

GTFF accuses University of stalling

By BILL LUTZ
Of the Emerald

Representatives of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) reiterated Friday their charge that the University was using stalling tactics in contract negotiations with the GTFF.

Bill Ratteree, vice-president of the GTFF, said the "University's refusal to recognize existing benefits and rights of GTFFs," was only the immediate issue.

He said, "The larger issue is the University's delaying tactics designed to prevent agreement on a

contract this year. The University has consistently made proposals which aren't substantially different from the status quo. They have turned negotiating sessions into little more than debating forums with no attempt to reach agreement on major issues."

Vice-Chancellor Bill Lemman, who heads the University negotiating team, responded by calling the GTFF charge of stalling, "incorrect."

Lemman said the difficulty in these negotiations has come from the approximately 60 different articles, many of which he says,

"combine aspects of their student status and their employee status." He said these have to be sorted out and dealt with.

But the GTFF claims that the University is only willing to negotiate those items which they are mandated by law and not "permissive" items that are negotiable if both sides agree. Most "existing rights and benefits" fell into this permissive category.

"Memberships on departmental committees are a prime example of such rights and benefits," Ratteree said.

"Our position, clearly stated to

the University, is that we are not discussing benefits and rights accorded graduate students, but benefits and rights accorded GTFF's as teaching and research of such rights and benefits," Ratteree said.

We fully recognize the GTFF's rights of employment and they should be maintained. The problem is they wish to have contractual protection of all rights and benefits. We are simply separating the permissive and mandatory items," Lemman said. He also pointed out that these were departmental matters. "We don't

plan on taking these rights away. We simply don't want to guarantee them."

According to Ratteree, however, it is "a well-established labor relations concept that previous practices, that is benefits and rights, which have been consistently applied, are protected by maintenance of rights and benefits clauses in labor contracts."

Ratteree says the GTFF believes the University is stalling in order to play on the transitory nature of GTFFs.

"Delaying tactics," Ratteree said, "tends to demoralize GTFFs."

The GTFF and the University have been negotiating since October. Now negotiations will continue through a mediator from the State Conciliation Service, a branch of the Employment Relations Board.

The GTFF was founded two and a half years ago with the purpose of representing the nearly 1,000 GTFFs at the University.

"We are attempting to increase the extremely low salaries of GTFFs, provide adequate health insurance and improve working conditions," Ratteree said.

OSU cutting elms to stop disease

By PAUL WALDSCHMIDT
Of the Emerald

While Oregon State University (OSU) is planning to cut down as many as 204 of its giant American elm trees in an effort to control the spread of Dutch elm disease, the University isn't planning anything as drastic "right at the moment," according to Ted Burns, University landscape supervisor.

Burns points out that the University "doesn't have that many elms." He says out of approximately 4,000 trees on campus, about three dozen are elms.

On the other hand, OSU has 332 elms. By cutting down 204, there will be enough space between the remaining 128 to help control the spread of the disease. The OSU grounds crews are cutting the trees so that the remaining trees are at least 60 feet apart.

Burns explains that thinning trees is one of the few ways to control the disease. The disease is caused by a virus. The virus is spread by a species of beetle, but once a tree is infected with the

virus, it can be passed to other elm through adjoining root systems. If the elms are far enough apart so that their root systems don't touch, the disease can be controlled.

He says chemicals can be used to control the beetles. Besides cutting down the trees, he says, trenches can be dug around trees and chemicals poured into the trench to treat the virus-infected roots.

At OSU, the first 21 elms marked for the axe will be cut down during the next 10 years.

As of yet, the disease has not appeared at either OSU or the University, but it is expected within a year or so. Dutch elm disease originated in Europe and has since spread to the eastern United States and the mid-west. The American elm, which is susceptible to the virus, is not native to Oregon. The tree, which is common to the central and eastern United States, was imported to

Oregon as a shade and decorative tree.

The disease, which has been spreading eastward across the United States, is already present in eastern Oregon, according to Burns.

"It (the disease) has been detected in Ontario and there are some suspected outbreaks in Portland," Burns says. "Once it's established in Portland, it won't take it long to work its way down the valley."

American elms make up about a third of the trees on the OSU campus and were planted 50 to 80 years ago. Because elms make up less than one percent of the trees at the University, Burns says the University hasn't made plans yet on how it might respond if the disease appears on campus.

Burns points out the University just recently completed planting about 360 new trees this spring. None of the new trees planted were elms. According to

Burns, the tree planting project was part of the University's recent centennial celebration. Money was specifically donated to the University's Development Fund for purchasing trees.

He adds, "It was originally supposed to be one hundred, but there was enough money raised to buy lots more. We've just finished planting all we're going to plant this spring."

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