

## REPORT FROM THE OFFICE STAFF TO THE EXECUTIVE

We met with the Executive Sub-Committee on Overtime, Etc. and gave them our concerns and recommendations regarding both the organization of the Union and the office and our particular positions. However, most of the recommendations we made were not addressed in the first phase of their report presented to the Executive. Therefore, we have decided to make our own submission to the Executive. This report reflects considerable thought on our part and the three of us are in unanimous agreement.

### Division of Labour

We feel that our jobs can be divided into either clerical or administrative duties. At present, our job descriptions include both. It is not humanly possible to do both. This means we are faced with a choice. Does the Executive want the office staff to be typists and a bookkeeper or administrative resource people?

We all thought we were taking administrative type jobs when we took these jobs. We believe this was the intent in creating these positions. In our minds we expected to be doing liason work between the Executive and various Committees and the employer and various outside organizations, as well as research and resource work for the Executive. None of the three of us wants to run the Union nor do we believe that was ever the intent of the membership. However, we are constantly put in that position by an indecisive Executive.

The breakdown of responsibility as we see it should be as follows:

#### The Executive

The administration of the Union; drafting policy, developing policy and long range goals/objectives for the Union  
Planning of the administrative accomplishment of those goals; taking an overview and longer range approach than the present piecemeal, crisis to crisis, moment to moment way of operating  
Acting on recommendations from the membership, various committees and the office staff  
Maintaining some level of continuity in the Union

#### The Secretary-Treasurer

Maintaining all financial records, paying of bills, financial statements, liason with the auditor and other financially connected duties  
Administering financial policy as directed by the Executive and membership and being responsible for ensuring financial matters are handled in an appropriate, businesslike fashion (i.e. making sure that no by-laws are violated or policy contravened)  
Acting in a research/advisory capacity in any decision regarding the financial matters of the Union  
Doing financial management of the Unions funds, researching and recommending financial policy for consideration for the Executive and membership. Ensuring all the Union's financial obligations are met, recommending such investment opportunities as would create the best use of our funds and guarantee the most secure situation for the Union  
Overseeing equipment leases and purchases as is considered necessary for the functioning of the Union and its office, including service problems with the Union's equipment (and negotiating service contracts where necessary)  
Administrative work for the Communications Committee, acting as a liason with the printer, ensuring we get the best service we can afford, policing deadlines for the newsletter, etc.

### Sec.-Treas. cont.

Responsible for drawing up agendas for Executive meetings making sure that information that should be brought to the Executive's attention is.

Responsible for production of minutes for membership and Executive meetings

Acting as a representative of the Union both with the employer and with other organizations at the direction of the Executive

Handling inquiries in the Union office

Working with the Grievance Committee as time permits but as a minimum keeping abreast of current complaints being handled by the committee

Keeping informed on Contract Committee activity

Being conversant with Union policy and activity

### The Union Organizer

Maintenance of the Collective Agreement including administrative work with regard to processing grievances and arbitrations. Being a resource person for Stewards and the Grievance Committee. Training of stewards, grievance committee members, Ensuring that grievances are processed in a consistent and correct manner. Being the liaison with the Union's lawyer. Processing complaints to the Labour Relations Board, Doing research for grievances. Recommending changes to the Contract Committee for consideration in negotiations so that that committee is aware of the problems that are arising from the current contract.

Maintaining the Union's library including ordering materials that will be of use to the Union

Acting as a representative of the Union both with the employer and with other organizations at the direction of the Executive

Handling inquiries in the Union office

Keeping informed on Contract Committee activity and being involved in providing resource expertise on what are the problems with the current contract

Being conversant with Union policy and activity

### The Union Co-Ordinator

Preparing for negotiations including being a resource person for the Contract Committee doing research and attending negotiations. Doing administrative work for the Contract Committee, including being their liaison with the Union's lawyer and the Labour Relations Board. Handling inquiries from the press with regard to negotiations. Issues Contract Bulletins at the direction of the Contract Committee. Acts as a liaison/contact person for the Contract Committee with any government body or organization deemed necessary.

Acting as a liaison between the Health & Safety Rep. and other committees related to Health & Safety. Including involvement with health and safety matters such as helping with WCB complaints, being a Union representative on such matters as is deemed necessary

Acting as the Union's reclassification specialist. Counselling members on reclassification appeals, appearing as the Union representative when deemed necessary.

Acting as a representative of the Union both with the employer and with other organizations at the direction of the Executive

Handling inquiries in the Union office.

Keeping informed on Grievance Committee matters and offering assistance to the grievance Committee as time permits

Being conversant with Union policy and activity

In a general, the responsibility of the day to day running of the Union office should be shared jointly. We have had no problem in this area and see no reason to change our methods at this point. We make every attempt to keep each other advised of everything that is happening and of materials coming into the office and to make decisions jointly about recommendations to the Executive with regard to the office. To a certain extent we feel we should all cover for each other in that we should all be able to handle most telephone inquiries and be able to keep the office running so that when all three staff are not available things don't grind to a halt. We do considerable consultation amongst ourselves in the hopes of giving the membership the most accurate information and dealing with them in the best way possible. For most of our membership the three of us via the phone is their main contact with the Union. We feel that how we deal with people will greatly color their impression of the Union.

