

Rejection of Holmes was completely unfair

Following their decision not to regularize his courses, members of the Psychology Undergraduate Studies Committee should not be surprised if Professor Chris Holmes responds with a considerable amount of protest. Holmes has plenty reason to be upset. Not only will the Undergraduate Committee's decision result in the cancellation of Holmes' courses this fall, but the Psychology Department's decision-making process was blatantly unfair.

First, according to clause 3(a) of the agreement between himself, YUFA (York University Faculty Association) and the University in 1986, a "special Departmental Committee was to be struck for the purpose of reviewing Professor Holmes' teachings." This *ad hoc* committee, formed in the fall of 1987, was composed of three Psychology Professors and was asked to issue a recommendation on whether Professor Holmes' two courses, "Mystical Psychology and Psychic Sciences" and "Mystical Views of Consciousness and Creation," should become a permanent part of the Psychology curriculum.

In addition to keeping Holmes in the dark during their deliberations, the *ad hoc* committee members made little effort to attend Holmes' classes. According to Holmes, only one committee member attended even a portion of one class during the five month review. Regardless of the committee members' cumulative experience in the field of psychology, it is impossible that a comprehensive review of Holmes' teachings took place.

The committee's inadequacies are exemplified by an ambiguous six-sentence memorandum issued to Holmes, from Dr. David Rennie, Director of the Undergraduate Psychology Programme and Chairperson of the Psychology Undergraduate Studies Committee. The memorandum simply stated the "gist" of the committee's decision, but it failed to include any description on how they came to their conclusions. Unfortunately for Holmes, the *ad hoc* committee's recommendation carried considerable weight in the Psychology Undergraduate Committee's rejection of Holmes' proposal.

In addition to the *ad hoc* committee's advice, the undergraduate committee's decision was, according to David Rennie, made with reference to the Psychology Department's established procedures and criteria. However, when asked what specifically these criteria were, members of the committee refused comment and Rennie responded by stating "I said they were established Departmental criteria for dealing with a situation of this kind. Why can't you just take my word?"

It would be interesting to find out what the big secret is. All committee members that were contacted indicated that a great deal of time and care went into their decision. If "established procedures and criteria" were employed, why didn't the Psychology Department issue a clear statement to Holmes' outlining the various criteria that Holmes' courses did not satisfy? Doing so would surely quell any protest from Holmes and his students.

Instead, Rennie opted for yet another anemic memorandum outlining two general criteria that the Psychology Department refers to during course formalization hearings: Is the course in question a course in Psychology and does it meet a recognized need in the Department's Undergraduate Programme.

The committee's decision that Holmes' teachings are not truly significant, however, is the committee's failure to provide a detailed response outlining the reasons for its decision. All Rennie's letter informed Holmes was that "the etymology of the word psychology is irrelevant to the issue" and that the "perspective in which consciousness is addressed (in Holmes' teachings) was considered to be irrelevant to . . . modern psychology." Rennie's memorandum also indicated that Holmes' courses "did not fill a recognized need in the Departmental Undergraduate curriculum" and that the courses were "neither in keeping with the corpus of knowledge addressed by existing courses . . . nor in keeping with academic plans for it."

Rennie's statements are in dire need of explanation and elaboration. To determine if a course is appropriate for the Psychology curriculum the etymology of the word 'psychology,' or at least York's definition, is indeed relevant, furthermore, Holmes didn't need a committee to tell him that his courses did not "fill a recognized need" in the Psychology Department. The basis for Holmes' grievances is that the Psychology Department has never recognized his teachings. This decision merely justifies Holmes' belief that the Psychology Department has been intolerant of his teachings and that it has denied him academic freedom.

And so the saga of Chris Holmes will continue until members of individual committees overcome their biases against his teachings and judge them in an objective and comprehensive fashion. Holmes at least deserves this courtesy.



Nixon budget undermines government's claim to support post-secondary education

By JEFF SHINDER

The effects of a decade of inadequate government support for post-secondary education can be seen all over campus. Certainly, students being relegated to sitting on the stairwells of overcrowded classrooms, or spending precious moments searching in vain for a parking spot, downgrades the quality of life on campus. More damaging, though, is the impact of underfunding on the standard of education. Declining student-faculty ratios, and the lack of direct personal teaching contact that emanates from it, is an example.

