it becomes increasingly important that faculty members reflect this diversity. If York University is unfairly evaluating “non-Western ways of knowing,” then it must surely be YUFA’s job, among others, to address this inequity.

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Ratiba Hadj-Moussa (Sociology, Arts; Graduate Programme in Communication & Culture)

What the comment seems to forget is that the West is everywhere, trying to impose its values upon thousands of cultures. Minorities have the right to express their difference, particularly within an institution such as York University where the official discourse seems to be open to some differences. Yes, there are different criteria to evaluate our performances as teachers but they should not be characterized by the closure and the ignorance we see at different levels in the Canadian government (particularly, its immigration officers!).

Stop telling me that as a “Neo Canadian”, I am and I will be only and forever “Neo” and not “Canadian”.

■ ■ ■

Hira Singh (Sociology, Arts)

“Mosaic” and “multiculturalism” are the terms often invoked to characterise Canadian society. Universities in Canada, being part of the Canadian society, are expected to be characterised by these same traits. If the notions of mosaic and multiculturalism imply a recognition of people’s different cultural backgrounds and nationalities, with no discrimination against any particular group/groups, or no differentiation between various groups, then the first question is what is “foreign”, who is a foreigner in

Canada? This is not just semantic hair-splitting. In other words, notwithstanding the claim of mosaic and multiculturalism, there are two kinds of Canadians in Canada: the Canadians and the ‘foreigners’. Who are the Canadians who serve as the standard to measure the Canadian-ness of others—the foreigners? Foreigners in Canada are the people of non-West European ancestry. It is interesting to question why a second or third generation visible minority in Canada remains, to a large degree, a foreigner, while the first generation immigrant from West Europe easily passes for a Canadian. I do not want to pursue this question, though it is interesting for a number of reasons. The question is nevertheless important in considering the relevance of foreign ways of knowing.

Broadly speaking, there are three aspects to the problem that deserve consideration. First, the Canadians, as defined above, serve as the *vantage point* to look at and evaluate the foreigners. Second, they are the ‘norm’ and the normalness or the normlessness of others is judged in terms of their closeness to or the distance from the former. Third, the Canadians, by virtue of being Canadians, enjoy certain privileges that the foreigners have to struggle for, with or without success. These are the privileges the Canadians enjoy, without necessarily being aware of them, since they take them for granted—as normal.

The characteristics constituting the normal range from the appearance and accent to a particular mode of thinking, theorising, and communicating. To the extent, the foreigners are different in terms of these characteristics, they are considered not normal or less than normal that they have to make up for. It creates a tension—overt or covert—at the level of the students, colleagues, and the administrative staff that is

difficult to predict or anticipate. This puts pressure on both the foreigners and Canadians to learn to negotiate with each other, even though the pressure is often on the foreigners. They have to constantly prove themselves.

The pressure on the foreigners is not all deliberately created. Rather, it is a product of a combination of complex historical and structural factors. The global economic-political hierarchy has created a hierarchy of knowledge, including the ways of producing, acquiring, and communicating knowledge. Knowledge, including the mode of its production and consumption produced

in the West is considered superior. Not only that. Whereas those outside the Western world are expected to know the West, for people in the West, it is a different matter. Whatever they know about the world outside is automatically valid “knowledge”. What they don’t is not worth knowing. This often breeds what one Sociologist (C. Wright Mills) called narrow parochialism. Moreover, what people outside Western world know about their own society has to be validated by the West.

There is a positive dimension to the presence of foreigners among Canadians. The foreigners have the advantage of being exposed to some-

thing more than their Canadian counterparts, and if they succeed in overcoming the initial barrier and resistance, the foreigners enjoy a comparative advantage over the latter. In this, there is promise. If the narrow parochialism of Canadian-ness can be overcome, it will create a more positive environment for acquiring, producing, and disseminating knowledge for both the Canadians and the foreigners. This is a challenge and an opportunity for those equipped with foreign ways of knowing.

York's chilly climate (and other barriers to career progress)

The Joint Sub-committee on Employment Equity recently took under consideration a report from the Centre for Human Rights and Equity. The report, written by Darla Rhyne of the Institute for Social Research, was titled A Descriptive Analysis of Open Ended Survey Questions About Delays and Barriers in Career Progress for York University Faculty Members.

