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News and notes

Negotiations 2001: Membership meeting to ratify proposals

The next General Membership Meetings will ratify YUFA's primary bargaining position for 2001. The Contract Review Committee will be on hand to address questions and issues. It will be held **Wednesday the 25th of April, 3pm-6pm, Harry Crowe Room, Atkinson College**. The proposals will be sent to you before the meeting and will be available on YUFA's website.

YUFA supports women retirees at U of T

At a Membership Meeting on the 7th of December, YUFA passed a motion supporting "the cause of retired women University of Toronto faculty members and librarians in their efforts to win compensation for their years of underpay relative to their male colleagues."

On the 18th of December, the YUFA Executive followed this up with a letter to UofT President Robert Birgeneau, urging him to redress the low pensions of these women retirees:

"We are writing to lend our support to the retired women faculty and librarians ... who are seeking redress for salary inequities incurred prior to [the] 1991 review.... These salary inequities have resulted in embarrassingly pitiful pensions for the individuals in question. Many of these women have made and continue to make important contributions to the University, the community, and scholarship in general. The fact that they should endure penury and hardship at this stage in their lives casts a blight on the reputation of your venerable institution. The number of individuals involved is not high and the costs ... relatively small compared to the impact compensating them appropriately would have on their lives and the reputation of your institution."

YUFA submits brief to OHRC Age Consultation

In September 2000, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) launched a province-wide consultation on human rights issues facing older persons. Any interested individual or organisation was able to make a submission. Due to its keen interest and bargaining history regarding mandatory retirement, YUFA chose to participate in the public consultation.

In a letter to the Commission dated 31st of October, YUFA argued that 'mandatory retirement is arbitrary, discriminatory and a waste of human potential.'

The letter argues for a reassessment of the assumptions and objectives whereby this form of discrimination has been justified by the courts.

It continues: 'One argument for setting a mandatory retirement age has been the necessity to preserve the integrity of pension plans. But given the fact that more people are living longer, preserving the integrity of pension plans may in the future require people to delay the age at which they begin to take advantage of their pensions. Demographic analysis of the distribution of members of pension plans suggests that soon, those who are retired will outnumber active members, leaving too few active contributors to support the growing number of retirees.'

'With regard to fostering the prospects of younger workers, we question the wisdom of playing off the needs of one population cohort against another. We also note somewhat cynically, that the effect of mandatory retirement in the context of replacement workers is to save employers a lot of money as they replace older more expensive workers with cheaper, younger labour. Many jurisdictions including other provinces in Canada (ie Manitoba) and the United States have no mandatory age at which workers must retire. None of these economies have collapsed nor is there

evidence that younger workers have been forced elsewhere to seek employment.

'[Furthermore,] The number of people who choose to work past the age of 65 is quite small, and in fact, when given the choice, people are likely to choose early retirement.

'...There are good reasons for individuals continuing to work beyond age 65. Many people, especially women who have started careers later than their male counterparts, or who have spent many years working in the home or in low wage jobs, face the prospect of living in poverty in their senior years due to low pensions. It does not seem fair or equitable to force people in these circumstances into retirement.

'As an arbitrary standard mandatory retirement has no relationship with competence. Madame Justices Wilson and L'Heureux-Dubé in their dissenting judgements in "Stoffman" ... argued that the idea of mandatory retirement logically requires that somehow a person becomes less competent the day after her 65th birthday. We already have in existence the criteria of *bona fide* occupational requirement and there is no reason why these criteria could not be extended to assess those over 65 years where appropriate. In addition, employers always have the option of terminating employees for cause. Our argument is that the cause should not be arbitrary – ie. based on age without any requirement to show incompetence or inability to perform her job.

'To address the university sector in particular: in Ontario it is clear that we will soon face a severe shortage of university faculty. Some of the factors that will affect our universities include a double cohort created by the decision to discontinue Grade thirteen, increasing enrolments and an aging professoriate. In the next ten years 43% of YUFA members will reach age 65. Our older faculty are highly skilled. The commitment and costs spent educating this faculty should not be squandered, their talents will be needed.'

Chair's report ...

Poor labour relations impair York

By Penni Stewart

Colleagues

Spring, but for many of us unfortunately not the end of classes, is on the wing. In this post-strike edition of *Active Voice* several colleagues reflect on the dilemmas we face. Here, I focus mainly on our current labour relations climate.

At YUFA we have been busy. The end of the strike brought a host of individual and systemic issues and our staff and officers have been working to resolve the many accommodation issues, including tenure and promotion, sabbatical leaves and travel funds. YUFA staff are also busy advising candidates on details of negotiating first contracts and terms and conditions. For the first time YUFA staff are administering the various grants and leaves previously handled through the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning (SCOTL).

In the last *Active Voice* I was able to report progress on a number of issues in the key labour / management committee (the Joint Committee on the Administration of the Agreement, or JCOAA). Since the end of the CUPE strike, however, things have slowed to a crawl.

Despite what we believe is a contractual obligation to negotiate pay for remediation—central to rights of all unions is that the employer is not allowed to unilaterally set pay—the employer offered to pay a small percentage of the faculty involved in remediation the lowest pay level in our contract (the rate for marker/graders). Not surprisingly some faculty members find this upsetting. We have filed a grievance.

It took well over a year to get contracted improvements to retiree

benefits implemented, despite the assured funding of these post retirement benefits fund and agreement to extend benefits some months ago.

Two months ago we requested information on administrative stipends, on the basis of information submitted to JCOAA showing extra-ordinary and arbitrary variation in the stipends (in some cases, apparently, between zero and \$20,000/yr) paid in different faculties. To date there has been no response.

Several month ago YUFA offered to pay for a salary analysis conducted by a third party, when salary data showed what appears to be growing gender inequities in salary. We reminded the employer that our last collective agreement includes a pledge by the employer not to allow the creation of new gender inequities. We have made this request, through JCOAA, several times but the only response has been the statement that we “may not agree on [what constitutes] gender inequities.”

Other issues are simply not followed up. For example, nearly half the request for reports on faculty workload, requested over the last year, have not been received. A conflict of interest policy submitted about a year ago has never received a response.

Three years ago, YUFA first raised our concerns about the approaching impact of the double cohort. Within the next few years York (along with every other North American university) will experience many retirements while facing a growing student cohort, fueled by provincial changes in education. These changes have serious implications for faculty and librarian workload and for the organization of our work. We have had no serious re-

sponse to our request to discuss these issues with the employer.

What accounts for this slowdown? Perhaps a short-term difficulty is that a new Director of Academic Staff Relations heads the office responsible for our labour relations. But the larger problem, in my view, is that employer's reorganization of labour relations last summer is not working. Their idea of dispersing responsibility between the Vice Presidents Academic's office (previously responsible for academic labour) and the Vice President Finance (currently responsible) should have resulted in greater coordination. But, in my view, the result has been to further marginalize labour relations by increasing the separation of the lines of authority from the key front line managers—the deans.

Most worrying, despite efforts of the office of Academic Staff Relations there seems little will on the part of the principals to move issues forward. Management culture at York places little genuine emphasis on informing or consultation. At the same time, we are witnessing an apparent centralization of authority in the University Executive Committee (UEC). This has meant that employer representatives on the JCOAA must consult absentee principals on almost every issue, but seem to have little call on the attention of top management.

Another source of frustration is inadequate information. Two weeks ago a session of JCOAA was devoted to a review of financial information. What we heard was very worrying: it was reported that next year there will be budget cuts of 3.7% to all administrative portfolios in the University, except the faculties who are cut by 2.5%. More cuts

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may follow. According to AVP Gary Brewer, 0.7% is attributed to the CUPE settlement, and the rest to unexpected ancillary costs, such as increased heating costs. Just three years ago, in the 1998-2001 budget plan, the Vice President (Administration) projected a balanced budget by 1999-2000. And April 2000 Financial statements also indicate a healthy financial picture for York.

What are we to make of this budgetary crisis? As Pat Bradshaw, YUFA Treasurer and faculty member at Schulich, argued in her "deficit story"—deficits reflect decisions and assumptions about spending and saving—for example the emphasis on paying down the debt. The problem of course is that the partial information shared with YUFA is not what is needed to assess the budget—an old story. What are we to do? In a letter reprinted in this edition of *Active Voice*, Harry Glasbeek (Professor Emeritus from Osgoode) calls on President Marsden to initiate a review of the history and culture of collective bargaining at York. The YUFA Executive has endorsed his call. The extremely poor history of labour rela-

tions impairs our community's ability to revitalize itself, and makes York a more difficult place to work. Confrontations of the kind we have recently witnessed are a lose-lose situation. Such a review should examine other university communities and workplaces with the goal of establishing standards for "best practices". A review would include scrutiny of accountability structures, offices and support. It would clarify roles of the union and management and hopefully promote constructive dialogue and relations.

