

Dean gets quarter-million for wrongful dismissal

BY MICHAEL CONNORS

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — Memorial University has reached an out-of-court settlement worth over \$250,000 with former dean of science Alan Law over a wrongful dismissal suit.

The two sides reached the deal Jan. 13, one day before the suit was scheduled to go to court.

Law was dismissed as dean last July when senior administration said it had lost confidence in his ability to lead the Faculty of Science. The executive council of the Board of Regents, Memorial's highest governing body, made the decision to dismiss Law solely on the advice of senior administrators and without ever hearing from Law himself.

Law claimed proper procedure had not been followed and quickly launched a legal challenge.

In the settlement document, Memorial's lawyers agreed the university failed to follow proper procedures by not giving Law a fair chance to defend himself to the Board.

Under the deal, the board rescinded its decision to dismiss Law, who then voluntarily resigned as dean. Law is now considered to be on leave with pay until June 30, 2000, at which point he will be granted early retirement with an annual pension of \$13,000.

He will not be required to teach or do research, but will still receive a total salary of \$253,000 over the next two-and-a-half years. Law will also be compensated \$7,500 for the period between his dismissal and the settlement.

But despite the agreement to rescind Law's dismissal, the university does not admit any wrong-doing beyond the way in which the former dean was dismissed.

"The decision to change the dean still stands. And now we can move on and get a new dean of science and get the kind of leadership and direction that the university requires in the Faculty of Science," said university spokesperson, Peter Morris.

Law, who did not speak to media during the lawsuit, says he isn't particularly happy with the settlement, but is glad the matter is finally over and believes his reputation may be somewhat repaired.

"I've never in 36 years had anyone sully my reputation in any way, and I view the reinstatement as somewhat of

a vindication," he said. "I thought it was a bit of a cloud over my head, but now that cloud is gone."

Law was critical of the university for allowing the matter to drag on for so long, especially because he was scheduled to teach three courses this semester. He was instead forced to clear out of his office Jan. 18.

"They made a muck-up of it the whole way through," he said. "If they'd done this three weeks ago we wouldn't have been scrambling to cover classes."

Law's firing sparked widespread outrage across the university community at what many felt was a

summary dismissal which the dean did not have a chance to defend himself against.

Robert Adamec, chair of the Committee of Concerned Faculty, says he is happy with the settlement, although he is worried about how the pay-out will be absorbed by the university.

"I thought it was a justifiable outcome to what I felt was a very badly handled issue," he said. "[But] I'm unhappy for the university because someone has got to pay for this. It will have to come out of an already overburdened budget that's already in deficit."

Adamec says the money should be

taken from the personal budgets allocated for senior administrators, rather than money earmarked for academic programs.

Morris did not know what part of Memorial's budget the settlement money would be taken from, but said the university would be able to absorb the cost.

In the meantime, the university's faculty representatives say the settlement casts Memorial in a bad light, and are calling for a review of the senior administrators responsible for Law's dismissal.

Unique university-college venture launched

BY ANGELA PACIENZA

TORONTO (CUP) — An agreement between Ontario's largest college and Canada's third largest university will make it easier for students not quite ready to enter university to eventually obtain a degree.

Under the York Articulation Program, announced earlier this month, students will begin post-secondary studies at Seneca College and eventually move to York University. The program allows students to earn a college diploma and a bachelor of arts degree in just three years.

"[The deal] enhances our reputation as a university of opportunity and inclusiveness, and a university that cares about how our students move on in the rest of their lives," said Lorna Marsden, York University president.

Stephen Quinlan, Seneca president, says the idea for the project came as a result of Seneca students demanding an

easier way to move on to university. He adds that York is the natural choice for a partner in this program.

"York was one of the key universities because of our close geographic proximity and indeed the reputation of the university in the area of arts and science," he said.

Students can begin the program this September. A new building is being built on York's main campus to house the university component of the program. It is expected to open by September 1999.

"I never thought I'd be going to university," said Simone Ziv, a first-year Seneca student who plans to enter the program. "I didn't have any goals. But now [the program's] given me something to look forward to."

Participants of the program will be in class year-round, spending the first two years of study at Seneca, while taking summer courses at York. Their final year is spent at the university.

Other Ontario colleges and universities are involved in joint educational initiatives, but this is the first program that grants college students the opportunity to obtain a university degree.

