

## RALUT Special General Meeting 2002

### SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING, Fall, 2002

The meeting came to order at 2.05pm with approximately 100 members present. Dr. Alec Waugh in the chair.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of March 25th 2002 were approved as previously circulated.

#### President's report

Peter Russell welcomed members, and introduced Fred Wilson and Helen Rosenthal as new members of the Executive Committee who had been appointed to fill the vacancies created by the resignations of George Luste and Charlie Meadow. George Luste had become President of UTFA and felt that it would be inappropriate to continue his membership of the Executive Committee of RALUT. Charlie Meadow has retired to live in Victoria. Both had provided outstanding service to RALUT during its formative period and the meeting expressed its gratitude to them.

In late November RALUT moved into an office at 256 McCaul Street (Suite 404) that has kindly been provided by the University at no rental cost to us. The office will be open to members in the New Year and will be staffed by volunteers. A reception is also planned for the New Year.

During the summer of 2002 Peter Russell attended the Annual Meeting of AROHE (Association of Retiree Organizations in Higher Education) in Indiana. He was much impressed by the quality of United States Retiree organizations and of their success in persuading US Universities of the continued value of retirees – a success that we particularly need to emulate in Toronto. Peter Russell is now a member of the Executive Committee of AROHE.

The Constitution of UTFA has been under review throughout 2002 by a committee of which George Milbrandt is a co-chair. Harvey Kerpneck and Marvin Gold are also members, and although progress has been exceptionally slow RALUT is well represented and continues to be concerned for the future of retirees within UTFA. The proposed revised constitution is expected to come before a General Meeting of UTFA in 2003.

Asked about that the possibility of there being two classes of membership in UTFA - with different membership fees – Peter Russell said that this is definitely not settled. One group within UTFA believes that retirees should pay substantially more, while others feel that the present fee should be increased, but not by such an amount as would drive retiree members out of the organization. The issue will be debated further.

#### Treasurer's Report

Ann Schabas presented her report ... and noted that our financial position is much improved over last year, but many demands on our resources exist. Paid assistance is probably one such demand as there are limits to how much can be achieved by volunteer help. Peter Russell noted that, should the University continue its attempt to reduce our benefits, we may need to seek a legal opinion on the applicability to us of a 1993 Supreme Court of Canada ruling on benefits. This might be another cost that will have to be considered. Jacob Ziegel noted that, as RALUT is now incorporated, everything done to date has to be re-confirmed as there is no automatic conversion from unincorporated to corporate status. Peter Russell and Jacob Ziegel will discuss the matter at a later date.

On motion duly proposed and seconded the Treasurer's Report was adopted unanimously.

#### Membership Committee Report

Germaine Warkentin explained that membership matters have been handled during the past few weeks by an ad hoc committee that will be

formalized as the Membership Committee at the Executive Committee meeting of December 18th. We have 676 members out of a potential membership of about 1,400. It is fairly stable but is still only half of our potential membership; proposals to achieve this are under consideration.

#### Pension Committee report

This was presented by Harvey Kerpneck who drew the meeting's attention to the list of case histories published in the latest issue of the RALUT Reporter.

A grave concern during November was the introduction into the Legislature of Ontario of Bill 198 (Keeping the Promise for a Strong Economy Act [Budget Measures], 2002). This would have increased greatly the ability of employers to remove surpluses from defined benefit pension plans without the consent of employees and retirees who have contributed to the surplus. RALUT had met with the Ministry of Finance and with Opposition members of the Legislature to oppose the Bill and was very gratified that the government has withdrawn the entire section of the bill that covers pension matters.

Negotiation between the University and UTFA over salaries, benefits and pensions have been very protracted but the arbitration award is expected within the next few weeks. We have no reason to expect very much, but it will be a one-year award (2002-2003) and so new negotiations will begin almost immediately. RALUT has five members on the UTFA Salary benefits and Pensions Committee.

A new statement of Pension Policies and Principles was adopted by the Executive Committee and distributed at today's meeting.

There were questions and subsequent discussion on the status of the surplus in our Pension Plan (drastically reduced by recent stock market performance, but the University still proposes a contribution holiday for itself valued at about \$35 million), and the proposed distribution to retirees at

McMaster University of part of their pension plan surplus.

On motion duly proposed and seconded the new statement on Pension Policies and Principles was adopted unanimously. The meeting also expressed by strong applause its appreciation to all those who had been involved in negotiating on behalf of retirees.

#### Benefits Committee Report

This was presented by Douglas Creelman who explained that the committee is concerned with all non-pension benefits.... A booklet listing all such benefits has been distributed by the University and RALUT had a strong influence on its preparation. There was considerable surprise that fewer than half the members present seem to have received this booklet, and this will be addressed immediately.

Many questions were asked by members. The advice on all problems or queries on applicability of benefits is that members should address them to Vice-President Hildyard, who has undertaken to deal directly with any such queries, with a copy to RALUT of both the query and the subsequent answer or disposition of the matter. RALUT, however, is unable to act as an Ombudsman or deal with individual problems.

#### RALUT Reporter

The new Editor of the Reporter is Fred Wilson who received the warm thanks of the meeting for taking over this important part of RALUT, following it very successful first year under the editorship of Charlie Meadow.

#### Volunteers

Membership records and all related matters have been handled, since RALUT was founded, by our Treasurer Ann Schabas. This, however, is too much for the Treasurer to handle and all membership matters will now be the responsibility of the Membership Committee. Volunteers will be needed to staff the RALUT office. We have not yet developed social activities. Other similar

organizations do so but our attentions have been fully occupied so far with pension and benefit matters. However, there is a role for volunteers who are prepared to take the lead in developing such activities. A show of hands indicated considerable interest in bus trips to the Shaw and Stratford Festivals.

CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada)

CURAC is the successor organization to CAERA which held a very successful one-day meeting in Toronto last May. John Dirks spoke to the meeting of plans to formalize the existence of the new organization at a meeting to be held in Halifax on May 26th, 2003. RALUT has been asked to be a founding member. Pensions and Benefits as well as best practices of Colleges and Universities toward retirees will continue to be a theme in all the considerations of CURAC.

Other Business

Stefan Dupre noted that the University of Toronto has experienced difficulty in recruiting people in their early fifties from the United States because of our mandatory retirement requirement. He wondered whether this is an issue that can be re-opened. Peter Russell replied that this is a vital issue and that he has had several meetings with the President and Provost of the University, both of whom are aware that it is a serious recruiting matter. Indeed most universities in the United States have abandoned mandatory retirement. Lack of flexibility is seen as the principal problem, and this is definitely the time to move on it. For that reason RALUT hopes to sponsor a forum on 'Redefining retirement in our time'. This will need to be a university-wide initiative. It is hoped to hold it on a Saturday afternoon forum during the Spring of 2003, possibly in the Innis College Town Hall.

The Annual General Meeting of RALUT will be held on April 24th, 2003 in Alumni Hall of Victoria College at 1.30 pm.

There being no further business the meeting

adjourned at 3.40 pm.