Is a review of collective bargaining enough to "fix" York? Maybe not. Many of my colleagues are now convinced that a more fundamental reform of both of York's governance structures—the Senate and Board—is necessary. In my view, the Senate has become increasingly preoccupied with bureaucratic matters and seems unable to act as a forum for genuine leadership or debate. Too often management and labour issues spill into Senate affairs because there is not another working venue. This is no formula for creativity.

Revitalizing the Senate may be crucial, but it is not sufficient. At Trent, a judicial review of a decision

by the Board of Governors to overrule the Senate, on the closure of the downtown colleges, upheld the arguments of the Board (a decision now under appeal). At York, we have a management-dominated Board, the norm in many corporations. But it is also a common corporate practice to separate the positions of Chief Executive and Chair of the Board, so that the organization is not captured by the short-term needs of its managers. The Chair of York's Board appears to play no such role, leaving the impression that power is almost entirely in the hands of the President.

At the same time, the Board is terribly short on diversity. On the corporate side—well the Board mostly is corporate—executives from the financial sector, lawyers and other non-union employers (IBM!) dominate. Probably, we should not be surprised by its actions. It is time for a more broadly representative Board. If we must have a corporate-dominated Board, perhaps we should have some executives and directors of corporations that actually have to deal with unions!

Penni

Feature section 1

Approaching bargaining

Results of the 2001 bargaining questionnaire ...

YUFA members respond

By Brett Cemer (staff)

In an unprecedented outpouring of opinion, more than 430 YUFA members took the time to fill out and return YUFA's 2001 bargaining questionnaire. (In 1999, just 275 members responded.) The survey results are now being used by the Contract Review Committee as it develops bargaining proposals for this spring's negotiations.

YUFA members gave their views about bargaining priorities in the areas of salary improvements, health & safety concerns, excessive workload, equity issues, and benefits plans. The distribution of respondents by home Faculty, age category, and sex, closely matched that of YUFA as a whole.

Priorities

There is a strong consensus among YUFA members that the top three bargaining priorities for the upcoming negotiations should be (in alphabetical order): benefits, salary, and workload. On scale where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'extremely important', the percent-

age of '4' and '5' answers for these three areas were, respectively, 71%, 77%, and 62%.

How YUFA members rank these priorities varies to some extent with demographics: female respondents' first priority is workload, while male respondents put salary issues first. Older members emphasize benefits more, while younger members are more interested in salaries.

Salaries

A cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) was the most popular of six kinds of salary proposals presented in the questionnaire. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents supported this proposal. In next place, tied at 40% support, were an across-the-board increase of the same dollar amount for every member and development of a salary grid. These results mirror those of 1999.

Members also indicated what factors they felt should determine salaries at York. As we know, the most important determinant of YUFA salaries has been and remains management discretion. Yet,

this factor received the least support of those listed, at a mere eight per cent. Clearly it is time for a change. The factors YUFA members most believe should influence salaries are years of professional experience (74%), merit (67%), and rank (63%). Merit is markedly more popular with younger colleagues.

Many of the respondents remarked on the recent/ongoing merit exercise. For the most part, comments were split between those who objected to merit pay in principle and those who objected to the process that the employer had designed for allocating merit pay. A minority suggested that far more money should be spent on merit so that more members could receive merit-based raises.

Dismay about the low levels of administrative stipends was widespread. More than 95% of respondents believe that Chairs and Programme directors are under-compensated for their efforts by the existing levels of yearly stipends, which are \$3408 for Chairs and \$2272 for Programme Directors. Instead, the median rates that mem-

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bers would consider reasonable are \$5000 and \$4000 for Chairs and Programme Directors, respectively.

In all faculties except Science, a majority of respondents believed that the salaries of Alternate Stream faculty members (who are assigned high teaching and service loads but who are not required to do research) should be brought up to par with Professorial Stream faculty members. Overall, 63% of members 'strongly' or 'somewhat' support this proposal (49% in Science).

Health & safety

Although YUFA members rated health & safety relatively low in the list of priorities, a disquieting 59% of survey respondents said they have concerns about air quality and temperature in their offices and classrooms. Women were particularly affected.

These concerns applied to every building in which a significant number of respondents work. Moreover, many respondents working in the Centre for Fine Arts, Lumbers, and the Petrie Building questioned whether hazardous materials were being handled safely in their buildings.

When asked about other health & safety issues that had arisen in focus groups YUFA conducted last summer, the top three issues were inadequate ergonomic office equipment (34%), stress (27%), and worries about safety in parking lots after dark (31%). The latter concern was especially prevalent among women (62%).

Workload

Many YUFA members feel that their workload has increased in the last five years (67% of those who have worked at York for at least five years). Professors' teaching or librarians' 'professional performance' are most often identified as the source of the heavier load (83%

of those experiencing an increase), while increased service demands also affect many (64%).

The five top workload issues, from a list of several possibilities provided in the questionnaire, were:

- 'Overall, email from students has significantly increased my teaching load' (51%)
- 'My class sizes are too large for optimal learning' (43%)
- 'Other aspects of workload are so heavy that few members in my unit want to do committee work or fill chair and programme director positions' (43%)
- 'It is very difficult to achieve a balance among teaching, research, and service' (42% of faculty members)
- 'I receive no teaching-load credit for graduate supervision' (39%)

Members appointed to Atkinson, Environmental Studies, and Fine Arts tended to feel most burdened by several facets of overwork.

Librarians also share faculty members' sense that it is difficult to balance 'professional performance', research, and service (64%). This is largely because, as *all* librarian respondents agreed, York's libraries are understaffed.

Equity

Although equity was a comparatively low priority for survey respondents, certain equity-related proposals were endorsed strongly by YUFA members of all ages and faculties, and both sexes.

Specifically, a proposal to broaden eligibility for continuing reduced-load employment after age 65 in order to assist those with low pensions was supported by 81% of respondents (44% 'very strongly'). Nearly all felt that improved harassment investigation procedures were needed (92%: 49% 'very important').

Other equity-related concerns, ranging from disability issues to chilly climate and low pensions,

were described by 52 respondents. These comments, as well as responses to open items elsewhere on the questionnaire, are being studied by the Contract Review Committee.

Benefits

YUFA retirees' numbers are growing apace—they will double in the next 10 years as more than 450 or an estimated 42% of continuing members retire. It is not surprising that substantial and permanent improvements to the flimsy benefits programme for retirees is one of the most important proposals for survey respondents, regardless of their age group. Overall, 96% feel this proposal is important (72% 'very important').

Improvements to benefits for 'active' members are less popular. Although there are areas of the benefit package that could be improved, consensus is lacking about which ones should be addressed. For example, the two specific proposals assessed in the questionnaire—eliminating deductibles and a parking/commuting benefit—garnered much less interest than the retiree benefits proposal.

Thank you for your contribution

The YUFA Executive wishes to thank everyone who took the time to aid the bargaining effort by responding. Your input has already been very informative for the Contract Review Committee, which is formulating proposals, and it will also be most useful to the Negotiating Committee when proposals are being put forth at the bargaining table.

Acknowledgements: The author wishes to thank Kathy Bischooping and Jay Rahn for improving this report.

Rethinking the Alternate Stream

By Mary Kandiuk (Information Officer; Librarian Representative, Contract Review Comm.)

There is currently a small and largely unrecognized group of individuals in YUFA. They are to be found in clusters in certain departments and faculties, namely DLLL, French Studies, Kinesiology, Science, with a few others sprinkled here and there (Centre for Academic Writing, Theatre, Nursing). They are course directors, chairs of departments, undergraduate programme directors and directors of labs. Some have served in administrative positions such as associate deans. Many have PhDs and are involved in research. Others are chairs of committees; several have won teaching awards. In fact these individuals carry heavier teaching and service loads than many of their colleagues. They are also heavily involved in student advising and have a large number of contact hours with students. They are members of YUFA yet they earn on average 15% less than their YUFA professorial colleagues and 7% less than their professional librarian colleagues.

The alternate stream was created many years ago in response

to the University's need for specialized teaching skills in certain areas (i.e. native speakers in language courses, lab coordinators and coaches). Their responsibilities lay primarily in the areas of teaching and service and they were evaluated for tenure and promotion on this basis. The current number of YUFA members in the alternate stream stands at 44. For a number of years the University stopped making appointments in this category. There appears to have been a shift in this policy with recent appointments being made in Biology and Nursing.

