

## **October-November 1995, Volume 22.2, Robert H. Johnston, Editor**

please note, there are slight differences between this and the printed version--the text boxes have been omitted in this version

### **Transition Agreement Headed to Final Offer Selection**

Negotiations between the Faculty Association and the administration reached an impasse on Monday, November 20, 1995. The final position of the administration was that any restoration of CP/M payments withheld on July 1, 1995 would have to be financed through ATB decreases. A CP/M scheme at 110 par units per 100 members was calculated to cost 2% of salary. Your representatives on the Joint Committee argued that it was unfair to ask existing faculty to finance the CP/M plan. We argued that the traditional source of funding, the difference between the salaries of those retiring and their replacements would finance a significant portion of the CP/M plan. We further argued that the Social Contract had not treated all faculty equally and that junior faculty and meritorious faculty had paid a particularly high price. We argued that it was in the interest of the University to restore a degree of horizontal equity between faculty members.

The next stage in the bargaining process is Final Offer Selection. The remuneration caucus is now preparing a brief which will be presented to the panel of three selectors on Friday, November 24, 1995. The selectors are to make a final decision by December 15, 1995.

*Wayne Lewchuk*  
*Chair, Remunerations Committee*

### **Some Thoughts on Presidential Directions**

President Peter George has recently contributed significantly to the debate within our ranks on the subject of our University's future. His two documents, "Directions" and "Resources", co-signed by thirty colleagues from all sections of the University community, have provoked a lively response, principally in the form of three "town hall" meetings where Dr. George has amplified the document's written observations and heard comments from his audience.

Published within a provincial context dominated by the Harris government's announced plans to slash hundreds of millions from post-secondary education in Ontario, "Directions" looks to the next decade or so and tries to estimate priorities and how these might be achieved, while preserving and strengthening those parts of the University's task essential to our continued health and preeminence. Engagingly, President George acknowledges that preliminary drafts of his statement provoked criticism for "pretentious" statements on his vision for the University and he has endeavoured to remove such features from the final version we are seeing. However, in any document where there is consideration of "mission" and "vision", some evocative language is inescapable, even necessary. Certainly it would be ungracious to quarrel with the determination to be creative, to excel and be recognized internationally, to commit oneself to excellence, to inspire and serve. All universities, one assumes, could, even should subscribe to these noble ambitions. Change too is inevitable: a continuing fact of life where, for reasons not just financial, "the status quo is not a viable alternative."

In his "Resources" statement, on the other hand, Dr. George comes to grips with some stark facts of the current economic scene. Here he provides us with some financial figures and the accompanying message is clear enough: heavy cuts and departmental justifications for their function and utility lie ahead. This brings its own wrenching questions, particularly in the stated context of the distinction apparently to be made between departments which "generate" revenues and those which "use" them. University support is promised for those areas in which "we have demonstrable achievements and established national and international reputations for excellence and innovation" þ the last three words being a recurring mantra in university documents of the 90s. The prospect of interdepartmental competition for scarce resources is profoundly disquieting, and what happens to those departments which might not

bring in extra revenue but which have a justifiable conviction that their function is indispensable to any university pledged (repeatedly) to the pursuit of excellence? As the President reminds us, "we are not a business corporation [even if] we are being forced to think about commercializing some of our activities." Some fierce, demoralizing battles loom if this depressing vision is to be realized.

Dr. George and his team must be commended for bringing these issues to a wide McMaster public. They have certainly struck powerful chords among us, even as many wonder whether they will have a job in a year or two. Clearly we cannot pull a blanket over our heads and pretend the "Common Sense Revolution" is all a bad dream. The need to prepare for and meet the challenges ahead is the document's most insistent theme and its authors are right to make it, even if some features of their scenario evoke strong disagreement and foreboding. Nothing else could have been expected. This local exercise in *glasnost*, if maintained, might help the process of McMaster perestroika without, let us fervently hope, triggering the same result as occurred in an earlier and more notorious example.

