

NASA wages rollback

by Ken Bosman

Wage and benefit rollbacks have been imposed upon the U of A Non-Academic Staff Association by a binding arbitration report.

"In most instances we would not be inclined to help the University in overcoming its own recent collective bargaining decision — but these are not normal times," said arbitrator Gerald A. Lucas in his report.

Lucas was jointly appointed as arbitrator by the U of A Board of Governors and NASA under the terms of the Alberta Public Employee Relations Act.

The arbitration report ordered the following changes to the NASA contract:

— Building tradesman will have their wages reduced by 3 percent.
— Extra pay for afternoon and evening shifts will be reduced from ten percent of the employee's base wage to a flat \$1.00 per hour.

— "Merit" and "long service" increases will be frozen on March 31st, 1988.

— The first two hours of any overtime period will be at time-and-a-half rather than double time.

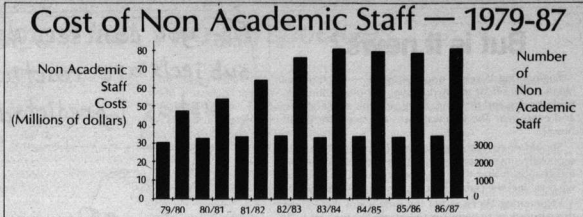
"He's getting them out of a hole," said Brendon O'Neill, NASA President. "The arbitrator accepted the University's position that they could not afford to pay us any more money."

"The award reflects, to a degree, the objective of 'hold the line'," said Brain Cault, U of A director of Personnel Services, but added, "The award does not freeze 'merit' and 'long service' increments for fiscal 1987-88."

"The award will cost us about \$870,000 in the 1987-88 operating budget," said A.M. Rennie, U of A Associate VP Administration. "We have to come up with a significant amount of money we hadn't budgeted for."

The changes to the contract will save the U of A about \$100,000 this year, and about \$2 million next year relative to the contract in force prior to the Arbitrator's decisions, said Cault.

The Arbitrator's report repeatedly criticized past University negotiations and concessions, especially with regard to Tradesman. "Unquestionably, the University's rates [of pay] are out of line, the Univer-



sity exacerbated the problem when it agreed to increase the rates in 1986 — if knew or ought to have known."

Rennie defends the previous negotiations: "To come to a negotiated agreement we had to give in on the Trades to keep the whole contract from going to arbitration."

O'Neill agrees that NASA has done well in negotiations relative to non-academic staff at other Universities: "We're probably ahead of the others, we've just been a lot better at bargaining — you can't hold that against us."

O'Neill is upset over the loss of "increments" however. "They're sacred — they've been around from day one. No one has had their increments taken away."

"Increments" are a near universal public sector contract provision which provides automatic annual increases for satisfactory employees until the employee reaches the maximum pay for their position.

U of A employees receive between 3.8 to 4.2 percent per year in "merit" and "long service" increments. These will continue until March 31st, 1988 but will then be frozen.

Increments for fiscal 1987-88 were estimated to be \$1.68 million, according to Rick Spilsted, U of A Director of Budget planning.

"These increments are not gone, they're frozen" said O'Neill, "Future negotiations, or a future arbitrator, could put them back in."

O'Neill also questions the whole arbitration process saying that "the Arbitration Board is set up by the Government, the Government sets up the list of arbitrators, and the government sets down the rules."

Provincial legislation also requires the arbitrators to consider "any fiscal policies that may be declared from time to time by the

Provincial Treasurer for the purpose of the [Labour Relations] Act."

In spite of this, O'Neill feels Lucas is "generally fair" and adds "we've used him before, we've always had a pretty middle of the road settlement."

O'Neill also charges that the University has its personnel priorities wrong and asks "are they serious if they won't go into a complete hiring freeze?"

Allowing the various departments to fill staff vacancies means Government sets down the rules," whole departments according to O'Neill.

"When they abolished the Extension Library 43 positions were abolished, even though most of the employees were rehired by other departments" said O'Neill "If many departments did without one or two staff the cuts could have been spread out and the Library saved."

Despite these problems O'Neill describes the NASA dealings with the U of A as "really very good. — We can see eye to eye. It's not an adversary relationship."

Aggies out for blood in CAB

by Roberta Franchuk

The Red Cross is looking for your help in keeping their blood supplies up.

A blood donor clinic is being held in the Central Academic Building this week, and the Red Cross is hoping for support from the University.

"The University clinic is very, very important for us," said Edi Skoropad, Red Cross clinical consultant. "It's one of our highest collection areas in the one week time period. We're aiming to collect 1400 units of blood this week."

The Faculty of Agriculture is aiding the Red Cross by setting up a faculty competition. Faculties, especially Engineering, are challenged to beat the Agriculture students by donating more blood per capita. Agriculture has won this competition for the last ten years.

The CAB clinic runs Monday to Thursday, 10 to 3, and Friday 10 to 2. If you can't make it, the Red Cross also operates a daily clinic in their Blood Transfusion Centre at 8249 114st, which is open Monday through Saturday from 10:30 to 2:30, and Tuesday and Thursday nights until 8.

The Red Cross would like to emphasize that it is not possible to contact the AIDS virus by donating blood. The society has been screening blood for the virus since Nov. 1985, and in June 1987 introduced a new donor screening procedure.

"The screening was put in place to identify high risk people who may not be eligible to donate. This ensures a safe blood supply," said Skoropad.

The screening will identify people in a high risk of coming in contact with the AIDS virus or who may have been exposed to Hepatitis B. Donors who feel that they may be in a high risk group are asked to indicate that donation be used for laboratory purposes.

The screening procedure involves a registered nurse asking a few questions about your health history. All answers are confidential.

Tests are then conducted to type the blood and screen for various diseases.



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