

Boyd analyzes remaining GTFF issues

To write on the eve of a strike vote runs the risk of appearing to be self-serving. To minimize that and as a courtesy, the President of the GTFF was informed of the intended appearance of this statement so that the leadership would not be surprised and could be better prepared to respond to their membership if that seemed appropriate. I am sensitive to the time problem, but there was no way I could make an earlier response to the opinion articles which appeared in the *Oregon Daily Emerald* of October 17, 1978. Even at the risk of being criticized for speaking out now, it seems imperative to respond to the allegations and arguments that have been advanced in this public forum. We would all be ill-served if at this late hour misinterpretations of the University's position influenced the critical events of the next few days. So much for apology and explanation of lateness!

When the GTFF and the University began negotiations about a year ago, there were some 60 issues on the bargaining table. Now there are only five, three of which appear very near resolution if we can reach agreement on salary and workload. We have come a long way. Unfortunately, recent publicity has focused on the remaining issues, with little recognition of the substantial achievements already made.

From our perspective, the following is a summary of the most significant remaining issues and our positions with respect to them:

Salaries. Published descriptions are not accurate when they describe the University's salary offer as "a mere 5 percent." Over the two year period of the contract, it represents almost 14 percent (13.84%).

The problem is not that the University gives GTF's a low priority or wishes to exploit cheap labor. The problem is that it is difficult to provide a good total wage for someone who only works approximately one-third time for nine months out of 12. We believe our salary offer to be a fair and just one. Indeed, compared with the pay scales of most universities, it is a generous one — rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding.

This amount equals or is higher than the pay raises received by any group of state employees in Oregon, no matter who bargained for them. And even though part-time positions yield low salaries, it is important to point out again that graduate teaching fellows at the University of Oregon enjoy rates of pay which are among the highest in the nation.

The comparison is even more favorable when one considers that tuition is waived in the amount of about \$1,000 per year for residents and \$1,300 per year for non-residents.

Although health insurance is no longer an issue *per se*, it has become melded with the salary issue. The Oregon statute which permits state agencies to pay or contribute to health insurance premiums for employees prohibits such payments for those who work less than half time. Oregon law also prohibits such payments on behalf of student employees who are provided with campus health service.

To search for ways to deal with these problems, the University has already agreed to establish a commission of teaching fellows and faculty to investigate possible solutions to the health care issue in the future. Further, I have offered to raise \$25,000 from the private sector to assist in

meeting uninsured medical expenses of teaching fellows and their dependents.

I recognize that this may not meet all the needs of all GTF's, but it will help many, and it is a witness to a serious commitment to the amelioration of health care problems for GTF's.

The GTFF asked that the University substitute for the 5 percent increase offered for September 1978, the third pay raise within the biennium, an increase of \$40 per month per GTF to enable teaching fellows to purchase health insurance privately. When stated as \$40 per month per employee, the amount appears deceptively small.

Over a full year, however, the total is approximately \$230,000 over the University's offer. To reallocate that much to salaries this year, with substantial amounts required every year in the future, would be too destructive to the quality of this University, which has already suffered severe budget cuts in the last two biennia.

The University must live within an authorized budget which was established before bargaining began by appropriations made by the 1977 legislature. Moreover, such an increase would be extravagant when compared with salaries at other distinguished universities. We could not justify to the public being that much out of line with the rest of the nation.

Work Load. The University proposed a .30 normative work load standard of 12-14 hours per week. This range was suggested in the belief that GTF duties — particularly teaching duties — are not easily quantified and vary according to the experience, training, ability and diligence of individuals. Assignments and expectations vary from department to department.

Admittedly, some GTF's are working

more than 12 hours per week, but many are enjoying lighter assignments and might actually be confronted by a higher work load if a single standard were enforced for the entire University. This illustrates the hazard of contractualizing the many informal arrangements which have characterized academic life through the years.

The University has accepted the factfinder's recommendation that there be a 12 hour average, but the factfinder did not indicate over what period of time the average should be calculated.

The University proposed that the 12 hours be averaged over the period of the GTF appointment, while the GTFF wants to average the time over a period three weeks shorter, excluding the time classes are not in session. The University has made a significant compromise offer in a letter of October 18, 1978, to Charles Aker, President of the union. We hope that the membership will find it attractive.

We are very close on all other issues, and I believe there is consensus that those other issues will be satisfactorily resolved. Because the GTFF has not achieved all of its bargaining goals (neither party has), there may be a tendency to place too much emphasis on the remaining issues, important as they are. In my opinion, the GTFF has represented the interests of teaching fellows extremely well.

My hope is that we can now reach an early agreement without the divisiveness of a strike or strike threats, and that together we can make this a great year for the University of Oregon. I am pledged to work with the GTFF for that goal.

William Boyd
University President

Faculty must avoid being used

We are concerned over the growing possibility of a strike of the Graduate Teaching Fellows, and we urge the faculty to consider what they will do in that event. We view with sympathy the GTF's efforts to secure increased remuneration, especially because some of them teach more than do some of the full-time faculty. Their pay request was fully supported by the impartial factfinder's report. President Boyd rejected that report, not because the funds were lacking but because compliance would re-

quire diversion of funds from other, (to him) higher priorities. We believe this order of priorities is mistaken. Is his rejection consistent with his impassioned plea to the faculty on October 4 for a more humane university? If he is serious about that, our GTF's salaries would be a good place to begin realizing his ideal.

A strike will please none but a few diehard reactionaries in our ranks. It will set colleague against colleague and split most departments and schools. It may also set

faculty and GTF's against one another. And what of our students? The ultimate cost of a strike will be a disruption of their studies. Outside the campus, a strike will cut the universities ties to organized labor and endanger our flourishing Labor Education and Research Center. Such are the possible consequences of wrongly-ordered priorities.

In case of a strike, we urge our faculty colleagues to avoid being used to break it, and, if possible, to support it. Above all, they

should not take up the slack left by striking GTF's; and they should oppose reprisals against the GTF's. Our GTF's are only considering availing themselves of a right granted them by the State of Oregon. Although we sincerely hope it does not come to a strike, we also doubt that a humane university, such as President Boyd portrayed, will move to penalize our junior colleagues for exercising their legal rights.

Dave Curland (Romance Languages)
Tom Brady (History)

theirs

