

t u f times

Published by the UH/CL Guild, Local 4033, Texas United Faculty
Vol. 5, No. 5, Spring, 1985



DRAWING THIS OUT A LITTLE FURTHER.....

HERE COMES THE BUDGET CRUNCH! At some of the other schools around the state administrators are already approaching faculty with contingency plans for dealing with major budget cuts, minor budget cuts, or a freeze on state funding. Such plans include cutting whole programs in the worst case, merely freezing all faculty promotion and tenure decisions with less major cuts, or dropping nontenured faculty in selected areas. In any of these situations, faculty will be hit hard, especially nontenured faculty. The ONLY organization through which we can make our concerns known directly to the state Legislature is TUF. Although in the past our Chancellors and Presidents have not often proven themselves effective lobbyists, our administration will try to defend the University and maintain budgets; their careers are on the line. But if cuts have to be made, they will more willingly sacrifice our jobs than theirs. TUF, as part of the state AFT, is connected to a very significant force in state politics, a force which has and can continue to have an effect on legislative decisions in Texas. Through ULLCO (United Labor Committee), which can field over 130 lobbyists and represents not only the AFL-CIO in the state but other organizations not connected with labor, TUF can have a dramatic impact on legislation affecting faculty. ULLCO is opposing the cuts to higher education. But TUF speaks only as loud as its numbers will allow, and no one else speaks just for us.

Think about it. Your \$15 a month, small by comparison to teaching 4 or 5 classes, or losing your job, will be one more number with which we can try now, while there is still time, to stop what is happening. Just as important we can use that number in the future to improve our situation. Public school teachers have made progress in this direction; now it is our turn.

CAN OUR MANAGERS MANAGE?

As reported in a previous issue of TUF TIMES, the administration of the School of Business and Public Administration has (without consulting its faculty) moved to a system of "Faculty Goal Statements." Faculty are to consult with their supervisors on appropriate goals to be achieved during the next calendar year and sign a statement of these goals.

But an article in the WALL STREET JOURNAL of January 17, 1985, indicates that such systems as this have not been found to work:

When Monsanto Co. years ago tied compensation to a structured review process in which employees set their own goals, "we found it didn't work," says Mr. Bob Reass, manager of strategic operations. Employees, afraid to set goals they couldn't meet, instead set easy-to-reach goals. "We found we were sealing our own mediocrity," he says.

AND NOW, A NEW FEATURE!!!!

TUF TIMES invites, for publication, letters and articles, such as Dr. Snyder's below, which reflect the diverse concerns and viewpoints of our faculty. Won't it look great in your annual report? We will be publishing these in our new column,

UHCLUCKINGS, A COLUMN OF FACULTY OPINION.

OUR FIRST FOLLOWS:

MIXED METAPHORS AND MIXED-UP CLASSES

Proposed cuts in higher-education budgets will be made over the next two years. Nobody, no element of any of the Texas systems was strong enough to prevent or even soften the shock of recommended slashes averaging 25%-30%. The questions left by the legislators are, "Where, precisely?" then "How deeply?"

Whenever such emergencies arise, the proposers and mandaters leave it up to the administrators to execute measures that are supposed to restore the state's economic health. University administrators' task is to prepare the higher-education body for surgery. So far all involved are blameless, even laudable: "responsibility" in the best civic sense radiates from the proposers, and the administrators' hands are perfectly sanitary. They have responded to a "natural" economic relapse.

Administrators' "prep" routine for ensuring surgical spotlessness is to involve the patient in answering the questions "Where, precisely?" and "How deeply?" The patient is inevitably the faculty. Many faculty are glad for the opportunity to get involved. Such

considerateness to their sensibilities reassures them that their safety and health will be protected, possibly improved, however uncomfortable the cuts may be. And with the faculty engaged in searching over their own bodies for proper points to place the scalpel, administrators secure the aprons that will cover them from splatter and stain.

But this metaphor is all wrong. Even if it were correct, the health of the public economy would never be achievable by cutting into what all concerned, including Head Surgeon White, acknowledge to be the heart. Yet faculties are also--even at a time when it is especially evident that the educational pulse is faltering--the ones acknowledged to be the cardiac patient.

To adjust the metaphor to pure anatomy, the collective body of the university faculties cannot afford to sacrifice the least, nor the weakest, nor even the most vestigial of its members--for either its own putative good or that of the public it educates and trains to sustain the economy which fails to sustain them in turn.

