

Editorial

GTFF grievances should be heeded

The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation tactfully voiced its grievances last week in an effort to reconcile differences that surfaced during contract negotiations with the Oregon State System of Higher Education and the University.

In reviewing the demands of the federation, it is evident that most not only are well-founded but also mitigated in an attempt to compromise with the state system and the University, both who have negotiated with good intent but failed to compromise successfully at their end of the bargaining table.

The union's demands are not unfair — they are well-within reason and should be accepted by the University. The GTFF is not asking for a wage increase; rather, it is bargaining for policy leniency toward health care, provision of a detailed job description, and fairness in the evaluation of teaching performance.

Health insurance is at the forefront of the GTFF's demands: Initially, the GTFF asked for full medical and dental plans, which is not an excessive demand in itself.

In a reconciliatory move, however, the federation recanted this demand, asserting that members are willing to pay their own medical insurance if the University implements a payroll-deduction plan so they can pay in installments rather than a lump sum at the beginning of each term.

This certainly is not an unfair request, and probably will cost the University little money, especially if a small processing fee covering the costs of deferment is charged.

The GTFF is justly requesting a specific list of job descriptions and requirements be developed as an employment guideline.

The union members are complaining that, as GTFF President Chuck Hunt pointed out, "a GTF can get fired for not doing his job, but the job description is not spelled out." How, one is inclined to ask, can a GTF be fired if they are not evaluated on the effectiveness of duties performed?

Graduate teaching fellows, who teach courses in 70 different departments, deserve to have a specific, detailed job description. Furthermore, GTFs should be evaluated partially on the basis of appropriating this job description.

Currently, the employment status of GTFs depends solely on student evaluations — a criterion the GTFF correctly contends is unfair. Judging the performance of GTFs solely on the basis of student evaluations is inappropriate because the teacher may be subject to vindictive, unwarranted criticism from the students.

Moreover, many undergraduate students do not take the evaluations seriously and rush through the forms, giving only a partial appraisal of the instructor's ability.

Student reviews, however, should not be eliminated completely from the evaluation process, as they provide helpful insight into teaching ability; nevertheless, the GTFs also should be subject to independent evaluation based on how well they perform specifically described duties.

When negotiating channels are re-established with the state system and the University, the grievances of the GTFF should not only be heard, but also heeded.



Commentary

'Freedom fighter' a relative term

According to what I read in the papers, President Reagan wants to continue giving aid to the Contras in Nicaragua. I thought maybe someone out there might be able to answer a few questions that have been bothering me for some time.

Commentary by
Harold Bock

I am told that the reason I should support the president is because the Sandinistas are communists and, as we all know, communism is a very, very evil thing. So, just what are the Sandinistas doing in Nicaragua that is worse, say than what the Cuban-Contra refugees have been doing in Miami?

It could be argued that communist governments are not any worse, or any better, than any other governments. What cannot be argued is the fact that an ungodly variety of human rights violations from Argentina to Zimbabwe have been committed by non-communist governments. If the Sandinistas are committing some unique unheard of atrocity, I'd certainly

like to know what it is.

If an independent agency, such as Amnesty International, can't actually document behavior WORSE than that practiced by Duarte's El Salvador, Pinochet's Chile or Botha's South Africa, then why should we spend our tax dollars to eradicate evils no worse than those officially sanctioned by nations the President supports?

Would someone please explain just what it is that Communists do that is so very different than what Democrats, Republicans, Baptists or Catholics do? During the past fifty years the Communist ogre has absorbed so much of my time, energy and resources and so much of my country's time and resources, I think it's time I found out.

I am 73 years old and while I haven't known many communists, I have known a few. The only thing that distinguished them from the general population was their rather boring political religion. So, if my community can't pass the school budget while my government annually spends \$300 billion to defend me against communism, I figure I must be missing something.

I am told the Contras are freedom fighters — the equivalent of the founding fathers. If killing Communists makes one a freedom fighter, why doesn't killing Democrats or Republicans make one a freedom fighter? I mean, if it is alright to murder a person in Nicaragua because of his obnoxious political beliefs, then why isn't it alright to murder someone in Eugene or Salem because of his obnoxious political beliefs?

Today Protestants and Catholics are killing each other in Ireland, Muslim Shiites and Muslim Sunimites are killing each other in Iran and Iraq, Jews and Palestinians are killing each other in South Africa, and there doesn't seem to be any end in sight.

I can tell you right now, all these people killing each other consider themselves freedom fighters. And you would have to be a little touched in the head to

believe that the Communists are behind all these freedom fighters slaughtering each other. Not that the Communists are any better or any worse than anybody else. It just so happens that freedom fighters were killing freedom fighters long before anybody anywhere ever heard of Karl Marx or Communists.

The trouble is, the freedom fighters of this world not only kill each other, they kill each other's women and children, and anyone else that happens to be in the way. Will you please tell me why killing the innocent child or wife of someone suspected of being a Communist makes the one doing the killing a freedom fighter?

Who are the victims of these freedom fighters anyway? I mean, how do we know they are Communists? I always thought that a fundamental principle of American law, of human decency and justice if you please, required an accused person to be considered innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. Have you heard of a single solitary victim of any of these killers from any side anywhere on Earth being executed after being judged guilty by an IMPARTIAL jury? Just what is so holy about indiscriminate murder? Just how do all these wars further the cause of democracy, of peace and human brotherhood?

I am told that the reason we must eradicate Communists is that they are godless and have no respect for private property. Well, now! If Ronald Reagan and his Contra supporters take my tax dollar, that is, my private property, against my will to kill women and children in Nicaragua, just how does that make them any different than the Communists? If they are ready to trash their Christian values and their Constitution, what makes them any better than their avowed enemies? But worst of all — Mr. Reagan is my president, and yours. If he takes my tax dollar against my will to kill Communists or anybody else, and I make no objections, then how does that make me any better than either Mr. Reagan or the Communists?

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