Below are some excerpts from that report – if you're interested in viewing it in its entirety check out <http://yufa.org/equity/delays.html>.—eds

Background

In February, 2001, the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University was commissioned by the Centre for Human Rights and Equity to undertake a descriptive analysis of responses to three open ended questions from a survey of faculty at York. These questions asked about the length and seriousness of delays in career progress related to taking care of children; the length and seriousness of delays in career progress related to caring for other family members; and, barriers to career development within the university. (p.1)

The findings presented in this report identify barriers and delays and have a potential both for generating hypotheses about these issues, their dimensions and interrelationships and for grounding conceptual understandings of employment eq-

uity. However, the findings are not generalizable and do not provide estimates of prevalence. The opinions and experiences of respondents who answered the open ended survey questions are not necessarily typical or widespread. (p. 2)

Summary of Themes

(pp 9-10) The following section of the report identifies themes that seem especially salient for Aboriginal Peoples, those with disabilities, visible minorities and women.

Aboriginal Peoples

Barriers to career development include chilly climate and under representation in full time faculty positions.

Visible Minorities

Assistance to non-English speaking family members has delayed career progress for some.

Barriers specifically related to being a member of a visible minority group include chilly climate; subtle and overt racism; a climate dominated by a white majority frame of reference that results in less productive work and unfair criteria for tenure and promotion; overwork due to being a "token" faculty member and a non responsive environment for challenging Euro-centric and Anglophone assumptions.

People with Disabilities

Barriers specifically related to disability include: inability to get research funding while on Long-term Disability; inability to work while on Long-term Disability; bad acoustics limiting participation in activities held in the Senate Chamber; inadequate and inefficient physical access and facilities; lack of interpreters for deaf faculty, difficulty meeting professional obligations and/or being perceived as incompetent due to non disclosure of disability, harassment and ridicule from colleagues.

Women

Child and family care responsibilities may delay women longer than men. Many women report a chilly climate for women; lack of accommodation of child rearing responsibilities especially during the tenure and promotion process; heavy work load; excessive administrative responsibility; and, difficulty obtaining desired courses. Some women felt it took longer, required more work and a more substantial file to obtain promotion than men. Others felt the overall criteria for tenure and promotion was overtly sexist. Some women felt the situation at York had improved over time.

Equity Committee launches initiative to counter teaching evaluation biases

Monica Mulvihill (staff) and **Jody Nyasha Warner** (Libraries; YUFA Equity Coordinator)

The YUFA Equity Committee has been discussing ways in which we could support people who are experiencing difficulty with teaching evaluations during the T&P process. In particular, we are interested in addressing how race, ethnicity, accent, gender, sexual orientation and disability can result in biased evaluations, including the impact of traditional expectations in the discipline. In order to take a pro-active approach to dealing with these concerns, we are planning to establish a resource file and a pool of knowledgeable colleagues who could provide peer teaching assessments. The re-

source file will be comprised of a collection of research articles which contextualize the role that race, gender, etc. play in the teaching evaluations provided by students. These articles would be kept on file at both the CST and the YUFA office and could be copied and added to individual T&P files where relevant.

We hope to compile a list of faculty members who are prepared to volunteer as peer teaching assessors. Their role would be to read course outlines, course material and teaching dossiers, attend a T&P candidate's class and write a teaching evaluation taking into consideration factors such as disability, sexual orientation etc. This would occur at the point at which a candidate feels that their teaching evaluations, or the commit-

tee's reading of them, have demonstrated some evidence of biases. Although we would provide some minimal orientation, we are hoping that those who volunteer will have some prior experience and/or expertise in these issues. We do not expect that the time commitment associated with being a peer assessor will be onerous.

There will be an orientation for peer assessors set for late April 2002.

If you know of any articles that contextualize the issues raised above, could you please forward this information to Jody Warner <warner@yorku.ca>. If you are willing to volunteer to be a peer assessor, please contact Monica Mulvihill <mmulvi@yorku.ca>.