*Robert H. Johnston*  
*Professor of History*

## **Tenure Under Attack Again?**

**Six months after Mike Harris set off a firestorm of criticism for his threat to eliminate tenure, a new battle is brewing over comments attributed to his Minister of Education and Training. John Snobelen has been reported to have made derogatory comments about tenure to a convention of Tory youth last month.**

**OCUFA President Michael Piva sent in the following letter to Snobelen today [November 7, 1995].**

**"I have recently become aware of some alarming and ill-informed statements attributed to you concerning tenure. The University of Waterloo student newspaper, the *Imprint*, quoted you speaking to a mid-October Progressive Conservative Youth convention as saying:**

**'We as a government cannot cut social assistance to the people of Ontario and then ask them to tolerate a tenured professor on sabbatical. No one should have a lifetime contract.'**

**We hope these comments were attributed to you in error, because they betray a grave misunderstanding of Ontario's universities and of the role of tenure in meeting the university mission.**

**Tenure is, above all, a means to preserve academic freedom. The universities' role as centres of lively, critical thought would be impossible without it. This role is essential for a vibrant democracy. Tenure ensures that professors are not punished for pursuing research or speaking out on ideas that might be unpopular with the powerful forces of the day.**

**Tenure is granted only after many years of dedicated research, teaching and community service; its granting is subject to rigorous appointment and appraisal reviews; it is followed by exhaustive and exacting performance reviews, conducted at least annually. I challenge you to name any profession that is subject to more evaluation than university professors. Tenure does not protect people who neglect their duties, and there are recent cases of discipline and dismissal to prove it. No one in a university has a lifetime contract; tenured faculty have continuing appointments.**

**Professors, who have dedicated their lives to the pursuit of truth and the dissemination of knowledge, naturally feel passionately about tenure and academic freedom. Indeed, preservation of tenure has prompted our colleagues at the University of Manitoba to take strike action.**

**Your alleged comments also suggest a false impression of university sabbaticals. Sabbaticals entail specific research projects necessary to a professor's work assignments; they are not, as the statement attributed to you implied, extended vacations. Sabbatical proposals are intensely scrutinized and vetted, and the results thoroughly evaluated, to ensure that they are wise investments in professional performance.**

**I would appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience whether the quotes attributed to you accurately reflect your views. This is further illustration of the critical need for us to meet and share our views and experiences. I repeat our request for a meeting with you."**

*Reprinted from The OCUFA Report  
November 7, 1995, Volume 2 Number 4*

[At November 21, 1995, Michael Piva had still not received a reply from the Minister.]

## **New List on Academic Freedom**

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**What is Academic Freedom? Whose interests does it serve? Have we got it, and if not, how might we establish it? Is discourse and other expression within the Academy freer, or less free, than in the surrounding community? Where are the proper limits of Academic Freedom and how (and by whom) are they being contested, shifted, transgressed? With what other values (as for instance sensitivity, patriotism, equity, piety) does this value compete or conflict? How should we resolve these conflicts? When we invoke Academic Freedom in debate, is it to affirm impartial principle, or to dignify partisan aims? And how does this concept interact with various theories of knowledge and truth.**

**ACADFREE-L is an unmoderated discussion list devoted to such issues, and to news involving them. Faculty students, and interested others, of whatever philosophic or ideologic persuasion including those who distrust the whole notion of Academic Freedom are all alike cordially invited to join. To join, send an e-mail message to:**

**listserv@beaver.bemidji.msus.edu**

**Leave the subject line blank; and for the text of your message, enter a single line as follows (substituting your own first and last names for "FirstName" and "LastName")**

**SUBSCRIBE ACADFREE-L FirstName LastName**

**Further instructions and information will be e-mailed to you when you have done this.**

*Brian Donovan (bdonovan@vax1.bemidji.msus.edu)*

## **Humour from Around the World:**

### **Orchestrating Budgetary Priorities**

*From the September 1995 Advocate, the newsletter of the Hungarian Scientific Workers' Association. Translated by John Fekete, President of the Trent University Faculty Association and reprinted with his approval.*