The Liberal government assumed office in 1985 to, among other things, redress the chronic state of post-secondary education underfunding in the province. Until recently, the government's performance was quite encouraging. For example, from 1985-86 to 1987-88 total operating grants to universities increased by 16% from 1.242 billion to 1.441 billion. The tangible impact this increase has had on the universities, however, has been mitigated by a number of circumstances. Included among these are inflation, the costs of career progress for university staff and enrolment growth. In fact, these factors consumed 12% of the 16% increase in total operating grants. Unfortunately, the 4% grant increase for programme enrichment was paltry in comparison to the 175 million (according to Council of Ontario University [COU] estimates made in 1985) needed to properly upgrade the provinces' universities.

Treasurer Robert Nixon's recent budget, rather than recognizing the deficiencies in the governments past funding record, seemed to approach the issue with an air of complacency. In the viewpoint of Council of Ontario University President Harry Arthurs, the budget reflects the government de-prioritization of post-secondary education on its funding agenda. "With a 7.5% increase in university operating grants compared with an 8.6% increase in total government spending—it is obvious) universities have dropped once again in the priority list," Arthurs stated. "Despite the statement in the 1985 budget about investing in those areas that will keep Ontario competitive and sustain the quality of life, the fiscal facts do not meet the rhetoric," Arthurs added.

He called the level of support indicated by the budget "disheartening."

The statistics seem to validate Arthurs' contention. According to the budget analysis produced by the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS), the budget's 7.5% increase in total operating grants to universities (totalling 1.556 billion) is totally inadequate. They estimate that the system required something in the neighbourhood of a 13% increase to maintain the present level of funding and provide access for the 1988-89 applicants. Interestingly, according to the OFS, the "needed" 13% increase is a conservative approximation as it does not include the

projected government commitment of \$88 million does not properly consider the greater funds needed to provide higher level education. In fact, they estimate that the expenses of educating a student increases 50-100% when they enter third year level courses. Thus, in their view, the government estimate that the province will require \$40 million to cover the turnover of students already in the system, falls well short of the mark. The OFS projects that the universities will need \$53 million to accommodate the turnover of enrolled students. In their view, this leaves inadequate funds for the 11% increase in enrolment expected this fall.

The OFS feels that the accessibility of Ontario's university system will be reduced indirectly by the operating grant allocation formula. At present, the formula pegs an institution's operating grants at a fixed level as long as their Basic Income Unit counts remain within 3% above or below their "base" BIU count. (BIUs are a measure of enrolment which takes account of the cost differences for different types and levels of programmes.) As a result, universities that have surpassed their BIU levels can reduce enrolment without a corresponding reduction in their operating grant. According to the OFS, Laurentian, Brock, Trent, Carleton, and York all have overcome their BIU levels. Apparently, York is in a position where it can reduce enrolment by as much as 11% without any drop in their operating grants.

Regardless, last year York admitted approximately 6,900 full and part time students. The university, though, had decided to cap the levels of incoming students. According to York Vice-President of Management Information and Planning Sheldon Levy, even before the budget, York was planning to maintain enrolment at the 1987-88 levels. "It was our intention) to hold our entry class constant, given the recent announcement we have been forced to re-evaluate our plans," Levy said. He also indicated that any viable solution to the overcrowding problem would involve the utilization of off-campus space. At present, the administration is determining if York can accommodate greater enrolment under the circumstances

"Any government with an eye on the opinion polls would be reluctant to significantly divert resources away from social programs to the universities."

financial impact of the recently introduced pay equity legislation in addition to the impact of copyright legislation on library costs. The inflation estimates in the government projections do not include the inflation of non-salary items which amount to 20% of the university operating expenditures in Ontario. The OFS also stresses that the 13% does not contain allotments designed to alleviate the effects of past underfunding.

The expected increase in first year enrolment makes the inadequacies of the budget's funding commitments even more glaring. The budget did increase the pledge to accessibility funding from \$27 million to \$38 million. The new money, unfortunately, will only cover the expenses that resulted from the increase in university enrolment in this past academic year. In response to this dilemma, the government has announced accessibility funding levels as high as \$88 million for 1989-90. However, according to the OFS, the

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