

GTFs give tentative OK to new contract

By SALLY HODGKINSON
Of the Emerald

The executives of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation tentatively accepted a University proposal on work load Tuesday night, making a potential GTFF strike unlikely.

But the executives indicated that they would ask University vice president Paul Olum to request a report from all departments detailing how the proposal would affect GTF work loads before finalizing their acceptance of the proposal.

GTFF representatives met with the University's negotiation team, headed by Olum, Friday afternoon after GTFs distributed 3,200 leaflets on campus explaining their perception of the work-load issue. Work load has been labeled by both sides as the major issue preventing settlement of a GTF contract.

The University offered the GTFF negotiation team two proposals Friday.

The proposal favored by the administration eliminates the 150-hour normative for 1980-81 and defines a standard GTF work load as one that "will require no more than 172 hours per term for an appointment of .40 FTE full-time equivalent." In addition, the University has promised — but not in writing — to form a committee composed of union and University representatives to monitor GTF work loads in the departments.

Another addition promised to the proposal guarantees that Olum would write a letter to department administrators instructing them not to increase GTF work load over historical practice. The University also promises not to bring up the work-load issue during the next contract negotiations.

The second proposal — tentatively accepted by the GTFF executives Monday — says that "no GTF appointed at .40 FTE shall be required to work more than 175 hours per term. GTFs who anticipate or experience variation from the 150-hour norm in excess of 25 hours" will have adjustments made in either work load or FTE if the complaint is valid.

The second proposal also has some unwritten promises attached to it. The University promises the establishment of the work-load monitoring committee, but not the memo from Olum or the guarantee that the work-load issue wouldn't be reopened in the next contract negotiations.

The negotiation team recommended the second proposal to the executive council because it retains reference to a "150-hour norm" instead of just establishing a work-load ceiling.

"We'd like to keep the idea of the 150-hour norm in the contract," said Charles Acker, GTFF president. "At least it lets the departments know that's the way things should be."

The negotiation team also recommended that the council approve one of the proposals because of the

shaky support for a GTFF strike.

"Olum said that if we (the GTFF) don't want to accept one of these proposals, or something similar to them, then we should strike," said Acker. "They've really got us over a barrel on this (the work-load issue)."

Acker said support for a GTFF strike over the work-load issue would be uncertain since that issue affects some GTFs more than others.

If Olum agrees to ask departments for a report on the work-load impact of the proposal, the GTFF executives will meet to discuss the results. If the results aren't acceptable, the council will withdraw its acceptance of the proposal.

The executives also approved the negotiating team's salary proposal. The GTFF proposal works within the 7 percent salary increase offered by the University but divides that increase up slightly unevenly among different GTF pay scales to prevent differences in GTF pay levels from expanding. The GTF agreement to the 7 percent salary increase is tied to work-load approval.

A tentative University proposal for GTF health fees was also accepted. The University plan — still to be approved by the State Board of Higher Education — provides for the payment of the mandatory health fee through GTF paychecks. The University will subtract the amount needed to pay the fees from its GTF salary proposal.

Hiring

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Olum was unavailable for comment.

Budget pressure may be the reason for the University's current interest in student participation in personnel decisions, Pierce says.

"They want to make sure they hire good people and they're trying to be more careful. That's my perception. Personnel decisions can have a tremendous impact," Pierce adds.

There is also an internal debate in the political science department about student votes in personnel decisions, Pierce says. Student votes are supposed to, by departmental regulations, reflect the view of their constituency. But Pierce says he hasn't seen any attempt by the PSSU to elicit response from undergraduate political science majors.

Pierce says he is in favor of having students participate in curriculum and management decisions in the department and also favors student screening of candidates for appointments. But he adds that he is personally against students voting on personnel decisions, especially those involving tenure and promotion.

"Students have a short-term interest in hiring an instructor. The faculty has to live with that decision for 15 or more years," Pierce says. "Students usually aren't qualified to make professional judgments of faculty."

But Lacey disagrees, asking, "How can student interest be any shorter than the faculty's in a one-year contract?"

Pierce says that student input is valuable when the department is considering candidates for a teaching job "but I don't know if I could go from there and say they (students) should have a vote."

"Why should a student vote carry the same weight as a vote

from someone in the department who's going to have to live with that person for 15 years?" he adds.

Lacey says student input is essential. "Students are part of the department. There would be no faculty without students."

Pierce says he is comfortable with student voting rights on the personnel committee since the committee is only advisory but adds, "I'm not sure the (University) administration is."

Lacey says letting students vote on the personnel committee but not in the faculty body is a contradiction.

"What Pierce is saying is that students aren't good enough to make a decision on who to hire but they're good enough to pick the five people the faculty is going to vote on. That's absurd."

Pierce notes that faculty members have access to candidate files and can nominate any for consideration. But Lacey says the faculty "invariably accepts the recommendations of the personnel committee" and rarely bother to check through the files for other candidates.

Recent decisions and attitudes toward student participation in personnel matters are erasing the gains that students fought for in the late '60s and early '70s, Chalmers says.

Lacey agrees, "What I see is an erosion of student participation at the University," Lacey adds. "The administration was happy to give students representation on committees when the street were filled with marching students and they were trying to blow up Johnson Hall."

"Nobody's out in the streets now so they're trying to push students off the committees. They're saying, 'let's get everything back to our own control now.'"



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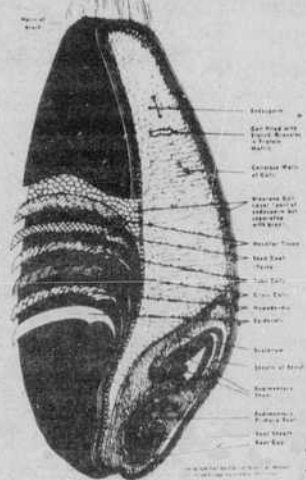
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