

Hasselfeldt has problems with Arthurs' paper

By TAMMY HASSELFELDT
President, CYSF

On March of this year President Arthurs issued his "Discussion Paper" on the structure of student government at York. This paper culminated a two-year investigation of student government by Provost Gilmor of the University of Guelph. The President included some of Gilmor's suggestions for improvement, but clearly the President had his own ideas on how to improve student government. Many of these ideas are included in the recently released "Green Paper" on Student Government—the next-to-final document on structure, with only technical changes to be made for the final paper.

There has been student input throughout the entire process. As you will see, however, it has had relatively little impact on the President. The Green Paper still includes many of the principles that student government has disagreed with from the beginning.

One of such principles is the whole process itself. In the CYSF response to the "Discussion Paper," we stated that the "form and structure of student government should be student designed and implemented," even though this statement is contrary to the York Act, which gives the Presi-

Two weeks ago President Arthurs released his Green Paper, the next-to-last draft of a document which will drastically reform existing student government. The reforms are expected to take place in early January. In an effort to spur campus debate, Excalibur has solicited comments from two York community leaders — CYSF President Tammy Hasselfeldt and Norman Bethune College Master David Lumsden.

dent authority to control the conduct and activities of students. We believe that "if students can develop a structure that is acceptable to all present student government, and potential student governments, then such a system should be in place."

Another principle that student government cannot agree with is the creation of the Deans/Masters Fund. Money from this fund will be spent by the Deans and Masters "in consultation" with student government. They will also "receive and seriously consider any suggestions or proposals (from student government) concerning such expenditures."

Under the president's structure, 20 percent of the student activity fee will be allocated to the Dean's and Master's Fund. The Deans and Masters shall divide the 20 percent evenly, with Deans receiving 10 percent and Masters 10 percent. There-

fore, the Deans and Masters will have control over student money.

This is not acceptable. Student governments should control student money and I cannot agree with any proposal that puts student money in the hands of Deans or Masters.

The funds are to be used to develop academic and cultural programmes for students. The President's reasoning behind this principle is that the Masters should not have to continually be asking college councils for money for their programmes to continue. However, if the program benefits students, I believe that student government would continue to fund it.

There are several problems I have with the President's Green Paper with regard to funding. Primarily, what I cannot accept is the President's disregard of the direct levy. For years, student governments have requested that they receive their

money directly, rather than in several grants from the administration throughout the year. In March, CYSF took this question of direct levy to York students. The referendum was supported by every student government—graduate, undergraduate, and part-time—and 64 percent of the York student body agreed. This is overwhelming support for a system which exists at every other university in the country! I therefore take

the percentage of students in favour of an issue, the referendum will fail if the quota is not reached. I can understand the President's concern that presently the strategy for those conducting referendums could be "the less advertising, the better," and consequently there would be no strong opposition to the issue of a referendum.

However, instead of placing a quota on referendums I would suggest that guidelines for the conduct be developed by CYSF, GSA, and the Provost. Such guidelines could include the amount of advertising allowed, the number of polling days, and placement of polling stations across campus. Once these guidelines are in place, one would see student governments policing both themselves and each other—which could only be beneficial to student government and students as a whole!

These issues will be addressed to the President via individual and collective submissions in response to the Green Paper. The President wants his new structure in place by January, so submissions—particularly those questioning his basic principles—may be futile. One can only hope that the Student Relations Committee of the Board of Governors, and the Board itself, may be sympathetic to concerns shared by all student governments at York.

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offense to the President's disregard of the most important principle of student government, beyond simple existence.

The President did suggest some new plans in his Green Paper. The one of most concern is a quota for referendums. No matter how large

Lumsden looks ahead to the proposed changes

By DAVID LUMSDEN
Master of Norman Bethune College

Where do matters stand with respect to changes proposed for student government? Though a number of important matters need to be fleshed out over the months ahead, the agenda and parameters of change have been set forth in President Arthurs' 14-page document of September 9, the "Green Paper."

The first point I want to comment on is the three-tier, complementary system of student government. All undergraduates (except, perhaps, those of Osgoode Hall) will be full members of CYSF—a point accepted by Bethune College Council last year when, for the first time in this college's history, we joined CYSF. I am very pleased to see that both Glendon's and Atkinson's students will be in CYSF (as associates)—it would have been tragic if Glendon had been isolated from CYSF, on top of its geographic distance. It is imperative that CYSF now pay close

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heed to the concerns and leadership of the faculty and college levels of student government, that all the undergraduate faculties play a role in CYSF, and that both faculty and college government leaders have an Executive voice in the running of CYSF—and not least, that CYSF develop a clear vision for its role, with due liaison with graduate student government.

The "Green Paper," as expected, encourages the formation of faculty-level student governments where none now exist. Thus, it is easy to see that faculty-level governments will soon appear in Education (FESA), in Fine Arts (CAB), and hopefully before long, in Science (SSA). This last one is particularly important for my college and its council. In fact, the official "Implementation Strategy" document of last July, governing the 'marriage' between this college and the Faculty of Science, states that Bethune "will assist, as appropriate, in the reconstitution of the Science Students' Association (SSA). It is expected that a close working relationship will develop between the proposed SSA and the College Council."

In other words, we here have been given the exciting challenge of helping to bring a new faculty-level student government into being, and I have been very pleased to see close ties beginning to form between our college council and the nine science or science-related clubs which are now housed in our midst.

