

RALUT Annual General Meeting 2004

RALUT AGM, 20th April 2004

The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm with approximately 100 members present. Ralph Garber, RALUT President, chaired the meeting.

John Munro moved that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of April 20, 2004 be approved. Isabel McCrae seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

The President gave an overview of the evolution of the mission of RALUT and its accomplishments over the past three years. He stated that currently the mission is to protect the rights of retirees of U of T concerning pensions and benefits and to provide opportunities for retirees to have a rich life within the University. He noted that accomplishments of RALUT included furnishing and staffing an office, setting up committees to explore issues and make recommendations to the Executive Committee, participating in the founding of CURAC, joining AROHE, thereby making it an international organization as well as participating in the Toronto Triqangle - an informal group of retiree associations at York University, Ryerson and U of T. He reported that the Public Policy Committee is involved in discussion re abolishing mandatory retirement.

He thanked all who had contributed endless volunteer hours on committee work and noted that the number of people involved in exploring issues lent reliability to any position that RALUT espoused. He closed with the statement that working on issues which affect others is commendable and hoped that a call for volunteers amongst membership will be well answered.

The Treasurer, Ann Schabas, moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Ed Barbeau seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Ann thanked those members who had topped up their membership fee with donations. These will be put aside to fund certain projects to be decided by the Executive of the future. Ralph Garber

thanked Ann for three years of service and praised her for her fiscal rectitude.

Doug Creelman, Chair of the Benefits Committee, reported. He urged that if any members encountered difficulty with extended medical and dental coverage to get in touch with him directly or through the RALUT office. He also urged members to join CARP, an organization for retirees which deserved all the support that RALUT membership could provide. He asked that those RALUT members who were not members of UTFA to join that organization as well. He thanked the members of his committee and invited questions from the floor.

Jacob Ziegel noted that, in his experience regarding dental work, there is a gap between the coverage provided by the University and what professionals charge. He asked that RALUT find out the basis upon which reimbursement is made and how professionals set fees. Discussion followed concerning other members' experience. Doug Creelman thanked George Luste, as President of UTFA, for pushing for expanded coverage for dental work for retirees.

Jacob Ziegel asked if RALUT could provide guidance to members regarding car insurance and Doug Creelman responded that RALUT does not recommend either brokers or insurance companies for car insurance.

Doug Creelman advised that if members had not received or had misplaced the survey of facilities and opportunities for scholarly activities available to retirees at U of T, they should contact Angela Hildyard, V-P of Human Resources at U of T.

Peter Russell said that RALUT had tried to involve the Ombuds office in matters involving the retirees but the Ombuds said that she had no jurisdiction for retirees. Peter Russell does not accept this and is pursuing this as a way of helping retirees who encounter difficulty in dealing with the University. He has turned to UTFA to help get the Ombuds Office to expand its jurisdiction. If this is not possible, RALUT will try to establish its own Ombuds Office for

retirees.

Marvin Gold reported for the Pension Committee, in the absence of its Chair, Harvey Kerpneck. This Committee was established to advise the executive on matters of pension, to gather information and propose goals. All that RALUT can do is try to influence the team that negotiates with the University administration. He said that the pension plan at U of T is one of the worst in North America. The committee is trying to get the administration to focus on the most disadvantaged pensioners. Marvin Gold said that he and Harvey Kerpneck have been the two retirees on the UTFA Salary and Benefits Committee. Marvin Gold also informed the membership that there would be an increase of 0.96% as of next July and that in 2005, pensions will rise with inflation.

At this point in the proceedings, Ralph Garber thanked George Milbrandt and Joan Winearls for co-chairing the AGM and for making arrangements for lunch.

John Munro read the report from the Policy and Public Issues Committee in the absence of the Chair, Meyer Brownstone. The report, available on the RALUT website, included the mission of the committee which is to study and advise the executive on public policy issues which affect RALUT retirees. He said that currently the main issue before the committee was mandatory retirement. He gave a brief overview of the positions each of the stakeholders held such as the human resource department's desire for diversity, the administration's goal of getting rid of deadwood, the union's fear that abolition of mandatory retirement will mean the abolition of tenure and its fear that the government may raise the retirement age beyond 65. He asked for comments from the floor.

Myron Gottlieb asked why RALUT is concerned with mandatory retirement when almost all of its members had already retired. Germaine Warkentin responded that the Joint Working Group has to pay attention to both retired and salaried people and has to look at the big picture which includes those who have not yet retired. It also has to ensure that if the transformation

takes place that retired faculty are not disadvantaged by changes that come about.

