

election Interviews

Here's the questions we asked the candidates and the answers they wrote. Aside from checking the spelling and keeping the answers down to 150 words, we haven't changed a thing.

YFS President



GEORGE SANGHERA

What are your top five policy goals, in order of priority?

To choose five policy goals, and place them into order of priority would seem to be a fairly difficult decision. When you are a candidate for such a position your main priority are the students.

First for me would be to work against any kind of Sexual Discrimination, Racism, Homophobia and discrimination of class and Physical ability. The second priority would be to work towards a freeze on parking, housing and tuition costs (including ancillary fees). Thirdly would be the restructuring of the student security system, with a view to restoring the old "Call-in" system for students, and to improve the lighting on the University pathways. Fourth would be the restructuring and lowering of the YFS salary base for executives in this period of recession. Finally I would look towards working with the colleges on a more firmer level.

Aside from elected officials and paid staff, very few students have any role in student government at York. List some concrete ways you plan to increase student involvement in the YFS.

When I was V.P. Programs for YFS/FEY back in 1990-91, we ran a set of volunteer forms that students would fill out to give us an idea of what they would like to help with, and what they were interested in. This year saw the disappearance of these forms, which was very ridiculous, in the fact that students want to get involved, but with such a closed YFS it is almost impossible. Some of the ideas I have to amend this are to donate an entire page in the handbook which is a volunteer form, this automatically gives the students a chance to participate in YFS, and also by printing a volunteer form in the campus newspapers. We would have to make sure that these students are contacted on a regular basis, giving them a feel of belonging. It is very important that the students realize we are approachable.

Name four examples on the York campus of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, class or physical ability. Tell us how you plan to combat these.

One problem of discrimination with regards to the differently abled, was the problem in the Fine Arts building where a Student had to push a loading dock door down manually because there was no other elevator to use. This problem had just been

brushed of by the University.

A Race problem, was, a swastika had been spray painted on the side of the wall at the Kosher deli in complex one, it had taken almost months of pestering to have it cleaned by the University.

A gender problem, regarding student security, was, where the escort van had been called to pick up a group of five women, yet when the escort van arrived the two male student security picked up four of their male friends, and left the four women outside Vari Hall.

A student who had been staying in residence with a friend, had been harassed because his previous record in residence wasn't outstanding, yet the other students in residence vouched, that he had not done anything wrong all year, and was being discriminated against. [word limit exceeded].

Name three areas where the York administration has overstepped its bounds, and explain how you plan to resist.

- i) Parking costs and Housing conditions.
- ii) Cutting of the Winter/Summer schedule.
- iii) Illegal use of ancillary fees.

The administration is playing the students for stupid. It doesn't realize how strong we actually are. I plan to fight the administration all the way on any decisions they make regarding students, and student money. We have to work together, and not let them rest for a single day. We must continue to argue and fight for student rights. Every student representative on the committees must be outspoken, and if required, we shall send more students down to the meetings, until they realize the true feelings and concerns of the students.

Student government at York is often stifled because of conflicts between the central government and the college governments. What would you do to change the environment from one of conflict to one of cooperation?

The Colleges will see a wind of change this year if I am elected. The YFS will shed any past disguise it has had. Simply put YFS needs the colleges if anything is to be done. YFS has to find out what the colleges want from them and work towards that goal. In the long run it will benefit the whole York community if all governments are united in the same battle. There should be no reason for conflicts between YFS and the colleges, YFS must help the colleges and vice-versa. We all have the same interests at hand. "Divided we fall, United we stand".



NIKKI GERSHAIN

What are your top five policy goals, in order of priority?

- (1) The quality of our education

is being compromised through academic cuts, and ancillary and other "back-door" tuition fees are jeopardizing access to York. I will fight underfunding and tuition fee increases, and an administration that makes up for the funding crisis on our backs.

(2) York students have little or no say on our most important decision-making bodies. I will lobby to increase student representation on BOG and the university's budget committee. Students must have a say in how our money is spent.

(3) Every year, residence students pay more and receive less. I will fight for an appendix to the province's Landlord and Tenant Act that will include university residences.

(4) Because clubs and services play a critical role in the student movement, four extra seats on YFS council must be made available to them.

(5) I will continue the search for a less expensive health plan that will still include 100% prescription drug coverage, including oral contraceptives.

Aside from elected officials and paid staff, very few students have any role in student government at York. List some concrete ways you plan to increase student involvement in the YFS.

It's crucial that YFS reach out to students from the moment they are first on campus. Next year, therefore, I will set up committees during Registration Fair. We will form working groups on a number of issues that concern students — underfunding, women's issues and parking, for example. This will set a solid groundwork for the year, allowing students to network and mobilize at the outset.

We've heard a lot recently about restructuring YFS, and some of the concerns have been legitimate. But restructuring for its own sake is a waste of our time and energy. Structural change should be implemented only toward a certain end — the empowerment of students. The more that students are informed and aware, the more interested and active they will be.

These working committees present just one way in which the student movement at York can be rejuvenated.

Name four examples on the York campus of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, class or physical ability. Tell us how you plan to combat these.

