

Action sought to help Aboriginal women

BY PAUL MAYNE

The status of Aboriginal women in Canada couldn't be any lower, according to the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC).

"This issue is bigger than we know, it's huge. The indifference has to end regarding the status

and safety of Aboriginal women," says Beverly Jacobs. "All levels of government need to work diligently and urgently to institute plans of action."

Jacobs spoke last week at King's University College as part of the symposium on the fragile lives of Aboriginal women. The event was sponsored by Western, The

Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children and At^losha Native Family Health Services Inc.

Jacobs says it's always difficult to talk about the missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. With the constant air of mistrust between police and Aboriginals, many families are not reporting missing family members. In 2003, there was an estimated 500 missing or murdered Aboriginal women across the country which Jacobs feels "was a low number."

Jacobs says the federal government is not "acknowledging

the seriousness of the problem." NWAC recently submitted a strategy plan for 2005-2010 with the objectives of a national registry, public awareness campaign, policy analysis and other comprehensive recommendations.

Negotiations for funding this 'Sisters in Spirit' campaign had requested \$10 million over two years, with the government responding back with an offer of \$5 million over five years. But Jacobs says NWAC has yet to see any federal support.

"They say they're still committed to their funding but we're still dealing with all the politics," says

Jacobs, noting there was no mention of the funding in the February budget. "We've submitted our work plan and we've requested funding confirmation by the end of April."

Jacobs says working on a national and international awareness strategy is key to getting the word out on the severity of the ongoing problem.

"Our common goal is to end violence against our women," says Jacobs. "It has become a unifying project in the sense we're trying to turn a hard, difficult issue into something positive. We all could have been one of these women."



Paul Mayne, Western News

Native Women's Association of Canada President Beverly Jacobs (left) speaks with Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy, Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, prior to the Aboriginal women symposium.

Most faculty grievances resolved internally

BY JIM ANDERSON

Western's Faculty Association handled 169 faculty grievances and issues this year.

"It wasn't a significantly higher number overall than in previous years, but there were a few more policy concerns," says Albert Katz, Chair of the Rights and Grievance Committee.

A report filed at UWOFA's annual general meeting Tuesday covered grievances and issues

handled between July 1, 2004 and April 15, 2005.

"Most of these were resolved internally, but a few went to a formal grievance process and some to arbitration," says Katz.

There were issues and concerns raised by 139 full-time faculty and 30 part-time faculty - a drop in concerns by part-time faculty this year, says Katz.

The range of issues raised under the collective agreement varied widely, including non-discrim-

ination and harassment cases, promotion and tenure, workload issues, academic responsibilities, working conditions and leaves of absence, to name just a few.

The Faculty of Social Science led with the most issues - 43, followed by Arts and Humanities with 24, and Medicine & Dentistry with 19 cases.

Other grievances were spread in varying numbers among other faculties.