While the responsibilities of the alternate stream in Science have changed little over the years, in some areas, DLLL and French Studies in particular, the criteria for the creation of alternate stream appointments are no longer relevant. Whatever the original formal expectations for those in this stream might have been, they are significantly different today. In part this is due to the enormous professional growth in certain fields such as applied linguistics, the fact that Departments have hired new faculty into the professorial stream rather than the alternate stream (as they might have in the past),

and increasing demands and expectations of faculty within departments that do not distinguish one stream from another. Many members of the alternate stream have gone on to receive their doctorates and are actively involved in research, publication and conference activity. While holding the somewhat vague title of Lecturer the expectations of some members of the alternate stream are in fact no less than those of their professorial counterparts.

Undoubtedly one of the reasons for the present overlooked plight of our alternate stream colleagues is the fact that they are dispersed amongst so many different departments and faculties across the university. While the professional librarians are actually fewer in number than the alternate stream, they are a more cohesive group and have been successful in raising their issues in a coordinated and organized way to the forefront of YUFA's agenda. So let us as we approach our next round of collective bargaining lend our support to the issues of the alternate stream and work with them to achieve the recognition they deserve.

Whither your benefits? ...

The view from 2007

By Margaret Knittl (Association of Retired Faculty)

We all know that the face of the York University will be transformed over the next five or six years by massive retirements on the one hand and

vigorous recruiting of new faculty on the other to meet both these retirements and burgeoning enrolments demands. It is harder to visualize what all the consequences will be. And when will planning and implementation start? Here I look at one aspect only of that renewal: its

impact on retired faculty and librarians.

I leave aside the contentious matter, now under discussion, of trimming back the increments to pensions our pension plan provides for, and look instead at the much

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less well known curtailment of post-retirement medical and dental benefits for retired faculty and librarians which has already happened. The benefits plan for YUFA retirees is of the type where *the sum to be expended* is guaranteed, *not* the benefits outlined in the brochure retirees receive. In short, it is a capped programme. Legally speaking, the administration has the right to reduce benefits and increase retiree-paid premiums if costs exceed the combined total of the sum it puts up and the premiums it collects. The sum it allocates to the plan is set biennially in contract negotiations with YUFA. At present there is no obligation on the administration to increase its allocation in step with either inflation or growing numbers of retirees, and it remains murky what happens if the money available proves to be inadequate within the contract period. Just to ensure the survival of the plan YUFA is under the very serious burden of ensuring that, contract by contract, the administration agrees to a sum that takes inflation and growing numbers into account. To actually improve your retirement benefits is another whole issue.

I believe you know that benefits for YUFA retirees are a pale shadow of what active faculty enjoy. It's less well known that they are

also markedly inferior to the benefits provided for retired members of the professional and managerial group at York. This has been the case since 1994 when, because benefits were costing more, year by year, than the \$66,000 earmarked for them by the administration, YUFA retiree benefits were cut back, and members were first required to pay premiums. The P&Mers remained unscathed; in their plan it is the *benefits* that are guaranteed, not the sum to be expended. They contend with no cost over-runs, no cuts, no premiums, no biennial scramble merely to stay in the same place.

The impact of the coming tidal wave of retirements on our and your tenuous hold on retiree benefits scarcely bears thinking about- except that it's high time some thinking and planning got done! In projecting a view of 2007 I use figures provided to the Retirement Planning Centre for the age distribution of faculty as of the end of 1997. Shifting each cohort along by ten years gives a good view of the scene in 2007. According to the Department of Human Resources, the number of persons insured under our plan in 1997 averaged about 405 over the calendar year. By 2007, allowing that 18% of retirees will not join the plan and that 65% of those who do will have a spouse, and 35% will not (this follows the

experience to date), the number of insured persons will be about 950. (This does not take account of early retirements or of deaths among present retirees.)

In the plan year just past, costs have been running at about \$640 per insured person. Given an inflation rate of 4% a year (based on experience to date) that will rise to \$842 by the end of 2007. For 950 insured persons the cost of the plan, with *no* improvements, will be a little over \$800,000. The present budget is approximately \$400,000. Of that, \$300,000 is provided by the administration and about \$100,000 comes from premiums retirees pay. The latter amount will grow as the cohort of insured persons grows, but what will the administration do? The answer depends very much on what YUFA does now in contract negotiations, what priority you give to putting your retirement benefits plan on a solid foundation while there is still time. Once you retire, you are no longer a 'human resource' to the administration and within YUFA you become an associate member only. Forget that bit about Professor Emeritus!

And if you want to see your battered benefits plan actually improved, there is a second struggle ahead. For now the issue is the plan's survival.

Feature section 2

The Strike

Reflections

The three faces of victory

The unravelling stops here

By Carla Lipsig-Mumme (Social Science)

The recent 11-week strike by York's 2100 teaching and graduate assistants and sessional lecturers, members of CUPE local 3903, was not your average public sector strike. It was long, the workers were the precariously-employed underclass of their workplace—and the union won. In winning, they have kicked off a new stage in the struggle for unionization in our increasingly commercial universities. They may even have opened a new front in the battle to maintain *public* higher education in Canada.

In any strike, there are three faces to victory. There is the language in the collective agreement; the public 'take' on the settlement, and how the union movement uses the gains. In this strike, there were three core issues: the indexation of salaries to tuition for teaching assistants in Unit 1 of the local; job security for sessional lecturers (Unit 2); and a decent first contract for the graduate research assistants

who had recently won a long and dirty struggle with the York administration over their right to unionize at all (Unit 3).

Wages and benefits were an issue for all units, but tuition indexation for teaching assistants became the pivot quickly. In the past, the union negotiated contracts that ensured that its members would receive pay raises as tuition rises under deregulation. It is a very creative way of using the collective bargaining process to deal with public policy.

Tuition indexation for teaching assistants had been unique to York contracts for a number of years [several other unions have partially indexed tuition rebates—ed.], and the employer was now proposing to end it when the present generation of TAs completed their studies. In making tuition indexation the centrepiece of demands, CUPE was, in effect, fighting for the next generation and other universities. It was also insisting that it would go to the wall against employer clawbacks. The contract language registered a solid victory for

the union on all these issues. The victory was all the more sweet because members had massively rejected the government-supervised ratification vote forced on it less than a week earlier.

The second face of victory, the public reading of the strike and the settlement, is more complex. Not surprisingly, the media and the York administration invoked the student community, the ghost at the bargaining table, to clobber the union. In many public sector strikes, the struggle for the minds and hearts of the users of services is key to both settlement and life after signing the contract. And in many public sector strikes, the translation of union concern for the interests of the community into strike strategy comes too little and too late to ring true. In the York strike however, union and community concerns came together sufficiently for students to register support, even as they expressed their fear about losing their academic year.

But there is also a political context to the public take on the un-

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ion victory. It now seems clear that the York Administration was prepared to 'wear' this strike to rid itself of tuition indexation, or indeed, any lien on its ability to raise tuition. To that end it stretched out the bargaining, and seemed to believe either that the union did not represent its members, or that it could starve them into settling. When neither proved the case, it turned to a nasty piece of coercion, the law which allows the employer to call on the government to supervise a vote on its last offer. Rejected by a 2/3 majority, York's administration was now between two rocks and a hard place: students and their parents who believed the university did not care whether they lost an academic year; a union whose internal solidarity had been reinforced by outrage at the forced ratification vote; and the Harris cabinet. The last, which had not played a visible role in the strike, could be seen to be readying itself to take over the employer's side of the negotiations, in effect putting York into receivership. The sloppy, vitriolic, threatening columns by John Ibbitson in the *Globe and Mail* telegraphed those moves.

As the employer returned to the bargaining table in the weekend of January 6, following its failure to force a ratification of its offer, President Lorna Marsden made a tactical blunder that cost the administration mortally. When Marsden ordered the students and the full-time faculty back to the classroom and hired buses to assist in crossing the picket lines, a crisis of legitimacy broke out. Isolated, fearing that the Harris government would step in, facing a union which had recreated

solidarity after almost 3 months on strike, the York Administration settled, and forfeited any of the ordinary public sympathy that employers usually garner when facing successful unions.

CUPE's handling of the strike, the settlement and the public perception of it, have given the union movement a unique opportunity in Canada. Over the past decade, universities' growing use of

Higher education has become a service industry, whose employers deploy the language of community and scholarship to maintain an underclass

contracting out, part-time contracts and the privatization of services have eroded secure employment and created a mosaic of precarious jobs. But a message has now gone out nationally from the York strike: the unravelling stops here. We will fight if universities continue to try to solve their public funding shortfalls on the backs of their employees. We will try to use collective bargaining to re-open public access to higher education. And if anyone can, unions in the higher education industry can make these things happen.

