

MINUTES  
RALUT AGM  
MARCH 25  
2002

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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of RALUT (Retired Academics and Librarians of the University of Toronto) held in Alumni Hall of Victoria College, University of Toronto on Monday March 25th 2002

The meeting came to order at 2.05pm with 106 members present.

1. Mr. Alec Waugh was appointed to chair the meeting.
2. The agenda was approved as previously circulated.
3. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of May 1st 2001 were approved as previously circulated (Appendix I).

4. President's report

Peter Russell welcomed members and reviewed RALUT's first full year. It has been a busy year in which the basic operating structure of RALUT has been established with a small number of committees, and an Executive Committee meeting monthly. An early priority has been communication with members by creating the Reporter, which is published quarterly, and through our web site. He warmly commended Charlie Meadow and Ken Rea for their exceptional efforts with these two extremely important and successful parts of our program, both of which seem to have been enthusiastically accepted and appreciated by members.

Much of our time and effort has been taken up with establishing our position in the eyes of the University Administration, and there have been several meetings with President Birgeneau and Vice-President (Human Relations) Angela Hildyard. We are also consulting over the possibility of obtaining space on campus that would provide office facilities, and possible assistance with a part time employee. There are continuing discussions toward changing the existing University policy of not communicating with RALUT on matters of policy concerning retirees. We are optimistic about the future.

Unfortunately, there is some disappointment at not yet having delivered anything very concrete in terms of pension improvements. This remains a major concern and currently occupies much of our time and effort. Consequently, there has been little time available for addressing some of the wider, non-monetary aspects of retiree life, but these are very much on the mind of the Executive Committee for the coming year. All in all it has been a successful first year, but there is much more to be done.

5. Treasurer's report

John Gittins presented the Treasurer's report (Appendix II) on behalf of Ann Schabas who was out of the country. Total income was \$27,204.49, expenditure was \$22,547.48 and the year end balance was \$4,657.01. Two members

questioned the size of the bill for legal services (\$12,709.29). Peter Russell explained that this was for a legal opinion on RALUT's status in respect of both the University Administration and UTFA (University of Toronto Faculty Association). It is an extensive statement of the responsibilities and obligations to RALUT of both parties and, while we have not felt the need to use it in our defence so far, it is a powerful document should the need later arise. We do not anticipate any repetition of such costs in the near future.

One of the members urged that we make use of the expertise of legal members of RALUT in future and the meeting was assured that we do already do this as a preliminary course. Another member wondered whether the membership fee might be lowered if there are no more large legal fees. Peter Russell said that this would certainly be considered when our financial position is clearer. The Treasurer's report was approved.

6. Meeting of CAERA (Canadian Association of Emeriti and Retired Academics) Peter Russell and Germaine Warkentin gave a brief outline of the history of CAERA, which was founded at a meeting of the Learned Societies in Calgary in 1994, but has met only sporadically since then. It will, essentially, be re-founded this year during a full day session (May 31st) during the meetings of Congress 2002 (formerly the Learned Societies Meeting) to be held in Toronto under the sponsorship of the University of Toronto and Ryerson Polytechnic University. Peter, Germaine and Ken Rea have worked extensively on the organization of this session and have high hopes for its success as an organization that will play a major role across Canada on behalf of retirees. Its name will probably be changed to better reflect its expanded role of including Colleges and probably staff as well as academics. Registration forms will soon be sent to all RALUT members and a show of hands indicated that one quarter of the members present will attend. Dr. John Dirks, former Dean of Medicine, is chairing the organizing committee and the conference itself.

The Plenary session will be addressed by the noted economist Professor Paul Davenport (President of the University of Western Ontario), and a discussion session will be led by Professor Michael Creal of York University. This will be followed by three sessions on pensions and benefits, and how to bring retirees back into a more meaningful role in the university setting. There will be a concluding session at Massey College.

