

Central council must be independent

By MICHAEL MOURITSEN

President of the York Student Federation

In their recent campaign for election as Stong College representatives to the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF), John Koornstra and William Osmars called for "more direct control" of CYSF by the colleges. Koornstra, in a campaign statement, claimed that "someone must show the council that Stong wants actions favourable to Stong and its students, and not favourable to CYSF as has been their recent practice . . . I can only emphasize that whatever I do will be with the best interest of Stong in mind."

Osmars, in an article aptly titled "More mumbblings on CYSF", which appeared in the November issue of the Stong Walrus, mumbled that "The interests of the York community would be better served by a body more directly linked to the colleges." He said he supported in principle a proposal that all CYSF representatives "be appointed by and be responsible to their college governments."

The proposal to which he referred is contained in a curious memorandum from Bethune College Council (addressed to no-one), dated September 27. This memo calls for the establishment of a body to replace CYSF to be called the York Inter-College Council (YICC — rhymes with clique).

The YICC would be composed of representatives chosen by the member colleges, with a chairman chosen from the college representatives.

This body would be responsible for direct funding of such central services as Radio York, Harbinger, Excalibur and Daycare. It would co-ordinate and suggest student programmes between member colleges, would "keep administrative costs to a minimum," would "promote and perpetuate the college system," and would "negotiate with the university administration . . . for full allocation of student government funds to go directly to member colleges."

Finally, the Bethune proposal suggests that the YICC would "recognize the Senate student caucus members (also indirectly elected by college councils) as representatives of the individual colleges and sole representatives of the student body in matters of university policy."

Bethune College Council, incidentally, is not a member of the York Student Federation. It is interesting that the college council supports the principle of central student government (even if it is a castrated one).

Under the existing constitution, the students in each CYSF member-college directly elect three representatives from the college at large. Students also directly elect

the president of the federation from the campus at large. Osmars' and Bethune's proposal would take central student government out of "student control" (i.e., direct election by students), and replace it with "politician control" (i.e., indirect election by college councils).

The central student government would then not have to be accountable to the students at large or to the university community. Representatives would only be responsible to their friends on the college council which elected them. Representatives, according to Koornstra, would only be concerned with the particular concerns of their college, not the wider issues which confront the university. There would be no opportunity for a campus-wide election in which students could focus on university-wide issues and publicly debate fundamental questions.

Who would organize a university-wide course evaluation, or a university-wide car pool service, or a part-time employment service, or a student duplicating service, or a charter-flight service? A committee of college council representatives? Why should they? They are accountable to their college councils.

Departmental student associations (such as Geography, History and English) and university-wide clubs would be required to

travel from college to college to seek financial assistance, and would have to answer the question, "What do you do for our college?"

The York Student Federation is not in the business of serving colleges or college councils. The federation services students. Period. Regardless of college affiliation (even if that college is not a member). The federation is responsible for representing all students (graduate and undergraduate) in university-wide matters. It is the responsibility of college councils to cater to the concerns peculiar to the members of a particular college.

It is unclear why there is a need for more "college control" of the central student government. The CYSF and college councils both have their own terms of reference and areas of responsibility. There is, in fact, direct input from the colleges in the approval of the CYSF budget and amendments to the CYSF constitution. The president of each college council is an ex-officio member of the central council and may vote on the budget and constitutional amendments.

Student politicians can best spend their time, and best serve their constituents, by working on their own areas of responsibility. They should meet and co-operate on areas of common concern e.g., social events such as Orientation and Winter Carnival.

Letters To The Editor

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, c/o Excalibur, room 111 central Square. They must be double-spaced, typed and limited to 250 words. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for length and grammar. Name and address must be included for legal purposes but the name will be withheld upon request.

Michael Mouritsen gets it in the ear from Stong—once...

I was amused as well as amazed by Michael Mouritsen's column in last week's Excalibur concerning Stong's Ad Hoc Committee on CYSF. Considering the fact Mr. Mouritsen presented his views both at Stong's General Meeting and later at an all-colleges council meeting and received several excellent replies to his queries (that must have slipped his mind as he wrote his column) I can't help but feel his article rather unfair both to the committee as a whole and to certain individuals within it.

The neutrality of the items in the report that caused Mr. Mouritsen's comment "they did not amount to much" contradicts his opinion that "Didiano and friends" were not about to conduct an objective study. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee had a wide range of views on the question being studied which makes me feel Stong students were fairly represented. We all had to compromise on our opinions to prepare the report but that does not mean it was "unnecessary."

