

EDITORIAL

Fire policy at York essential for safety

The Administration is putting its faculty and students at risk by not having a policy on fire regulations for overcrowded classrooms.

The Ontario Fire Code states that overcrowding in a lecture hall or classroom is illegal, yet many classes at York continue to be filled beyond capacity. This is extremely hazardous. In a fire, blocked aisles and exits could easily lead to injuries, possibly death.

After hearing numerous complaints from faculty who were worried that they would be liable for injuries in a fire, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) released a report last year confirming the professors' concerns.

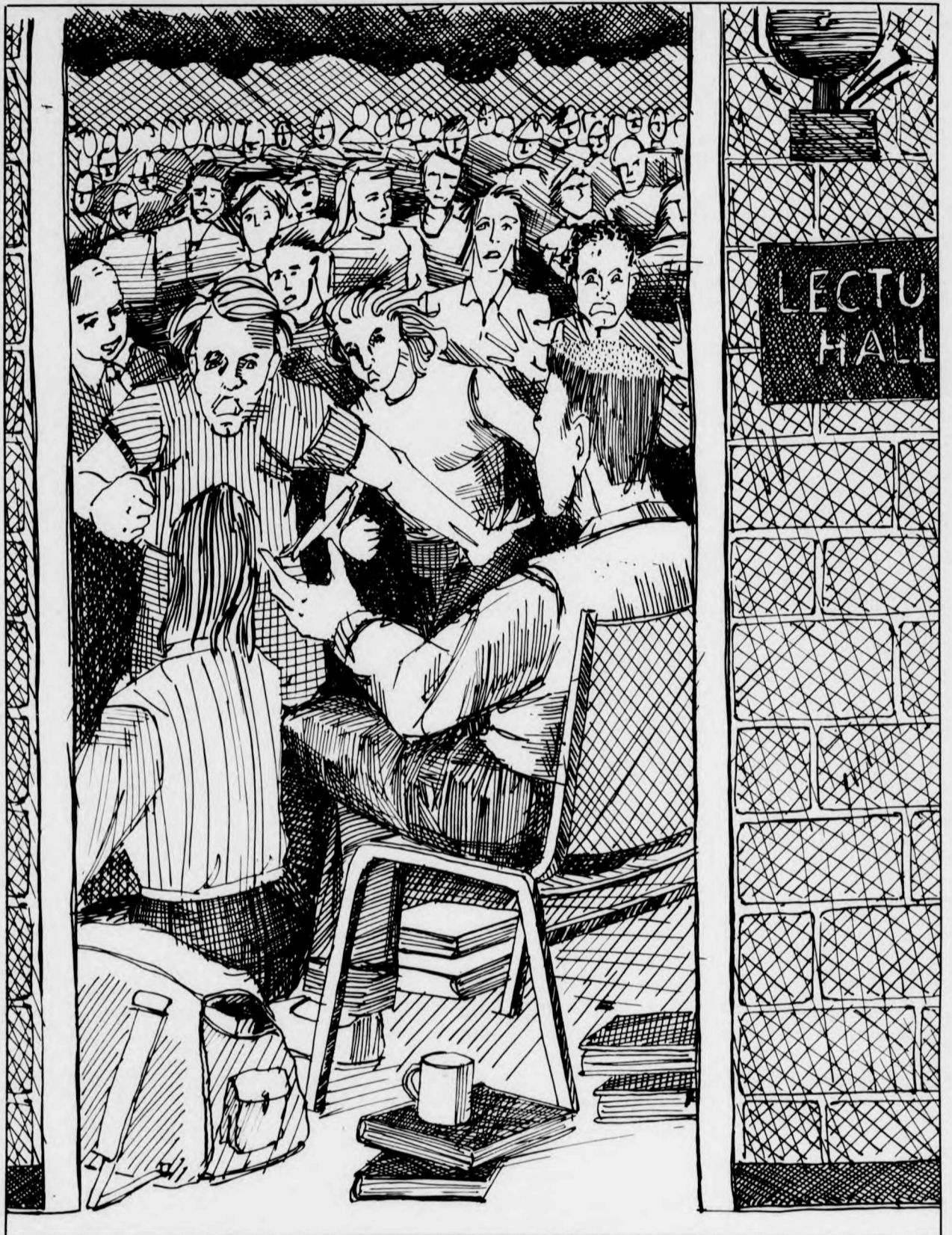
The report, based on independent counsel, said that if professors were aware of overcrowding in class, they could be liable for harm to students. OCUFA's Communications Co-ordinator Bob Kanduth said that "there is a good possibility that a student could sue both the university and the professor since it was the professor who let the situation occur."

