

# One week warning of potential TA strike

by Doug Saunders

Teaching assistants and part-time professors will decide next Wednesday if they want to hit the picket lines.

Representatives from the Canadian Union of Education Workers say they called the October 30 strike vote because they are making little progress in contract talks with the York administration.

Doug Allen, a CUEW researcher, said he hopes the vote will help the negotiations.

"Calling the strike vote is the best way to ensure a satisfactory collective agreement," Allen said.

Although the administration bettered their original pay increase offer of 5.8 per cent last month, raising it to 6.8 per cent, Allen said the union is still demanding the same pay increases and benefits as full-time faculty received in August.

The York University Faculty Association won a 9 per cent increase in salaries and benefits after relatively quick negotiations this summer.

"It is an insult to our membership that administration doesn't intend to give them the job security or the remuneration they deserve," Allen said. "If you work full-time, you should have the benefits of a full-time employee. It's an issue of fairness."

Paula O'Reilly, chief negotiator for the York administration, indicated she may bring a better offer to the table when talks continue this week.

"We haven't made our final offer yet, but the administration is very close to the outer ends of our financial limits."

O'Reilly said she is reasonably confident the parties will reach an agreement.

"We've met with a [Ontario Ministry of Labour] conciliator on two separate occasions

and we're still making progress and the mood across the table is very optimistic."

A major sticking point in the negotiations is the issue of full-time conversion, where the university guarantees a certain number of part-time professors will be promoted to full-time positions each year. This year, York is refusing to accept any conversions.

O'Reilly said the university cannot afford to offer the conversion program.

"In this financial climate we're not sure how many full-time positions will occur to guarantee appointments to any particular group. We just can't guarantee appointments."

Allen said the university was able to improve their pay increase offer earlier this month by drawing on funds originally slated for the conversion program.

"We didn't like that very much," Allen said, "but we're heartened to hear from the university that it is no longer an issue."

Allen said CUEW members were disappointed by the \$30,000 one-time sum the university offered the union for campus safety.

In a wide-ranging survey on safety and security issues released by CUEW this month, it was revealed that 75 per cent of women avoid the campus in the evening out of fear. "This stands in the way of their ability to pursue a career," Allen said.

O'Reilly said CUEW members should not expect the same level of benefits they have received in the past.

"This time we're in a different environment because the university's financial situation has worsened because of decreased government funding."

But Allen said CUEW's demands would cost the university very little.

"The differences between our pay demands and theirs amount to one quarter of one per cent of the York operating budget. And our employment equity proposals are free."

## Men's rights group lands on Uof T campus

Canadian University Press

TORONTO — As if sexism wasn't enough, campuses are being graced with so-called men's rights groups.

The men's rights group In Search of Justice has recently begun a recruiting campaign at the University of Toronto and plans to establish a branch there.

"We intend to be an activist group operating at UofT," said Will Steeves, the unofficial U of T coordinator for In Search of Justice.

"We feel that there are many issues of importance to men and men should be aware of them whether they're in university or working full-time. All the better that they start to learn in university."

Women's groups aren't thrilled by the prospect of a men's rights group on campus.

"I don't like them on campus, but the only thing I can think to do is to mount a campaign," said Suzette Reid, coordinator of the U of T Women's Centre. "I think their just a bunch of spoiled boys with nothing better to do with their time."

ISJ posters across campus list child custody, paternity suits, affirmative action and rape cases as areas in which men are discriminated against.

"I'm not surprised," said Elissa Horscroft, vice president of equality and social affairs of York Federation of Students. "It's a reaction to having power taken away. But they don't understand that the power is over other people."

But Steeves said men are disadvantaged.

"There are many, many issues where men are oppressed and I think it's totally ridiculous for some groups to say you're not as oppressed as some other group."

"If you don't think men are oppressed, what do you call a man being thrown in jail because he can't make support payments? I call that oppressed."

Rob Centa, external vice president for YFS, chuckled at the group's claims.

"I totally disagree with them...there are individual examples (of discrimination), but it's not comparable with the structurally inherent sexism," said Centa. "This country is not being controlled by women."

In Search of Justice was founded over 19 years ago to help men gain child custody. But according to Steeves, "lately, we've branched out to other issues, namely social attitudes...and the lack of reproductive rights (for men)." The group has over 1,000 members across North America.

Horscroft and Centa both said that there are no such groups on campus at York, but talked of the possibility of a pro-feminist group forming.

"There are men's groups with a focus to work towards a more equitable society," said Horscroft.

"Something may happen this year," said Centa. "But I'm always leery of all mens groups. They have to be careful that it doesn't turn into a forum for further entrenching sexism in society."

## Program gets raves from U of T and Ryerson

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Stamp, the sexual harassment officer at U of T. "It's been really invaluable."

"They will give advice to [security staff] about personal health and safety," Stamp said, adding that they are also excellent "as a channel for passing information."

Mihalic agreed. "If I have any activity [in the area of sexual assault] on campus we pass the information on to them. We've had a great rapport and exchange of information on both sides."

According to Mihalic, the training and education initiatives offered by Leaver have improved the quality and scope of the services offered by security on campus.

"Ryerson Security in the past haven't received training in the area of sexual assault," he said.

Although the mandate of the Metro sexual assault squad is primarily to investigate cases that involve unknown offenders, they have widened their scope in recent years to include issues such as date and acquaintance rape as well as victim sensitivity.

"Sensitivity and care of the victim is number one," said Leaver.

"We want to get the guy but the victim is important... we don't lose sight of our focus, victim sensitivity," said Moores.

"If we all work together then that victim is going to get the best care possible" said Detective Constable James Moores.

When asked if York has plans to participate in the program, Jim Drennan, director of York Security would only say that Metro police "haven't contacted us and we haven't contacted them."

## A fairer Excalibur

**EXCALIBUR** is in the process of developing a policy to aid us in establishing and maintaining a non-discriminatory media. At present we have a draft policy which we hope to adopt and incorporate into our constitution. We encourage interested members of the York community to read the policy. We welcome your suggestions for improvement.

We are accepting written suggestions or criticism until November 10. For more information and to pick up a copy of the policy, come by our offices and speak to Jeannine or Doug.

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