

THE WEST INDIES GROUP OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE

26th March, 1975

WIGUT BULLETIN

EXECUTIVE NEWS

Due to pressure of work Lucio Araujo has had to resign from the Executive. The Executive takes this opportunity to thank Lucio for his tremendous contribution to the Union during the past year and a half. We also appreciate his offer to assist wherever possible. Lerlyn Elliott will be away for four (4) months on Study Leave. Vernon Scoon (Biological Sciences) and Miriam Dillon have agreed to serve on the Executive. Marjorie Thorpe is now the WIGUT representative on the Housing Committee. Congrats to David Beckles on the birth of a daughter, also to Lucio for being elected President of the Trinidad and Tobago Chess Association. Congratulations to Brother Jacobs on his appointment of Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

EMERGENCY GENERAL MEETING of 24/2/75

Several members have complained about the lack of notice announcing the meeting. The Executive wishes to apologize for this situation which was due to a temporary breakdown in the distribution arrangement. The notices were delivered to the several distribution points as per previous arrangement. However, in the affected cases the sheets were either given to office staff to distribute or placed in the internal mail. This resulted in the delay experienced by some members. We will ensure in future that for emergency issues members responsible for distribution will personally supervise all arrangements.

As regards the meeting itself, the Executive felt that there was no need to reopen the issue. The sentiments expressed at the meeting more or less reaffirmed previous union decisions as regards our coordinating with other unions. However, we would welcome any further comments on these issues from all members.

HOUSING LOAN SCHEME

You will recall that in the last annual report WIGUT indicated that efforts were being made to improve the provision under the housing loan scheme. At a meeting with the F. & G. P. negotiating committee on 6/2/75 the following proposals were made.

1. The University continue to provide housing at a rental of 10% of salary to staff for the duration of his/her employment rather than for three years as hitherto. This has been agreed to by the F. & G. P. committee.

2. The upper limit of the loan provided in the present Assisted House Purchase Scheme should be increased from \$16,800.00 to \$25,000.00, and that staff members using this scheme be given (unlike in the past) a 10% housing allowance. This allowance to be paid with effect from 1/8/73.

The following was agreed with the F. & G. P. negotiating team, and awaiting approval from F. & G. P. committee.

1. That the University continue to provide housing at a rental of 10% of the staff member's salary for the duration of his employment.

This proposal has already been agreed at the last meeting and submitted to F. & G. P. where it was approved.

- II The upper limit of the loan provided in the present Assisted House Purchase Scheme to be increased to TT\$25,000.00 and the member of staff given housing allowance of 10%, this allowance to be paid with effect from August 1, 1973.

3. The Parties agreed that the F. & G. P. should be asked to approve the following:

- (i) The increase of the interest free loan to TT\$25,000.00 as proposed.
- (ii) Payment of housing allowance to members of staff under the Assisted House Purchase Scheme of 10% of salary with effect from 1st August, 1973.
- (iii) Any member of staff on a three year contract or on tenure, appointed to a programme which is expected to continue indefinitely, irrespective of the source of its funding, would be eligible for a housing loan. The programmes which are deemed likely to continue indefinitely would be listed in a schedule which should be reviewed annually.
- (iv) A member of staff under the Assisted House Purchase Scheme who resigned would -
 - (a) from the effective date of his resignation pay interest on his loan at the Current Commercial mortgage rates; and
 - (b) make arrangements for the liquidation of his loan balance within eighteen (18) months after his resignation.
- (v) A campus committee should be set up to decide on priorities in the allocation of loans to applicants. This committee should comprise two members of the Administration, two members of WIGUTs and a Chairman to be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.

- III The University to lend members of staff money at normal commercial mortgage rates to enable them to purchase houses. The University would provide first mortgages of two thirds of the value of the house up to a maximum of TT\$50,000.00 or second mortgages of up to two fifths of the value with a ceiling of \$30,000.00. The University would also provide the full 20% housing allowance to members of staff who obtained a loan.

4. The Vice-Chancellor pointed out that the University had no capital funds with which to implement that proposal and would also find it difficult to raise capital funds for that purpose. The Parties agreed however, that the proposal should

be submitted to F. & G. P. for approval subject to the availability of funds.