An eurocentric and non-representative curriculum, buildings to which some students do not have access, sexual harassment and assault in the classroom, in residence and in parking lots, and an explicit racial bias in the system are general examples of the type of discrimination York students face daily.

Moreover, we are in the midst of a funding crisis that will even further limit the access of some to post-secondary education.

Clearly, the president of YFS must continue to make these issues a priority. Racism, sexism and homophobia are more than just buzzwords to be used for political opportunism during elections. Overt and systemic discrimination against people with disabilities, lesbians, gays, people of colour, and women is a reality that can only be addressed by challenging the structures of the system. YFS has reached a level of sophistication wherein, with other students, we have the tools to begin working toward this

type of meaningful change.

Name three areas where the York administration has overstepped its bounds, and explain how you plan to resist.

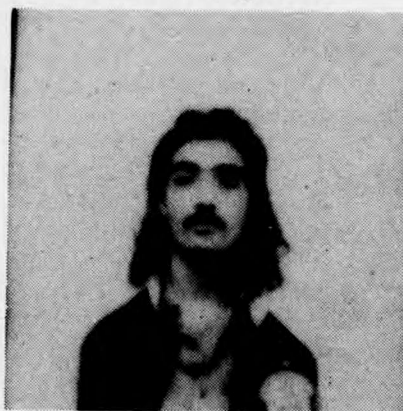
Perhaps VP Finance Bill Farr epitomized this phenomenon when he unilaterally raised parking fees by 100% over only two years. Or maybe it was best evidenced when Acting-Dean Tom Meininger closed the Ainger — the most profitable (and the coolest) business on this campus and the only student-owned and operated restaurant. However, I think that President Harry Arthurs won the coveted "who-can-abuse-their-power-the-most-prize", when he included an appendix in Presidential Regulation Number Two that gives the university the power to arbitrarily kick students off of campus.

History has proven that the administration exercises its power to the detriment of students. I will address this by continuing to present an informed and intelligent analysis, and refusing to allow student concerns to be compromised by the administrative whims of the York bureaucracy.

Student government at York is often stifled because of conflicts between the central government and the college governments. What would you do to change the environment from one of conflict to one of cooperation?

Actually, I think that a better way to explain the phenomenon you describe is to appreciate the fact that there are a number of issues and areas of concern for which colleges are better equipped to deal with than YFS. Similarly, clubs, services and faculty governments are also more effectively able to serve their local constituents than is YFS.

Having said that, I will continue to respect the autonomy of the college governments, and the faculty-based governments, and also continue to work with them around our mutual interests — how underfunding affects their constituents, the shuttle service's disregard for residence students, and the safety and quality of residence life in general.



JOE MARCELLINO

What are your top five policy goals, in order of priority?

My top five policy goals are as follows:

(1) Ensuring that student representatives are accountable and accessible to students by increasing student awareness.

(2) Work towards common student interests and not the interests of a select few. This includes cooperating with all clubs and services, and strengthening the Clubs' Coalition.

(3) Finding practical and rea-

sonable alternatives to the rising fees. Working with various wide based coalitions to stop the funding cuts to post-secondary education.

(4) Raising awareness on the issues of racism, sexism, and homophobia.

(5) And last but not least, making York a safe and fun place where students not only achieve their academic goals, but enjoy themselves at the same time.

These policy goals are supposedly in order of priority, but I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that they are all number one on my list. I chose to put them in the order that I did, since only through making representatives accountable and accessible; and cooperating with a wide range of clubs, interests, and students can any of our goals as students be reached.

Aside from elected officials and paid staff, very few students have any role in student government at York. List some concrete ways you plan to increase student involvement in the YFS.

Very few students have any role in student government at York, because very few students are aware that York has a student government. I plan to increase student government in the YFS by first introducing students to the YFS (York Federation of Students). I believe students will appreciate a president who walks among them, who talks to them, but more importantly a president who listens to them. This appreciation will cause students to talk about the YFS, and this talk will turn into student action in conjunction with the YFS. More students need to be introduced to the various clubs and services on campus. This again can be done by talking to people, and letting them know about the various clubs and services that may interest them. If elected I will not only be a student president, but a president for the students.

Name four examples on the York campus of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, class or physical ability. Tell us how you plan to combat these.

Discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, and physical ability is of serious concern to myself, and to the member of the York community. As far as concrete examples of discrimination are concerned we find that many courses are taught with a European bias, there is very little in terms of cultural diversity in many of the courses of York. There is also discrimination that takes the form of differential tuition for Visa students. With the recent announcement to cut the Winter/Summer program, many students just coming out of high school who need more than two months of full-time work in order to pay their fees, will be denied the opportunity to begin post-secondary education in January. This denial of opportunity is discrimination.

I will work with the various groups involved as well as those concerned to battle any form of discrimination on campus. This has to be done by raising awareness of these issues.

Name three areas where the York administration has overstepped its bounds, and explain how you plan to resist.

The York administration has overstepped its bounds with the cutting of the winter/summer program. It has overstepped its bounds in terms of allowing food complexes to be built in York Lanes, without con-