In what was likely a response to the OCUFA report, Robin Armstrong, University of Toronto Dean of Arts and Sciences, issued a warning to professors about their potential liability and their responsibility for class size. U of T professors can now refuse to teach over-crowded classes or demand that unenrolled students leave.

York administrators did not seem concerned about the September and October overcrowding that resulted from students "shopping around" for courses. They said that nothing can be done about this, and that the situation would ease by November.

York professors should have the same authority as their U of T colleagues.

Unfortunately it looks like it will take a tragedy for a policy of this sort to be implemented at York.



e x c a l i b u r

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LETTERS

What about non-smokers

Dear *Excalibur*:

Reading in July that the York University administration was finally implementing phase two of its "Let's clear the air" no-smoking policy in September 1988 made returning for this academic year that much more enjoyable. I think that universities, being institutes of higher learning, (and having a large impact on the developing minds and bodies of young women and young men) must set an example of an enclosed environment of clean, toxin (smoke)-free air respecting the good-health of its inhabitants. (The fact that some of York's cafeteria foods don't respect our health is another issue - at least in that case there is choice.)

However, on returning to York last week - to my dismay - I was greeted by a thick smoke-filled north half of Central Square where smoking is still allowed, and a series of huddled smokers throughout the rest of the building (where it is not allowed). I am certainly not advocating "butt-out policing" ... there is certainly a long tradition for smoking in all of the area. What I am asking is that in a place such as Central Square where most students

must pass through daily to get to class, the library, bookstore, etc., and many meet to socialize; why allow smoking at all?

"What about smokers' rights?," you might ask. "We pay tuition too. It's "big brother" taking away impinging on our freedom again."

I agree that it is generally preferable to phase out the use of personal use of health hazard substances by informed consent rather than the imposition of regulations and punishments. But in this case (as in many other public institutions) - by the reality of a shared air system - the health of all should not be adversely affected by the rights of a few smokers (I'm simply not patient enough to wait for them to become informed.)

Come on York Administration, let's set a healthy and intelligent example; let's really clear the air of Central Square.

— Brian H. Keith

Angry student speaks out

Re: "Library hours reduced due to lack of funds," 8 Sept 1988, *Excalibur*.

First-year students, listen to what York University doesn't want you to

know: Scott Library used to be open Sunday through Friday until midnight. This year, Scott Library closes at 9 p.m. on Sunday and Friday. Branch libraries close Fridays at 5 p.m.

Director of Libraries Ellen Hoffmann alleged that there is not enough money for staff on Sunday and Friday nights, yet told *Excalibur* the following week that the new Yorkline computer system costed "between one and two million dollars."

While Yorkline is faster than the old system, and does a more accurate search by subject, these advantages are not worth such a high price. It makes me sick to think that Yorkline was probably installed at the expense of library hours.

U of T's main library is open until midnight Monday through Friday, and Saturday and Sunday until 10 p.m. It isn't right — U of T students get a prestigious education and an excellent library, although tuition at York is higher than at U of T.

If you want the former Scott Library hours reinstated, go to the CYSF office at 105 Central Square (across from the General Store) to sign the petition. Over 500 students have already signed.

—T.J. Roberts

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