

# news from **Cuasa**

Volume 21, No. 1

Editor: Bob Rupert

September, 1990.

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## **RECIPROCAL FREE TUITION**

The committee (David VanDine and Pat Finn) has continued to work on extending reciprocal free tuition arrangements beyond the pilot project with York University. President Farquhar has written to the President of Simon Fraser University seeking to set up a reciprocal free tuition benefit with that University. Members with dependants interested in taking advantage of reciprocal free tuition should contact David VanDine in Personnel. The committee is continuing in its efforts to establish this benefit with other Universities and you will be kept informed of any further progress.

## **GREAT CANADIAN ROAD RUN**

Athletics Canada is sponsoring a road run (or walk) to help the Carleton University Disability Access Fund. The 5km course will loop through the heart of Ottawa and cross the inter-provincial bridges. The run will take place on October 14, 1990 at 10:30 a.m. For more information, registration and pledge forms contact the Paul Menton Centre for Persons with Disabilities 788-6608.

## **HOUSE FOR RENT**

For rent near Canal; large, furnished house available for occupancy mid-December to April. Reasonable rent for non-smoking person(s) prepared to look after two cats. Contact: S. Davies at 232-1356(h) or 993-9717(o).

## **Duffy**





# EVALUATIONS

Teaching Evaluations have always been sensitive and controversial at Carleton. Some complaints:

- \*Application of the data derived from evaluation forms does not take into account factors such as class size, course, format, or whether the course is compulsory.

- \*Students may rate their professors more on congeniality and human relations skills rather than high academic standards and effective communication of knowledge and understanding

- \*The evaluation process as designed and used by management is punitive. Because it offers no meaningful incentive or reward for effective teaching, the evaluation does not promote effective performance for faculty. It punishes (though rarely and ineffectively) those who get low grades from their students. Assistance for instructors is not always offered.

- \*The forms are badly written and neither elicit helpful information nor genuine feedback.

- \*Standards of performance are vague, and the procedures for action by Deans are not uniform.

- \*Graduate supervisions are not evaluated.

- \*For many courses some questions are not applicable yet no mechanism exists to screen such question from compilation.

There are, of course, many who feel teaching evaluations, though imperfect, are better than *no* measurement of faculty performance in the classroom and the lecture hall.

In the last round of negotiations, CUASA and the administration set up a joint committee to investigate the past, present and future of Teaching Evaluations at Carleton.

Late in 1988, Mark Langer (Film Studies) and David Van Dine (Personnel) were appointed co-chairpersons. Tom Ryan (then Vice-President Academic) and Deborah Gorham (History) were the other committee members. The "joint" approach broke down rather quickly when the administration tried to replace one of its committee members (Ryan) with a member of the CUASA bargaining unit, and also refused to share in the funding of research by the Committee.

But based on the research the committee had already completed, most of it internal, CUASA representatives Langer and Gorham prepared their own report and presented it to CUASA.

Their findings:

In the absence of specific norms in the Collective Agreement, there is no consensus as to whether the course evaluations contribute to self-improvement of teaching staff. There is no systematic support system in place for improvement of teaching. The university appears to lack the means to act upon the data obtained in teaching evaluations in order to improve teaching. The university does not provide significant incentives, rewards or support for excellence in instruction (this fall the employer provided a teaching workshop for new faculty).

There is a lack of agreement as to whether teaching evaluation scores are affected by bias. It has been suggested that the evaluation forms should be redesigned to test for bias on the part of the instructor. Research in recent literature dealing with teaching evaluation may reveal more information on this question.

A number of problem areas exist in the collection of data relating to teaching performance. The design of the evaluation forms and the manner in which these forms are evaluated should be re-examined in the light of recent literature pertaining to the appraisal of teaching performance.

The cost to the university of printing, data entry and part-time salaries involved in compiling teaching evaluation information is \$12,200. This does not include "soft" costs such as 14-16 person weeks for Sue Richer and an assistant, or computer costs. The cost in time and labour at the department and faculty level has not been estimated.

The cost of teaching evaluations is considerable. The benefits of the teaching evaluations are in dispute. All CDI denial funds are redirected by the Joint Committee to Administer the Agreement usually to the Salary Adjustment Commission for award to members of the bargaining unit.

Evaluation of teaching can be used as either a carrot or a stick. Many of the opinions stated to the Committee have indicated that teaching evaluation is often viewed (rightly or wrongly) as an inequitably applied stick. Such an application of teaching evaluations runs counter not only to the provisions of the Collective Agreement, but also to common sense. The current system of evaluation should be redesigned to encourage a sense of co-operative self-improvement of teaching skills among faculty members. The failure of the system to do this is regrettable.

Copies of the full report are available on request from the CUASA office.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

As this is the final year of a three-year contract, the clause (Article 40.13) permitting the carry over of unexpended funds from Professional Expense Reimbursement lapses. CUASA is seeking early agreement with the employer on the principle that unexpended funds be carried over. The future amount of the Professional Expense Reimbursement will be determined at negotiations. CUASA will keep you informed of developments. Should we be unable to reach agreement on a carry over option, members have until April 29, 1991 to spend the \$500.