It is important to note that it will essentially be the student leaders of both the College and the Faculty, not the administrators, who will mutually evolve the appropriate governmental structures and interdependences. I expect this will be a model for the growing relationship between Winters College Council and Fine Arts' CAB, perhaps for Vanier's co-evolution with FESA, and in due course, perhaps for the councils of the five colleges affiliated with Arts—or more likely, with suitable parts of Arts. Clearly, the SSA must have some close ties with Faculty of Arts developments (as must this college), not least because several major Departments in Arts are themselves co-affiliated

with Science (Geography, Mathematics, Physical Education, Psychology)—indeed, the whole Department of Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics has just formally been accepted into affiliation with this college. Thus, both the SSA faculty government and our college council must have due representation and concern for certain Arts members (and their department associations or 'organizations').

Our college council level of government must not be made up only of Science students: under "Voluntary Affiliation" (the President's principle which is the driving force behind so much of the changes we all face), I trust we will attract a broad array of undergraduate (and some graduate) membership from a variety of faculties, attracted and retained by the academic and non-academic activities pursued under our new mandate and thematic identity of "Science and Society" (including appropriate Third World, and Health Studies interests).

Thus, as our "Implementation Strategy" document puts it, "The membership of College Council will reflect the diversity of the student members of the Council." In short, our college council will be supportive of the student government formed in our faculty of primary affiliation, the SSA, but will also itself have a wider membership and its own due areas of autonomy and concern, both academic and non-academic.

I might add that I do not view the recognition requirements for Faculty-level student governments (on p. 7) to be insuperable barriers to the people's genuine will.

To be effective on behalf of student interests, each government at each level must have distinctiveness—one devoted to incoming students so that they may make informed choices of affiliation at the college level, and may acquire identification with and commitment to the other two levels. The "Green Paper" (on p. 8) for the first time spells out that college membership (required of all first-year students) will be retained by the student at the end of his/her first year "unless they either transfer or terminate it"—i.e., any change requires an act of will (except for residence dwellers, who remain affiliated where they live). Thus, each College is challenged to be attractive to its constituency and to nourish student commitment and club commitment; and in turn, that ought to reinvigorate Alumni.

Of course, to be attractive and receive allegiance, each college-level government in particular, must offer programming and services of interest to undergraduates. Indeed, the "Green Paper" itself (p. 4) remarks that, "especially the colleges, under the new dispensation—should all provide enhanced programs of extra-curricular and co-curricular students activities to complement academic programs." And such "enhanced" activities require adequate funding, and that in turn requires that each college recruit and retain, if it can, a student membership roughly equal to what it now has on paper—and must do so not out of some mindless urge for a "body-count" race, but simply because high-quality services and events for our students (such as our newspapers) do cost significant sums of money, yet are of great value to community life and to our university's well-being.

It is also conceivable (from pp. 4 and 11) that such high-quality, necessary student services may give rise to a somewhat "enhanced" college-government fee (each of the other two levels of government will have their own fees, payable by all students)—well worth it, if the college does provide the programming and services of requisite calibre and coverage.

The funding issue is, of course, sensitive. During the three-year transitional period leading up to the full impact of voluntary affiliation in 1991-92, each college council's "Base Financial Allocation" is frozen at the amount granted to it in 1987-88. But for the first time, the "Green Paper" (p. 11) indicates that councils may receive extra funding during the transition period: "to assist them in responding to significant changes in revenues

and obligations, if any, which may occur during the transition period," reflecting the effects of mandate implementation. And that is a promising development.

A controversial matter is that college and faculty "Activity Funds"—to which even non-College-affiliated undergrads will contribute (p. 8). Present student leaders are not happy that these two modest funds will be under the management, respectively, of the Master and Dean, though it seems to be quite clear that both the Master and the Dean are legally and morally bound to ensure such funds are expended on their unit's undergraduates, and only after due consultation with their unit's student government. This will need monitoring, yet the Masters and Deans are but faithful stewards, and themselves are likely to continue to need student government assistance with other matters. Thus, this new system does have some checks and balances.

This can be seen as well in another section, one newly presented by the "Green Paper" (p. 10), where a funding 'corridor' is detailed for the College Activity Fund: colleges will receive such "in proportion to the number of their full-time equivalent members, provided, however, that now colleges will receive more than 125 percent or less than 75 percent of the average allocation." This will provide some buffering of the effects of the enhanced differences in membership among the colleges that voluntary affiliation will bring. In our case, it should be clear that some of our student clubs and affiliated units, which are co-affiliated with both the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Arts, have entitlement to seek funding assistance from two deans as well as our College Activity Fund (as well as CYSF...).

For this new, three-tier system of student government to work, such bodies must continue to attract enthusiastic student

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leaders, whose labours on behalf of their constituents and of York University must be cherished and recognized by us all. Further, and as is evident from the "Green Paper" (p. 14), the system's success will depend on the abilities, sensitivity, and vision of each provost, and of each member of the Board's Student Relations Committee over the years ahead. With respect to that Committee, I urge that its student membership be reconsidered: instead of its present structure of two elected undergraduates, I urge that three ex officio students be on it, the Presidents of CYSF, GSA, and Glendon's Student Union; and, to ensure fairness to the three-tier nature of the new system, I would also urge that the Board Committee always have one representative of the faculty-level governments, and one representative of the college-level governments. A meeting per term between the SRC and the masters and deans would also be of benefit.

With time, good will, firm resolve, adequate infrastructure, and shared vision, all of us can benefit, in an improved and proud York University. The way must be tried.