

Secretaries form association

Office staff demands increased salaries

By BRIAN MILNER

About 200 secretaries and other office workers voted unanimously Friday to form an association to "define and further the interests of the staff in York University."

There are over 500 secretaries, clerk typists, and technicians at York who have had no organization to protect their interests. (There is a library staff association which has no wage grievance.)

The main point of contention -- and the primary reason for the association -- is the low pay of secretaries and office staff.

A motion was passed at the meeting demanding an increase in the "scales of salaries for secretaries, stenographers, clerks and other office staff . . . to the same scale as those current in the North York municipal offices."

The range of salaries for North York secretaries is \$5,500 to \$6,400. York's range is \$4300 to \$5900. For clerk typists there is a difference of \$1,000 at the minimum starting salary.

"Salaries are the main beef," one senior secretary said. "We're getting a lot less than in other institutions."

The difference revealed at the meeting was "quite surprising." "I didn't know the rates . . . exactly what the scale was. That's been kept pretty much a secret," she said.

Discussing salary ranges is meaningless without looking at actual salary averages. D.J. Mitchell, the director of personnel, said in an interview Tuesday. Actual salary averages would be more relevant, but even then there is "no one classification where you could use the word secretary," he said. "York's definition might be different."

Mitchell would not reveal the salary averages of York office personnel. North York's were unavailable.

Elsie Hanna, spokesman for the

steering committee, told the assembled workers Friday: "We cannot continue to live on salaries which are falling back nearer and nearer to what the government calls the poverty line, while other sections of the community are given large increases because they are unionized."

"How can we pay the taxes which support the 16 percent or 30 percent or 50 percent increases of other people," she asked, "when we get approximately 4-1/2 percent?"

Other grievances include the cost-of-living bonus percentage and the failure of the Laskin Report on Rights and Responsibilities to mention support staff.

These points will be dealt with at a future meeting. Other motions to be considered are "the full publication throughout the university of all job vacancies," and the inclusion of staff

representatives "on all committees which have power to make decisions which can affect such employees."

The support staff should have representatives on relevant committees, administration vice-president W.W. Small said Tuesday.

"I've already recommended that (last spring)," he said. "There must be some benefit to be gained

from consulting with them on matters that concern the university."

"Staff associations are good things . . . as long as they have a realistic grasp of what the circumstances are," W.W. Piepenburg, associate dean of the Faculty of Arts, said Tuesday.

"All universities are underfinanced," he said, "so on the whole, clerical workers, par-

ticularly women, are underpaid."

"In my opinion, they (clerical staff) have very good relations with the academic staff. But that's no reason why people shouldn't be rewarded competitively for their work . . . Nearly all other occupational groups have organized themselves," Piepenburg, a charter member of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said.

New home for day care?

If all goes well, the York day care centre may very likely find itself in a new permanent home next year.

At a meeting of the Senate Committee on Space and Allocations held last week, a

resolution was passed endorsing the centre and giving high priority to finding day care facilities for the coming year.

Ian Dobson, who attended the meeting for the centre said that he and the other parents present felt

they had received quite a substantial commitment which would in essence guarantee the continuing life of the centre. He added that they were also happy to see the day-care centre moving from a college-based to a university-wide operation.

Howard Adelman, acting dean of Atkinson College, voiced strong support for the centre and cited the example of Sweden where day care centres care for as many as 120 children. With a large operation, he said, women who might not otherwise stumble across the centre would be attracted to use its facilities.

Thirty-two children of both students, staff and faculty presently use the centre -- 10 children full-time and the rest on a part-time basis. Staff members say that enquiries are received daily and that the waiting list is quite long.

The premises now occupied in 017 Winters consist of two adjoining rooms which cannot adequately accommodate any more children. Winters College wants the rooms for study space next year so that a move of some kind will be necessary, if the centre is to survive.



WHERE THERE'S SMOKE . . .

It took North York firemen only about 15 minutes to put out a fire Monday night in an old woodshed in a field on the West side of the campus. The fire department had been called once before, at the end of November, 1969, to put out a fire in the same shed.

Excalibur - William Folos

All agree it was political repression

PSA firing at Simon Fraser being investigated

By DAVID CHUD

Special to Excalibur

BURNABY, B.C. -- Kathleen Aberle was one of the faculty members at Simon Fraser University who was suspended by the administration during the strike of the Political science, sociology and anthropology department last fall. While everyone involved agrees that the suspensions were a simple act of political repression, it is easiest to point this out in Miss Aberle's case.

