

# EDITORIAL

## The harsh realities of university neglect

Unbearably long lines? Overcrowded classrooms? Chronic shortages of student housing? Disgruntled faculty and support staff? Excal extends a warm welcome to all first-year students and would like to prepare you for some of the harsh realities of the Ontario university system.

Every returning student can attest to the gravity of these problems. In contrast, the general public downplays the plight of Ontario's university system. Statistics testify that it is no time for complacency.

Universities do not fare well in the grand scheme of things during provincial budget seasons. While universities and colleges have seen their expenditures per student reduced by about 15 percent since 1977-78, cost per patient day in hospitals and per student in elementary and secondary schools have increased by about 15 percent. Universities have dropped to an all-time low on the government agenda. If Ontario universities were currently receiving the same share of government spending as they did in 1977-78, a further \$300 million per year in university operating grants would be required.

In response to the problem, the past Liberal government offered a combination of half measures and rhetoric. According to the Liberals, our university system has "arrived at the corner" through the allocation of an increased \$86.95 million. Unfortunately, the needs of a world class institution greatly exceed the token nature of the Liberal contribution. The Ontario Confederation of University and Faculty Associations (OCUFA) estimates that our system requires an allocation of \$500 million over the next three to five years in order to be competitive on a worldwide scale.

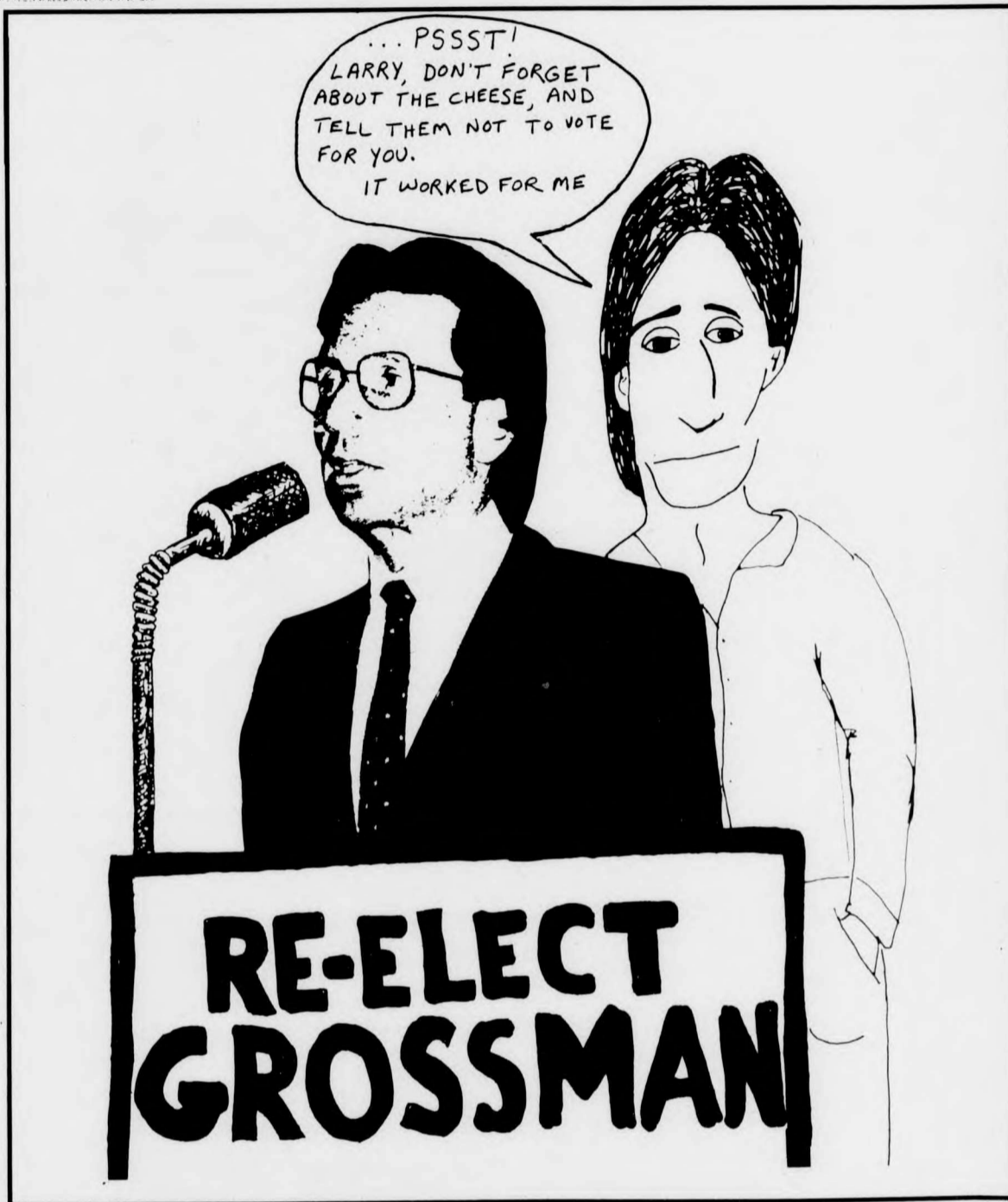
In addition, merely to maintain the existing physical plant in Ontario's universities, the schools need in the neighbourhood of \$50 million annually. OCUFA contends that to respond effectively to space shortages, the system demands \$54.8 million annually for the construction of additional facilities.

