



COUNCIL OF
THE YORK STUDENT
FEDERATION INC.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT

The aim of this report is to give York Students a review of the work and findings of the CYSF Academic Affairs Committee. In respect to our research and work with students we found that the major difficulty at this university is the lack of communication between the University's functional subsystems, i.e., Admissions, Student Programs, and Student Relations and with that of the University Student Body. We believe the problem of communication stems from two areas. Firstly, Study Body Governments at York are poorly structured and lack in any form of power which can serve to centralize student needs. In particular, the Central Student Government at York has failed for years in providing a strong intermediary link between the student body and the administration. The administration should foster a working relationship with the aim of improving student governments. The allocation of increased postering space for student governments and increased support to centralized campus media by the administration would be an excellent approach to start with.

The committee believes that the University has failed in providing students with a strong input in the functioning of student services. By encouraging input from students these services could well become more efficient and effective. An example of this is the newly-created Food Ombudsman at York. This newly formed body has effectively improved communication between the students and food services. We believe that the same format would be excellent for such services as Admissions, Student Relations and Student Programmes.

In general, this Committee found that York University offers an excellent range of services in all areas of academic concerns. These services, however, tend to lack a proper monitoring system which enables change to come about when needed. It is our recommendation that an office be set up in order to monitor all student services and not only recommend reform where necessary but implement reform where needed. If an office is set up, it should allow for strong student input in the functioning of its mandate.

It is our hope that the University administration will act on the recommendation and spirit of this letter.

MARK PEARLMAN
CHAIRMAN, CYSF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

YEAR END ACTIVITY REPORT

The CYSF Academic Affairs Committee involved itself in three major endeavours. These were:

1. INCREASED GUIDANCE SERVICE TO STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC PROBLEMS
 2. COURSE EVALUATIONS
 3. THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE AT YORK UNIVERSITY
1. In brief, this office serviced a total of 163 student concerns. Of this case load, 65% were resolved and 35% are still actively being investigated.
- The greatest number of cases dealt with course grievances to a total of 58%. 28% of case loads were grievances directed against fee payments.
- A strong proportion of cases were of a nature dealing with foreign student eligibility.
- In the majority of case loads students were unaware of appeal procedures and available administrative counselling. This office cannot stress enough the need for students to read carefully their calendars for appeal information and course direction. It is to the benefit of students to understand appeal information and individual rights prior to proceeding with an appeal and as general knowledge when enrolling at York University.
2. This department strongly favours coordination of campus-wide course evaluations. This year the math department conducted course evaluations and these results have been printed in this paper.
3. Since September of '82 this office has researched, and through referendum proposes, the creation of an independent Ombudsman Office.
- In early October a proposal for the creation of this office was sent to a number of Faculty and Student governments with the intention of stimulating input. In November of '82 a campus-wide survey was conducted in order to have an indication of what were academic-related problems at York University. The results of this survey are printed in this report.
- On April 5, 6, and 7, students will be asked through referendum to financially support the creation of an independent Ombudsman Office.

ALL YORK STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO VOTE IN THIS REFERENDUM

If the referendum succeeds, a committee composing of a student representative from each student government will be responsible for implementing the function for the office.

**HAVE AN ACADEMIC
PROBLEM?**

**CONTACT US—
WE'RE HERE TO HELP**
667-2515 Rm. 105 Central Square

RESULTS OF SURVEY

Due to space limitation we are unable to give a complete breakdown of survey results. A total 1,450 students were surveyed. The sample was representative of the University population and was derived from population statistics from the University Senate Office.

In response to the question: Have you had problems in dealing with York's bureaucracy in the following areas?

Admissions

A total of 64% of respondents indicated having problems with admissions. Students indicated that this department was extremely slow in processing paper work and the lack of proper guidance was another strong complaint. These results clearly indicate a need for reform in the admission department. In general we advise students to constantly keep in contact when dealing with this department.

Courses

A total of 48% of respondents indicated having problems with courses. The greatest number of complaints was with the 'red tape' involved in transferring from one course to another or withdrawing from courses. Our advice to students is to contact us if you have problems in this area, but please first consult your calendar for important dates.

