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Class size committee created

John Molendyk

The first step towards establishing a committee to deal with the question of class size at York was taken last week.

A proposal concerned with the composition of the committee's membership was submitted to the York administration by the Canadian Union of Educational Workers.

According to CUEW Chief Steward Leslie Sanders, the union recommends that representatives of the administration, senate, faculty, students and CUEW form the committee. If the administration agrees to the proposals, the committee should be in operation by January.

CUEW President Michael Michie stated this week that because the committee's establishment was stipulated in the union's recent contract, CUEW will try to maximize its own input. Michie emphasized that the issue affects the quality of education at York, and therefore affects the entire student body.

Vice-president of Employee and

Student Relations Bill Farr said that because of the sensitivity of the question it will be treated as more than just a contractual dispute. The proposal has been referred to President H. Ian Macdonald and Vice-president of Academic Affairs W.C. Found for further consideration.

Only after the three have collaborated, said Farr, will the

proposal be answered. He indicated that the January target date was "very feasible."

Mr. Found echoed Farr's remarks, stating that it was important to make "careful choices" in the matter. He said that the committee, once established, should be "a meaningful one." President Macdonald could not be reached for comment.

Canadian authors much neglected

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With regards to Canadian content, Galloway described the percentage derived from examining the 1,769 literary works as being "somewhat discouraging." In all, from grades 11 to 13, Ontario high school students are exposed to a body of literature that is only 14 per cent Canadian. Non-Canadian literature occupies

more than two-thirds of the shelf space, totaling 86 per cent of the books being studied by students.

In fact, Canadian literature is not represented in the top five most popular works in ten of the courses.

The top five, according to Galloway's study are: *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Pygmalion*, *Animal Farm* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. The most popular Canadian work is Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*—number eight in the top 26.

Moreover, Galloway feels that "Canadian artists are not considered among the most important. Shakespeare is undoubtedly the first and John Steinbeck is the second." In interviews with 8 anonymous English department heads, Galloway found that "many teachers have a feeling that there is something secondary about Canadian literature somehow."

Galloway found as well that as the grade level increased, the percentage of women authors and protagonists decreased. Although four of the eight department heads interviewed in the study were women, course outlines did not appear to exhibit drastic change in the material chosen for study.

Galloway stated her concern regarding positive images of women in literature. "In John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, the one female in the drama doesn't even have a name—she's Curley's wife. I wish there was more of a range of roles for women; that role of wife and mother seems to be the one..."

Galloway feels that studying these traditional roles is not only doing an injustice to young women but to young men as well. Said Galloway: "The literature they study reinforces the reality presented in these novels."

Results from the study show that 78 per cent of the literary works presented a male as the chief character, 11 per cent maintained a female as the chief character (although she points out that "many of these are not positive images, Lady Macbeth being one example") and the remaining 11 per cent exhibited a balance of the two.

Margaret Laurence's book, *The Diviners*, is only one victim of the invisible censor in Ontario. Laurence's book has been censored from courses in Ontario Secondary Schools since 1973.

When Galloway asked the eight department heads whether they saw Laurence's book as a possibility in course outlines within the near future, many of them said they did not. When asked why, said Galloway, their answers all told the same story. "Heads don't want any controversy from the public or the parents. They like to keep things smooth."

Although Galloway's study was performed in 1977, she followed up with a series of spot checks last year before publishing her final results. In her own words, "There was no change."



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