

NEWS FROM UWFA

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**1997 / 1998 UWFA
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resident's Report

I attended, with Kim Best, our Office Manager, the Western Regional Conference of Faculty Association at Vancouver in October. Explaining our circumstances to strangers, as much as their explaining their's, leads to heightened understanding and perspective.

I found myself musing to them about our evident disillusionment and demoralization. Four years of government under-funding have led to an accumulation of resentment and frustration at The University of Winnipeg. Certainly compared to universities in B.C. and Alberta we are very much worse off. And yet the fiscal situation in Manitoba is not in any significant way inferior to these two provinces. A delegate provided the pithy aphorism that explains our predicament. Provincial government policy, he says is roughly as follows: "Our intention is to starve the buggers (sic) to death and hope we get the universities we like."

Indeed! Cutbacks have been a substitute for serious policy decisions about universities. And the result probably is that universities in Manitoba are satisfactorily neither to faculties nor to the governments that fund them.

The guerilla warfare against universities must end. Governments must soon realize that slash and burn, or is it a scorched-earth policy will not produce universities that even governments approve of. In the end, all-round, everyone will be unhappy with the outcome, unless things change.

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What else was interesting about Vancouver? There persists concerns about the keeping and storing of files, especially in sexual harassment cases.

Also, I was impressed by an exceptional presentation by Tony Bates, Director, Distance Education and Technology, UBC (e-mail: tony.bates@UBC.ca). Faculty Associations, he said, are legitimately concerned about issues of copyright and workload in highly technological education ventures. But he was also convinced that these matters can be handled successfully and there can be openness to new possibilities in the delivery of university education.

Finally, the Conference was riveted by a debate on the new Technical University of British Columbia (colloquially called: "Tech. U.") The provincial government in its wisdom has chosen to set up this venture without provisions for a Senate and without an advanced commitment to procedures for academic freedom and tenure. We need to re-iterate that without academic freedom there cannot be scientific and technical excellence. More will be heard from CAUT and local Faculty Associations on this score and Members are encouraged to support this cause by writing the Premier of British Columbia and the Minister of Colleges.

At home Reg Skene and the Bargaining Team are working away and our representation on the Pension Committee (Ron Norton, Alden Turner and Phil Cyrenne) are actively involved in the debate over a proposed new Early Retirement Plan. David Cheal works away diligently on your behalf as Grievance Officer. The building blocks are in place for a busy and successful year.

ALLEN MILLS

REPORT OF THE CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

After working through problems related to governance issues, the UWFA negotiating team is now engaged in discussions with the University of Winnipeg Management team about salaries and benefits. As a means of bringing into focus our principles, concerns, and needs, for the purpose of these negotiations, the UWFA team prepared a discussion paper which reviewed the principles which govern our negotiations, and suggested a model for giving effect to these principles.

The model put forth takes the form of a three-year agreement. Days off without pay would be eliminated in the first year and approximate parity with the University of Manitoba salary scale would be achieved within three years, with everyone placed in his/her appropriate position on scale by the third year. Institution of the new scale would be timed so that Assistant Professors would be brought on scale the first year, Associates the second, and Full Professors the third.

The discussion paper was designed to provide a framework for discussion within the "principled bargaining" procedures which have characterized the current negotiation session. The document was received with respect and interest by the management team, and very useful discussions are now underway, so far centred largely on the points raised by our document. We hope to be able to report in the near future that these discussions have resulted in the signing of a Collective Agreement mutually beneficial to the Members of UWFA and the Management of the University of Winnipeg.

REG SKENE

**POSSIBLE NEW EARLY RETIREMENT PLAN
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG**

The administration has presented the Pension committee with a possible new early retirement plan. The proposal, which is still in its early form, would permit any plan member who has 25 years of service to retire at 55 years of age or older without penalty. In addition, \$600.00 per month would be provided until age 60, the earliest date a person can claim CPP. Finally, there would be a guarantee of yearly increases of at least 75% of cost of living up to 6% (i.e. maximum increase=4.5%).

