

Acadia students up in arms over stalled contract talks

WOLFVILLE (CUP)—With negotiations heading nowhere fast, students at Acadia University are bracing for a faculty strike.

But they aren't taking the looming strike sitting down. Or are they?

On Jan. 12, hundreds of students occupied the main administrative building on the Nova Scotia campus and held a sit-in to express their displeasure with the current state of contract negotiations between administration and faculty.

Talks are currently at a standstill. A provincially-appointed conciliator had been called in earlier this month to help the two sides reach an agreement, but left after just two days.

The highlight of the sit-in was a two-and-a-half hour question period during which Acadia president Kelvin Ogilvie and faculty association president Jim Sacouman fielded questions from students.

"I think the students were really pleased about the forum," Paul Black, president of Acadia's student union, said. "They got to ask the questions they wanted to ask, and they got to ask them to the people the way [they] wanted to."

During the emotionally-charged forum, however, there were signs of frustration among the students as the two presidents belittled each other. One student asked how they could stand there and expect to be taken seriously while virtually laughing at each other, and there were repeated calls from the audience for the two to "grow up."

The faculty is calling for a five per cent raise retroactive to last November and in each of the next two years. The administration is only will-

ing to give faculty the five per cent retroactive raise, with smaller increases in each of the next two years. There is also disagreement over

the language of the new contract.

Acadia students have taken other actions to encourage the two sides to sit down and work out their differences. Many have formally refused to pay their tuition this semester, and some are sporting red and blue ribbons to protest the stalled talks.

Black has announced that if the situation is not resolved soon, the student union will call for the resignations of both Ogilvie and Sacouman.

"Having allowed the situation to escalate to this point, it is apparent that neither is capable of competently holding their position," Black said.

While Ogilvie refused comment on the matter, Sacouman said, "If it were seen to contribute to the negotiations, I will resign immediately at the same time that Kelvin Ogilvie resigns as president of the university."

Black also announced that if a strike or lockout occurs, the student union will pursue legal action against both parties.

Student frustration is being exacerbated by a work-to-rule action that was launched by Acadia faculty at the beginning of the month. Professors are refusing to take part in the Acadia Advantage, a program through which students use laptop computers as a major learning tool.

Students in the program, who now number over 1,400, pay an extra \$1,200 on top of their regular tuition and are issued a laptop computer. Using the computer and one of the myriad network connections found in Acadia's class-

rooms, residence rooms and common areas, students can download material provided by their professors, access class notes found on web

sites or join with others in chat groups.

Sacouman says professors have not received pay for helping to make the Acadia Advantage program a reality. Other faculty say they are participating in the job action to drive home the fact that they

should have the choice as to whether or not they will use computer technology in their classrooms.

Acadia faculty will hold a strike vote in late January or early February.



UPEI

If you have any questions or concerns about sexual harassment at UPEI, there are people you can talk with, in confidence. Sexual Harassment Committee members for 1997-98 are:
E.H.R. Yancy Ross (yross@upei.ca), Lisa Muzumdar (lmuzumdar@upei.ca), Barb Curley (566-0382; curley@upei.ca), Bob Pritchett (628-4366; pritchett@upei.ca), Brigitte Sassen (566-0334; bsassen@upei.ca) and David Sims (566-0812; sims@upei.ca). If you have concerns or questions about sexual harassment, please contact a committee member.



Lumbricus terrestris
(ANNELIDA: Oligochaeta)

FOR SOME LIFE FORMS...SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS NOT AN ISSUE