COLLECTIVE BARGAINING - AN ALTERNATE VIEW

It seems that it might be an opportune time to ask my colleagues to consider the point of view that collective bargaining might be counter-productive to faculty welfare on this campus. I am prompted to write this because I detect a sinister 'underground' movement to 'persuade' or frighten faculty members into the belief that we have no choice on this campus but to go ahead into collective bargaining.

I believe the opinion I will relate is no extremist's viewpoint. Until November's Faculty Forum I, like many others, had an open mind as to whether or not I would vote for collective bargaining if and when the issue comes to a vote.

That the faculty of this institution has entered a 'low era' in its morale is not open to debate. Dissatisfaction with how things are run and downright worry about prospective future developments in administrative prejudices and power are rampant; this is clear from the volume of words on the subject published lately in this Forum and in Newsletters from OSEA and AAUP and elsewhere. There is no argument to be made in response to the shout that individual faculty members have been subject to unfair decisions by insensitive administrators. Harsh decisions have been made and I have been as alarmed at them as we all have been.

The crux of my argument lies in the conviction that the proponents of collective bargaining are in essence proposing to respond in an immediate fashion to a problem (faculty welfare) which is, of course, ultimately of long range concern. My fear is that a 'quick fix' approach to this long term problem will in itself lead unavoidably to a lessening of faculty and institutional prestige and quality, and thereby result in our own suffering.

The truths about harsh faculty treatment are met equally with the truth that this treatment results from two independent factors: the 'tight' economics of this period, and the development of an increased managerial staff and concomitant outlook in university governance. The scenario we need for a boost in faculty morale is an easing of the financial stringency and a more enlightened (educated?) outlook in some administrators. Neither of these is on the horizon at the time of writing.

Collective bargaining requires that we the faculty accept the ways of the administration, and appoint hard-headed bargainers to sit down opposite the administration and knock out a contract. In the process, as pointed out by Charles Warnath in his December 1973 Faculty Forum Paper, "faculty would have to give up something in order to get some other things." What would we be prepared to give up? This is difficult to answer; we would certainly have to give up some of the tangible benefits we now have (examine any extant contract), but what concerns me more is that we shall also relinquish a claim which I value as highly important in the long run, and which we are presently still able to
make. This is the claim that we are men and women of reason and intellect; seekers of the truth; we value our profession above our personal gain. Throughout history society and society's elected representatives have valued university faculties for the indispensable resource they are.

It is impressive to consider the support we have traditionally enjoyed from most quarters. Despite quotations to the contrary, we do have an array of supporters when it comes to matters of interest to the faculty; from the Offices of University President, Chancellor and indeed Governor we have derived support in achieving our present level of relative dignity and comfort. Whilst it is true that not all the publicly stated aspirations of our administrators may be consistent with the welfare and intellectual integrity of our institution, these are matters which have been in the past and can be in the future resolved by reason and education. Equally valuable to faculty welfare has been the lobbying done on our behalf by such groups as AAUP. Quite recently and without collective bargaining AAUP were successful in seeing that faculty notices of appointment recognized our responsibilities as we see them and not how some others see them.

What of the future? With collective bargaining we might gain some comfort from more clearly defined conditions for faculty dismissal, and we might gain some salary increases (but who will be the necessary loser to provide us those dollars?). In the process however, we would have forever lost our claim to being rational individuals who can sit down with our administration and talk about objectives which we see as advantageous to the institution. We would, on the contrary, be bound irrevocably into the position of being the adversaries; we would have confirmed the administration's view of us as employees to be managed in an unimaginative manner. To go to collective bargaining would be to throw any goodwill left into the faces of those senior administrators from whom we have had, and could continue to have, support; and we would construct forces which would forever work to push faculty and administration to opposing poles on most if not all matters.

Another matter about which we all share concern is our prospective stance vis-a-vis striking. The concept of a body such as this faculty threatening to strike, or indeed actually interrupting the education of our youth and the continuance of our research, must be distasteful to any rational person. Hence it is of interest that in the article 'What is Actually in a Faculty Contract'\(^1\), we read "The faculty agrees not to strike and the governing board agrees not to lock out any employees for the duration of the contract". This is surely reasonable and indeed would be our only tenable stance. But what of the recognized need for each of two bargaining groups to have a platform of strength from which to bargain? Is not a threat to strike just about the only strength this faculty could claim? The only conclusion is that we would be starting in a weak 'bargaining' position.

In summary, it is my conviction that we should not be prepared to threaten to withhold our services to society; if we capitulate in the face of present pressures, and resort to argumentative tactics and threats, we forever relinquish our claim to being persons of superior intellect and reason; we would have 'sold out' and joined the ranks of others who resort to 'fighting' tactics in place of

---

\(^1\) Attached to the memo sent to all faculty Feb. 5, 1974, by Lois A. McGill
rational argument to accomplish their aims. This would be ironic at a time when most of us would argue that diplomacy is preferable to confrontation in world affairs; are we to assume two moral standards - one for national government and one for university government?

In our administration there are some who recognize that a faculty, or indeed any working team, will be most effective and will accomplish the most and the highest goals when working in an atmosphere of confidence and optimism rather than in an atmosphere of fear and distrust such as presently exists here. Let us give that viewpoint a chance to correct our ills.