5. Arising out of the discussions on Proposal III it was noted that there were difficulties for non-nationals both in Trinidad and Barbados to obtain mortgage loans. The Parties agreed that the University should make representation to the Governments concerned to see whether they could be persuaded to raise the restrictions. The Parties agreed that WIGUTs should send a note to the Vice-Chancellor indicating the specific problems being experienced by non-nationals in obtaining mortgage loans.

STUDY LEAVE SCHEME

Several members are still uncertain about the mechanics of the New Study Leave Arrangements. It was therefore suggested that the scheme be explained once more in simple terms.

The new scheme which became effective from July 1974 will completely replace the old scheme as from October 1975. The transition arrangement for staff overlapping both schemes has been documented elsewhere. The main points relating to the new scheme are:

(1) Grants

Staff Member	\$1215 per annum
Spouse (Non-staff)	550 per annum
Children (up to 3)	305 per annum

Note (i) This grant is accumulable up to a maximum of four years.

- (ii) No duplication in claims for children is permitted when member and spouse are both staff members, but the non-discrimination clause applies and a female staff member who is the spouse of another member is entitled to her \$1215 per annum.

(2) Usage

Members can apply for any portion of their accumulated grant at any time; but leave will be granted subject to the exigences of the service and normally will be in the vacation periods. This means that the three (3) year leave period is not now generally applicable. (For members in the Library, ISER, RRC and School of Education the three (3) year restriction still applies but the Executive is now working on schemes which would reduce this discrepancy between these members and members of the teaching staff).

The grant will not normally be paid after the 31st of March in the termination year to persons resigning from the University.

Funds may be used for travel relating to academic development of the member and such purpose as the purchasing of materials and for subsistence during such travel. Also, any member not travelling during any year can spend in any one year up to 20% of his or her total grant for the purchase of books and materials.

(3) Accountability

Accepting the policy of accountability it was agreed that the member of staff should provide reasonable proof of expenditure.

Specifically, for the purchase of books and materials when not travelling the following options have been agreed on:-

- (1) Member receives 20% of total grant in cash and renders account within 30 days, failing which the sum or any part not accounted for is deducted from salary and credited to member's Study and Travel Grant account.
- (2) Members may request the University to order the materials and/or books; any excess over the 20% allowed to be paid by the staff member or deducted from salary. (This procedure although time-consuming can be cost-saving on certain items. Members can obtain an order through departments and have these orders approved by the Finance Officer).
- (3) Members may purchase the books or materials and apply to the Finance Officer for a refund.

(4) Surplus Funds

Any surplus funds will be credited to the Campus Sabbatical Pool from which actual replacement costs of staff going on sabbatical will be met.

WORK PERMIT

The question of Work Permits has been an issue for several years, and various WIGUT Executives have tried in vain to solve it.

There are two questions now involved, namely why should University staff require Work Permits at all, and also the question of a proposed fee for Work Permits.

U.W.I. is a regional institution. If it is to continue as such, and we are sure that the overwhelming majority of the University community would wish it to, equality of treatment for all West Indian staff is essential. The question of Work Permits for West Indians should simply never arise.

Furthermore, it must be accepted that for a University to function in its role of stimulating the search for knowledge, it requires exposure to the contemporary experiences of other countries. It needs new ideas from as wide an area as possible.

For this to occur, it is extremely desirable that a percentage of our staff should be from outside the Caribbean. The majority of our staff must be West Indian, but we need the expatriate minority. The Government should place no barriers in the way of the University's recruiting staff as it sees fit.

The treatment that our non-Trinidadian staff now receive, is simply unacceptable. Whenever they leave Trinidad, they are subjected on their return to the rudeness and down-right insults of the immigration squad if their work

permits are not in order. And the permits are often not up-to-date, due to the inefficiency of the Ministry concerned.

Furthermore, our staff get arbitrarily summoned, frequently and at short notice, to the Immigration Office in Port-of-Spain, with threats hanging over their heads if they ignore the summons.

It is known that a section of the community in Trinago feels that the University should be scrapped and possibly replaced by a University of Trinidad. In the light of its actions, one must seriously wonder whether the Government is not working in its own to destroy the University.