"The significant thing about this program is that it is tailored to the needs of college students," said Education Minister Dave Johnson.

Ziv says the joint-program is cost effective because the first two years are spent at college, where tuition fees are significantly lower.

"It makes a hell of a lot of sense," she said.

Prior to the agreement, if Seneca college students wanted to obtain a degree from York, they had to apply

to the school for advance standing after two years of college study, and then complete another two to three years of university.

"I'm sure this will be the incentive for many other students to move to university as well," Ziv said.

Seneca is involved in joint ventures with several other Ontario universities, as well as having a number of other joint programs with York University.

"I think this is the tip of the iceberg," Quinlan said. "As education changes in Ontario, you will see more and more joint venture agreements of this nature, all designed to make it easier for students to have success in whatever they wish to do."

Trent TA union drive

PETERBOROUGH (CUP) — Student employees of Trent University demanded job security, adequate wages and good working conditions as they kicked off their drive to unionize.

The Trent Academic Assistants Workers Committee announced the beginning of a unionization drive for Trent's teaching and research assistants, lab monitors and markers on Jan. 6.

Student workers, most of whom are graduate students, are the only non-unionized employees at Trent.

"As non-unionized employees, we're in a dangerous position in light of the recent wave of attacks on universities by the government and corporate sectors," said Alex Levant, a member of the committee.

As members of a union, the student workers would be able to negotiate a collective agreement which would formally establish the rights and obligations of both employer and employees.

Student academic assistants at 10 of Ontario's 17 universities are unionized, while union drives are underway at two more, Brock University and Queen's University.

According to Daria Ivanodhko, a national representative for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), there has been a marked increase in the number of inquiries about unionizing academic workers in the last few months.

She says people are increasingly concerned about job security and working conditions as more and more funding is cut from post-secondary institutions.

"My job as a TA is crucial to me. I need that money to complete my studies," said Morgan Gay, a graduate student and TA at Trent. "But with all the cuts to education,

everything is threatened and because we are not unionized we are the most vulnerable."

Val Patrick, business agent for CUPE local 3903 at York and 3908 at Trent, echoes Gay's concerns.

"Especially in this political climate and this time of squeezing, if you don't have an organized collective voice you'll get squeezed out," she said.

Union members at other university campuses say organization is helping to protect them in these tough times.

"Last year the administration wanted huge rollbacks. If we hadn't been organized we would have had our pay decreased, we would have lost our job security and many of our benefits," said Andrew Gray, a student teaching assistant at the University of Toronto and treasurer of CUPE local 3902.

Unionized student academic workers have also made recent gains. At York University, negotiations resulted in a drug and dental plan, guaranteed annual wages of approximately \$9,500 and a guaranteed number of years of paid work.

But Trent administrators don't seem to feel that there is a strong need for student academic assistants to organize.

"I disagree strongly that [they] are so vulnerable," said Paul Healy, dean of research and graduate studies at Trent. He adds that student academic workers are highly valued by the university.

Healy says he is skeptical about the success of the unionization drive. He adds that organization can lead to labour unrest, pointing to the fact that there have been two faculty strikes at Trent in the past six years.

ARE YOU A SCIENCE, ENGINEERING OR TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE?

IF SO, THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY MAY BE THE PLACE FOR YOU.

The Textiles Human Resources Council, a labour-management partnership, invites you to consider a new, one-year, intensive management internship program. Based in Hamilton, Ontario, the program will be delivered by the Mohawk College Faculty of Engineering Technology and the McMaster University School of Business.

This English-language program, to start in May, 1998, offers:

- ⇒ a world-class education in textile technology;
- ⇒ comprehensive managerial skills training;
- ⇒ a four-month job placement;
- ⇒ free tuition; and
- ⇒ excellent potential for full-time, well-paying employment upon successful completion.

The Canadian textile industry is a highly dynamic, highly competitive and technologically advanced industry. We need well-trained, motivated managers and professionals.

If this industry and this internship appeal to you, call Gordon DiGiacomo or Shirley McKey at (613) 230-7217, fax us at (613) 230-1270, send us an E-mail at thrc@sympatico.ca, or write us at:

Textiles Human Resources Council
66 Slater Street, Suite 1720
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H1

Please visit our web site at www3.sympatico.ca/thrc.



Textiles
Human
Resources
Council

Conseil des
ressources humaines
de l'industrie
du textile