

## Majority undecided

# Faculty group considers merits of unionizing

By JAMES McCALL

Approximately 75 members of the York University Faculty Association, professors, lecturers and librarians, attended a general meeting held October 1 to discuss the possibility of the association becoming a legally recognized collective bargaining unit.

At this gathering, Marie-Claire Pomez, an organizer from the Canadian Association of University Teachers, spoke in favour of unionization for York's estimated 906 full-time faculty (although professional librarians are now members of YUFA, and were included in the last settlement negotiated by the association, they are still not recognized as faculty by the university administration).

### ADVICE

Pomez has worked for the past two years advising university faculty associations throughout Canada how to become legally certified as unions. According to her, all the faculty associations of the francophone universities of Quebec have applied for certification, as has the University of British Columbia; she was personally involved in successful certification attempts at St. Mary's University in Halifax and at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg.

### DISSATISFACTION

What prompted this discussion by YUFA of collective bargaining was a general dissatisfaction on the part of the membership, according to YUFA chairman Harvey Simmons, with recent settlements informally negotiated with the university administration.

Citing Statistics Canada figures in the YUFA newsletter of September 24, Simmons states that York's faculty salaries have slipped since 1970-71 from near the top in relation to the 15 other universities in Ontario (associate professors ranked fourth, assistant professors ranked third) to near the bottom in 1973-74 (associate professors ranked 12th, assistant professors ranked 11th).

### STATUS QUO

Simmons argues that merely keeping abreast of the cost of living, which he sets at about 12 per cent a year, would only mean maintaining

York's position, in terms of faculty salaries, at the bottom of the provincial pile. It must also be remembered that York has the third largest student enrolment in Ontario after the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario.

The settlement which seems to have done the most damage was the 4 1/4 per cent for the year 1973-74, negotiated during the famous budget crisis when many faculty members were afraid of losing their jobs.

The settlement for the year 1974-75 was 10 1/2 per cent.

### DOUBLE ROLES

The question of collective bargaining for university faculties, for which there is no precedent in Ontario, is complicated by the different roles faculty members usually perform in a university.

Although the York University Senate, almost entirely composed of faculty (115 members out of 150) with a few seats set aside for students and support staff, is largely responsible for determining academic policy for the university, it also makes budgetary recommendations to the Board of Governors, which is the legal employer of the university and is responsible for all financial matters.

In addition, faculty members in their respective departments frequently have a say in which colleague is hired or fired and which one is granted tenure. Many administrative posts in the university are filled by a system of rotation of faculty.

At the present time, department chairmen and even deans of faculties are members of YUFA, unless they expressly decide not to be. Clearly, there are many instances in which the faculty, if it became a union, might find itself in the invidious position of an employee occasionally performing some management role.

### POWER

Pomez suggested, however, that this problem could be solved simply by excluding a faculty member from the bargaining unit whenever he is, in fact, representing the employer.

Directing her remarks to the YUFA members, Pomez said, "What we want is to get more power. If you lose certain things, you still can determine your own



Harvey Simmons, chairman of YUFA

future... You can decide the size and type of group that you want to form.

"The bargaining unit must be appropriate to the group. Up to now chairmen of departments have been included, if department chairmen are chosen by faculty and are not department heads.

"I don't think it (certification) will be a loss. I think you will lose your illusions, but in reality I don't think you lose."

Pomez indicated that although deans would definitely be excluded from the bargaining unit, the selection of deans and department chairmen as well as Senate membership could be negotiable in a contract.

"Don't stop working on Senate," Pomez said. "The main reason for organizing is not salaries but the participation of faculty in the decision-making process of the university."

### LOT OF DAMAGE

In answer to a question concerning the reaction of professional faculties, such as the law faculty at York, to joining a faculty union, Pomez responded that professional groups "can do a lot of damage" in preventing certification, but that usually compromises could be made with them — in particular by allowing them to opt out of the bargaining unit.

In addition to the 10 1/2 per cent negotiated by YUFA on behalf of its members who make up, according to Simmons, about 80 per cent of the faculty, the university provided \$150,000, approximately 1 per cent of faculty salaries, for an anomalies fund, \$78,000 of which went to the Osgoode law faculty.

YUFA negotiating chairman Paul Evans said, "We didn't negotiate the anomalies fund. It was completely outside negotiations."

The university administration's

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In the same YUFA newsletter of September 24, a reference was made to a proposal by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, a representative of which is scheduled to meet with the membership of YUFA at a later date, suggesting a province-wide "two-tier system of bargaining in which one committee of OCUFA representatives and university presidents would arrive at an appropriate increase in the full-time salary budget, and a second committee composed of representatives of the first and representatives of the government would agree upon the appropriate increase in government financial assistance."

"There was an indication that OCUFA would like us to tread warily in the direction of collective bargaining," said Evans. "Once collective bargaining comes, it might be difficult to introduce a two-tier system."

### ANTI-WOMEN

A bias against women which the York University pension plan has reflected by preventing women employees from collecting the same benefits on retirement as men, even though they contribute the same portion of their salaries, was roundly deplored by YUFA members at the general meeting.

However, a meeting of women faculty called one hour prior to the general meeting to discuss collective bargaining issues of particular interest to women was cancelled because of a very small turn-out.

When asked if he thought the membership of YUFA would vote in favour of becoming a certified collective bargaining unit, Simmons replied, "A minority are for it, and a minority are against it. The vast majority haven't made up their minds."

"If we can't get a reasonable settlement, I would bet a majority would go the collective bargaining route."

After Marie-Claire Pomez finished speaking, there was warm applause from the YUFA members present; but it will be a while before we know whether or not they were merely being polite.

## Tykes fall off trikes

WASHINGTON (CUPI) - Who would spend \$19,300 to find out why kiddies fall off trikes?

The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, that's who. Their official conclusion: "Unstable performance, particularly roll-over while turning."

But this isn't the only far-seeing research the American government has financed from the taxpayers' pockets. Other areas of recent study include bi-sexual Polish frogs, the smell of sweat from Australian aborigines, and mating calls of Central American toads.

An Arizona Republican, John Conlan, notes that federal programmes cost every man, woman and child in the U.S. about \$1,500 annually, more than double the cost per person in 1965.

"Since tax cheaters can be fined and jailed," Conlan suggests, "perhaps federal bureaucrats guilty of squandering our money should be as well."

Examples of governmental expenditures of questionable merit are numerous.

The American Board of Tea Tasters sips along for \$117,250 a

year. Extra sipping can also be arranged with the Board of Tea Appeals, for a slight fee of course.

The Interdepartmental Screw Thread Committee, founded as a temporary agency to speed the end of the First World War, is still figuring out the way nuts and bolts work. The cost is \$250,000 a year.

And the U.S. agriculture department recently paid \$20,550 for a study of red blood cells and serum antigens in a new breed of Polish swine. The pigs must think it's nice that somebody cares.

## Manpower exam switches location

Students expecting to take the general public service exam administered through the Canada Manpower Centre are asked not to go to Stedman or Winters, but to the Vanier dining hall instead.

Students rushing to the test site in McLaughlin are asked to turn instead to the Founders dining hall.

The time and date have at least remained the same: Tuesday, October 22, at 7 p.m.



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