

Faculty strike looms as negotiations stall

BY KAVERI GUPTA

The threat of strike still hovers as negotiations stall between the University and faculty.

Talks came to a standstill at last Monday's meeting following the Dalhousie Faculty Association's (DFA) rejection of the Board of Governor's latest financial offer.

"We have neither settled nor broken off talks, but the money is not there

yet," said Michael Cross, chief negotiator for the Association.

Cross met with the Job Actions Committee, the group responsible for planning strikes, on Jan. 20.

"The DFA executive will be discussing a strike vote," Cross said. "It was a tactical decision... I still hope we can achieve settlement long before that."

Cross stressed the process as a deliberately lengthy one.

"This is a very elaborate legal process

so nothing happens quickly," he said. "Everybody should just take a deep breath and relax while we work this thing out."

Cross said current talks will continue for roughly another week. But Cross and the Board's chief negotiator, Peter McLellan, have agreed that Jan. 30 is the last day of discussion before a conciliator will have to be brought in.

"We are trying to buy some time so that we can get a commitment from the

government that if a conciliator is needed, one can be brought in quickly," Cross said.

McLellan could not be reached for comment.

If the conciliator fails to reach agreement between the parties in one day, and talks break down, a strike or lock-out is possible after two weeks.

A strike requires majority support in a vote of the faculty members.

A strike vote, once passed, does not mandate striking, but allows the Association executive to call a strike as they see fit during the course of negotiations.

Talks have centred around the contract agreement between the University and teaching staff. And while most of the contract has already been successfully negotiated, the

faculty association still has concerns about salary raises for professors and preventing further cuts to faculty positions.

"We want to stop the bleeding," Cross said.

Out of 11 universities, comparable in size and quality, Dalhousie falls tenth on the list in terms of faculty salaries.

"[Professors] have lost something like 11-12 per cent of our income in the 90s because of freezes and rollbacks," he said. "We are just shooting for the middle of the pack... you lose people when you have non-competitive salaries."

Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) president Chris Adams says while he has concerns about the negotiations, the DSU is not just a lame duck.

continued on page 4...



Whether one is for it or against it, marijuana use is an issue that almost every university student will have to deal with. With that in mind, The Gazette has produced a special hemp and marijuana supplement. See pages 12-14. (Photo by Joachim Stroink)

New allegations of harassment in security

BY MARK REYNOLDS

A second former female employee has come forward with more allegations of harassment at Dalhousie's security department.

The student claims to have been sexually harassed by the same employee who was suspended last month for harassing a female co-worker.

Last week, the Gazette reported that a guard had been suspended for allegedly harassing Joy Day, a female guard. Day complained that

she had endured verbal and physical harassment from a guard that she had been assigned to work with. That guard was suspended for two weeks after she filed a formal complaint. Day has since quit.

The former student guard, who wishes to remain anonymous, said that the guard in question also harassed her.

"It started when I became a student guard [in 1993]," she said.

"It wasn't one incident," she added, "there were comments and jokes... little innuendos."

An incident where comments were made about her body stands out in her mind.

"He said I looked different, and I said that I had got my hair cut. He said it wasn't my hair he was looking at — it was pretty clear what he meant."

The student, who worked with the security department for three years said she chose to treat the comments as jokes.

"[But] when he was asking me out, that made me uncomfortable."

She chose not to make a complaint, but feels that the guards behaviour was unacceptable.

"That guy should not be a security officer," she said.

Although disturbed by the incidents, she says she is not bitter about her experiences with security.

"There are a few that are great guys...but there are a few that give

continued on page 3...

Acadia unsettled by threat of strike

Students worry as professors reject contract offer and set strike vote

BY CHERI GREENO AND MICHAEL NASH

WOLFVILLE (CUP) — With negotiations heading nowhere fast, students at Acadia University are bracing for a faculty strike.

But they aren't taking the looming strike sitting down. Or are they?

On Jan. 12, hundreds of students occupied the main administrative building on the Wolfville campus and held a sit-in to express their displeasure with the current state of contract negotiations between administration and faculty.

Despite their passion, student protestors are unable to slow the

impending strike. Talks are currently at a standstill. A provincially-appointed conciliator was called in earlier this month to help the two sides reach an agreement, but left after just two days. At a Jan. 20 meeting, the faculty voted 97 per cent in favour of rejecting the university's final offer. The refusal was followed by 95 per cent of those present agreeing to hold a strike vote on February 2 and 3.

The highlight of the student sit-in was a two-and-a-half hour question period during which Acadia president Kelvin Ogilvie and faculty association president Jim Sacouman fielded questions

from students.

"I think the students were really pleased about the forum," said Paul Black, president of Acadia's student union. "They got to ask the questions they wanted to ask, and they got to ask them to the people the way [they] wanted to."

During the emotionally-charged forum, however, there were signs of frustration among the students as the two presidents belittled each other.

One student asked how they could stand there and expect to be taken seriously while virtually laughing at each other, and there were repeated calls from the audience for the two to "grow up".

Inside
 "Man is a being that aspires to equilibrium. He balances the weight of the evil piled on his back with the weight of his hatred."
 —Milan Kundera

National News
 The Canadian Federation of Students is tackling the issue of student debt by planning a national Day of Action.
 Page 5.
 A former dean at Memorial University reached a \$250,000 settlement with the university in a wrongful dismissal case.
 Page 6.

Focus
 Autistic students are learning to cope with university life.
 Page 10.
Sports
 The tigers men's volleyball team took silver at the annual Dal Classic tournament.
 Page 20.

Arts & Culture
 Highlights of the Tibetan Film Festival.
 Page 15.
 Traditional concert reviews: MacKeel and Highland Heights keep us hopping.
 Pages 15 and 16.
 CD reviews: Usher, Ultramagnetic MCs, Duran
 Page 15.

Science & Environment
 The lack of effort to clean up the Sydney Tar Ponds may be rooted in racial and economic prejudices.
 Page 7.