CityU.'s Merged Union Set To Act for 15,000 on Staff

By M. A. FARBER

The two rival faculty unions at the City University merged last week, increasing the prospect for tough negotiations this summer on the university's second contract with more than 15,000 professors and staff members.

If the new organization is certified as the bargaining agent for the 15,000 employees as expected, it will represent more persons than any other campus union in the country.

The organization, still unnamed, amalgam of the Legislative Conference and the United Federation of College Teachers, said it would embark on a new course of professional militancy to gain salary and other benefits and to raise educational standards at the university.

Among its contract demands will be the elimination of "inequities" in wages, tightening of the faculty grievance procedure, limitations on workloads and "mandatory standards" for overcrowded offices and other physical facilities.

Officials of the new union said the conference and the federation had been competing "needlessly dissipating our human and fiscal resources" for too long.

The merger will give the faculty greater strength vis-a-vis the university administration and "added political clout" with the Legislature.

Rising Problems

"We were fighting each other while the total faculty was faced with budget cuts, enlarged enrollments that were far from adequately financed and threats to tenure, sabbaticals and reasonable workloads and conditions," said Dr. Belle, president of the federation. "We support the merger. We support the merger as the agent for the part-time instructional staff and "support" employees, as well as lecturers.

Last Friday, the merger of the two City University unions was approved by the unions' members by a margin of 10 to 1, with more than half the union membership voting. Dr. Zeller, who was chairman of the conference, was named president of the new organization.

The federation, which is the agent for the part-time instructional staff and "support" employees, was chosen deputy president.

3 Units Sought

Another impetus for the merger was the federation's formal challenge of the conference as the agent for the full-time instructional staff and "support" employees. Both organizations were said to be anxious to avoid legal appeals on representation that could cause a delay in contract talks.

The new union will now seek one bargaining unit of all 15,000 employees at the university, in place of the present two units. The university, which says that it fears uniform salary increases if there is only one unit, wants three units — consisting of full-time faculty members, part-time faculty members and "support" employees.

A hearing on the unit determination has been scheduled for tomorrow by the State Public Emploee Relations Board. The board, which will determine the number of units, also has the power to certify the new union as the exclusive bargaining agent — as many units represented in the negotiations, probably after a faculty vote.

In the contract signed three years ago, City University salaries were raised to among the highest for faculty members anywhere — for example, the range for a full professor is currently $22,500 to $31,275. Community college professors were placed on the same salary scale as senior college professors and the perception of professors in various ranks was changed to raise the proportion in the higher categories.