

Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity
—Lord Acton

Excalibur, founded in 1966, is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. Excalibur is a member of Canadian University Press and attempts to be an agent of social change. Printed at Daison's, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications.

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College council 20,000 — students no score

Student apathy toward the dealings of York student councils has always been one of the university's more predictable political traditions.

In a system where the essential make-up of university-wide and college student government changes from spring to fall, many students are unaware that a council in fact exists to serve them, just as many council members feel equally unencumbered by this knowledge.

Yet, however obvious this state of affairs may become after a year's stay at York, events such as the recent disclosures regarding the Founders student council budget can only transform one's customary offhand cynicism into a sort of mild outrage.

For the past few years, the Founders constituents have permitted their college council to

horde their mandatory fees, removed from each student at \$17 per head, rather than to spend it on college activities, the purpose for which such fees are theoretically destined.

Until last year, this situation was allowed to exist without question. Students just assumed that Founders was by nature a 'dull' college, and didn't bother to consider the fate of their activity fees.

The odd student who thought to ask why all he was getting for his money was the right to sit in the college pub, was given various answers, including news of plans to build some grand \$20,000 restaurant.

Last year, Founders elected a council that promised to spend the money, and it seems that they intend to make good their promise. In this case, however, the remedy may be worse than the disease.

The Founders council appears to be embarking on an irresponsible spending spree to "get rid" of their fabled surplus.

According to the council members, the main social and cultural activity of the college is a programme called Foundations. Courtesy of Foundations, a lucky squad of 15 people are sent to dinner and a play in downtown Toronto for only \$1.50.

The evening costs Founders roughly \$300 a shot, since dinners and plays don't come cheap these days. So the \$1.50 price tag is terrific, unless you happen to be one of the 1,500 college members who miss out on the trip.

The council admits that the events are not well publicized, in that the only real notice given of a Foundations event is a message written on a blackboard in front of the council office. Ah well, at least the councillors and their friends will hear about the trips; it would be a shame to see the

tickets go to waste.

The one puzzling item is the disagreement among council members concerning the amount of this surplus; the president told Excalibur the sum was in the neighbourhood of \$5,000, while the treasurer placed it at roughly \$14,000.

Discrepancies such as that are less than encouraging when they are evidenced by elected officials who find themselves dealing in thousands of dollars.

After all, once they mow their way through the surplus, they will have a fresh budget of over \$20,000 from this year's crop of student fees.

A person could see a lot of plays for that.

* * *

Although Founders provides the most blatant example of council mismanagement, that college is far from unique in many aspects.

Most college councils are shrouded in mystery, meeting at

times usually known only to a select few, and carrying on with the smoky camaraderie of a private club.

Past good intentions are legion. Notices of meetings are initially posted on college bulletin boards, but after a few weeks everyone tends to forget to tack them up. Ambitious social programmes leave the September starting post under a full head of steam, but tend to falter after the first October or November dance.

There are exceptions, of course, and the point is not that college councils are automatically incompetent or purposely clandestine; it just seems that an inordinate number of them fit snugly into this category.

To most students, the college councils are closed clubs. Only friends of those running for office know who the candidates are, and therefore friends of the council members re-elect old councils, while fresh blood consists of friends of friends. The councils are self-perpetuating.

There is one obvious explanation, and this is that the council positions are voluntary, and require much time and effort.

To the student who comes to York to study, drink, smoke, dance, watch movies or sleep, councils hold no attraction. To the few souls who have political aspirations or seek the council as a womb of extra-curricular club-like activity, the idea that they owe something to the first category of studying, drinking, sleeping students becomes almost alien after the first few club meetings.

But the responsibility is there, and both sides should realize it: the student who pays \$17 to take part in college life, and the councillor who accepts the position on the understanding that he will use the funds to support that life.

Otherwise, bigger and better Foundations programmes will roll forth from the council offices, and nobody will be the wiser — just poorer, by \$17 and a year of social inaction.

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Unlimited opportunities!



Staff meeting
2 p.m.
today.

Room 111
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"Somehow I don't think our talk on campus security is having the desired effect."

Clubs deserve generous support

The CYSF budgetary pie is currently being divided among the ravenous council protectorates, encompassing salaries, Harbinger, daycare and whatever.

Lost in this shuffle in the past have been the clubs and organizations on campus. Last year, for instance, the clubs received a pitiful \$2,500 out of a

budget which flitted around the \$80,000 mark.

This year, it is to be hoped that all clubs which apply for funds and meet the finance committee's criteria (i.e. no parties at the council's expense) will be given their necessary grants, with no arbitrary ceiling on the total club allocations.

If students are to be involved on campus, chances are they may seek that involvement in small, organized groups with common interests. To this end, this year's CYSF can fulfil a major part of its responsibility to the student community by funding clubs without the begrudging tight-fistedness which has marked its predecessors.