George Luste said that the University administration wants the services of faculty over 65 but is not willing to pay them for it. He said that less and less money is coming from the government for education in general and higher education specifically. It was suggested that tuition fees are too low. Fred Wilson, who is retired and still teaches a full load, is no longer protected by tenure. It was suggested that if mandatory retirement is abolished, it should be retroactive.

RALUT has to protect retired teachers. Lino Grima said that there is already draft provincial legislation concerning the abolition of mandatory retirement but RALUT should continue its vigilance because of the details.

John Munro said that, while there is draft legislation, it is on the back burner probably not to be brought forward until the second mandate. He feels that RALUT must keep pressure on the government to act on this legislation. He also said that as far as unfavourable economic effects of abolishing mandatory retirement goes, 15 years experience in Quebec and 10 years experience in the US has shown that there are no economic problems.

Beate Lowenberg presented the membership report and urged members to encourage retirees who are not members of RALUT to join so that the goal of 1200-1400 members be realized. To Jacob Ziegel's question of the annual number of faculty retirements, the answer was 100.

Fred Wilson, editor of the RALUT Reporter, thanked all those who had contributed in the past year and noted the large publication output of RALUT members. Ken Rea, in charge of the RALUT website, said that the use of the website has grown over the past three years and that it receives about 40 hits a day. Germaine Warkentin said that Ken has gathered an invaluable set of links from the RALUT website to other sites of interest to retirees. It was noted that the first RALUT Handbook was distributed to members and that members were invited to address RALUT with suggestions for

improvement. Handbooks are still available on request. Ralph Garber thanked Fred Wilson and Ken Rea.

Germaine Warkentin reported on the UT/UTFA Joint Working Groups and the RALUT Senior Scholar proposal. UTFA and the administration have agreed to have joint working groups, the largest of which will deal with the relationship between retirees and the university. This will make sure that retiree interests are taken care of and to keep retirees within the university environment. A questionnaire recently distributed to all retirees on Academic Productivity and Retirement has received an unprecedented response. RALUT seeks to ensure that all retiring faculty have access to the same academic and social facilities and to create something that will allow flexibility to retirees and the scope of their engagement with the university. There were no questions from the floor.

George Milbrandt moved three amendments to the RALUT Constitution. The first dealt with Article 3 and provided that changes in fees can be recommended by the Executive to a general meeting, rather than an annual general meeting. This allows for more flexibility in timing fee changes. Harding le Riche seconded this, and it was passed. The second dealt with Article 8 and provided a maximum membership of fifteen, rather than twelve, for the Executive Committee. This responds to an increase in the number of committees. John Munro seconded this, and it was passed. The third dealt with Article 9 and provided for two vice presidents. These would be involved with two major groupings of committees, Program (Benefits, Pensions and Policy; Public Issues) and Operations (Membership, Communications and Office). Joan Winearls seconded this, and it was passed.

Ann Schabas moved, and Jacqueline Chapman seconded, that the new fee schedule circulated by the Executive Committee be accepted.

George Milbrandt, Ken Rea, Joan Winearls and Helen Rosenthal are retiring from the Executive Committee; Ralph Garber thanked them all for their work. The nomination committee presented

its slate of nominees which was accepted without additions and approved by the membership.

It was noted that the retiree representation on UTFA's Salary and Benefits Committee has been increased from 2 to 4. The two new members are to be Germaine Warkentin and Peter Russell. It is not necessary that members of this committee be members of RALUT.

Peter Russell notified the membership of a meeting of AROHE in Nashville and of the second annual meeting of CURAC in Winnipeg on May 27-28. CURAC is a federation of 28 academic retiree associations in Canada. CURAC will enable national standards to be set. Surprisingly, some Canadian universities do not offer medical benefits to retirees. Such inequities must be addressed effectively. Academic over 60 are the largest growing demographic group and the question is how they can contribute to society. CURAC is now part of the Canadian Labour Congress' Labour section. Outreach to underfunded public education institutions could be the answer. A regular column about CURAC will appear in future issues of the Ralut Reporter.

Ann Makolkin spoke on behalf of SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Committee) and said that it is trying to link research institutes with common interests in North America and Europe. It is a clearinghouse of knowledge from research institutions and a great value to Senior Scholars. She asked for input.

Ralph Garber thanked members of the Executive Committee -- retiring, continuing and new -- for making RALUT possible and moved for adjournment. Roselyn Stone seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm

[TO TOP](#)

[TO TOP](#)