

UNIVERSITY NEWSBEAT

Prepared and paid for by the Communications Department, S802 Ross, 667-3441

President discusses labour relations

President H. Ian Macdonald delivered the following statement to the Board of Governors at its meeting on Monday, October 6, 1980.

The University is currently in negotiations with the following unions:

- York University Staff Association;
- Canadian Union of Educational Workers; and
- International Union of Operating Engineers.

I would like to inform the Board of my concern about the general difficulties faced by the University as reflected in these negotiations.

In the daily operations of the University, we conduct ourselves as universities have done for over 800 years — in a collegial fashion. We are a "community" in every sense of the term. Faculty and students are united in the common purpose of learning and each teacher in the University is "a manager" in terms of the University's "business". He or she determines what takes place in the classroom or in academic research, and is responsible for maintaining its quality, according to the laws of Senate.

However, when we enter the world of labour relations, we take on the mantle of the Ontario Labour Relations Act — we are obliged to divide formally into "labour" and "management". For that purpose, our defined "management" is composed of permanent administrators along with certain faculty members who play that role for a period of time. That non-descript term — "the administration" — basically refers to the President, Vice-Presidents, and Deans. Two features of our "management" distinguish us from the normal industrial model:

- the vast majority of managers are there only for a limited period

— stepping out of their regular professional role for the purpose; and

- they do not have the industrial options of determining the allocation of assets and profits between wages and dividends or of setting prices; they only have the resources emanating from government grants, private donations, and student fees.

From that situation flow a number of consequences:

1. We are told by many at York that we should do a better job of overall planning. However, that is a difficult task where our basic academic planning comes under the aegis of Senate while our resource planning is largely determined by six separate collective negotiations, involving some 83% of our budget.

2. We are told we should behave more like a community; if only we all talked out our problems together, everyone would be happy. We do have a community of interest. As I have said, our senior management will mainly return to the academic fold. Our collective bargaining policy is derived largely from advisory committees of academics. We all have the same basic objectives:

- a high standard of compensation for employees of the university;
- good working conditions and support service; and
- a reasonable degree of employment security.

However, it is not always possible to provide all of these together — particularly today — and there are occasions when internal conflict will pose a threat to the effective conduct of the academic purposes of the University.

3. The reason we cannot always do as well as we would like is because of the extraordinary constraints that have been imposed on

universities in Ontario. Let me say to the York University community once and for all that it is unreasonable and unfair to suggest that the President, Vice-Presidents, Deans, academic advisors, or whoever else composes "the administration" want to constrain their colleagues. We must do everything we can to maximize resources through:

- higher government grants;
- greater student enrolment; and
- enhanced private support.

However, I hope we can put an end to the unfounded accusations that university administrations are simply accepting the government policy and cheerfully carrying it out. Members of our administration have been on record, time and again, in deploring the following consequences of government policy:

- for nearly a decade university income has grown less than the rate of inflation;
- since 1971-72 Ontario has dropped from third place to tenth place among the provinces in per capita student support;
- provincial grants have fallen far short of that specified by the Government's own Ontario Council on University Affairs;
- faculty salaries in Ontario are now nearly 10% below the next lowest province in Canada (in some provinces, salaries are as much as 20% higher);
- the present student/staff ratio in Ontario universities is 15.5 to 1 compared with 13.5 to 1 in the rest of Canada and will soon be at the ratio of secondary schools;
- in the index of public expenditure per client served over the past decade, hospitals have risen by 150% while universities have fallen 10%; and
- we are budgeted for a \$1.25 million deficit this year in York University.

Can anyone seriously suggest

that the universities have not fallen in the Government's public priorities?

The Presidents and the administrations of the Ontario universities have worked hard for several years to persuade the Ontario Government and the public of the permanent folly of this course of action. In briefs to OCUA and other public documents, the case that Ontario's future rests in the hands of its human resources has been documented thoroughly. We have been asked again by the Premier to make proposals for the future planning of the Ontario university system, and the Presidents are now preparing a report for that purpose.

As far as I am concerned, nothing less than the survival of a high quality university system in Ontario is at stake. In this strenuous campaign, I believe we deserve the support of the whole university community. I would urge members of the Board — particularly the faculty and student members — to ensure that our community knows that this administration finds current government policy unacceptable.

Where does this relate to labour relations? There are several consequences that concern me, principally the divisive effect on a collegial community and the threat to our normal happy relationships. Within such a financial environment, a particular group — principally our Policy Committee (made up of the President, Vice-Presidents, and Deans) and its advisors — must try to carry out our personnel objectives for the whole community, consistent with their responsibilities for supporting the implementation of academic policy.

Chronic gloom about labour relations affects morale and also discourages our students. There

seems to be a tendency, from time to time, to assume that the outcome of labour relations must necessarily be the worst — a strike. However, our objective — and I trust everyone's objective — is to have negotiated settlements. In forty-six collective agreements negotiated at York, forty-three have been settled without a strike. We will continue to work hard to that end, and I trust we will be successful. Unfortunately, the issues are not always matters of "right" and "wrong"; there are strong differences of opinion on some issues within the academic community, and on their matters, movements in one direction clearly have a strong influence on other parts of the institution.

