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Students occupy Mac's office

Barb Mainguy

A three day occupation of President H. Ian Macdonald's office ended early this morning after the York Senate met the student occupiers' demand that classes be cancelled on March 27, enabling them to participate in the Queen's Park rally in protest of tuition fee increases. On receiving written confirmation of this decision, the students left the office, content that their most important demand had been met.

When the students initially began their occupation, they presented Macdonald with demands that he roll back the 13 percent tuition increase; that he apply serious pressure on the Ontario Government to increase funding for Universities; and that the promised accessibility study be completed before any increase come into effect. They also requested a meeting with Macdonald, and a guarantee that there would be no reprisals, academic or otherwise, against students who participated in the sit-in.

For most of the three day occupation, Macdonald steadfastly refused to meet directly with representatives from the occupation group, maintaining that they represented only their own interests, and could not be considered spokesmen for the student body. Because of this, negotiations were slow to get under way, until CYSF President Keith Smockum agreed to act as mediator.

When negotiations finally did take place, the University administration stated that they had already formulated policy on most of the issues, and that this would remain unchanged. Two small victories were counted when the students were promised a voice on the President's Policy Committee, and when they received their guarantee of no reprisals. The cancellation of classes was considered a major victory, because it showed the universities public support of the students at the rally.

The occupation received a mixed reaction from the York community. A spokesman for the group, Chris Savvas, said they had received support for their aims and objectives from CYSF, the GAA, and some clubs on campus including the Hellenic Association, the Third World Students Union, and the York N.D.P. Various individual faculty members voiced support for the students, and the Faculty Association said they shared the concern over rising tuition prices, although they did not officially support the action. About one hundred students visited the president's office during the occupation, and at least a hundred more expressed their support through petitions. However, elsewhere on campus the idea was received less favourably. Some students questioned the move, calling it "ridiculous" or "infantile", or at best unoriginal and theatrical.

After hearing the Senate decision, the students met for the last time to decide whether to end the occupation. Much of the debate revolved around whether they had achieved as much as they had set out to accomplish, or indeed enough to warrant their leaving. "I get the impression I've spent the last three days here for nothing," stated one student. Another described the situation as laughable. When it appeared that eight students would remain for yet another night, spokesman David St. Jean pleaded with the splinter group to leave with the rest. "You can only cause harm," he stated, his voice breaking. "Please don't stay. I plead with you to leave this office."

The students finally reached a unanimous decision to leave.



Prior to the takeover, 25 students meet with Mac on Monday afternoon.

Rape decision to be announced soon

Neil Wiberg

University administrators will soon announce a decision on an alleged rape of a York student by an instructor. Vice-President of Employee and Student Relations Bill Farr is in the process of sending out letters to the involved parties before making public the University's intended course of action.

Farr recently completed an investigation into the complaint and presented his findings to President Macdonald. The decision was reviewed by

Macdonald and passed back to Farr for ultimate resolution.

Professor Ann Shteir, Adviser to the President on the Status of Women at York, met with Farr yesterday. Shteir told *Excalibur* that, "Mr. Farr has been very cautious and careful in unfamiliar territory. His work was very diligent."

The complaint was lodged as a result of a November 16 incident which occurred in a teacher's apartment.

The possibility of a hard-line action against the teacher has

been strengthened by a recent landmark arbitration decision. An arbitration panel upheld the firing of Professor Rudi Strickler by the University of Ottawa. The ecology professor was fired for a series of three alleged sexual assaults on 20-year old biology student Marie Eve Coupal.

The Association of Professors at the University of Ottawa protested the dismissal before the arbitration tribunal. The union attempted to humiliate Coupal with tough cross-examination relating to her ability to consume alcohol, and her political views. They depicted Coupal as an anarchist who would do anything to attack an authority figure, such as a professor. Strickler did not testify before the tribunal.

Following several days of testimony, the panel upheld Strickler's firing.

Shteir described the result as an "exciting decision" and believes that it will act as a "big deterrent."

This case is considered to be the first one in which an arbitration panel supported the dismissal of a professor for sexual harassment in Ontario. Following the decision, Dean Arthur Kruger of the University of Toronto sent a memo to department heads warning professors to keep their "hands off" students.

However, the Association of Professors at the University of Ottawa were enraged. Association president Saul Ross stated in a press release, "If we thought this decision has been reached in fair and correct way, we should accept it. But it seems to us to have been reached in a grossly prejudiced way."

Profs nix nude pics

Jonathan Mann

Do naked bodies make you queasy?

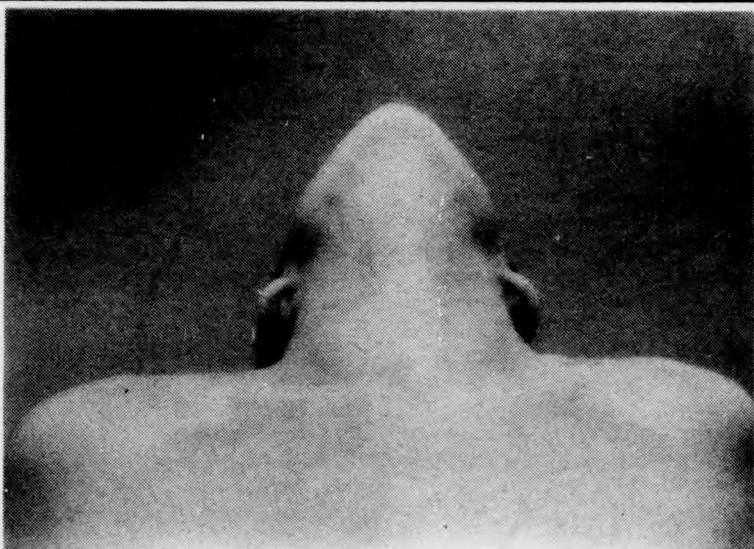
If so, you've probably got something in common with the 10 or so Administrative Studies faculty members whose complaints led to the removal of a recent exhibit of photographs from their lunch room.

The 17 photographs by photography instructor and visual arts graduate student Gregory Dru, are studies of male and female nudes. They were hanging in a fourth-floor room in the Ad Studies building for four days before Dru was asked to remove several of them by Wallace Crowston, the Dean of Administrative Studies. The Dean took the action after receiving several complaints from individuals offended by

frontal nudity in a few of the photographs.

Dru refused to remove just those photographs, and instead took down the entire exhibition. Speaking with *Excalibur* earlier this week, he explained that he was annoyed by the Dean's request. "I didn't feel that my images were pornographic in any sense, just straight photographic studies."

Professor Douglas Buck, who helped arrange the exhibit, agrees. "I felt that his (Dru's) work has a lot of merit and deserves to be seen." Buck heads York's Arts Administration programme, and was approached by Dean Crowston to set up exhibitions in the lunch room. He argues that "there always has to be an edge to art. If it becomes palatable to



all people at all times, there's a danger that it becomes visual Muzak."

Dean Crowston stands behind his decision. He explained that the room is not really a gallery which people can choose to enter if they please. Instead, it's used by faculty members as a dining room and reception area. "Because it's a multi-function

room," he explained, "there have to be some constraints on what hangs there." He stressed that he didn't find the pictures offensive, but merely more appropriate to "a downtown gallery."

If you'd like to see the controversial studies, they'll be showing at the Founders College Gallery.

Bryon Johnson