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# Coalition discusses strategy to combat cutbacks

By Bruce Gates  
 On the heels of last weekend's Waterloo meeting of student council leaders to discuss strategy for combatting the province's program of cutbacks to universities and colleges, the York University Anti-cutbacks Coalition held a revival meeting earlier this week in an effort to rekindle students' interest in protesting government restraint in educational spending. A follow-up meeting is planned for February 5.

"We're trying to mount some kind of educational campaign in order to put pressure on the administration," explained Michael Michie, president of the Graduate Assistants Association (GAA).

Out of the Monday meeting, which was attended by 12 persons, including representatives of the GAA, York Students Against

Cutbacks (YSAC), York University Faculty Association (YUFA), York University Staff Association (YUSA) and representatives from some of the colleges, emerged three strategies the Coalition hopes to implement in order to win student support for the anti-cutbacks movement: One strategy would see an informational session set up in the Bearpit, with a band used to draw attention. This strategy would precede by a few days a planned forum in the Bearpit, which would involve members of academic unions, students, members of administration and a government representative. Finally, a media blitz, involving letter writing campaigns to the Globe and Star as well as seeking national coverage in either Maclean's or Saturday Night magazines.

Other strategies discussed included a possible tuition fee strike and a one-day boycott of classes. Both of these, however, present problems.

"As long as students continue to attend classes here, that suggests they're not too concerned about cutbacks," said Calumet student

Fred Roth, who was concerned that a boycott would only be effective if a large portion of the students supported it.

The tuition strike strategy also was seen as being limited because it involved only the student body and not the individual unions concerned (i.e. YUFA, GAA, YUSA).

While the council leaders at Waterloo rejected marches and sit-ins as effective tools in dealing with the provincial government, Michie suggested they do have their place. "You're aiming at publicity, but you have to have a lot of follow-up to demonstrations," he said. This was something the mass demonstration last March at Queen's Park failed to achieve.

"I think you have to be more militant as well," he continued, but added that such action would depend on getting more students involved.

And that's one of the main points of the Coalition's efforts: encouraging student involvement through education.

Explained Michie: "We have to get the message across to the

students that the university is in danger, and we have to work out some strategies that will have political effect... It has to be some kind of long-term strategy aimed at the next provincial election."

Among the long-term strategies put forward last weekend by the council leaders at Waterloo were:

- the establishment of a central lobbying bureau serving as an information centre for the various local councils;
- the lobbying of each MPP (planned to begin in March);
- a spring conference to demonstrate solidarity on the part of instructors, students and support staff against provincial cutbacks; and
- liaison with the council presidents of the 22 community colleges to set up a college commission.

However, if the best-laid plans happen to go awry, the culprit could be student apathy. Said Michie: "It's hard for large groups to feel the impact of cutbacks. It's the least secure groups (like members of the GAA) who feel it the most."

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## OFS puts emphasis on campus action

WATERLOO (CUP) Working with students and community groups to fight cutbacks, rather

that planning demonstrations, will be the priority of the Ontario Federation of Students this spring.

However OFS has not completely ruled out mass actions.

At its conference here last weekend proposals for action such as demonstrations or pickets were conspicuously absent, replaced with an increased emphasis on building campus anti-cutback committees and co-operating with other groups fighting cutbacks.

OFS had previously emphasized campus committees as one of the main basis for its anti-cutbacks strategy. However, according to a report prepared by the OFS executive for the conference, their viability at present is, "tenuous".

The committees were absent as an "organizing and political force on the campuses", it said, although "their importance to our campaign

has not diminished."

Similarly, the second base of the campaign—building alliances with campus and community groups to fight cutbacks — was also lacking, it said.

"There has been little evidence of sustained and widespread cooperation between faculty, support staff, and students at the campus level. A few campus situations have been marked by open conflict."

The executive urged that committees be rejuvenated and that students work to build links with faculty, support staff, and teaching assistants on each campus. As well, it proposed a conference of all groups in post secondary education to mount opposition to cutbacks, and a lobby bureau to coordinate and provide information for lobbying MPP's.

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## New academic VP for York

(cont'd from pg. 1)

At Thursday's forum Macdonald gave reassurance that the new position will not require a bureaucracy behind it, but only a secretary and an office. In the past, academic concerns have always been handled by the president, said Macdonald, and the academic vice-president will work out of the existing structure.

"In the material circulated by YUFA, it has been suggested that the office might cost as much as one-quarter million dollars annually to maintain," he said in the open letter. "This is far from accurate and greatly exaggerates the potential cost. It would be my aim in establishing this position to make effective use of personnel now available within the Faculties so as to keep the basic cost of the office at a minimum effective level to achieve our aims. Moreover, the cost involved could be reduced further should the successful candidate be selected from within the York community since this would involve only an additional stipend."

Regarding the selection process Macdonald said:

"The appointment of a vice-president is the prerogative of the President. However, in view of the particular relationship of this office to the academic affairs of the university, I have decided to establish and chair an advisory committee to which I will be appointing two members of the community and I have invited the Senate Executive to make arrangements for the nomination of two others. My selection will be made on the basis of the advice of the committee and its assessment of the merits of various candidates."

Macdonald said his decision concurred with the report of the Senate's Committee on the Organization and Structure of Senate and the University delivered at its meeting of April 27, 1978.

The committee listed the academic functions that require attention as: "a) the animation or initiation of action in the area of policy change; b) effective, on-going decision-making and c) the coordination and implementation of academic plans and services."

The structural alternatives the committee considered were task forces (which it saw as good only for short-term specific projects), portfolios (which infringed on the limited availability of the Deans and was also good only in the short-term), assistants to the president (which would not fulfill the requirement of taking initiatives) and an academic vice-president.

Despite the apparent smoothness with which the wheels are turning to implement the new position, sufficient speculation has developed to merit a motion in last Thursday's senate meeting which read: "Given the present financial situation that Academic Policy and Planning Committee report to Senate at its next meeting on the academic implications of the appointment of a VP academic."

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 6:30 p.m. & 8:30 p.m.

York Hall Rm A214  
 Friday Feb. 2 7:45 p.m.  
 Sunday Feb. 4  
 2:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.  
 Monday Feb. 5  
 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

North York  
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