For in fact this faculty is not a body at all. It is a group of working human beings whose own economic welfare is at stake. When it is jobs that need to be safeguarded, instead of "members" of a body, the conception of class membership is the essential thing to keep in mind. Economically, administrators, along with certain portions of the professoriate, are a kind of class; their authority, their salaries, and their growth rates prove as much. What remains of the professoriate, along with staff, is another kind of class; their lack of authority, their salaries, and their attrition prove as much.

Classes protect their interests, of course. And these interests are defensible only if their constituents possess class identity and will. This will is for itself and for other classes which are also threatened by the interests of yet another class in the same overall system, one that has greater authority, higher economic status, and a rosier future altogether in the American structure.

Enough said under the dimming rays of the old cause, which no one in our New Canaan of High Tech and futurist vistas understands anyway. The salvageable point, however, is that faculty have only to register their fears for the security of their jobs to discover where the proposed cuts will be applied. How, then, can they agree to cooperate with the cutters without contradicting their own collective interest? They cannot, simply.

Yet faculty have often done precisely this, arguing that it is better to direct the blade with their own hands than allow someone else to commence the operation. The wound, perceived as inevitable and necessary, will, then, be less traumatic--to the "institution as a whole," as they say. But the institution as a whole typically survives; institutions seem to be immortal. The faculty as a class, however, will be asked to be the sacrificial lamb or the beaten goat enabling this divine whole to endure.

The only way for faculty to avoid their ritual fate, is to cohere. The only way for a class to cohere, is to refuse to offer up any of its members--to insist on its own mortal wholeness, its literal integrity. Ironically, though, teachers as a class often like to be good, even when firmly united, rather than sensible and practical: The unionized teachers of N.Y.C., displaying more altruism than any other civic group, went so far as to bequeath their pension funds to help save the whole, only to remain to this day stigmatized by the national public as among the culprits who cased the city's troubles in the first place. Clearly, self-sacrifice neither works nor procures credit for the "part." Sacrificing pension funds or sacrificing jobs--both are self-mutilations serving no healthful ends--pathetic efforts, both, to save something by nullifying the very source of most things worth saving, human labor.

Faculty and staff at UH/CL have nothing to gain by cooperating with those whose job and interest it is to save the whole by trimming the class that is so often so predictably well-intentioned in doing its part. However, the whole to maintain in this case is the whole of the part, the faculty itself. If the administration asks, "sensibly," that faculty scrutinize themselves for possible healthful cuts, faculty should respond with the common sense of self-preservation and refuse.

Faculty cannot refuse, it will be said in smiling resignation, for they are nought but a class of employees. Yet precisely because they are, they can and must refuse to do what their employers, along with their executors, are paid to do: select the members that need to be lopped--non-renewed, terminated, retired, "program-attritioned," laid off, whatever the euphemism.

A class is a class, each with its special interests, after all. Unlike the sick patient, the faculty cannot be expected to consent to the surgeons' advice, for it cannot elect to avoid surgery and bravely take the consequences. And unlike the sacrificial animals, faculty and staff have to produce their livings and not merely serve themselves up as

products.

Granted, the faculty is a "part." But a university is not an organic "whole." If it were, there would be no economic classes, just classes for learning and teaching. And since we are constituted as a kind of class with a middling rank in the hierarchy, we must act accordingly. When the invitation comes to "get involved" in the decision-making process required by imperatives to cut, we should not let ourselves be snookered by the magnanimity.

If the offer is accepted--whether by individuals, by sections of the faculty, or by its representative institutions such as the Senate--the class becomes a non-class of individuals looking to save their own jobs and programs by helpfully identifying other individuals and programs and services that "won't be missed." Worse, they become the other class, but without the other class's substance. If faculty want it that way, for whatever reasons--professionalism, merit, timidity, fatalism, rationality or selflessness or virtue--then individual faculty members with strong position and hardy disciplines will prosper while the class of which they are part will lose its integrity. The faculty will then be truly dis-membered.

The moral is as old as the hills and as universal as you may wish--Tecumseh, the Three Musketeers--but it remains categorical:

Now is the time to become members...of the

UH/CL Guild, No. 4033, Texas United Faculty.

John Snyder

So....

YES, I wish to join the UH/CL Guild, Texas United Faculty, on the understanding that if I am untenured, or in other special circumstances, my membership can be anonymous.

SIGNED _____

(please print if your signature is not legible, like ours)

Send to Curt Smith, 309, or Bruce Palmer, 281. We will call you to explain membership, advantages, and dues procedure.

WELCOME.
