

# Contract negotiations at an impasse

by Paul Clark

Dalhousie Faculty Association representatives picketed Friday's convocation and the Board of Governors presented a new salary proposal to the faculty at their meeting Thursday, but a number of issues still must be resolved before they can reach a collective agreement.

Peter Scotch, a DFA negotiator, said in an interview with CKDU that the faculty is currently analyzing the Board's new proposal, but on key issues like promotion and academic planning, "there is still nowhere to go as far as we can see".

David Cameron, the Board's chief negotiator, declined to comment on the Board's new proposal.

Last Friday's demonstration at the Rebecca Cohn was held to show the membership is behind the negotiating team and wants things to get moving at the table, he said.

"If things continue without any progress at all, then other action will certainly be contemplated", he added.

Contract negotiations have so far spanned over five and a half months. The last collective agreement between the Board and faculty association expired on July 1.

The DFA's displeasure at the duration of negotiations has at times extended beyond the issues of the negotiating table to a critique of the administration itself.

A DFA leaflet dated October 17 calls the administration "ineffective", alleging planning at Dalhousie is "non-existent", and says the Board has stated it "does not want Dalhousie to reach the level of excellence of which it is capable". "Can we ever have a

better university with the present Administration?", it rhetorically asks.

For their part the administration says it is wrong to suggest they are not concerned about Dalhousie's academic excellence, but there are financial considerations to also bear in mind.

President Andrew MacKay says the DFA's claims its demands will make for a better university are "well-intentioned" and "probably many of their proposals do have an element of that, but I have difficulties with some of the things proposed".

According to the DFA, the Board wants to place a quota on the number of positions available for the highest rank for librarians. The DFA has argued such a system could cause quality librarians who cannot get promoted to accept positions elsewhere.

MacKay denied a quota system was ever proposed, but says the Board wants control over promotion to top ranks within the library. He says the dispute at heart is over whether the library is a "service" to the university, as the university maintains, or is part of the teaching department. He says someone who is a cataloguer "and forever a cataloguer" should not be eligible for promotion to top rank in the library.

On the issue of job protection, the Board is seeking the power to decide whether to replace members who leave the DFA's bargaining unit. MacKay says the Board didn't intend to give up this power when they signed the first contract. "It should be the power of any employer to

manage its resources", he says.

Chris Axeworthy, the faculty's chief negotiator, says the Board may be reluctant to replace them, but that in order to maintain the standard and quality of the university it is important this occurs.

Regarding salary negotiations, before the Board's newest proposal Axeworthy said the administration was offering a 6% increase, while the faculty was asking for 10 percent. The issue of restoring anomalies (one third of faculty members are said to be paid less than their counterparts at Dalhousie with similar qualifications) is also still unsettled.

MacKay, apparently somewhat hesitantly, says the administration has agreed to have a campus-wide review in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, of the need and ways of implementing affirmative action for women and minorities at Dalhousie. The administration, unlike the faculty, however, does not want this to be in the collective agreement.

MacKay says the faculty's proposal for affirmative action in the contract deals exclusively with women and would have introduced "a very different kind of appointment process" into the university.

He admits women are underrepresented in many departments at Dalhousie, but says he has not seen any evidence of discrimination in hiring. The president, who is also chairman of the province's Human Rights Commission, also says that because he agrees with the concept of affirmative action, he can appreciate the value



Peter Scotch plugs the DFA cause.

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more women in the faculty would have as role models and in introducing a more female orientation in the university.

DFA negotiator Axeworthy says the DFA wants an affirmative action commitment in the contract to "police" its implementation.

## Gov't gives in to protesting students

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — A four-day traffic blockade at Memorial University of Newfoundland ended Tuesday afternoon, when the province's government agreed to the demands of student protesters.

About 2,000 MUN students had blocked the Prince Philip Parkway, a major city street which divides the MUN campus, since Friday afternoon. They were protesting the death of a student in the crosswalk traffic accident, and demanding that safer crossing systems be installed.

The demonstrators said they wanted a skywalk built as soon as possible, to end the dangerous conditions at the crosswalks. They said the barricades would not be removed until they received a written commitment for action.

Following a cabinet meeting Tuesday afternoon, the provincial government announced it would contribute most of the funding needed to build two parkway skywalks and a traffic-light system along the

parkway.

Dave Downey, a Students' Union vice president, said the union is "really happy" with the solution. "We're glad people recognized the seriousness of the situation."

Temporary measures include fencing a median area along the busy road and boosting police patrols in the area. The parkway speed limit has been reduced from 50 to 30 kilometres an hour and security personnel will be placed at intersections.

The safety of the parkway crosswalks had been argued for five years. Users said drivers did not respect the crosswalk right-of-ways, forcing students to risk their lives when crossing the road.

20-year old Judy Ford died in the Friday accident, when a truck failed to stop as she crossed. Since the beginning of the fall semester, three other Memorial students had been injured in parkway traffic accidents.

Student union president Joe Greene returned from a Na-

tional Union of Students conference held in Winnipeg during the weekend, to participate in the protest. Greene said the students held a general meeting Saturday night to discuss city government offers.

He said a meeting with city officials had not ended with "firm commitments."

"The opinion was generally unanimous," said Greene. "People were not felt the promises were not satisfactory."

City police had been present at the barricade since the Friday afternoon takeover. Demonstrators said there were problems at the beginning, when two students were placed in a police van after one lay across the crosswalk and another placed crossing safety signs on the window of the van. The two were released without being charged.

Memorial's student newspaper, The Muse, issued three special editions during the weekend. The paper's co-editor, Martha Muzychka, said the traffic jams during peak

hours were "phenomenal." She said the blockades numbers fell to about sixty students at night but grew to hundreds during daytime activities.

A motion at the National Union of Students' Winnipeg conference gave support to the efforts of the MUN demonstrators. NUS had planned a general day of protest in honour of the movement for October 27.

MUN students were joined in protest by the student councils of Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook and the College of Trades and Technology in St. John's.

CTT students sent the MUN students' Union a notice of "pull support" for the move. The College's students boycotted classes Monday to add their own blockade line at a different point on the Prince Philip Parkway.

Grenfell students in Corner Brook formed similar roadblocks in the west-coast town Monday to affirm their support. College officials

reported the students had vowed to keep the Corner Brook vigil "until something is done."

The cabinet announcement came amid controversy over funding the pedestrian bridges. City officials had said they wanted the problem studied by Traffic Committees, with recommendations being made to the municipal council. Students' Union officials were quickly appointed to an enlarged committee.

Greene said the city officials suggested that the protest be suspended for two weeks, to await committee recommendations. He said students rejected the proposal in the general meeting Saturday.

A meeting of students union executives and residence officials at Memorial Tuesday afternoon decided to accept the government's proposal and end the barricade. Students removed their barriers and made a ceremonial march around the campus to end the demonstration.