

ALL AUCE LOCAL ONE MEMBERS

RITCHIE AND ASSOCIATES

On Friday, July 26, 1985, the Director of Purchasing informed his staff of the recommendations made by Ritchie and Associates for the Purchasing Department. Put simply, Ritchie and Associates' report claims that the Purchasing Department can be efficiently run with 30% less staff! If this is the kind of proposal that we can expect in the other administrative areas of our bargaining unit, then we have good reason to worry about a large potential loss of jobs, and a severe reduction of services to the rest of the University.

No one, amongst the AUCE members we have spoken with, believe that Ritchie and Associates, in the short period of time that they are here, develop anything like a real understanding of the nature and meaning of the work we do. They look at the surfaces: the 'workflow', the utilization of time and movement. The crudity of this review is now borne out by their proposal for Purchasing: you don't need a highly paid specialist to tell you that you can save 25% (their original proposal) of a \$600,000.00 budget by eliminating six and a half positions that cost \$150,000.00 in salaries (the figures are approximate, but very close).

When questioned specifically about the Ritchie and Associates recommendation for Purchasing, Eileen Stewart, Director, Personnel Services Department, said that the information our members were given is inaccurate, and misrepresents the actual situation. She maintains that no decision has been made that any positions are to be cut. Ritchie and Associates have studied the workflow in Purchasing, and have determined, on paper, that the work can be done by a given number of employees. This does not mean that the University is going to accept their recommendation, or even necessarily test it exactly as proposed (in fact, as we found out yesterday morning, the proposed reduction in the number of buyers has been reduced by one; they now propose that the department can operate with four less buyers rather than five less, as was originally proposed). The University intends to implement this proposal on a trial basis. The staff will be reduced for the period of the test run, but there will be no loss of pay. If the trial run is successful, even then it does not mean that the University will decide to lay off any staff. Ms. Stewart maintains that all this could mean that several people will be freed up to take on new duties, and actually expand services. If there are layoffs resulting from the Ritchie and Associates review, she has given us every assurance that the reductions of staff would be handled through reassignment, attrition, early retirement, and so on, before anyone would be actually put out of a job.

So who do we believe? Obviously, if the University is spending the kind of money we expect they are spending on this study, they would be very unlikely not to implement the recommendations that result from it. According to our information, Ritchie and Associates have claimed that they can achieve a 25-30% increase in efficiency in every area that they have studied. If their way of achieving this is the same elsewhere as it apparently is in Purchasing, then those of us who work in administrative areas can expect to see a large reduction of the workforce, and those of us who work in other areas of the University can expect to see a serious reduction of services.

Just a reminder that we will discuss this issue further at a one hour membership meeting on Thursday, August 1, 1985 (12:30pm - 1:30pm IRC 1). Please attend if you can!

July 30, 1985

Ted Byrne
Union Co-ordinator

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