

**York University Faculty Association
Trustees' Annual Report
2010-2011**

Submitted by
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Introduction

Under Article 3.5 of the York University Faculty Association (YUFA) Constitution, two Trustees are to be elected at the Annual General Meeting to prepare a report reviewing the union's previous year's activities, policies and operations and are asked to make recommendations to improve YUFA's methods of operation.

For this Trustees' Report, we have reviewed the YUFA Constitution, By-laws, the minutes of the Executive Meetings, Stewards' Council Meetings, the financial report from the auditors for the 2009-2010 year, and the draft minutes of the Annual Meeting (November 24, 2010). We conclude that the union is fulfilling its obligations to its members, operating responsibly and participating in important labour activities and solidarity efforts internal and external to York University.

Review of Activities

In addition to the day-to-day administration of the Collective Agreement and service to members, such as processing grievances, in 2010-2011 YUFA continued to deal with a number of initiatives begun in the previous years, as well as several arising issues of importance to members. Given the large number of complex and diverse issues to be considered, the Trustees are satisfied that most were resolved satisfactorily and in a relatively timely manner. Moreover, we were encouraged by the thoughtful comments recorded in the minutes about the arising issues.

1. Timing of the AGM: As noted in the last Trustees' Report, the move to a Spring AGM, while generally seen as a positive move, has created some anomalies in practice. The audited Financial Statements before us are for the fiscal year ending almost 12 months ago, as compared with more standard six month financial reporting practice in other associations. Similarly, the Workplan Reports of the Executive of YUFA for the current year are not due until May. Therefore the Trustees can only report that we are satisfied with the Workplans as posted on the YUFA Website, but cannot comment on the achievements for this year.

Recommendation: That the Executive continue to monitor the impact of the Spring AGM and explore ways in which other important activities and reports can be brought into the same cycle.

2. Electronic voting: Last year we recommended that the Executive Committee and Stewards' Council monitor the evote process and consider its effectiveness in responding to a healthy climate of debate on various issues for which a yes / no response may be too simplistic.

Recommendation: Although the Trustees encountered no negative issues raised concerning evoting in the material we reviewed, we recommend that its effectiveness with complex voting issues continue to be monitored.

3. Stewards' Council: Last year's Trustees' Report noted concerns with respect to questions regarding the role and powers of Stewards' Council, relative to the Executive. The Trustees are pleased that this matter is currently under discussion as part of the work of the Constitution and By-laws Subcommittee, which will be reporting to the membership in the future.

At time of writing, there are 49 stewards and one vacancy. For the five meetings to date in the current academic year, Stewards' Council has had an average of 61% of stewards.

The Trustees note that Stewards' Council meetings normally have a substantial agenda and that there are many who wish to speak to various issues. The current Chief Stewards have strengthened the application of the Rules of Order to ensure that all sides of issues are aired. Nonetheless, Council meetings have tended to run overtime and / or have not been able to complete the agenda. One of the items most often left unaddressed is the Stewards' Roundtable, an important opportunity for stewards to learn the concerns of others.

Recommendation: That Chief Stewards, in their roles as Chair of Council meetings, continue to employ Rules of Order to ensure a full discussion of issues within the allocated meeting time.

Recommendation: That the Chief Stewards consider ways in which the Roundtable component of the meeting can be given its full weight.