But the York victory also reveals an urgent need for change in how unions handle the struggle. As

labour-friendly American academics Kate B. Bronfenbrenner and T. J. Juravich brilliantly argued in their country, the increasingly commercial university cannot continue to maintain the fiction of a community of scholars and scholar-apprentices. Higher education has become a service industry whose employers deploy the language of community and scholarship to maintain an underclass. It is more than time that each of the campus employee groups: full-time faculty and part-time faculty, graduate teaching and research assistants, support staff and students, as well as employer representatives - recognize the reality of class relations on campus, and organize based on that reality.

At present, campus workers are organized in a messy mosaic of union groups, sometimes several uncoordinated locals of the same union, sometimes a number of separate unions, not to mention the workers whose outsourced jobs fall outside the protection of unions. There is compelling reason to argue that the coming together of all unions on each campus for coordinated bargaining - or even for mergers - would strengthen campus unionism.

And there is further reason to believe that if the campus unions forced university employers to bargain as a group, instead of one campus at a time, the results would be considerable. The third face of victory is the most challenging of all.

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York faculty need one union, governance reform

By Gregory Guy (Languages, Literature, and Linguistics)

The CUPE 3903 strike again brings into focus a crucial issue for academic staff at York, namely the division of York teachers and researchers into separate unions. In union matters, numbers and unity equal strength, and the YUFA/CUPE division at York harms both groups. Other Canadian universities have one union representing all academics: for example, Western, and most recently, Wilfrid Laurier. York should follow their lead and seek a merger of all the teaching, research, and library staff at York into one union.

Of course, this is not something to achieve at collective bargaining with the employer. Nevertheless, enhanced union solidarity should be on our minds during bargaining. As an initial step in this direction, I suggest that YUFA should table a claim regarding the definition of persons covered by our collective agreement: everyone teaching more than two full-course equivalents (or four half-courses), should be covered by YUFA salary floors, benefits, etc. Coupled with CUPE's seniority provisions, this should have the effect of de facto 'conversion' of CUPE unit two mem-

bers. I don't propose that we should do this to 'poach' members from CUPE, but rather to help CUPE achieve its goal of employment stability for long-serving unit two members. If there are concerns about union membership, we could perhaps propose that persons in this position have an option of union representation, or negotiate some other arrangement with CUPE. But it is certainly a legitimate labour issue for YUFA. When it is cheaper for the employer to hire people at the CUPE rate to teach courses that would otherwise be covered by YUFA members, York has a powerful incentive to act against the interests of YUFA and its membership. This is, in effect, out-sourcing, as far as YUFA is concerned, and out-sourcing is clearly a legitimate bargaining issue. The present arrangements make a mockery of our collective agreement limits on workload, salary, and benefits: our members work alongside colleagues who do the same kind of work in the same department, often in the same courses, but by dint of belonging to a different union, are not subject to any of the minimum guarantees or protections of our collective agreement.

Another effect of the CUPE strike was to once again highlight the deficiencies of governance at

York. We have an administration that steadily pursues a top-down, managerial model of governance, but by most reasonable measures does a mediocre job of it. The Senate—which is the only collegial forum at York with any real authority—was once again fairly ineffective during the strike, due principally in my view to the notorious block voting by the 'bionic' senators—the deans, vice-presidents, and other ex-officio members. I believe YUFA should push for Senate reform: remove the right to vote from non-elected senators. Senior administrators may well offer useful service to the work of Senate (providing information, perspective, analysis, etc.), but their independence of action is in doubt, since they are members of a hierarchical structure which may require them to 'toe the line'. Their practice of block voting allows the administration to significantly affect the policy it is supposed to be governed by, and to obstruct initiatives for purely self-serving reasons (such as avoiding loss of face for a bad decision.) Given this, they are not participating on a par with the other elected members of Senate, and should not have a vote in Senate, unless they stand for election through some established constituency.

York needs a democratic labour relations inquiry

By Harry Glasbeek (Law)

Editor's note: The following is a letter to York President Lorna Marsden dated 8 November 2000, early in the strike. In hindsight, its analysis remains cogent, its call for change compelling. Published with the kind permission of the author.

Last year I wrote to you, in sorrow. During a period of tense negotiations between York and CUPE, I—and the many people who signed the letter—expressed concern about the nature of employer/employee relations at York University. You were kind and generous enough to treat the letter thoughtfully. You undertook to reflect on how labour relations could be improved. The current CUPE strike provides you with an incentive and opportunity to follow through on this undertaking.

A central part of the earlier letter was an acknowledgment that, even in the best of all worlds, collective bargaining would lead to occasional breakdowns. Still, the argument went on, York seemed to go to impasse too often. In that context, I urged that you minimize the risk of another disrupting showdown by entering into a two-year agreement with the CUPE locals, then at odds with York University. The point was not that this would resolve the underlying labour relations' problems, but that it would give everyone some breathing room during which some serious re-thinking might take place. In the event, this was not done and here we are again: pickets, disruptions to research and classes, further embedding of tensions and resentments which will persist for a long time after this particular dispute has been settled.

What is there to say and do? Well, immediate action to remedy

the situation is not possible. But, we are in a university. We can, are expected to, think. Let us begin thinking. At the risk of being pedantic, I want to make some elemental points to support some suggestions which, in turn, could kick-start the thinking process.

The logic of the system of collective bargaining practised in our universities only has merit in the private sector. There economic warfare subjects the parties to the discipline of the market. If workers can go without their pay for longer than the employer can last without profits, the employer will be pushed back to the bargaining table. If the employer can hold out longer than the workers, they will be pressured into a settlement. To make this work, the parties have been granted some legal privileges which policymakers believe create appropriate countervailing powers. Workers may try to persuade other workers and trading partners of the employer not to deal with that employer; employers are free to maintain production if they can and to hire other workers to do so. Both employers and employees are at risk. It is this which underpins the system of "voluntary" agreement-making in the private sector. It makes internal sense.

Not so in our setting. University workers bear the same risk as do workers in the private sector. This gives rise to the impression that the private and quasi-public bargaining sectors are fundamentally the same. But, in the private sector, the employer's possible loss of production will cost it money. This is not true for a university. Its potential loss during a dispute is one of reputation, of prestige. In due course, this might impose a monetary cost, but not necessarily. Qualitatively, collective bargaining in universities is fundamentally dis-

tinct from the process in the private sector.

The importance of this is that, in the university setting, the negotiators on the employer's side are in a very different position to that occupied by their counterparts in a for-profit firm; as seen, this is not true of the university workers' negotiators whose principals bear the usual risks. This puts university administrators in a unique position. The university's administrators' attitude to collective bargaining becomes a crucial determinant of how collective bargaining is conducted in universities. As a university's negotiators are not disciplined directly by an external "neutral" force such as the market for goods, services and labour, they do not face the same dilemmas as do private sector employers and managers. They have a different set of imperatives and discretionary powers. This means that, in a university setting,

- (1) Administrators who, notionally, are there to facilitate, plan and co-ordinate, the university's workers' teaching and research tasks, who, notionally, are there in a secondary/supporting role, are given a primary decision-making role which, if they choose, may be exercised in an adversarial manner. The way in which this choice is made depends on the culture of the university;
- (2) Administrators may see this decision-making power as an aggrandisement of their role, as adding to their power. There may be a temptation to use this power in a confrontational way because
 - (a) it gives a sense of importance, of centrality, which administrators, notionally, ought not to have, and

(Continued on page 14)

**A MESSAGE FROM THE YORK COMMUNITY TO THE UNIVERSITY:
responding to the daily website “MESSAGE FROM THE UNIVERSITY
TO THE YORK COMMUNITY”**

Hi there York University—
all dozen or so of you and your lawyer—
up there in your highrise concrete retreat

It's your Community here:
well, about 30,000 or so of us I guess,
undergrads, graduate students
part-timers, full-timers and staff
—you know, the incidental
but unfortunately necessary
accompaniments of
and just now impediments to
the appropriate unfolding
of your upward Corporate path

We're so proud, O University,
to have been chosen
to be part of that path
—each of us just a tiny pebble
under your triumphant strides
along this way that must be tried
—TENTANDA VIA!!—
just so delighted to be here,
to have been called
O University
to be witnesses to this Destiny
that is unfolding
before our awestruck gaze

O University (all dozen or so of you),
Collective Apostلهood of Innovative Excellence!—
we, your Community, deeply regret
that in this democracy
no Knighthoods or Dameships are available
to enwreath your laureate brows

But behold, far in the west,
high on Burnaby Mountain,
one of your number,
triumphant conqueror of the last of these
little nastinesses committed by us
your Community:
installed in glory, a new President
—himself and his bureaucrat buddies
rewarded, as each of you too
O University (all dozen or so of you)
may be rewarded for your unyielding heroism
by any number of Canada's 60-odd
Educative Corporations,
not to speak of Government Ministries

A consummation awaited
O University
with humble
almost prostrate anticipation
by your York Community

*As read at the Founders Gate, 29th Nov 2000
John Unrau (English)*

(Continued from page 12)

- (b) there is no direct cost to the university during any disruption which follows their “tough” stance; indeed, there may be a savings in operational costs;
- Everything depends on the culture of the university;
- (3) Administrators may come to see the university workers as workers qua trade unionists, interested only in capturing an ever larger share of the university’s assets, whereas they, the administrators, are the only faction interested in the welfare of the university as such. In this way the collective bargaining scheme may cause administrators to reconceptualize the organization of universities so as to be the opposite to what it was meant to be and the opposite to what the public relations’ branches of universities say it still is, an organization where teachers, students and researchers-faculty, graduate and undergraduate students are the essence and core of activities, where they are the university. Whether or not this happens depends on the culture of the university.

