

Rape rumours dispelled

By SUZANNE LYONS

Last Thursday, Mike O'Neil, Director of Parking and Security, officially dispelled any rumours suggesting that a number of sexual assaults have occurred recently on the University campus.

In response to growing concern, Security Control issued a public bulletin advising students to disregard circulating rumours. "We are now aware of one sexual assault allegation," O'Neil stated. "But the incident was not reported to Security Control at any time." The assault is alleged to have occurred on January 8th, 1988 outside of Atkinson College. Further information will become available as Metro Police and Security Control complete a full investigation.

Pending the inquiry, O'Neil urges all people to use caution when walk-

ing from University buildings to parking lots or bus stops in the evenings. York Security staffs a squad of six officers and approximately fourteen students on patrol each night. However, O'Neil continued to stress the importance of using preventive measures to ensure personal safety at all times. "Avoid taking short cuts, use the buddy system if at all possible, or make use of the free Escort Service which operates between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.," O'Neil suggested.

In the event of any difficulty, simply look for one of approximately thirty-five blue emergency telephones located in all residences, parking lots, Tait MacKenzie and the Ice Arena. A person need only lift the receiver, and a Security van will be dispatched to that location immediately.

New Coalition calls for free trade vote

By HOWARD KAMAN

York University has recently formed a coalition against free trade. The group, consisting of faculty, graduate and under-graduate students, held its first meeting last week to decide the direction the coalition should take.

The basis for the group, says member John Cleveland, is the fact that "the federal government did not have a mandate to implement a free trade agreement. Therefore, before any agreement could have any legitimacy, it must be approved by a direct vote of the Canadian electorate." As well, he stated that this pact, regardless of one's opinion on free trade, is a bad one anyway, and must be rejected. Said one member, "This is not an attempt to raise a debate on free trade; this is *against* free trade."

The free trade argument is by no means new to York, as the activities of several groups have shown, namely the Faculty for Environmental Studies and the Council of Canadians (COC), a group of 8,000 people nationwide, with interests in protecting Canadian sovereignty. Both groups now have acknowledged representatives in York's coalition.

The goals of the coalition are simple; raise awareness of the free trade deal, and build up to a vote which, they feel, must occur before the deal goes into effect. The voting processes discussed may be twofold: via York's many organizations, as well as a possible referendum involving all of

York, staff and students. Says Cleveland, "Our activities will focus on going out and contacting all of the groups on campus, arranging to talk to their executives and identifying contacts who would be willing to raise the issue (of free trade) in their next meeting."

He went on to say that the goal would be to have each organization conduct its own vote on free trade, and compile a list of those groups opposed. He refers to this system as an "outreach method," and believes that it would be far "more impressive" than a straight referendum alone.

In combination with a general vote, though, it would be solid representation of York's opinion on the issue. "Even if we lose . . . It's bigger than York campus, if it has a public impact in raising the issue of a need for a debate, and the need for a vote. The decisions are made not at York University, they're made in the country as a whole. I think we'll have that impact regardless."

"The worst enemy is apathy, our inability to get people to take a stand and get involved. My reading of the situation right now is that people are hiding under a rock, for various reasons; the government has successfully maneuvered . . . bypassed parliament, bypassed parliamentary hearings, signed an agreement, and then presented it as a fait accompli. So, this proposal is aimed at going out to the people."

ANALYSIS

Why government surveys are wrong

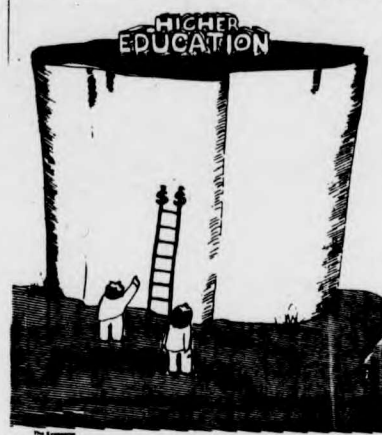
By LIDIA CABRAL
and JAMES FLAGAL

The introduction of the new 'fast-tracking' system which will allow Ontario students to enter university after only four years of high school has raised a lot of concern in the academic community. Instead of the old Grade 13 senior matriculation diploma which students required to gain university admissions, the new system, to be introduced next year, will enable students to complete their secondary education by the end of Grade 12. And while the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) contends that there will be a minimal impact on enrollment in post secondary institutions as a result of the new system, a student lobby group in a recent report that the government's projections are completely inaccurate.