4. Released Time: Previous Trustees, including the current Trustees, have reported and made recommendations on the issue of course releases and stipends for Officers of YUFA. The current Trustees continue to support the recommendation that the standard form of recompense for such service to YUFA be course release time and that the release time be standardized by Executive position, and furthermore, that notice of the release awards being made available at the call for nominations. The current Trustees continue to be of the opinion that the membership expects that those who take on service for YUFA will be active in fulfilling those roles. Nonetheless, we have had to continue to be concerned about the "banking" of YUFA generated, release time. Although, the Trustees were convinced there is support in the Executive for the practice that release time be taken in the year it is awarded, the Trustees were troubled to read that the funds owed to pay for the costs of released time (that, thus, have not been

taken) were increasing (and have been increasing since these Trustees have had the opportunity to assess the financial reports). That is, that the amounts of "banked / owed time" are going up, not decreasing as would be expected and as has been recommended by many Trustees. What troubled the current Trustees was the following words by the Treasurer in the most recent YUFA Executive Workplan "*on going discussion and review of Executive compensation (release time **and payouts in lieu of release time**) (bolding ours) over the past few years.*" As Trustees, we are concerned about the phrase "payouts in lieu of release time" as this phrase does not reflect the will of the YUFA Members (made known in AGMs). The current Trustees support the beliefs of the membership, namely that the membership is best served when YUFA Officers are provided the time to fulfill their various responsibilities during their terms of office.

Recommendation: YUFA supports those YUFA members who have been awarded release time, by asking the members use the released time to fulfill the agreed upon responsibilities for YUFA. The Trustees are concerned that YUFA members who are not taking earned release are jeopardizing their other life activities including but not solely, their professional activities and contributions.

5. Salaries and Benefits: The Trustees noted a substantial increase in the expenditures on salaries and benefits in the 2009-10 Financial Report. These were clarified as reflecting for the most part an increase in full time staff complement from four to five. The Trustees were fully confident that such increases were justified and needed for YUFA to function optimally.

6. Financial Reports: Bargaining YUFA / BoG: Since bargaining is not an annual activity, but is a fundamental purpose for the Association, the Trustees felt that the membership should be more aware of the impact this activity has on our budget in bargaining years.

Recommendation: that the costs of bargaining be identified in the financial statements for years in which those costs are incurred. We suggest that separate line items or notes explaining these costs be made in the Financial Summary, and that these items include the costs for staff, for YUFA members for lawyers and consultants, and for other costs that are incurred solely due to the bargaining processes.

7. Teaching Stream Category: YUFA continued its work on the workload reduction issues arising from the current Collective Agreement. The Trustees noted the interest and concern on the part of the Members for the proposed new YUFA category, named *Teaching Stream*. The work of the Joint Long Range Planning Subcommittee on Workload was able to reach a tentative agreement with the Employer on teaching load reductions for Professorial, tenure-stream faculty in units whose normal teaching load is greater than 2.0 FCEs. This tentative agreement is conditional upon YUFA and the Employer reaching agreement on a new YUFA category, the Teaching Stream. That is, a *quid pro quo*. The Trustees see the proposed change in the workload for some (estimates are about 600) YUFA members coupled with the changes that the proposed

teaching stream would bring as being the significant change in YUFA's composition and mandate. The Trustees considered the new stream and its ramifications for all YUFA members a priority for the future year.

Recommendation: That YUFA be especially diligent in exploring all possible ramifications of a Teaching Stream Category for the newly recruited YUFA members as well as current YUFA members.

8. Pension: The Trustees were concerned with the reported activities of the VP Finance's office with regard to Pension Plan. In spite of York University's management and investment methods, long term solvency issues for the Pension Plan have emerged. As a result, the VP Finance's office appear to be considering a number of changes in the Plan that could effect the benefits earned by retirees or in the level of contributions YUFA members will have to make.

Recommendation: The Trustees recommend that the group for which Professor Walter Whiteley is the spokesperson be formalized and expanded with the mandate of ensuring that if changes are needed in the York University Pension Plan, these changes are monitored with pertinent input from YUFA in the decisions and that the decisions are made in the best interests of all YUFA members.

Other recommendations by the Trustees that the membership may wish to consider:

That YUFA members, Executive and the stewards consider the issue of succession planning.

That YUFA work to maintain collegial interactions throughout the University including the Professional Schools, all Faculties and other employee groups, including the Osgoode Hall Faculty Association.

Respectfully submitted,

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