The private model collective bargaining scheme, then, may distort all of the university’s values, goals and institutionalized decision-making. [Consider here the changed functioning of the Senate at York]. The emphasis, as flagged several times, is on “may”. The difficulties which I assert to inhere in the thoughtless adoption of the private sector model do not have to manifest themselves in their full fury. But, at York University, they do.

It would be silly to suggest that collective bargaining should be abandoned as the dispute-settling machinery. It is the conventionally accepted model and both universities and university workers have organized themselves accordingly. But, the setting in which it is to take place is reviewable. After all, not every university in Ontario has

York University’s track record. My memory tells me that there were actual disruptions in 1979 (YUSA), 1981 (CUEW), 1984 (YUSA), 1985 (YUFA), 1997 (YUFA), 2000 (CUPE). This depressingly impressive list does not include the many bitter confrontations—such as last year’s York/CUPE negotiations—which poison industrial and human relations York University.

This has to change. As so much depends on the culture of the university locale in which this conceptually awkward bargaining model is given life, I want to make a suggestion which could help launch the kind of cultural change which could lead to an amelioration of labour relations practices at York.

The current strike needs to be settled. Undoubtedly, you want this to happen sooner, rather than later. So do the workers. Without getting into the nitty gritty of the demands and counter-demands, a big step forward could be taken by demonstrating that the University is sincerely concerned about this strike and the culture which underlies the recurrent disputes which mar teaching and research. Announce that you want to set-up a democratically-based inquiry into the history and culture of collective bargaining at York University. The emphasis here is on creating a democratic process; the separation between administrators’ interests and those of the university’s workers lies at the heart of what has been going wrong.

While, no doubt, the workers’ approach has played a key role in some of the disruptions, the unions are varied in their approaches, values and needs; more, their personnel varies over time and the manner of elections and appointments ensures that a great variety of bargaining committees and executives come to the fore. None of this is as true on the administration side of things: the administration is the one constant in the bargaining equation and its mode of operations is entrenched in such a way that

new appointees are unlikely to make all that much difference to the stance adopted by the University. Structurally, this suggests that the inquiry should concentrate on such matters as the adopted role of, and any increase in the number of, administrators involved in collective bargaining and, most importantly, should include a qualitative study of the attitude of York University administrators to collective bargaining. The study might unearth valuable data and would be a strong acknowledgment that something is wrong in the employment relations sphere at York University, something which the University should confront as an entity.

The University has the capacity to instill a culture of respect for its oft-stated goals and values, one which remembers that the administration is there to serve the University and that this is best done by including the University’s workers and students as directly in decision-making as possible. The private sector collective bargaining model presumes employment relationships in which there are conflictual and symbiotic aspects. The basis of the conflict is the struggle between private wealth owners’ need to maximize profits at the expense, if need be, of the workers. It promotes hierarchical organization and exploitation. The symbiosis arises out of the material and psychological interdependence of the parties. It supports inclusiveness and joint decision-making. Any one employment relationship—in the private or public sector—is a combination of these pulls and pushes.

It is an imperfect world; conflict cannot be wished away. The issue is one of weight. I would argue that, in a not-for-profit situation, in a university where administrators never tire of saying that there is a shared agenda between the employer and the members of the university, the inherent symbiotic aspects of employment relations, ought to be, and are more easily, promoted. A university which pur-

sues its legal rights to fragmented bargaining and, therefore, the fragmentation of the common endeavour, to the maximum-as York University administrators are in the habit of doing-reduces its relationships with its workers to vehement antagonisms. Indeed, it creates a culture which leads to the kind of conflict-imbued posturing which makes real sense in the for-profit

sector where conflict between exploiting employers and workers is not only inherent, but manifest to both parties. While York University must live in a world whose vision is shaped by the needs and ideology of market capitalism, there is room for manoeuvre in its public sector setting. You could use the present crisis to take the lead, to help manoeuvre York's administrators into a dif-

ferent stance. It is time for York University's administrators to think about whether they aspire the University to be as much like a for-profit, hierarchical organization as it can be, or something else: a university in the idealized sense. Aspirations need not be achievable to be worthwhile. They can inform and improve behaviour.

Hard times for the graduate species

By Clive Holloway (Natural Science)

The recent CUPE strike at York provided ample time for reflection while waiting in the long traffic lines each morning. My thoughts wandered back to my younger days as a graduate student at Western Ontario in the early 60's. I began to think about stipends, fees and the cost of living, and I came to the shocking conclusion that to live as I did then, a graduate student today would need about \$40,000 a year. I arrived in Canada, an immigrant from the UK, with \$13 in my pocket. Two years later I had a car, a nice apartment, a savings account and enough spare cash to fly back to the UK for a holiday. The only thing I lacked in those days was time, that was where I had to scrimp and save. With gas wars bringing the price of fuel down to as low as 10 cents a gallon sometimes, I could afford to explore in my 10 mile to the gallon Chrysler as far afoot as North Bay. Again, only time was the constraint. Even a trip from London to Toronto was a good 4 hours on mostly two lane roads. The short 4-lane 401 across the top of Toronto went

through what seemed to be bush and muskeg with little hint there was a city nearby. A somewhat forbidding city in those days with its Gotham city architecture of red sandstone, drably lit, draconian licensing laws and 10 cent TTC fares.

Given the rule of thumb that a maximum mortgage should not exceed 2.5 years salary, I could have bought a house on my graduate student salary. The detached house I live in today was built in the 1960's at a price I could have afforded then. I didn't buy, of course, because I had other fish to fry and bigger worlds to see, but I know students who did. How many graduate students today could say the same?

What happened? Inexorable exponential growth is what happened. At first you don't notice it, things seem to just edge up almost imperceptibly. Then the first bend in the J curve is reached. When gas reached 50 cents a gallon in the 70's I shocked many people by predicting \$1.00 a gallon before the 80's. Meanwhile I was finding myself refusing to buy a 3-quart milk bag if it ever rose to more than 99 cents, then more than \$1.99, and even within recent times refusing to pay more than \$2.99. I recall a TV docu-

mentary of those days in which people were shown predicted prices of food within ten years; "would you pay \$1.00 for a loaf of bread?"

"I'll just have to starve" was the reply from one elderly lady.

So in real terms, graduate stipends today are about 50% less than they were in my day. We should not express surprise, therefore, at an article in a recent edition of the Toronto Star predicting a dramatic decline in the production of home grown post-graduates, already well underway. Nor should we, therefore, be surprised at the particularly bitter and determined struggle that was engaged this last Fall. In another 40 years, the children of our graduate students will be expected to live on the equivalent of barely \$8,000 a year if the combination of cost of living inflation and stipend erosion continues. Clearly, our concept of graduate school will have ceased to exist before we reach that stage. Maybe that is where we stand today, on the historic threshold of the extinction of the graduate species. It might even be exciting to contemplate what will take its place.

Feature section 3

Budgets and governance

University budgeting and academic resources

**By Brenda Spotton Visano
(Economics)**

The University is gearing up to absorb yet another base budget cut—3% to administrative units, 2.5% to academic units. We have emerged from a long and bitter CUPE strike, long because of the Employer's position that funds were unavailable to pay for CUPE demands. Indeed, the Employer claims that the costs of the more favourable CUPE settlement account for 0.7% of the forthcoming budget cut. The remainder of the cut, their position goes, is to cover cost overruns in the construction expenses for the new buildings and increased heating costs of the existing ones. Rumour has it that there will be subsequent budget cuts of comparable magnitude for a few years to come. But that information will not be released until *after* the Board of Governors has approved it.