A joint committee of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and MCU is currently conducting a study to determine how much post secondary enrollment will increase with the adoption of the four-year high school system. According to the study, 11.5% of those Grade 12 students surveyed said they plan to complete their diploma by the end of this academic year. 7.9% of those Grade 11 students surveyed said they would be taking the fast-tracking system as well. Allison Hargarty, an MCU Relations Branch Officer, says that from the studies conducted thus far, the government is expecting "an increase in demand (in the level of applications to universities) to be somewhere in the area of 600 bodies which is about a 1.8% increase." The MCU/COU report also projects that there will be an increase of 5.9-17.6% for undergraduate enrollment between 1990-1992.

An Ontario Federation of Students' (OFS) report entitled, "The Impact of OS:IS Implementation on Post Secondary Education in Ontario" says that "the government's study fails to take into consideration a number of significant factors which may have a significant impact on the demand for PSE." (OS:IS refers to Ontario schools—both Intermediate and Senior.) First, the report criticizes the MCU/COU study for ignoring various factors which secondary students consider in making their decision on how long they plan to spend in high school. "It is important to remember," the OFS

report says, "that the majority of 'realistic university-bound' students are arriving at the end of Grade 11 with 24 credits out of 30 achieved, and could therefore decide to complete high school in four years with no prior notice to the education system. It is precisely this volatility which makes accurate projections so difficult." In short, OFS believes that by basing their figures on surveys conducted this year, the government projections could be completely



inaccurate if a number of students suddenly decide to change their mind next year, and fast-track through the system.

And in the past government projections have been anything but reliable. While the Ministry projected a 4.1% drop in Grade 13 graduate enrollment into university between 1985-87, in reality there was a 7% increase during that period. The report contends that one of the major flaws behind the latest MCU/COU projections is the belief that "There will be a leveling off or decline in demand for PSE, yet that leveling off has not occurred." According to the report, the number of high school students attending university has increased substantially over the past 15 years from just above 10% to over 16%. And universities have not been able to absorb this increase in demand. While there has been an increase in applications of 38.2% between 1972-1985, admissions to first year have only gone up 22.8%.

To cope with this increase in demand for a university education, many institutions have been forced to significantly raise their standards for admissions. And while this is taking place, the provincial government still has a written policy of ensuring all high school students with a 60%

average or over an opportunity to attend a post secondary institution. This, of course, is far from reality. For example, this year York received 5,920 high school applicants who possessed an average between 60-70%, yet only 520 students with such academic standings managed to obtain an acceptance. University of Toronto now refuses to accept any high school graduate with an average below 70% into Arts, and Western and Queen's are quickly following suit.

But Hargarty insists that additional funds will be allocated as part of the government's university operation grant in order to ensure that institutions can deal with the increase in demand for admissions. An exact amount which each institution will receive will not be budgeted until MCU/COU report is complete, says Hargarty, but the increased funding will be separate from the \$27 million accessibility envelope announced by the government this past November.

However, the operations grant may be the last place where York wants the accessibility funds to be allocated. Historically, the formula used to distribute these funds, has discriminated against those institutions which have increased the size of their study body. York's enrollment has gone up from 14,000 to 40,000 in the past decade, causing our institution to be funded at 80% of the university per student average. Last year, York managed to increase its funding share to 90% while institutions like Western still receive over 120% of the system average.

The major flaw of the MCU/COU report, in a nutshell, is that it fails to consider some of the trends which have been taking place in university enrollment. Instead, the government is almost ignorantly choosing to assess the impact of the fast-tracking system in a vacuum. And so their projections for what institutions will need to cope with the introduction of the new system will most likely be way off, not because their survey predictions were necessarily wrong, but because the government again fails to take a comprehensive approach to post secondary funding. When the Ministry learns that every problem feeds off other problems in the system, then maybe we can start to expect reliable and effective policy coming from the offices of MCU.

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