WIGUT says again, the Work Permit requirement for U.W.I. staff is unnecessary and must go. The Government does not need the Work Permit as an instrument to silence free speech. It has all too many alternatives, as some of us are painfully aware.

The question of payment for Work Permits is a separate issue. The immorality here is not the payment as such, but the requirement of a permit for our staff at all.

Our position here is that if payment ever becomes a reality, U.W.I. Management must make the payments. It is absolutely essential that this be done, to maintain the University as a regional institution of a high standard.

So far University Management has refused to give a commitment on this point. If it persists in this, it may very well find itself accused of apathy towards the future of the University. We call on U.W.I. Management to make a clear stand NOW.

OFFICE SPACE FOR WIGUT

WIGUT is under attack

This continues to be a source of continual dissatisfaction. The University Administration by the way it is handling this matter, is demonstrating more and more, its inclination towards politically victimising the union because of its stand.

Office space is necessary for two main reasons:

- 1) we now have a paid secretary to help facilitate the business of the union;
- 2) we have purchased stationery and equipment which must be located at a permanent office.

Initially we put this matter to the Buildings and Grounds committee, and also pointed out that the University has in the past provided office space

for other on-campus (NASA) and off-campus (National Scientific Advisory Council, Astronomical Society) Groups.

The Committee refused the application on the grounds that there is a shortage of office space on the campus - F.&G.P. minutes of 15/10/74 "and after due consideration had agreed that its original decision should stand, that is in view of the pressure for space for teaching and administration, the University was unable to provide office accommodation for the WIGUTs." The office for which we applied was allocated to Extra-mural and the other has (we are told) been allocated for Hotel accommodation notwithstanding the fact that the four rooms in the SCR are empty most of the year round. In the interim, the second office is being used by an on-campus group for purposes of choir practice.

Not being satisfied with the matter we made a case to the F & G P, who rejected our application on the stated grounds that there was no office space available. We then asked that the matter be reopened because it was improperly dealt with. On this occasion we suggested that it was an incorrect suggestion about the shortage of office space, and pointed out that there was space available in three different parts of the University. It was suggested that we should seek space in the SCR.

At a recent meeting we reopened the issue, and it was only then that we discovered that the real reason for the refusal and the one given originally was that the Administration is attempting to victimise the union on political grounds.

This allegation is borne out clearly in the F & G P minutes of 17/9/74 which read "..... the committee expressed concern at the implications in offering office space accommodation to a registered trade union whose activities might not be exclusively tied to University operations and after discussions agreed that it was not possible to vary their previous decision".

The WIGUT executive is clearly under attack by the University Administration and we are calling on the membership to support us in the struggle ahead, we will keep the membership informed about developments on this issue.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH LOCAL MANAGEMENT

The executive recently held a negotiating session with the local management negotiating team. In this we discussed:

- (1) Leave for Academic Staff in the School of Education in which we are asking for a minimum of eight weeks per year to enable staff in these departments with year round commitments to enjoy the benefits of the new study and travel grant. The local management refused to discuss this on the grounds that it has no standing in

the matter. We will now take this matter to the full F & G P negotiating team.

- (2) We made a number of proposals to modify the existing fellowships and Assisted Leave Schemes, to remove clauses which we thought discriminated against staff generally, and younger staff members particularly. We also proposed a formal No-pay leave scheme - especially for staff wanting to pursue further study. There was some measure of agreement on all these, and the agreed areas will be put to the full F & G P [See Appendix I and II].
- (3) Departmental leave arrangements i.e. the "casual leave" (leave in excess of the five weeks local leave) for staff in the library and Administration was discussed. We asked for a minimum of 14 working days, while the management is offering seven. There is now a stalemate on this issue hence negotiations will continue at a later date.
- (4) New Health Scheme. We are to arrange a meeting with the Insurance companies concerned to further discuss these proposals. Members will be circulated shortly on the proposed schemes and comments are especially required on this matter. In any case this issue will be discussed at a special general meeting.
- (5) Grievances. Since coming into office the executive committee has dealt with twelve complaints from staff. Most of these have been satisfactorily dealt with.