President Marsden has been speaking to faculty councils about the changing and increasingly uncertain fiscal environment for On-

tario's post-secondary education sector. Provincial trends include a general deterioration in funding of the post-secondary education sector, a shift toward increasing accountability to the government (which in practice is rife with problems), increased targeted funding for specific student cohorts and increased emphasis on matching private sector funding. The presentation carries the implicit message that York's funding challenge is largely beyond York's control. To the extent it can be influenced, securing replacement funding has entailed more government and private sector lobbying on the part of Board members, Vice President Advancement, and the President herself.

Individual faculty members are concerned about increasing workloads, yet the President states that maintaining and possibly improving the student to faculty ratio is a priority. We are forced to absorb budget cuts, yet new initiatives are popping up in every faculty. What gives? Budgets—both expenditure and revenue decisions—entail choices and increasingly our choices

are made in the absence of information about the trade-offs inherent and embedded in these choices.

In the scramble to secure base funding in an environment where the ground is shifting constantly and considerably, York has been chasing after articulations with the community colleges, pursuing expansions in health, computer science, engineering, and business-related fields—following both student demand for programs and special government funding envelopes. One initiative after another is appearing on the agendas of faculty Councils and Senate. And the Academic Plans of Senate and the Vice President Academic support these new directions.

Academic planning at York proceeds, for the most part, in a budgetary vacuum. In a time-honoured university tradition, academic bodies such as Faculty Councils and Senate evaluate new initiatives on the basis of academic integrity alone. The value of such isolated academic evaluation is undisputed. But to stop here is to abdicate our responsibility to manage

strategically York's academic direction. In the reality of a deteriorating fiscal environment, new initiatives come at the expense of resources to mature programs.

We are neglecting to fully consider at the planning stage the fact that any new initiative will have to be protected from near-term budget cuts if the initiative is to have any chance of success. It follows that university-wide cuts to academic resources must be absorbed in other ways by other programs—in the form of cuts to course offerings, enlarged classes to service existing students, and attrition to the full-time faculty complement as faculty retire and are not replaced. This problem of shifting relative burden is compounded considerably if the new initiative requires additional resources in the start-up. To develop some programs, new resources must be devoted to the initiative *in advance* of the student enrolments and concomitant funding. Moreover, some of these new programs are significantly more faculty-intensive—with significantly lower than average student to faculty ratios—once up and running. While the aggregate York faculty complement may well remain unchanged throughout these turbulent times, the distribution of the faculty across programs is shifting dramatically.

When the question was raised at the Financial Information Subcommittee (FISC) about who decides how the academic budget cut will be allocated across academic activities—specifically which programs and activities would be exempted from cuts—Brian Abner, Associate Vice President Academic

stated that it was entirely a Dean's decision. This begs the question of why any Academic Plan emanates from the Vice President Academic's office and it is wrong if one considers the question of funding to Research Centres. Further, Deans lobbying the VP Academic to secure authorisation for replacement faculty appointments might well take exception to the statement. Yet, if we accept the statement at face value, it means Faculty Councils can no longer be satisfied with Deans blaming their superiors for constrained choices that their superiors tell us was entirely a Dean's decision.

Fundraising is increasingly critical, both as a means of financing university activities and as an *added* constraint on our choices. Many donations (such as Schulich's) and government grants (such as 'Superbuild') come with the condition that the university match the external contribution. These matching university funds must come from the budget of some other existing or planned activity. As such, the acceptance of the external tied monies entails, once again, a trade-off about which we are generally ignorant and can at best infer only after the fact.

If we are satisfied with the manner in which we are collectively managing York's response to the external changes emanating from shifting student preferences for programs and increasingly targeted and tied funding opportunities, then we need do little beyond the imperative action of clarifying responsibilities. Regardless of how we choose to manage our future, it is unacceptable to continue to chase a moving

responsibility target.

If, however, we care to collectively manage our strategic academic directions, then there are a couple of related fundamental challenges that face us.

- 1) We need to undertake academic planning fully informed of and accurately accounting for the funding and enrolment implications of a given strategic direction. Academic plans devoid of any explicit budget considerations are little more than wishful thinking. Related to this is the need for increased internal accountability and transparency with respect to the allocation of academic resources across teaching and research activities, generally; degree programs, research centres, and the like, specifically.
- 2) As the university is increasingly required to secure funding independently we need accountability of these fund raising activities from the Board and the Vice President Advancement. We need clear guidelines setting out criteria under which York will accept, or not, a given donation. Beyond clarifying the principles, we need to be clear on the choices inherent in any donation agreement. If a government grant or a private sector donation requires any contribution whatsoever from the university, we need full information about and equal participation in the choices that must be made in deciding to accept such tied funds, or not.

An exchange on “University budgeting and academic resources”

Pat Bradshaw (Business):

It is great to read Brenda Spotton Visano’s analysis of budget cuts and how we are engaging them as a union. I teach multiple perspectives and readings of various situations as a way of enriching our understanding of complex situations. In that spirit and not as a rebuttal I want to present another reading of the budget cuts at York and how YUFA members can take them up. In the multiple readings of various situations we can come to understand them better.

If deficits are a socially constructed reality that create myths or stories and that perpetuate certain knowledge claims and reinforce certain political dynamics we can ask a number questions to help us deconstruct the story. For example, what if we re-myth the myth of the budget crisis? In one “other” reading, York is a well managed and fiscally conservative institution that has created many reserves of money and is well positioned to deal internally with innovation and creativity. We can name the problem internally as one of the systematic allocation of funds toward building enterprises and reserves for a rainy day and away from academic priorities and human resources. The task of the actors (us) in this re-mything exercise is to reverse this dynamic

and to create a different reality. Our task can then be re-conceptualized as not taking the evaluation of academic initiatives in terms of budget constraints on ourselves but to call for political activism externally vis-à-vis the funders and expose the underfunding of public education as the problem.

We can make choices and we can take on the dominant story of budget crisis internally or we can challenge the story, deconstruct the story, reveal its biases and then create a new story or myth. We can redirect the story as a problem of the Harris government and not one we have to use to monitor and constrain and minimize innovation and the inherent strength of the people that make York University.

Brenda Spotton Visano responds:

Pat Bradshaw’s comment on the budget situation at York emphasises a critical dimension that most certainly should be emphasised. In many ways the challenges we face stem directly from government cuts to funding of higher education in Ontario. This is *the* critical context and highlighting it, as Pat does, is important.

If I understand Pat correctly, she argues we should focus our en-

ergies on publicising all that we do very well in combination with raising public awareness of the underfunding issue, rather than allowing ourselves to be consumed by a budget crisis myth. As part of an overall strategy to address and redress the funding issue, I agree with Pat entirely. As a means of promoting ourselves and ensuring a positive image, as a means of “re-mything” our situation and to some extent our identity, I agree that too is important.

I would not, however, go so far as to abandon my position that academic planning needs to occur explicitly in the context of an ever-present budget constraint. More resources make for less constrained choices, this is true, but choices we must and do make. Right now, the budget constraints operate to force choices by default and after the fact. My sense is that part of “re-mything” ourselves will include gaining or regaining strategic control over academic direction by integrating into the planning process careful and conscious budget allocation decisions.

And then the innovation, our inherent strengths, and the constraints forced on us by the provincial funding cutbacks will be all that much clearer.

Manufacturing a crisis: change at the CST

By Walter Whiteley (CST Advisory Board; Mathematics & Statistics)

Many of us are familiar with the "provincial model" of destroying good institutions by creating a crisis which is followed by severing the ability of the local community of support to make any critical decisions (they are a 'special interest group' who should not be trusted). This is then followed by restructuring things into a very different (and perhaps dysfunctional) form as a "solution". Of course, it is even better if you can combine several agencies to justify sweeping selected individuals aside. I propose this as an analogy to assist in understanding the present (and potential future) events surrounding the Centre for the Support of Teaching (CST).

The senior administration is in the process of submitting the CST through all the stages of such a model of change.

Creating a crisis (A): In parallel to the CST, the administration has created (often by a transfer of funds) a series of institutions with some role in the support of technology (perhaps in supporting the use of technology in teaching, perhaps just support of technology): o-TEL, ATSG, the continuing TEL initiatives and building plans.... Those created recently were *not* planned in any systematic way to work with the structures and communities of interest already built around the CST. They report to different administrators, correspond to different priorities, have different funding. They did not grow from or mobilize a community of people. They are staff intensive operations reporting to senior administration.

Creating a crisis (B): The current planning cycle at York is now dominated by budget cuts: 3%, 4%,

3%, 3% over the next four years. Some things have to change in order to save money. However, the shift towards Technology must be sustained and this shift will be driven by the centre, ahead of all other priorities.