*When the New York Philharmonic toured in Budapest, the Prime Minister received an invitation to attend the gala concert, but sent his finance minister instead. Next day, members of cabinet received the following memo.*

*Subject: Assessment of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony in the light of budgetary policy.*

*I made the following observations at last night's concert:*

*1. The oboe section had nothing to do for long periods of time. Their numbers should be cut, and their work distributed among the other members of the orchestra.*

*2. All 12 violins played the same tune. This points up an unnecessary duplication that is grounds for a significant work force reduction. Moreover, if the point of having 12 violins is to produce a certain volume of sound, the same result can be achieved by suitably amplifying 11 or even fewer violins.*

*3. Considerable effort had to go into the accurate rendering of sixteenth notes. This appears to be superfluous ornamentation. It would be better to replace sixteenth notes with much easier eighth notes. Students or entry level musicians could then be employed instead of highly trained professionals, with impressively lower salary and operating expenditures.*

*4. I don't see any point to having the horn section repeat the same tune that the string section has already played. If we can eliminate useless repetition of this kind, the symphony can be performed in twenty minutes instead of two hours.*

*I have to conclude that if Schubert had taken these items into consideration, he could have finished the symphony.*

*Recommendation: Introduction of these principles into the operations of the music community in this country would make it possible to schedule more concerts in each concert hall. As a result, half the concert halls could be closed, bringing significant further savings. Moreover, adaptation of these principles to the research community, post-secondary education, psychiatric hospitals, and other publicly funded institutions, would go some ways toward ensuring the success of our program*

## ***OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards***

### ***PROGRAM***

*Each year OCUFA recognizes outstanding teachers and academic librarians in Ontario universities through awards.*

*Since 1973 OCUFA has presented 245 awards.*

*The recipients are selected by the OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee.*

*Approximately ten awards are presented.*

### ***CATEGORIES***

*Teaching, in the context of the OCUFA Awards, embraces virtually all levels of instruction p graduate and undergraduate teaching, continuing education and faculty development. Similarly, proficiency in teaching may extend well beyond the classroom, the laboratory or the faculty member's office. Activities such as course design, curriculum development, organization of teaching programs and other significant forms of leadership are often important contributions to the instructional process. Those who excel in any of these are eligible for the OCUFA Teaching Awards.*

*Academic librarianship, in the context of the OCUFA Awards, embraces all aspects of librarianship that contribute to the scholarly achievement of all members of the university community. Activities such as development and delivery of services, provision of educational materials, collection development and management and other contributions to academic librarianship are important to the intellectual functioning of the university. Those who excel in any of these are eligible for an OCUFA Academic Librarianship Award.*

### ***NOMINATIONS***

*Nominations are invited from individuals, informal groups of faculty or students, or both, and such organizations as local faculty associations, faculty or college councils, university committees concerned with teaching and learning, librarians, local student councils, departments, alumni, etc.*

*Guidelines to assist in organizing a nomination should be consulted by prospective nominators and are available on request from your Faculty Association Office (Hamilton Hall 103A, ext. 24682, email: mufa) or the Provincial Office of OCUFA.*

*Nominations must include a covering nomination form (appended to Guidelines for OCUFA Teaching Award Nominations and Guidelines for OCUFA Academic Librarianship Award Nominations), a nominator's brief, and sufficient evidence, from as many sources as possible, to make it clear that outstanding work deserving of recognition has been done.*

### ***PROCEDURE***

*Deadline for receipt of nominations:*

*February 16, 1996*

*The original and six copies of the submission should be sent to:*

*OCUFA Teaching & Academic Librarianship  
Awards Committee  
27 Carlton Street  
Suite 400  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5B 1L2  
Inquiries to: 416-979-2117 or MUFA Office.*

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***END of NEWSLETTER Oct-Nov 1995.***

*Comments to:*

*[mufa@mcmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:mufa@mcmail.cis.mcmaster.ca)*