

Confusion and disagreement surround committee on status of women

by Sheila Fardy

A committee on the status of women at Dalhousie is going to begin soon, but there is disagreement as to the mandate of this group.

Sue Sherwin, ex-president of both the Dalhousie Women's Faculty Association and the Dalhousie Faculty Association, says that the committee's purpose is to consider methods of increasing the number of women and minorities on faculty, but University president MacKay says it is to "consider whether there is a need for affirmative action."

MacKay says the committee is charged with viewing arrangements for appointments of "women, the handicapped, and minorities" to faculty. When asked about the committee MacKay replied, "The committee is not established as yet. We had been waiting for a response to our proposal from the DFA, which we received on the 19th." When asked the name of the committee, MacKay said that there is no name yet.

According to Sherwin, the nature of the problem that this committee is meant to solve is the need to have a greater representation of women on the faculty at Dalhousie. The "Report of the Committee on the Status of Women at Dalhousie University," published in January of 1979, used statistics to point out the discrimination against women on the faculty at Dalhousie. The report showed that women were paid less than males in the same jobs with the same qualifications, and that women on faculty were "significantly fewer than the males."

"I don't acknowledge that there is an inequity," says MacKay.

Sherin says that the inequities in salary have been taken care of, but it is now

time to start doing something about the under-representation of women on faculty.

In negotiating their collective agreement the DFA proposed that "women on campus should be hired in those cases where there was no better qualified man available." Sherwin says that this proposal could be much stronger nevertheless, but the Board of Governors rejected it.

The DFA is looking for affir-



mative action on the issue; the Board of Governors proposed setting up a committee to study the problem.

When asked why the Board of Governors rejected the DFA's proposal MacKay replied, "The members of the Board feel that the DFA's proposal deals with only part of the problem; the board is interested not only in the representation of women, but other minority groups as well."

The DWFO was looking for action to increase the numbers of women in faculty at Dalhousie. This group has a broader scope than that, but is, says Sherwin, consistent with what the DWFO has hoped for. Sherwin says, "I am

not convinced that this will actually achieve the goal. The procedures will probably be so watered down in order to please all interested groups and still increase the number of women on faculty, that they may not be as effective as they could be. I hope that they will be successful and I am wishing them the best, but frankly, I have my doubts."

When asked what she thought the recommendations of the committee would be, Sherwin answered, "The recommendations may be weaker than the original from the DFA. This is a much more diverse group than the DFA. It is such a hard job."

The committee will be made up of representatives of interested groups on campus, including representatives of the DFA, the Senate, the Dalhousie Staff Association, and the Operating Engineers.

The 1978-1979 report on the status of women at Dalhousie came up with the following conclusions "Women faculty at Dalhousie University:"

- Are paid less than their male counterparts
- Are concentrated in the lower academic ranks
- Spend more time in each rank before being promoted; and
- Are significantly fewer than the males."

Among the recommendations was "That a committee be established to study the salaries of all full-time female faculty and empowered to correct anomalies..."

Sherwin says "we didn't expect to do everything at once, this is a step in the right direction."

"It will take a very long time before women are represented according to their numbers on any faculty, including Dalhousie," concedes Sherwin.

Senate supports DFA "open shop"

by Cathy McDonald

The Dalhousie Senate supported the right of faculty to refuse to join the faculty union, last Monday, January 19.

In a close vote, the Senate reiterated their disagreement with clause 7.03 of the recently released proposed contract between the Board of Governors of Dalhousie University and the Dalhousie Faculty Association. The clause provides that a faculty member swearing conscientious objection to paying union fees to the Dalhousie Faculty Association, must apply to a committee which accepts or rejects the member's claim.

The Senate voted 25 to 19 that a faculty member should not have to justify his or her conscientious objection to anyone. According to the contract, instead of paying fees to the union, a faculty member would pay the equivalent amount into the Dalhousie

Scholarship Fund.

A similar motion was passed at the December 8th meeting of the Senate, before the contract came out. The sense of Monday's motion was as a "reminder." The Senate has no power to make changes in the contract.

Alasdair Sinclair, chairperson of the Senate, described the two main arguments in this issue. It was felt by some people that the Committee to Administer the Collective Agreement had in the past passed judgement on particular cases without giving sufficient reasons for the decision. Other Senators believed on principle that a faculty member should not have to prove the status of his or her conscientious objection on the grounds that this is an infringement of the principle of academic freedom, as well as the right of association or disassociation with a union.

David Braybrooke, a DFA member, says the issue has

nothing to do with academic freedom. "This has no effect on academic freedom, that is the protection of people in expressing their opinions."

According to Braybrooke, the issue is whether or not the costs of bargaining should be paid for by everyone, as everyone whether or not they are in the union is bargained for. "Provisions (for conscientious objection) have to be defined, or it will be abused," Braybrooke said.

"It is hard to prove that they dislike the union so much that the benefits are no good to them."

The Senate discussed how it could be more linked to the bargaining process to be better informed and able to criticize the contest. The Senate Consultative Committee was asked to look into this. Sinclair said it was hard to criticize a 108 page document at a few days notice.

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