#### EXCESS OF WORK OVER BODIES

If the three office positions are to be administrative/resource positions, this leaves all the work of a clerical nature. We feel that there is enough clerical work to warrant hiring a secretary for the office. This person's duties would include:

Maintaining membership files

+typing cards

+setting up of files for new members

+typing script cards

+filing

+sending out form letters, contracts, etc. to do with new members

Distribution of the newsletter

Production of Contract Committee bulletins, financial statements, notices to members, or any other mailings as directed by the office staff and mailing of such items

Opening and sorting the mail; processing outgoing mail

Ordering office supplies and maintaining an inventory of supplies

Filing

Correspondence as assigned by the office staff i.e. notices of meeting to committee members, form letters, leave of absence requests, etc.

Purchasing coffee supplies and things of a similar nature

Room bookings for meetings

Maintenance of the list of volunteers and phoning them when they are needed

One hour explanations at Employee Relations

Phone reception

*Preparing the list of correspondence received*

These recommendations were presented as our impression of the best use of the present staff and office facilities to accomplish the things we are presently trying to do. Right now the three of us are somehow expected to do everything with no cut in services to the membership. None of the three of us feel we are doing the kind of job we would like to be doing for our members. This leaves us all with the problem of how to fund a fourth staff member.

#### HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE OFFICE

We recommended that the Executive initiate steps to change the dues structure of the Union. We all feel that 1% dues would be the most practical solution. The Executive would never have to go hat in hand to the membership to raise the dues. Dues would automatically rise (or fall) as the Union negotiated salaries rose (or fell...). It seems fairer that those on the bottom of the pay scale would pay less than those at the top.

There is also the question of the future of the Provincial and our financial commitment to them. This might be another avenue for freeing up more money.

We were asking the Executive to make some long term planning with regard to the whole organization and in particular the organization of the office.

#### EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

There seems to be no doubt in anyone's mind that a word processor could be put to great use in the office. We recommended that this possibility be investigated and that several things be considered:

- +compatibility with technology presently in use on campus
- +cost.....again the \$4200/mon. presently going to the Provincial or the dues increase/restructuring or a lease arrangement or setting aside some money out of next years budget
- +if a word processor was in use in the office we might find that a part time secretary would be sufficient
- +we could eliminate the scriptomatic (costs roughly \$150/month)
- +we could make an arrangement with the TAU similar to our present arrangement with the xerox machine
- +compatibility with a computer system....we hope that when the University gets their personnel files on computer that we will be able to tie in and we also see that a computer system for data storage would be of use

Consideration should be given in any long range plans to the purchase of a computer system for the office. The possibilities for data storage and retrieval are unlimited. This would be of enormous help to grievance and contract work as well as such things as mailing lists, accounting, etc. We realize that some of these functions could be done on a word processor and that is why it seemed the most immediate piece of equipment to consider *initially.*

If these pieces of equipment are not going to be planned for, we recommended that the Executive authorize switching to the One Write System of accounting. Patricia has done quite a bit of research into this. It would reduce the accounting time a great deal and she has been unable to find anyone who has any criticisms of the system, including our accountants. The initial start-up cost is \$188 and from then on it would only be the cost of the stationery.

## IMMEDIATE CONCERNS

Until some long term plans can be made we are left with the dilemma of the present working conditions of the office and the impossibility of accomplishing all that is supposed to be done. Can we eliminate some of the things we are trying to do? What does the Executive expect in terms of overtime? We desperately need a policy so that we know where we stand. In April when we first came to the Executive no solution was offered and as the year progressed, we lost Bice and things compounded especially as negotiations have continued for so long.

We unanimously believe that it is not appropriate for the Executive to avoid the issue as they have for the last six months. We do not want to have to sit through any more meetings where we are told:

1. "You knew the conditions when you took the job."

If you extrapolate that statement to its logical conclusion why should anyone negotiate for better conditions.....Would any of you like it if the Union refused to address your problems with the University because "you all knew the conditions when you took the jobs and if you don't like it leave" We doubt it. Further to that no one knows for sure what the conditions are in any job until they are actually in it. None of us expected the Executive to treat us as if we are adversaries. We thought we were all working on the same side.

2. "I volunteer my time and you should be prepared to do so too."

What we seem to have failed to convey to the Executive is that we are contributing our share of time. It also seems clear to us that we have no choice and the rest of you can come and go as you please, leaving us to somehow keep the show on the road and keep up a good front to the University.

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE IN OUR POSITION?

### Final considerations

We asked the Sub-Committee to look into and make recommendations regarding our job descriptions and pay scale. We all feel that the job descriptions contain more than three people can handle. We do not want to have to work overtime. We do want to be paid a fair wage for what we are doing.

We asked the Sub-Committee to give some consideration and make recommendations on car usage for the office staff. Would it be feasible to pay us mileage? What are the terms of car insurance? What happens if we are in an accident while using our cars for union business?

We asked that we switch accounting systems. Either to the One Write System or contracting it out to the auditor.