

Task force makes uneven passage

Senate discriminates, but not against women

By DOUG TINDAL

The first official steps toward removing discrimination on the basis of sex from York University were taken last Thursday at a special meeting of senate, called to discuss the 261 page report of the senate task force on the status of women. Some of the steps were taken with the faltering stride of a drunkard.

The report lists 64 recommendations dealing with childcare facilities, hiring practices, faculty and staff salaries, maternity leave and student funding.

"The university must, as a part of society, do everything it can to change attitudes of and about women, both inside the university and out", Johanna Stuckey, chairwoman of the task force, told senate.

Introducing the report, she said, "The York study reconfirms a spate of studies across North America."

Stuckey cited Canadian statistics to show that, nation-wide, female faculty members receive an average salary almost \$4,000 less than males.

"Administrators are reluctant to pay similar salaries to women for work of similar value," she said.

The first recommendation before senate dealt with inequities in York's pension plan. Professor Howard Adelman, a member of the task force, told senate there were two problems in the plan.

"First of all, there is a gross inequity in the survivor benefit plan," he said.

"At present, if a male employee dies, his spouse is entitled to benefits under the plan, but the spouse of a female employee is not. I understand a change is underway in this area because it is not only immoral, it is now illegal.

"Second, there is a problem in that the amount of money accruing

to a female employee in each year after retirement is less than the amount accruing to a male."

With very little discussion, senate approved the recommendation, "that the board of governors be requested to instruct the board of trustees of the pension plan to make recommendations as soon as possible on the specific method of implementing the principle of equity".

Senate also approved a recommendation to establish a committee to consider problems of part-time faculty, and to examine the possibility of establishing tenure streams, kinds of job security, pension plans, and inequalities specific to women, among the part-time faculty.

Then the smooth and orderly progression of motions was broken by a heated debate on what turned out to be the most controversial of the task force's recommendations: "that senate categorically declare itself against discrimination on the basis of sex".

Political science professor David Bell suggested that the words "on the basis of sex" be deleted, since the motion as worded might be taken to mean that senate approved other forms of discrimination.

Bill Farr, vice president in charge of finance, and a member of the task force, answered, "If Professor Bell would read the senate document on tenure and promotion, he would find that senate has declared itself to be a discriminating body."

When sociology professor John O'Neill also objected to the wording, suggesting that "on the basis of gender" would be more precise, Stuckey explained that "on the basis of sex" were the words used by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

O'Neill replied, "I don't understand this respect for the words of the code. It is, after all, put forward by a male-dominated body. It's men who locate the source of women's problems in their sex.

"I've always thought of sex as an activity," he concluded.

Humanities professor Walter Carter said the phrase should be

"discrimination against women", since some of the task force's recommendations specifically call for discrimination on the basis of sex.

But the recommendation was ultimately approved, with student senators Tony Hall (Glendon) and Keith Montgomery (Calumet) the only dissenting voters.

Senate then moved on (with a sigh of relief from several members) to approve a request that the university "actively encourage women to seek advancement within and at the university".

During the inevitable 20 minute debate to consider the merit of adding or deleting such words as 'all', 'and at', and 'at all levels', one senator was overheard to remark, "It should read '... encourage all female faculty members to become women.'"

But these hurdles, too, were eventually overcome, and senate, unquestionably feeling it had done enough for one day, sent the balance of the report to York president Ian Macdonald, with its recommendation for "immediate consideration and prompt action".

Caught posting anti-ULS flyers, six escape through back door

"They're just a bunch of naive, first year students," was the official word from chief returning officer Henry Goldberg.

But accusations of political sabotage are still being bandied around the offices of ULS members, who feel the "naive" students may have been put up to their deeds by an opponent of the ULS.

The six students were apprehended by members of the ULS and taken to the CYSF offices after they had tried to post 'Vote Communist, Vote ULS' posters Wednesday afternoon.

Inside the CYSF offices the three men and three women remained incommunicado for over an hour, while periodic statements were leaked out to newsmen, ULS supporters and interested bystanders by Goldberg.

"The kids are just naive anti-socialists. They're afraid to come out," he said.

But outside rumours spread naming everyone from presidential can-

didate Bill Eggertson to CYSF president Anne Scotton as co-conspirators.

York party presidential candidate Paul Higeli seemed as shaken by the turn of events as ULS leader Dale Ritch.

"What those people did was unconstitutional and illegal—it was garbage," said Higeli. "It reflects badly on everyone, because nobody knows who's behind it."

For a moment it appeared as though the whole affair might be settled amicably as news was leaked to people outside that the six students would give a statement and answer questions from reporters.

But as the statement was being read outside the front door of the CYSF offices, the students were ushered out the side door by Scotton.

Although Goldberg said he is satisfied the six students acted on no-one's behalf, the matter has not been dropped by the ULS, who are considering pressing libel charges against the six.

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A-F Thursday, March 20

G-M Friday, March 21

N-Z Monday, March 24

Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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