It seems probable, then, that we, our institution, and our profession would each benefit from a strong resolve to restate our belief in the wisdom of humanity in matters such as the evaluation and the possession (or lack of) a superior faculty at our Universities. We have more to lose than to gain by resorting to collective bargaining and all that would follow in the troubled times ahead. Miniscule short term gains would be soon overwhelmed by an irreversible trend towards demise of our institution.

C. J. Bayne
Zoology Department

3/4/74.
Decline in Faculty Salaries at O.S.U.

During the fall quarter of 1973, the Faculty Economic Welfare Committee collected statistical data on the rapid decline of faculty salaries during recent years when compared with nineteen other Institutions of Higher Learning. These data have been compiled and charted in a series of graphs for easier interpretation. The committee is particularly indebted to one of its members, Professor Curtis Mumford, for compiling most of these statistics and for drawing the graphical representations.

Figure 1 compares average U of O and OSU academic salaries combined, ranked with average annual salaries of 19 other institutions of higher learning. To insure comparability among data only 9-month teaching staff salaries have been used. In the "Report of the OSEA-AAUP Joint Salary Committee ------- Faculty Salaries at Oregon State University", issued to all faculty of OSU on March 16, 1973, that committee states:

In recent years, salaries at Oregon State University have steadily declined in relation to similar institutions. Several years ago, OSU ranked in approximately the middle position of the 21 institutions which the legislature identified for comparative purposes. OSU currently ranks 19th, 17th and 16th for the professor, associate professor, and assistant professor ranks respectively.

Figure 1 shows that for all ranks combined, OSU and U of O together ranked 8th among the 21 institutions in 1957-58 but had dropped to 16th position by 1972-73, and to 17th by 1973-74.

Other data collected by the committee (but not reproduced
show that between 1956-57 and the next year 1957-58, the combined position of professors at OSU and U of O went from 14th place to 8th place. Associate professors went from 13th to 5th places and assistant Professors from 15th to 7th. This improvement in comparative position was largely due to the support of Dr. John R. Richards who was at that time Chancellor for the State System of Higher Education. We quote from Minutes of the Faculty Welfare Committee Meeting of October 27, 1956, to which Dr. Richards had been invited:

Dr. Richards explained that the State Board is thoroughly convinced of the necessity of raising academic salaries and, at the present time, is working toward the realization of a salary fund for the year 1957-58 (not including monies for additional staff) which will be 25 per cent larger than the fiscal year 1955-56. Dr. Richards said that his goal will be to reach, by appropriate means at least 80 per cent of all the members of the next State Legislature, and further, that he was going to do his level best to reach them all.

Again we quote from the report of the OSEA-AAUP Joint Salary Committee of March 16, 1973:

...the faculty needs strong advocates at all administrative levels particularly in the Chancellor's office, the Board of Higher Education, and the Governor's office if significant salary improvement is to occur. The stark realization is, however, that we have no real advocates.

Also mentioned in the OSEA-AAUP report is a plan proposed 4 or 5 years ago by the Governor, designed to bring academic salaries up to parity with the 19 other institutions in 4 years. This plan was never adopted by the legislature. It is estimated that as of 1973-74 an overall increase of 13 per cent would have been needed to raise the average 9-month academic salary at OSU.
to the average of the other 19 institutions.

Figure 2 compares index numbers for the average annual salaries of 9-month academic staffs, all ranks combined, and the per capita personal income (U.S.). An index number of 100 was assigned to the OSU salary amount for 1957 and for the per capita personal income (U.S.) for 1957. It is again emphasized that Figure 2 compares index numbers and not dollar values.

Several comments are in order. The charts again show the substantial increase in salaries from 1957 to 1958, and the fact that changes in academic salaries and the per capita U.S. income advanced at a comparable rate until about 1968. However, after 1968 per capita personal income increased at a much more rapid rate as indicated by the steeper slope of the per capita personal income curve over that of the academic salary curve. The charts clearly indicate how, after 1968, and in particular from 1972 on, the gap between the curves has rapidly diminished and in particular the fact that the per capita personal income index has now surpassed the index for academic staff salaries at OSU. It is expected that later statistics will show a further degeneration in this situation.

Other conclusions that may be drawn from the figures are left to the peruser. This information is faithfully submitted on behalf of the Faculty Economic Welfare Committee.

William H. Simons

March 30, 1974
FIGURE 1. All ranks average "U of O and OSU Academic Salaries Combined" ranked with average annual salaries of 19 other Higher Education Institutions, 1957 to date (Academic-Year Teaching Staff).

SOURCE: Division of Analytic Services, Oregon State System of Higher Education.
Faculty Economic Welfare Committee, Oregon State University, March 1974
Index numbers of average annual salaries of 9 months academic staffs, all ranks, U of O and OSU; and Per Capita Personal Income (U.S.), and Per Capita Personal Income (U.S.).

FIGURE 2.

Index numbers of average annual salaries of 9 months academic staffs, all ranks, U of O and OSU; and Per Capita Personal Income (U.S.), and Per Capita Personal Income (U.S.).