#### 7. Relations with UTFA

Peter Russell and George Milbrandt spoke to this subject (Appendix III), which has occupied a very considerable amount of RALUT's time and attention during the year. During the past year UTFA Council struck a Constitutional Review Committee, chaired jointly by George Milbrandt (RALUT) and Professor Ed Barbeau (UTFA), which established two possible plans (A and B) for revising the UTFA constitution. These were brought before the UTFA Council on February 12th and Council confirmed, by a

vote of approximately four to one, its commitment to retirees retaining full membership in UTFA. The remaining proposals did not reach discussion before the meeting ended.

When the Constitutional Review Committee next met, on February 28th, it reviewed and unanimously approved the parts of Plan A that recommends: that retired members have four representatives on Council (increased from the existing two); that the RALUT President, or designate, plus another retiree be members of the salary, Pensions and benefits Committee; and a requirement that the salary, Benefits and pensions Committee examine and report on all tentative agreements between UTFA and the University (which require Council approval) before they go to council for consideration.

But, at this same meeting the committee, after a stormy debate, voted by 4 to 3 (with the 3 RALUT members dissenting) to change item 1 of Plan A to read

Retired faculty and librarians shall retain the option of full membership in UTFA. This went completely against the overwhelming decision of UTFA Council at its February 12th meeting. The intention of the committee was that Associate Members will have no vote for the President of UTFA and no vote on motions before UTFA meetings, including the Annual General Meeting. After additional discussion, the committee voted to delete item 6 from Plan A, in which it had been agreed that the annual fee for members of the retired faculty and librarians constituency should be sufficient to pay for newsletters and mailing costs to retirees.

Further debate on the fee structure for retired members was postponed until after retirees are consulted and the matter examined more thoroughly. RALUT's concern is that the fee for full membership by retirees will be set at hundreds of dollars and is, effectively, a crude attempt to remove us from any meaningful role in UTFA's affairs, after its Council had previously endorsed our continued full membership. We would, then, have no effective voice in the organization that bargains for pensions and benefits on our behalf.

The UTFA Constitutional Review Committee is close to completing its review of the Constitution and By-Laws as well as preparing a list of recommendations for consideration by the membership at a special general meeting to be held in October of 2002.

In the discussion which followed it was clear that RALUT members want full membership at a reasonable and affordable fee. They do not want an associate membership which will deny them an effective voice in the affairs of UTFA and to which they feel entitled. On a motion by Professor John Crispo, and duly seconded, it was:

**MOVED:** That RALUT do all in its power to preserve the present status of retirees within UTFA, and to ensure that this matter be dealt with separately from other

constitutional matters.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes and one abstention.

#### 8. Pension Committee report

Harvey Kerpneck reviewed the committee's work over the past year and stressed that, with negotiations due to have started last January, the committee had essentially folded itself into the UTFA Salary, Benefits and Pensions Committee and took a major role in its deliberations which led to formulating the UTFA negotiating position.

The RALUT Pension Committee had also met with the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance at Queen's Park to follow up the written submission that RALUT made to the Minister in response to the government's discussion paper entitled "Surplus Distribution from Defined Benefit Pension Plans" which was published on July 18th 2001. The proposed changes to pension legislation would be very detrimental to retirees in pension plans such as ours and would have the effect of handing surpluses to the employer with little opportunity for retiree members of the plan to object.

The committee has recently distributed a questionnaire to all members, which it is hoped will guide RALUT in its future pension discussions with the University. There have been meetings with Vice-President Hildyard at which she listened and responded forthrightly; the committee remains hopeful for the future.

George Luste, a member of the RALUT Executive who is also UTFA Vice-President for Salaries, Benefits and Pensions as well as UTFA's Chief Negotiator, described the present state of negotiations. UTFA's negotiating position was ready by the end of November, as specified in the Memorandum of Agreement which governs negotiations, but there has been only one meeting (of one hour duration) with the University side. At that meeting the University declined to put any position on the table, and UTFA has declined to enter into empty discussion based on its proposals only. Accordingly, the two sides will proceed directly to mediation and, if that is unsuccessful, to arbitration. Mr Martin Teplitsky has been retained as both mediator and arbitrator, and the University has agreed that, if matters go to arbitration, it will accept the arbitrator's decision. (Remember that under the terms of Memorandum of Agreement, an arbitration finding is binding upon UTFA but the University's Governing Council may reject it if recommended to do so by the President).