I appeal to our community to accept a positive rather than a fatalistic view of our future. I tried a few years ago to convene a meeting of Board Chairman, Senate Chairman, along with the heads of each of our unions, to work jointly toward a solution of our problems. My invitation was not taken up, but I am prepared to try again. Meanwhile, I believe that the issues facing us in current negotiations should be resolvable, although some of them have profound implications, not only for the University as a whole, but for the members of the other unions. In the future, many of these questions require joint study in the interests of all.

Mr. Chairman, I would hope that no one in this University prefers disruption to fair and reasonable agreements. I am prepared to assume that there are no such people in York University. For our part, we will do the best we can to ensure a harmonious environment in York University.

Four new academic programs are established

In a two-part series, we will report on four new academic programs that York University has designed, two of them in cooperation with other colleges. The science journalism program starts this year in collaboration with Humber College. The mass communications program also begins this year. And the new programs offered by the department of physical education and athletics have their inception. The rehabilitation counselling program offered by York and Seneca College opens in 1981-82. This first part describes the science journalism and mass communications programs.

York University and Humber college are collaborating in offering Canada's first program in science journalism. The program was initiated by Robert Lundell, Dean of the Faculty of Science at York, and Larry Holmes, Dean of Creative and Communicative Arts at Humber. It is being directed by Colin McArthur, associate professor of chemistry and director of York's liberal science program, and Jim Smith, senior coordinator of Humber's journalism department.

The new program was conceived because of the dearth of good science journalists, according to Prof. McArthur. "There are few journalists with a scientific background." He feels that since

society is becoming increasingly dependent on science and technology, people should be kept better informed than they are at present.

Students enrolled in the joint program will experience a broadly based curriculum. The liberal science program examines such diverse topics as industrial chemistry and the environment, science policy formation and its impact, and nutrition and world food resources. The journalism program at Humber College covers the fundamentals of reporting in all media as well as the specialized reporting of science and medicine.

Mr. Smith, a member of the Canadian Science Writers' Association, says the students will have the opportunity of learning from journalists who have worked in the field for many years.

Graduates of the program will have both a Bachelor of Science and a Certificate of Science Journalism. The York and Humber courses can be taken full-time or part-time and either sequentially or separately.

More information on the science journalism program can be obtained by contacting Prof. McArthur at 667-3474.

The Division of Social Science in the Faculty of Arts offers a combined honours program in

mass communications. The program, which was developed using existing York courses, faculty and facilities, is directed at research and theory rather than journalism and advertising. It plugs into Toronto's vast communications network, and concentrates on specific Canadian issues, such as the problem of cross-cultural communications between Quebec and the rest of the country.

Arthur Siegel, associate professor of social science and chairman of the Dean of Arts Advisory Committee, explains: "The major thrust in the series of

communications courses offered through Mass Communications is on the mass media, mass communications theory, and telecommunications.

"The historical setting, the economics, the structure and function of the mass media, and the cultural dimensions of mass communications will be explored."

The program aims to produce graduates who have acquired skills in communications analysis and the synthesis of knowledge in the increasingly complex field of communications. This background is directly useful for careers in

communications media, policy making, planning, and communications research.

Mass Communications Studies is also recommended to students who may want to proceed in careers and/or graduate studies in advertising and corporate communications. Moreover, the program is an excellent introduction to students who want to specialize in communications law and teaching in the field of communications.

Questions about the mass communications program may be directed to Prof. Siegel at 667-3459.

Now's the time to apply for scholarships

Canadians, preferably in their third or fourth year of university, who are unmarried and between 18 and 24 years old, are eligible for the 11 Rhodes Scholarships that will be awarded to Canadians this fall. Winners study at Oxford University in England for two and possibly three years starting September, 1981. Selection is made by provincial committees after personal interviews and on the basis of scholastic ability, character, qualities of leadership and interest in outdoor sports. Application forms and particulars may be obtained from the York Registrar or from the provincial

secretary; in Ontario the Secretary is J.M. Farley, Esq., P.O. Box 451, Toronto-Dominion Centre, Toronto, Ontario M5K 1M5, (416) 869-3333. The application deadline is October 25, 1980. Both men and women are eligible.

Applications are now being accepted for the IODE First and Second War Memorial Scholarships for Post-Graduate Study. Eight to ten scholarships will be offered to Canadian citizens who are between 20 and 30 years old and who already hold a first degree from a recognized university or degree-granting college in Canada.

At the time of applying, a candidate's studies for a Master's degree or equivalent must have been completed or be in progress. In each province a Committee of Selection—four IODE members and three university professors—will consider the academic record and promise as well as personal character, aims and ideals and health of applicants. The deadline date for applications is December 1, 1980. Application is made to the War Memorial Convener of the province where the applicant received the Bachelor's degree. More information can be obtained by calling 487-4416.