The *first* 'conclusion' from this 'crisis' is that all the separate structures, created in parallel, *must* be restructured into one coherent structure in the name of efficiency. Therefore the CST must be restructured. It is left unanalysed why the creation of parallel structures was not understood as inefficient from the word go. It is also left unspoken why the longest standing unit would not be carefully examined by knowledgeable external assessors as has been requested on multiple occasions.

Unlike the other structures thrown into this pot, the CST has a wide community of support. The CST also has a leader - Pat Rogers - who is internationally recognized for her expertise and leadership in the areas of professional development in post-secondary teaching. Pat has demonstrated, time after time, an ability to mobilize a community and develop new core programs. A leader with strong community support and internationally recognized expertise is a threat if you have a different agenda. Any community which claims the right to control their institutions is also dangerous. Special interest groups or claims of expertise cannot be trusted. Community building is really a conspiracy of special interest groups and therefore community building should be aborted and community input should be channelled away from any effective decision-making. Common sense is sufficient to judge anything, even areas of professional expertise in an academic community! Need I say that in the current dialog - common

sense has become a code word for a package of anti-intellectual attitudes which have no place in a university.

So it follows that you strip these community assets as a first step in reorganising and dismantling. You announce that you have decided that there will be major restructuring (in the absence of consultation or an evaluation of existing strengths and weaknesses). You pair this with an announcement that the current director will *not* be re-appointed (although her current contract had provisions for re-appointment by mutual agreement). Associate VP Rod Webb privately informed the director (Pat Rogers) of this fact a month ago which was followed by an announcement to the advisory board of the CST.

You do not seek advice on any of this. You announce and present a model for restructuring in which familiarity with existing programs is considered a deficiency, and in which the current community mobilized around the CST will be on the outside. The search committee for an interim director will be chosen by the same people who decided on restructuring and may include a few 'volunteers' (not elected representatives) from the CST community selected by the administration. This was also decided and announced by the Associate VP, without prior consultation. By unanimous motion and a letter, the Advisory Board of the CST communicated that this proposed process was not productive or appropriate, that the community and programs could face restructuring if the leadership was in place and that there was room for substantial participation by the CST community. In response, all of the previous decisions have been confirmed with no changes forthcoming. Clearly the

(Continued on page 20)

individuals making the decisions are not contaminated with the 'special interests' of prior involvement in the CST, by an understanding of professional development or community change, or by commitment to the programs or values of the current community of interests around the CST.

As I write, the future of the CST is uncertain. There are 'clarifications' coming in response to letters which assure us there is no intent to restructure the CST or to plan a single combined structure for technology support and pedagogical support. There is no change with respect to the declaration that the director must change (though different 'explanations' are now given) nor to the process proposed for picking the next director.

The advisory board may resign, and the support community withdraw to soldier on with our efforts, unsupported and in conflict with the administration. Twice in the last decade, the CST has experienced turmoil, in part because the substantial community of support became cut off from participation and new developments and plans did not build on and extend the existing programs and networks. That separation could easily happen again. This would result in great losses for all of York.

One might ask: Why would the administration choose a path

which is so destructive? One has asked that about our provincial leadership on many occasions! Is there concern about conflicting agendas among different agencies and individuals which require some to be swept aside? Or perhaps there exists an ideological agenda that sees the current structures in opposition? Are there particular grievances which must be taken out on individuals?

I would not dismiss any of these as partial explanations for this assault on the CST. During and after the CUPE strike, the CST was sensitive to and supportive of the diverse responses of faculty and TAs. It ran a session off campus during the strike to offer support to NFTY (new faculty), people struggling with their choices around how to teach / support students / respond to the crisis. [Of course those on the 9th floor did not see any reason for faculty to struggle – their expectations of faculty were unambiguous!] Immediately following the strike the CST ran key sessions to support faculty and TAs who were restructuring courses and teaching on the fly, assisting them in working through the trauma with their students and their colleagues. Some of these sessions were done in collaboration with (as well as receiving financial support from) the Unions. This was viewed as unacceptable and resulted in a public confronta-

tion with the Associate VP.

No similar support or efforts at healing were provided by any administrative arms (at least not from the levels who are making the current decisions – levels above Faculties).

People outside York are shocked at the overall denial of consequences and the need to address conflict which continues to flow from the centre about the major traumatic impact of these events. Accommodation and support are in limited supply. On the contrary, at many levels, we risk an experience of "payback time". In an atmosphere of payback it is possible that the CST has become a casualty.

What can we do now? If we see the CST as an expression of and support for an existing community of people, then this community must make some strategic decisions. How can it survive and grow, detached from resources controlled by the centre? How do we make visible to York as a whole (and therefore to the centre) that productive change must be community change – not ill considered, centre dominated change? Anyone seeking to control the change would, of course, try to remove those individuals who may have leadership and influence in the process of change.

Correspondence

In the October issue of Active Voice, a letter entitled "Should collegial governance be canned?" raised the issue of the decline in faculty participation in "collegial" University governance bodies and in YUFA. Recently, Jerry Ginsburg, Chair of Arts Council, touched off an exchange on this topic that was circulated on certain electronic discussion lists. We reproduce the three letters here to further this critical discussion. —ed.

'Faculty indifference'

Dear Colleagues:

As some of you will know, we had to cancel our last meeting for lack of a quorum. I believe some interesting lessons can be learned from reflecting on the reasons for this (non)-event. The proximate cause of our poor attendance—twenty-four people out of a Council membership of nearly nine hundred—was, of course, the brief ice storm on Feb. 8. But the fact is we rarely attract more than forty members to Council meetings. This is so even when we are discussing, as at our Jan. meeting, an item as fundamental as our procedures for determining promotion and tenure. Given this pattern, the inclement weather forcing our recent cancellation can only be seen as the last straw doing in a pretty moribund camel.

In my opinion, three factors account for our dismal Council attendance. First, most faculty members, stretched thin by the demands of 21st century society, just "don't have enough time," whether for York or anything else. But one makes time for what one values. So, the real explanation for our poor council attendance is that most faculty have little interest in the details of administering York, even those having significant institutional ramifications, and do not feel sufficient communal attachment to York to be willing to contribute to governance in the absence of such interest.

This faculty outlook has had some disturbing consequences. Closest to hand, it has turned "participatory democracy" in the form of our Council meetings into a rather sad joke. Most

faculty avoid these meetings like the plague, and their disengagement doesn't stop there. For instance, our Nominations Committee regards it as a major triumph when it can round up enough generous, civic-minded souls to make up a minimal slate for our committee "elections." All in all, it seems clear most faculty find the discourse of democracy far more inviting than the practice of it.

Given faculty indifference, it is not surprising that some members of the administration, stretched thin for time themselves, have lost interest in sharing every nuance of decision-making with the professoriate. Of course, some do not welcome "input" under any circumstances. But many others must surely regard seeking faculty guidance as a fairly futile exercise.

Undeterred by these trends, at our next Council meeting of March 8 we will resume our efforts to inspire faculty interest by resurrecting the promising agenda of our canceled meeting. Once again the Dean has generously offered to reflect on the course and causes of curricular development in the faculty over the past ten years. And once again the President is scheduled to follow him with an address to us. Preceding both, we will consider some major curricular developments reflecting our "internationalization agenda," namely, the introduction of degree programs in International Development Studies and South Asia Studies. I invite you to join your colleagues in what should be an interesting, informative, and important meeting.

Jerry Ginsburg, Chair, Faculty of Arts Council

No support, no respect

Dear Jerry,

I find the tone of your note quite disturbing and your assessment of the absence of faculty at the Faculty of Arts Council very different from mine. The amount of administrative work at York is horrendous and most faculty I know are very very over extended.

There is little remuneration or time release for this work so faculty are stretched—choosing between (and often trying to combine) committees at the unit, program, faculty, senate and union level. Furthermore, unlike administrators who have support staff to help them prepare for meetings, faculty have no such help. And of course, we are trying to devote ourselves to research and teaching at the same time—not true for most administrators.

In the last few years, I have been on both the Faculty of Arts Nominating Committee and a Search Committee for a graduate director. I had the opportunity to call dozens of faculty. True—it was difficult to find people to take up such work, but what I was most struck by was how much they were already doing and how overextended and close to burn out people were. The Arts Committee considered the idea that those who sit on TP committees should get some time release but of course there was no interest in this proposal from the administration.

It has also been my experience, and a very discouraging one, that when I have sat on some committees which have come up with major proposals for change, quite often the proposals (if not consistent with administrative priorities) have been ignored. And where we have tried to resist administrative proposals, this too has often been disregarded.