First, a little history. In February, 1968, the Canadian Association of University Teachers censured the Simon Fraser administration and board of governors, saying:

"A university is not a business, a government or an army, it is a democratic community. The notion that all power should be concentrated at the top simply won't work."

Because of the censure, faculty at SFU passed a resolution supporting greater decentralization of decision-making and accepting "in principle, student participation in university government."

The PSA department, after much public debate, instituted a system of decision-making which included student parity on all departmental committees, and mutual veto power for both students and faculty on all decisions. This system, without any question or interference from the administration was used effectively for the next year.

It was not until the question of tenure and promotion for faculty members arose that the administration began to take an interest in PSA's decision-making system.

The PSA committee which evaluated faculty, divided itself so that faculty members judged scholarship, and student members were responsible for collecting evaluations of teaching ability. Final decisions were to be returned to mass meetings of both faculty and students for ratification.

At this point the administration complained that: -- the faculty part of the committee wasn't composed of the correct proportions of senior and junior faculty;

--students were on the committee; --final decisions were up to the entire department.

The faculty part of the committee was then reconstituted to meet the wishes of the administration, but the other two complaints were rejected because they were integral to the already functioning system in PSA.

However, both faculty and students said their position was negotiable.

Throughout this period the administration several times shifted its position on what the "problem" in PSA was. For instance, the chairman of the department, Mordecai Briemberg (elected by a majority of both faculty and students), was accused of "administrative incompetence", a charge which has never been substantiated.

Finally, the dean of arts threatened that the administration would unilaterally impose a trusteeship over the department if it did not select a chairman who would meet with the dean's approval, and who would guarantee to restructure the department, getting rid of the parity and open-decision-making criteria. This is exactly what happened.



Kathleen Aberle

The dean then appointed a tenure committee to act on behalf of the department which included only one faculty member from the department.

Now back to Kathleen Aberle.

With a PhD from Cambridge University, Miss Aberle has taught at the Universities of Manchester, Michigan, California (Berkeley), Brandeis and Oregon. She has been invited to lecture at Cambridge, Oxford, London, Chicago, Harvard, Reed and Antioch and has published 18 articles in scholarly journals, six in Chambers Encyclopedia and the Encyclopedia Britannica, 12 essays in anthropological books and 333 pages of Matrilineal Kinship, a standard work in her field.

Her references include heads of anthropology departments at Berkeley and Michigan and senior an-

thropologists at the Universities of Chicago, Yale and Sussex.

The new departmental tenure committee recommended that tenure be denied to Miss Aberle because of "presently unresolvable doubts on the part of the committee concerning the quality of (her) academic procedures and of (her) contributions to the department."

The recommendation was forwarded to the university tenure committee, which recommended "that Dr. Aberle not be granted tenure and that she not be granted a further probationary period."

The only reason given for this decision was the committee's "serious reservations about her scholarly objectivity."

For the last few months, since the decision was made, letters have been pouring into Simon Fraser from prominent anthropologists from around the world.

University of Michigan anthropologist Eric Wolf wrote " . . . that the judgment passed in haste upon us all, as members of a profession which holds her in very high professional esteem."

From Richard Kluckhohn, an associate professor of anthropology at San Fernando State College: "It seems highly apparent that she (and others) have suffered from open statement of their political views. The content of these views is not germane to the discussion -- I myself happen to disagree with Dr. Aberle on many issues. What is germane is that the open expression of any political viewpoint is any citizen's right in any free society . . . In the realm of academic freedom, the responsibility of the teacher is to be forthright and honest, which Dr. Aberle has been."

The rest of the story is fairly well known. Those faculty who were denied tenure went on strike and got overwhelming support from PSA students, as well as some support from the rest of the university.

But power is not located yet in the hands of those who are affected by decisions made at the university and now the students at SFU are without the services of Kathleen Aberle and seven other excellent teachers and friends.

Last week the American Anthropological Association, of which Miss Aberle is a fellow, sent a two-man committee to Simon Fraser to investigate the suspension of their colleague. Laura Nader from Berkeley and Peter Carsten from the University of Toronto have the power to ask their association to censure SFU and ask fellows to boycott the university.