

Renegade hunger strike divides OFS

by Peter Stathis

To draw attention to university underfunding, about one dozen student council executives took part in a 48-hour hunger strike from July 31 to August 1. The event culminated with an invitation extended to the three party leaders to join the protesters in their "break-fast"

of Kraft dinner.

The media event that took place on the front lawn of Queen's Park was meant to coincide with Premier David Peterson's election call which was criticized as political opportunism. Executives from nine campuses took part in the protest, including representatives from UofT, Western, McMaster, Waterloo and York.

According to a press release, organizers named the hunger strike, **Underfed and Underfunded** to link "their hunger with the hunger felt by Ontario Universities." They claimed they would fast until the provincial leaders made post-secondary education funding a priority in their campaigns. Steve Deighton, President of Western's student council,

stated, "Ontario is near the bottom in Canada in university funding levels, yet it is Canada's wealthiest province."

Mitch Blass, VP (External) of YFS told *Excalibur* that this group of student leaders wanted to bring up the issue of underfunding (money coming from the government) separately from the issue of tuition (money coming from the students). According to Blass, some executives did not (and do not) support all the OFS (Ontario Federation of Students) mandates because they believe some of them are unrealistic and unattainable such as zero tuition.

education." Kim Speers, VP (University Affairs) at University of Waterloo, claimed that the hunger strike only served to alienate some student leaders from the OFS and divide what potentially could be a very strong organization.

Blass admitted that the protesters were "not trying to step on anyone's toes, but underfunding [was] something all students should fight against." John Vellinga, President of Waterloo's Federation of Students stated, "the Peterson Liberals may cut our funding to the bone, even let us starve on the lawn of Queen's Park, but they cannot ignore us!"

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The hunger strike was quickly denounced by many university student executives as an irresponsible and renegade act that jeopardized the efficacy of the OFS strategies for the election campaign. In a press release directed to the protesters, Jean Ghomeshi, President of YFS, divorced himself from the event, saying, "all you will succeed in accomplishing with your protest, is to compete with, if not totally de-legitimize, the provincial student movement already in existence."

Janet Piper, President of Ryerson's Student Union, also withheld her college's official support. She stated that a hunger strike was too extreme a measure to be taken to meet the "issues of election timing and the funding of

The hunger strike was not in place of the OFS campaign, but was just another aspect of it. According to Blass, the organizers wanted to take a step independent of the official OFS line. It was a question of freedom of conscience rather than being bound to a collective strategy. "Do we always have to consult with OFS before we act as individuals?" Blass rhetorically asked *Excalibur*.

When reached for comment, OFS campaign researcher Chris Lawson said that OFS was concerned about the "timing and tactics of the protest," but otherwise remained neutral to the protest, because its membership was split in terms of supporting the hunger strike or castigating it.

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NOON-1:00 AM
BBQ Lunch, NOON-2:00 PM
Night BBQ, 7:30 PM-11:30 PM

Room 023 Founders
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APPEARING LIVE:
THUR. SEPT. 6
THE NORTHERN PIKES
(\$8 adv. \$10 door)
THUR. SEPT. 13
THE MIDNIGHT RAMBLERS
(\$4 door)

Free Condoms

The Office of Student Affairs will be giving away free condoms to students during Orientation Week. The Golden Circle condoms resemble a large gold coin and are part of a nation-wide campaign to promote safe sex and AIDS awareness.

C.S. Marketing, the Canadian representative for Safetex, is supplying over 250,000 latex domes for 22 universities across Canada. They are also providing Health Services, 201 Vanier college, with a year-round supply which York students can obtain free of charge.



STORE HOURS

MAIN CAMPUS

September 3 - September 8

Monday	Closed: Labour Day
Tuesday - Thursday	9:00 am - 9:00 pm
Friday	9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am - 3:00 pm

September 10 - September 15

Monday - Thursday	8:30 am - 9:30 pm
Friday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am - 5:00 pm

September 17 - September 22

Monday - Thursday	9:30 am - 8:30 pm
Friday	9:30 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am - 3:00 pm

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THE BOOKSTORES

York & Glendon

The Bookstores are a University-owned and operated service whose primary responsibility is the provision of textbooks and general book service to the York University community. To facilitate our academic support function, two bookstores are maintained — one at the York campus, another at Glendon College. A selection of stationery and sundries is stocked at both locations.



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