The reduction of penalty is a major savings for a person who wishes to retire before age 61. The penalty, in the past, was 1/4% for every month before age 61. This has recently been raised to 1/2%. The University actuary has stated that the 1/4% did not cover actual costs to the plan when a person retires early. This change means that for every year before age 61 a person would be penalized 6% of their final retirement income.

Your UWFA pension committee members (and others) have suggested to the administration that the three suggested components (no penalty, bridging monies and guaranteed partial CPI) would be insufficient to induce a large number of people to retire early. The administration is currently considering what can be done to "sweeten" the offer. They are also looking at how and if benefits such as Blue Cross and life insurance can be maintained by members.

If you have any questions about the proposed early retirement plan, please contact your UWFA representatives to the Pension Committee. They are Phil Cyrenne, Ron Norton and Alden Turner.

RON NORTON

**REPORT FROM THE JOINT EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
COMMITTEE**

Due to the urging of UWFA representatives, the JEBC now hires consultants on the basis of competitive tenders. The result is that consultants' fees cost less than before and so does the cost of some benefits. You can see the difference in the premiums that you pay for Long Term Disability and Group Life.

GRACE O'FARRELL

**EARLY RETIREMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
MANITOBA -- DISCONTINUED**

A substantial number of University of Manitoba faculty have chosen to retire under a new plan that came into effect on April 1, 1997; some are retiring under a pre-existing plan. The actual number of retirees has not been made public but it is substantial enough to cause the University of Manitoba to stop accepting new applications for early retirement due to cost. The effect on the university's budget, staffing, and curriculum may be dramatic.

According to University of Manitoba Staff Benefits Bulletin #17 (April 1996), the basic outlines of the April 1997 plan are as follows:

1. Eligibility: 55-64 years of age; 10 years of continuous service; 12 month continuing appointment
2. Benefits: supplemental health and dental insurance paid by employer; group life paid by retiree; financial planning advice.
3. Possible senior scholar status with research support.
4. Cash incentives ranging from 32% of salary to 150% of annual salary based on age and service.* See examples below.

EXAMPLES:

1. A 64 year old faculty member with 31 years service. The incentive buy-out was 74% of annual salary.
2. A 60 year old faculty member with 27 years service. The incentive buy-out was 115% of annual salary.

*The University of Manitoba pension is a money-purchase pension plan based on the amount of money that an individual staff member accumulates in a personal account; there is no penalty for retiring early. The University of Winnipeg pension is a defined-benefit plan; there are substantial penalties for retiring early.

DANIEL STONE

THE UWFA OFFICE IS MOVING !!

On December 8th, the UWFA Office will be moving to Room 307 Sparling Hall in anticipation of the start of renovations to our current space. There may be a slight delay in moving our phone and computer lines, but we should be up and running as quickly as possible. The phone and fax numbers and our e-mail address will remain the same during renovations, and we expect to be in our new space sometime the middle of January. We will keep you posted.

WHO IS THAT STRANGER IN THE OFFICE NEXT TO YOU?

There is a 40 per cent chance that your office neighbour in the Fall of 1985 is no longer here. In 1985/86 there were 213 UWFA Members with either a probationary, tenured or continuing appointment. Of this number, only 127 remain. Roughly 60 per cent of the 86 departures were due to retirement, 30 per cent by resignation, and 10 per cent through either death, disability, or entry into administration.

Stated differently, every year, an average of four Members retired, two resigned, and one was either disabled, died, or entered administration.

Faculty Attrition, 1985/6 to 1997/8		
1985/86 UWFA Members	213	100%
Retirements	51	23.9%
Resignations	24	11.3%
Deaths / Disability	5	2.4%
Administration	6	2.8%
Total Departures	86	40.1%
1997/98 Remaining Members	127	59.9%

HUGH GRANT, Economics