Some concern was expressed about our position if the arbitrator's finding is considered unsatisfactory by UTFA, to which George Luste replied that the arbitrator has no authority to go beyond a one year agreement.

#### 9. Benefits Committee report

John Hastings reported for the committee (Appendix IV) and began by outlining its

terms of reference. It has been a very active year. A questionnaire has been developed which it is hoped will bring out the contribution by retirees to the life of both the University and Society. The committee is also working on a survey of all Departments and divisions of the University to ascertain the range of non-monetary benefits and support presently offered to retirees. This is known to vary extensively. It also contributed to the pension questionnaire recently sent out (see report of the Pension Committee above). There has been much work done on clarifying issues related to the Green Shield management of Benefits, the Self-funded Research Program, the Tuition Waiver/Scholarship program for dependents, and Library Access Privileges, as related to retired academics and librarians. Results have been summarised in the RALUT Reporter and on the RALUT web site. He further stressed the need for the University to recognize RALUT as a clearing house for information of value to retirees and also to be prepared to discuss matters of principle and substance with us. At present, the University declines to discuss such matters other than directly with persons affected. He spoke warmly of the assistance and help rendered by Vice-President Hildyard and officials of the Library and the Benefits office of the University.

Several expressions of concern about Green Shield were voiced from the floor. John Hastings reiterated that Vice-President Hildyard is fully prepared to deal directly with all such matters and has already done so effectively in several cases. He stressed that any retiree with concerns should put them in writing to her, with a full account of the problem, and should copy all correspondence to RALUT so that we are able to keep abreast both of concerns and results. He has been assured that the change of management from Liberty Health to Green Shield involved no changes to the manner in which claims would be dealt with or to the entitlements.

#### 10. Relations with the University of Toronto

Peter Russell reported that, in many ways, these are pretty good although, obviously, there are ways in which they can be improved. We have requested space from which RALUT can better serve its members, and we would like to see the development of a Retiree Centre in the future. The location of such a centre would be most important and we are looking to the future developments along Bloor Street as a possibility, but in the meantime we would like to achieve something that would serve for the short term. Peter Russell and Germaine Warkentin are about to meet with Vice-President Bob Birgeneau, Vice-President Angela Hildyard and Provost Adel Sedra to discuss these and other matters.

Comment from the floor included a request that we explore the matter of stipends for teaching and thesis supervision, and of the availability of assistance with travel related to research and conferences. Some Departments do offer such assistance, while others offer none; there is considerable inconsistency across the University.

#### 11. Election of Members to the Executive Committee

A Nominating Committee under the chairmanship of Germaine Warkentin had been set up last year to decide how to apportion the terms of the Committee members elected at the founding meeting of RALUT. The Constitution adopted at that time provided for twelve members, four of whom would serve a three year term, four a two year term and four a one year term. Subsequently, all members will serve two year terms, but may be re-nominated. The recommendation of the Nominating Committee, subsequently accepted by the Executive Committee, is that the following four members would serve one year terms ending with the Annual General Meeting of March 25th. These four are John Gittins, Marvin Gold, Phyllis Grosskurth, and Charlie Meadow. Marvin Gold and Phyllis Grosskurth requested not to be re-nominated. Accordingly, the Committee further recommended that the following be nominated for two year terms ending in 2004: John Gittins and Charlie Meadow (current members), Joan Winearls (former Head of the University Map Library) and Ralph Garber (former Dean of the Faculty of Social Work). A motion, duly moved and seconded, to put these names before the Annual General Meeting for election was adopted. There were no further nominations from the floor, and these four were duly elected to the Executive Committee.

Peter Russell spoke of his appreciation to Phyllis Grosskurth and Marvin Gold for their help and efforts in the establishment of RALUT and its development during this initial year. The meeting expressed its unanimous agreement with these sentiments in warm applause.

#### 12. Other Business

Germaine Warkentin expressed the appreciation of the Executive Committee to all those in attendance. This had been an extremely well attended meeting, especially considering that winter appeared to be having a final fling.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3.45pm.