Student Relations Office

22% of respondents indicated a lack of knowledge of this Office. Common responses solicited were: "Never knew it existed." We would strongly recommend students become aware of this Office. Mr. John Becker, Assistant Vice-President of Student Relations, is an excellent source of information for all related university matter. The office is located in Rm. 102 Ross, 667-2226.

Fees Office

15% of respondents indicated having problems with parking fines. 21% indicated problems with refunds and concerns over late fee charges.

Course Appeals

10% of respondents complained of extensive red tape when appealing courses. A number of students indicated problems when dealing with the secretary of the appeal committee for the Faculty of Arts. We recommend that you contact us and let us help guide you through appeal difficulties.

In response to the Question: Who would you see regarding academic problems?

The complete breakdown was as follows:

- 52% Professors
- 15% College advisors
- 12% Student Programs
- 23% Other

In response to the Question: Who would you see regarding appeal procedures?

The complete breakdown was as follows:

- 41% Student Programs
- 23% Student advisor
- 15% Prof or Course Director
- 14% Unknown
- 9% Other

In response to the Question: Who would you see regarding appeal against disciplinary action?

The complete breakdown was as follows:

- 56% Don't know
- 21% Student Programs
- 23% Other

In general contact us for counselling for these problems. We can help!

In response to Ombudsperson Questions:

- 1st Question: 42% supported the creation of an independent Ombudsman.
- 2nd Question: 59% supported financing the office to the tune of \$6 per student.

The Academic Affairs Committee wishes to express their sincere thanks to Allen Schacht. Mr. Schacht has been extremely committed to furthering the work of this committee.

THE AIM OF THIS SURVEY IS TO DETERMINE THE NEED FOR AN OMBUDSMAN OFFICE AT YORK UNIVERSITY. AN OMBUDSMAN WOULD SERVE TO PROTECT INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS AGAINST MALADMINISTRATION IN A COMPLEX BUREAUCRACY SUCH AS AT YORK. THE OMBUDSMAN WOULD ACT AS AN INFORMATION OFFICER, AND AS A PERSON WHO WOULD REPRESENT YOUR GRIEVANCES TO THE YORK ADMINISTRATION. THIS SURVEY IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND IS TOTALLY FUNDED BY THE CENTRAL STUDENT GOVERNMENT.

IN THIS SECTION PLEASE PLACE AN X IN THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER.

1. Are you between the ages of

- 18 - 21 years _____
- 22 - 25 years _____
- 26 - 30 years _____
- 31 - older _____

Are you Male _____ or Female _____

Are you a _____
full time student _____
part time student _____
graduate student _____

What year of study are you in?

- 1st year _____
- 2nd year _____
- 3rd year _____
- 4th year _____
- 5th year _____

Please give written responses to the following questions.

Are you a resident student or commuter student? _____

What college or association do you belong to? _____

Are you a Canadian citizen? _____

What is your religious belief? _____

Have you had problems in dealing with York's bureaucracy in the following areas? If yes to what extent?

Admissions _____

Courses _____

Student Relations Office _____

Fees Office _____

College Masters _____

Residence _____

Course Appeals _____

Degree requirements _____

Disciplinary areas _____

Other areas _____

Are you totally aware of all appeal procedures for courses and admission to degree programs? _____

Who would you see regarding academic problems? _____

Who would you see regarding appeal procedures? _____

Who would you see regarding appeal against disciplinary actions? _____

Do you feel it hard to find your way around the University bureaucracy if you had a problem to contend with? _____

Do you feel that the University bureaucracy is effective in that it is capable of resolving all problems fairly with due process? _____

Do you feel that the creation of an independent Ombudsman office at York would make it easier on you to deal with a University related problem? _____

Do you feel that the University bureaucracy is more accountable to the government than to the students? _____

Would you support the creation of an Ombudsman office at York? _____

Who do you think should fund such an office? _____

Would you be willing to donate 6 dollars of your student fees towards the creation of the Ombudsman office at York? _____

What areas of the bureaucracy at York are in need of improvement? _____

Would you support a referendum at York asking for the creation of an Ombudsman office? _____

Can you say that you have not had any problems with dealing with the bureaucracy at York? _____