RRC/CARDI REPORT

A delegation of WIGUT met the working party at the end of November 1974, and made it clear that no member of the RRC will join CARDI unless the term and conditions of service in the new institute were negotiated and agreed upon by WIGUT. As a result, a sub-committee of the working party was formed to start negotiations with WIGUT. In spite of our best efforts, the sub-committee has not met WIGUT yet.

The WIGUT executive has been meeting regularly with the RRC members to formulate the Union's policy regarding the transition from RRC to CARDI.

We have been unofficially informed that all the governments have now signed the relevant documents and CARDI should officially exist soon.

APPENDIX I

To be submitted direct to F. & G. P.C.

LEAVE FOR ACADEMIC STAFF IN (SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, ISER AND RRC)

At the last F. & G. P. and WIGUT meeting a paper was circulated making a case for eight weeks leave in the summer for staff in the above departments on the grounds that whereas members in other faculties could take the summer off, that these staff members because of their all-year round teaching and research commitments were unable to get the full study and travel benefits of the new study and travel grant scheme. Unfortunately, there seems to have been considerable confusion because the notion of local leave for library and Administration was introduced and discussed at the same time. To clarify the issue we propose that the two matters be separated as:

1. local leave for staff in Administration and the Library;
2. leave for Academic staff in the School of Education, ISER, RRC and other academic staff with all year teaching or research activities.

A problem emerges for staff in category (2) above because these members, because of their year-round teaching and research commitments can only travel (if they want to) in the five weeks local leave, or at the end of every three years.

This is undesirable for two main reasons:

- (a) a total of five weeks is inadequate and does not offer enough time for a member of staff to organise and execute a programme of study and/or research.
- (b) WIGUT as a trade union is completely opposed to a situation in which staff members who are engaged in the same occupational category are given different conditions of service.

As a means of solving this problem we propose that staff in these departments get a minimum of ten weeks per year (eight weeks leave in the summer), so that they can enjoy the study and travel benefits of the new leave and travel grant scheme.

We suggest that this proposal can be implemented if the present local leave be replaced by an eight-week leave period (to be taken between June and August plus two weeks to be taken during the year at departmental convenience) to provide study and travel facilities for the staff mentioned above.

APPENDIX II

Revision of leave schemes

You will recall that at the last meeting between the F. & G. P. and WIGUT that certain proposals were put forward in the form of scholarship leave, and no pay leave. The main reasons for these proposals was that the existing Fellowship, No pay and Assisted leave schemes, contained clauses which were tantamount to unfair, and discriminatory conditions of employment. It was agreed that rather than put forward new study leave schemes in the form of Scholarship and No pay leave, that WIGUT should attempt to incorporate the amendments with already existing leave schemes.

Under Assisted Fellowship and No pay leave there are certain clauses discriminating against staff who use these leave schemes largely for work towards a higher degree in respect of

- a. eligibility to cross the merit bar
- b. indefinite tenure.

We feel that this discrimination against staff members on these grounds are shameful and unbecoming of an institution of higher learning.

In view of the above disadvantages WIGUT (St. Augustine) hereby proposes the following:

1. The length of service required before a staff member becomes eligible, should be reduced from six to four years, but staff member will have to make a case.

Assisted leave to be extended (rectified) as follows:

1. The purpose of Assisted leave is to enable staff members to pursue further study.
2. The University will give the staff member a grant of \$2,000 (TT) payable in full, in advance of departure, as a settling grant and registration and other fees.
3. All staff (irrespective of position in relation to the merit bar) should obtain the same terms and conditions.
4. University will maintain payment of overseas Health Scheme or other Health Insurance Schemes as may be in force at the time.

No pay leave

1. Staff may apply for no pay leave for academic purposes.
2. Available to all members of the Academic and Library staff.
3. No pay leave will be for one year in the first instance, and may be renewed for a further year.
4. Where staff use no pay leave for purposes of study, the staff member will continue to pay 5% of salary to superannuation contribution. The University will pay the remaining 10% either as a loan to the staff member, or from any funds remaining from his normal salary after the payment for a replacement.