In the face of such an overwhelming problem, one would expect university funding to be at the forefront of the public agenda in the election campaign. Unfortunately this is not the case. Instead of an honest examination of the costs, sacrifices and requirements necessary to rectify the situation, we have been subject to the customary blend of political rhetoric, and a sheer neglect of the complex alternatives we must examine. Politicians persist in offering patchwork solutions to the serious problems at hand.

A perfect example is the Liberal promise to establish 5,000 student residence spaces across the province. At York this year, the first year undergraduate waiting list for residence spots alone surpassed 500. First, this doesn't even take into consideration the upper-year students searching for housing on campus. Second, these spots will have to be spread out over the 16 post-secondary institutions across the province. In essence, the proposal is a half measure at best. Realistic solutions will only come when governments finally make universities a top priority on their budgetary agendas.

Perhaps part of the blame also rests with the students. The Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) estimates that students comprise 200,000 votes in the present election. However without galvanizing themselves into an effective lobby voice, the students have failed to thrust their concerns onto the public agenda.

As Bob Rae, leader of the NDP, noted at last year's Post-Secondary Education Underfunding Rally: "Stop being so damn polite about what's going on in your institutions."



## LETTERS

We will publish, space permitting, letters under 250 words. They must be typed, triple-spaced, accompanied by writer's name and phone number. We may edit for length. Libellous material will be rejected. Deliver to 111 Central Square during business hours.

### Calumet defends Shibou

Dear Ms. Shibou,

The recent actions of the elections tribunal which stripped you of your victory in the presidential campaign is, in the opinion of the members of our college, inexcusable and morally unjustifiable. I couldn't help but feel a sense of disgust when I heard of the decision of the tribunal and this was augmented by the refusal of both Gerard Blink and Bryson Stokes to make any comment on the decision at the council meeting this past Tuesday. Blink's silence on the issue and his apathy concerning the legal costs which will be incurred, shows the apparent disregard in which CYSF holds the wishes and desires of its constituents.

I discussed this matter with the Provost when I met with him on Tuesday. While he never misses an opportunity to espouse the merits of Calumet joining CYSF, I told him that this was just one more example of the attitudes and actions which will continue to foster our desire to have no part of the CYSF.

As they attempt to perpetuate the irresponsibility with which they have operated in the past, they have effectively proven that they are not worthy of our membership. We have done well without membership in the CYSF, and we urge you and you col-

lege to re-evaluate your position with respect to CYSF.

Please feel assured that Calumet stands behind you and shares in the feeling of disgust regarding the recent actions of the elections tribunal.

Sincerely,

Brian Casey,  
External Affairs Officer,  
Calumet College

cc. Provost's Office  
Excalibur  
Brenda Hanning

### 'Ludicrous' Drew power-hungry

Editor:  
I find it ludicrous that CYSF President Drew McCreadie would choose to represent the Progressive Conservatives in the upcoming provincial election. What government does McCreadie think is responsible for driving the university system into the ground in this province for the past four decades? That McCreadie would align himself with such destructive reactionaries calls into question his ability to speak for the students of this university.

Furthermore, how dedicated can McCreadie be to his York constituents if he is willing to abandon them should he win the upcoming election (however doubtful a victory may be)? McCreadie seems only to want to be in *power*, with little thought

given to ideology, or to the interests of those he is responsible to.

—Stuart Ross

### Exotic Ghana needs pen-pals

Dear Sir/Madam,

Good Morning. We are Ghanaian students and we want to correspondence in Canada. We read your advertisement in Foreign Library, and we decided to write you. Since 5th March, 1983, we have been searching pen friends in Canada, but all in vain.

Sir/Madam, we beg your pardon kindly. Try as much as possible to publicize our names and addresses in *Excalibur* Newspaper for us to get pen friends and to communicate with them. Thank-you and we hope that your humble application will be favourably considered.

Here are our particulars:

- Miss Queen Aghata  
PO Box 1057  
Cape Coast, Republic of Ghana  
West Africa  
Age: 24 years  
Hobbies: General
- Miss Natasha Cosmos  
Age: 23 years  
Hobbies: Travel, Business, Music
- Miss Silvia Shirley  
PO Box 1057  
Age: 22 years  
Hobbies: Sports, sailing, friends and romance.

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