

Excalibur

Vol. 13, No. 12

York University Community Newspaper

30 November 1978



Gary Hershorn

"I shouldn't be in Canada at all. Winter is all wrong for me. I belong beside the Mediterranean. My ancestors made a terrible mistake. But I have to keep coming back to renew my neurotic affiliations." — Leonard Cohen

A look at York's women's activities (pg. 6)



Paul Stuart

Mimi Mekler and Therese Beaupre of York's Women's Centre.

Student awards program is called a "mess"

By Greg Saville

It looks like it may be a bleak Christmas for about 800 York students expecting loans from the Ontario Student Awards Program. According to York's director of student awards, Jo-Anne Albright, there's still about 20 per cent of 4,000 York OSAP applications that haven't been processed by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities and it's likely they won't be processed until after Christmas.

Two weeks ago David Butler, chairman of the Ontario Association of Students' Awards Officers, sent a letter of protest to the Ontario Minister of Colleges and Universities, Bette Stephenson, complaining about the delays, programming failures and policy changes that have plagued OSAP this year.

"Dr. Stephenson," the letter reads, "Ontario's Awards Officers.... are tired of seeing our students made to suffer because of inadequate Ministry planning and management.. we are fed-up taking the daily abuse from students which we have so quietly taken this year. We have reached the point where we no longer believe any OSAP assessment produced by your Ministry is correct."

Explaining the problems this year, Albright said much blame could be placed on the computer program used for editing enrollments. According to the letter, the program was supposed to be operational in May but due to delays it was put off a month and still isn't working properly today. Albright says that even the 1978 - 79 OSAP policy and procedure manual for Awards Officers isn't complete yet.

A spokesman for the ministry said the situation was not as bad as is indicated in the letter and Dr. Stephenson had arranged to meet awards officers this week to discuss the problems.

Dave Joly, a third year Phys Ed student, is one of York's 800 students still waiting for financial aid from OSAP. Joly applied to

OSAP about three months ago and now is faced with payments for residence and tuition. The regular waiting period for residence and tuition. The regular waiting period for processing OSAP applications is usually about six weeks.

Albright said she thought some York students might have been waiting over six months for financial aid from OSAP.

Fortunately, Joly will be able to manage thanks to assistance from personal friends, but this may not be the case for other York students waiting for OSAP to come through.

Albright said there is always York's emergency loan fund which provides a short term loan for emergency living costs.

Although the fund has been used extensively and is rapidly running out of cash, she said, "we are doing everything we can to help out."

Another solution that has been provided by the York Student Awards office is deferrals of residence and tuition payments until the remaining loans are processed. To date, the university has deferred tuition fees for 400 students.

The Ontario Federation of Students has called for changes to clean up "the student aid mess." According to OFS chairperson Miriam Edelson, "in a meeting with OFS November 10, the Ministry told us that there would only be minimal changes in the student aid program in 1979-80 because of the administrative difficulties."

Albright said this week was the deadline for input from the awards officers for 79-80 OSAP policy decisions. There is now a freeze on this input because of the great length of time required to develop a fully operational program.

One of the main concerns expressed in the association's letter to the ministry is that "we are afraid that 1979 will be a repeat of 1978.... Dr. Stephenson, we do not want to live through another year like this one."

(see Deputy minister pg. 4)

Beyond this page

- Atkinson Can-Lit conference (page three).
- Children's rights examines (page four).
- The challenge faced by York's dance students (pages six and seven).
- A fascinating new exhibit of Chinese art at the Founders Art gallery (page 10).

