

CYSF

COUNCIL OF
THE YORK STUDENT
FEDERATION INC.

105 CENTRAL SQ.
667-2515

The OFS debate

A perspective on the situation

By R. Ali, President—CYSF

There are a number of reasons why I do not favour CYSF membership in OFS and one of these is our constant dissatisfaction with the organization. I would like to make a number of points in regard to our status in OFS, the basis of service in OFS and a possible solution for Council.

First, I would like to turn your attention to the situation that York finds itself in. York is the worst funded University in the Province and second from the bottom in the Province. This is due to the way the funding formula is set up and consequently it is in our best interest to have the formula amended.

Thus it is with interest I note in the OFS response to the Bovey Commission Report the following:

"There should be no revision of the funding formula along the lines proposed in recommendation 25" of the Bovey Commis-

sion Report which suggests that there should just be an injection of money on another basis. One, however, notes that in the rest of the OFS response there is no mention of changes to the funding formula only general recommendations that more money should be injected into the system.

There is no doubt that OFS has lobbied the government for more money but no matter how much money there is in the system York will still be at the bottom of the list in terms of money. York's concern in this area is specifically what OFS has failed to act on. It is time that we as York students begin to act ourselves on this issue. It is time we stop denigrating ourselves and realize that if we don't act ourselves no one else will help us.

Second, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities space formula shows that York has approximately 75.4% of its space

needs while the system has approximately 90.2% of its space needs with nine other campuses has more than the average. McMaster shows 100% of its needs being met with Queen's having 108.3% of its space needs being met.

OFS has without doubt asked the Government for more money on capital expenditures but where does York fit into the picture? We've suffered the shortages for years but I've yet to see OFS documentation on space priorities for Universities lacking in facilities.

This third point can be perceived as a selfish one but one to be noted if you consider York's plight. That is, OFS supports a policy of bilingualism at all Ontario Universities. Unfortunately, this is not a well thought out policy vis-a-vis York. Glendon is the only bilingual institution in South Western Ontario and as such it receives funding for being so. If

the government were to support bilingualism at all Ontario Universities then special monies have to be found which should go into the Universities general funds rather than for a special function. Further, if the government were to follow this policy without injecting new monies then it is likely it would take Glendon's special monies and distribute them across the Province in the name of bilingualism. We would then be left without a truly bilingual institution and York with even less monies.

I think that demonstrates how much OFS serves York especially in the area of the funding formula and the capital grants. But let us look at another aspect of this case.

York University is the third largest University in Canada yet the Council of the York Student Federation has the smallest budget in the Province. Ryerson has a budget of 1.25 million while U.W.O. has a budget of 2.6 million, Carleton - 1.1 million and U of T 480,000 (not including revenue of other operations). CYSF has a budget of 250,000 which is among the lowest in Ontario. Of that amount, approximately 30,000 goes to OFS bringing our budget down where it impedes our own capacity to do the things we want to do and should be doing. The claim to the need to have a referendum is a result of OFS making the claim that it is not CYSF money but rather money collected from York students for OFS. Thus the claim is/ is that the Administration is supposed to collect \$3/student on behalf of OFS to be administered by CYSF to OFS. Unfortunately, I think someone forgot to inform the Administration of the fact, for they noted to me that no such agreement concerning fees exists.

One should note that an OFS

Fieldworker costs approximately \$24,000 and benefits. The York Fieldworker is not only supposed to serve both York and Ryerson but also the Northern Ontario regions. Not only do I fail to see the logic in that but I must also note that the Fieldworker is only on the York Campus an average of three days a month.

Thus our membership in OFS is an encumbrance to the operation to this Council if nothing more because that our membership is paid directly. This Council can no longer encumber itself with the luxury of such fees. Further, if Council should approve this motion, I will then move that OFS run a referendum for membership of York University with each student paying \$3.00 per student and CYSF will help OFS establish a contract with the Administration.

But I must emphasize that in the interest of Council and of this University we can no longer afford direct membership in OFS. The gain will not be ill-spent for we will be gaining much needed expertise and help in the office in the form of a Researcher, part-time assistant, restructure External Affairs and begin to do a number of other things such as the establishment of bursaries. But best of all we must and shall be able to speak for ourselves.

A note to all this is that Council's bill will go up if Calumet, Norman Bethune and Osgoode join CYSF and those organizations may not wish to join an organization so encumbered. Thus I ask you to join with me to unite this Council and to establish the mandate of this Council once and for all by affirming that this Council is not a member of OFS and later by asking the students in an independent fashion whether or not they wish to belong to such an organization.

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Put it in writing

Are you interested in having some input into the development of campus facilities?

Written submissions are being solicited from the student body and will be welcomed at the CYSF office, 105 Central Square.

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York Development Corporation