We should address these issues by increasing the democratic governance at York (rather than the appearance of it), providing faculty with the same support to do administrative work as administrators receive, and increasing the fulltime complement at York so that the administrative work is spread among a greater number. On this point, as the full time faculty have declined and the part time complement increased (relatively), the administrative work for faculty has also increased. Also the pressure in recent years from administration to cross-appoint new faculty has only exacerbated some of these problems. It means that these faculty have to keep in touch with two departmental cultures and meetings.

Correspondence

Admin now pursues agenda of its own

Dear Professor Ginsberg:

I read with interest your recent message to members of the Faculty of Arts concerning the low participation of faculty members in the business of the Faculty.

First let me say that I understand your sense of frustration and as well, I am impressed that you care enough about the practice of democracy and the revival of collegial governance in our university to have used your position as Chair of the Arts council to make this particular intervention. I too have become increasingly frustrated and alarmed about the "absent" faculty voice and about an apparently declining commitment to democratic debate and discussion at all levels of university life. Like you, I feel that I have been trying without much success to engage that voice in matters that have huge significance to the future of this university. We are not the only ones: some others have been trying to do the same but also without much success.

But while I share the essence of your concern, I do not at all support your analysis of how and why it has come to this. In 1992, I wrote an article called "The decline of faculty influence: confronting the effects of the corporate agenda." I am sending you a copy of it in the university mail because it will make the point in more detail than I can make here.

The point I want to emphasise is that you have reversed the order of events. The faculty as a whole did not withdraw from campus governance and then, the administration, trying generously to make room for faculty input, found it increasingly necessary to act on important matters without it. The change (and it was a change) took place the other way around. It began in the mid 1970s and 1980s when the administration increasingly pursued an agenda of its own for the university and shifted the balance away from setting academic priorities as a first concern, to setting budgetary priorities as a first concern.

At York, I watched this happen, for example, in the discussions of budgetary shortfalls from around 1975 through 1979. Arguments were made that a more "neutral" administration-dominated process was needed to decide upon the distribution of budget cuts because academic units were too self-interested to be able to make the "tough" decisions. It especially gained strength after President McDonald's Commission on Goals and Priorities experienced the resounding defeat (in collegial bodies) of almost all of its 60 plus recommendations for restructuring York. In fact, by my assessment, the university's involvement with that particular initiative was the last time that York's future was debated and resolved by the entire community in an open, and widely participatory democratic manner.

After that, administration-led practices were gradually integrated into a planning process which was more suited to corporate structures than to intellectual communities. New approaches to deciding upon university priorities were put into place which changed the extent to which the faculty could actually influence important matters related to the university's present and future. For example, the development of mission statements and five-year planning documents don't provide faculty members with a collective forum in which they can openly debate with each other, much less decide upon, the course that the university will take. All they do is offer opportunities for "input" to a series of concerns whose parameters have already been set. The process of converting collegial units' "inputs" into long-range objectives is not only woefully lacking in transparency, but also, it allows the central administration to pick and choose from a variety of academic needs according to its own priorities without ever having to submit them to debate.

It was easy to prophecy the result: the eventual abandonment of the collegial bodies of the university by its constituent members because increas-

(Continued on page 23)

Furthermore, although we are encouraged to get research grants, little technical support is offered for running these grants so certain organizational and budgeting work that, at other universities would be done by support staff, we have to do ourselves. Perhaps the administration would rather that we spend our time doing secretarial work than being present and vocal at Council meetings.

Finally, it would help if the administration treated faculty work with respect. It is my own experience that although the administration likes to promote the faculty publicly (should you win an award, for example), largely there is contempt for the work we do and disinterest in the conditions under which we do it.

Recent experiences with the strike have really underscored this for me. The amount of work and stress associated with the return has been extraordinary. However rather than acknowledging this with some modest remuneration and support, the administration has done nothing except offer to police us, while simultaneously relying on faculty to straighten out a mess largely created by their own incompetent and completely outdated management practices.

So, Jerry, rather than "encouraging" faculty by trying to guilt us, suggesting that we are not "civic-minded" or "generous", that we are "indifferent" to and have no "communal attachment" to York, I would suggest you address the real reasons for faculty absence and be an advocate for faculty.

Linda Briskin (Social Science)

Active Voice
Newsletter of the
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Correspondence

(Continued from page 22)

ingly they were spending time on trivialities or on trying to impact important institutional decisions with little or no effect.

Among scholars of higher education, there is virtually no dissension now over whether this shift has taken place in universities, from a more collegially responsive administration to a more independently assertive management (not only at York and in Canada but in many other national settings including Britain, the U.S.A., Australia and Western Europe among others).

But the article I wrote describing this shift and analysing its implications for collegialism was written in 1992. Since then, things have deteriorated further. In fact, your message may be an indication that, even from the point of view of effective administration, it has gone too far. Universities are institutions that simply can't move forward without the generosity and enthusiasm of its staff and faculty: there is much to be done all of the time and much that needs to be done by creative, well-functioning, sub-groups who work independently to sustain and improve the educational and research activities of the institution as a whole.

Aside from the changes in decision-making I described above that are major disincentives to spending one's limited time and energy on participating in collegial bodies, how can anyone expect the full-time faculty at York, in particular, to act out of generosity and feel enthusiasm toward an institution which completely and utterly ignored them during the recent CUPE strike? I am one of the many faculty members who wrote to the President and have NEVER received a reply nor a thanks for the expression of concern, even though the letter that I sent was neither condemning nor simply an endorsement of CUPE's bargaining position. In fact, it was in tone as well as content, a conciliatory letter. You will also recall well the refusal of the President to meet in any venue whatsoever with the full-time faculty of this university during the strike. And have you seen any mes-

sage of gratitude from our administration for the work we are doing, and will have to continue to do, to bring this extended term off successfully, or even any acknowledgement of the extra burdens placed upon us?

It appears to me that the entire York community, including faculty members themselves, have fallen into a paradoxical way of thinking that the full-time faculty are largely not to be meaningfully involved in discussions or resolutions of the important matters at York but at the same time, are to be relied upon as the work-horses that pull all of the sleds: research, teaching and maintaining the academic operations of the university. This "thinking" feeds the disintegration of the collective enterprise: each person is now looking after their own responsibilities by whatever means possible, and concerns about the institution as a collective entity have become a very low priority for many.

Janice Newson (Sociology)

CUPE say thanks

The 2200 Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants, and Contract Faculty of Local 3903 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees thank you for the support you gave us during our recent 78 day strike against the management of York University. Your solidarity with our struggle provided us with inspiration to remain firm at the bargaining table and strong on the picket lines.

We are pleased to announce that we successfully achieved our strike goals: increased job security as Contract Faculty and full tuition indexation and a more fair first contract as Teaching- and Graduate-Assistants. The solidarity demonstrated by individuals, unions and community groups from Ontario, Canada, the US, and overseas is incredible. We take this as an expression of the growing actions of defending ourselves against the corporate agenda in this province and beyond.

Our victory in this battle does not

mean that our fight is over. Alongside allies across Ontario, our local is committed to unprecedented self-defense of the working class. Our Flying Squad (of approximately 100 members and a part of a growing network formed across the labour movement) defends workers whether unionized or un-unionized and employed or unemployed. Engagements include supporting strikes, opening access to social assistance and affordable housing, and protecting people from deportation and being targeted by police. If you or your organization would like more information on Flying Squads, please contact Alex Levant at alevant@yorku.ca or (416) 736-5154.

Thank you so much for your solidarity.

On behalf of the Membership of CUPE 3903, Yours in solidarity and ongoing struggle,

Alex Levant (Recording Secretary), Peter Nyers (TA), Chris Vance (Communications Officer)

Housing notices

May-June house: Fully furn. House to rent May 5-June 30. Davisville-Yonge, min. from subway. 3-bdrm, quiet street, garden, A/C, on-street pkg. \$3500 for the duration. Tel. 416 481 6904, email derekc@yorku.ca.

Sabb. Rental: Furn. 3-bdrm townhouse in Maple. Finished bsmt. 15 min. from York. \$1550/mo. + util. Aug'01-Jun'02. Tel. x66199.

Seeking sabb. housing: Trent prof. seeking to rent house of academic on sabb. beginning Aug/Sept for 1 or 2 yrs. Pref. Annex, house with apt for grad. student son. Refs available from UofT and York colleagues. Tel. 416 535 9353, email atromly@axxent.ca.

General Membership Meeting

to ratify the Primary Negotiating Positions

Wednesday, 25th April 2001
3 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Harry Crowe Room, Atkinson College

Pursuant to Article 8, Section 4, of the *YUFA Constitution*, the Executive Committee will seek ratification of the primary negotiating positions for bargaining a renewal Collective Agreement with the Board of Governors of York University. The current collective agreement expires on 30 April 2001. Assent to the positions will be given by a simple majority decision of those members present and voting. Voting will be by show of hands.