Personally I am not going to question the legalities of withdrawal clauses or the necessity for them as, when CYSF becomes incorporated under its present constitution many rather disagreeable items will be unchangeable. What I do question is the ethics of an organization that could, during the summer when most students are not on campus, rearrange itself in a manner that completely divorces it from the control of the people that support it financially.

Mary Churchill,
Chairman

Ad Hoc Committee to study CYSF.

...and then twice...

Michael Mouritsen has as little respect for the truth as an alley cat has for marriage. The Nov. 15 CYSF column contained so many glaring untruths that I have space only to deal with the major ones.

1) Stong's Ad Hoc Committee on CYSF made no recommendations on Stong's membership whatsoever. What we did point out was that to leave the CYSF in the present situation would leave us without both Stong's contribution to the CYSF operating grant and some control over it. Look at Bethune's case, and they never had membership in CYSF.

2) The Oct. 11 Excalibur story on Stong's supposed threatened withdrawal also included statements by Stong student liaison officer and residence secretary Steve Dranitsaris and Academic Advisor Patrick Gray. It is typical of Mouritsen that he singled out the students involved for his criticism and did not mention

members of the administration; after all his policy is to co-operate with them.

3) The proposal he mentioned was drafted by Didiano and myself only, though many others were consulted.

4) The proposal was originally to require an early report of the Ad Hoc Committee, to allow for the receipt of briefs, both of which have been carried out, and to hold an opinion poll. This last part was withdrawn because it was felt that our courses of action should not be restricted at that point.

5) His interpretation of the committee report seems to indicate that he is illiterate. He ignores the fact that we pointed out some of the ways in which CYSF is no longer responsible to the colleges or the student body.

Above all else, there has been a deliberate attempt by Mike Mouritsen to sidetrack or cloud all discussion of the CYSF. His pitiable attempts to group all dissenters under a sort of "bad guys" label led by a sinister Mr. Didiano is surely not the sort of behaviour we should get from one in his position.

I feel that criticism of the CYSF should be answered with more than the obvious excuse that Mike Mouritsen disagrees with us. Remember, Michael, you may be satisfied with having no interest or discussion aroused, but I, and a significant number of others, are not.

R. WILLIAM OSMARS

...and three times...

My compliments to Michael Mouritsen and his effluence of truth. In his Nov. 15 CYSF column he is guilty of gross distortion of facts and incidents. He, in his eagerness, neglected to follow his own advice — "think before firing off a press release."

He has unjustly and with no basis distorted my relationship with the events and with the people mentioned in his article. Although my sentiments correspond in certain aspects with those of Bates, Didiano and Osmars, Mouritsen has assumed that there is a conspiracy in the making. I submit that certain of my ideologies conform with those of M. Mouritsen. Does this also suggest that we have colluded?

Mouritsen vainly attempts to prove that there is a collusion of sorts. By doing so he is attempting to minimize the true problem at hand. Contrary to his assumption that Stong had not even considered the problem of CYSF membership prior to an Oct. 11 article in Excalibur that threatened withdrawal, there is proof that on Oct. 10 Stong's General Meeting passed a motion to establish a committee to study the question. Unanimously, I might add. This clearly demonstrates that Mouritsen has conveniently not bothered to learn the facts. It also shows that the problem of membership concerns not a few people as Mouritsen suggests, but Stong College as a whole.

Another declaration on Mouritsen's part was: "Bates, Didiano, Koornstra and Osmars then drafted a proposal to be presented to the Stong General Meeting Oct. 24." Another fallacy. I was as unaware of the drafted proposal as my dear friend M. M. was. If my friend had paid any attention to the proceedings of the Oct. 24 meeting which he had attended he might have noticed that I was among the first to show disapproval of the proposal in part. However it possibly might have slipped his mind when writing the article or else he felt more smug in assuming my complicity in this act.

M. Mouritsen seems to feel the Ad Hoc Committee's report 'did not amount to much.' The committee consisted of many opposing viewpoints showing a well balanced representation. The conclusions reached were mutually agreed upon and were of great concern to all the members. That 'they did not amount to much' is an indication that our dear president has lost touch with the feeling of the student body.

Let us hope that in the future M.M. will take a more serious look at the problems of the student body and not pass them by as frivolous, as is his common practice. And let us hope he will refrain from firing off press releases without thinking.

JOHN KOORNSTRA
CYSF Representative Stong

...and finally four!

I would like to correct some misinformation printed in the CYSF column of Nov. 15, entitled "Stong was correct to remain in CYSF." Firstly, the title is a misleading one, for, under CYSF's present constitution, Stong cannot withdraw except with the approval of council. In effect any decision made by the college would have to be approved by CYSF.

According to this article, M. Didiano and I were threatening withdrawal (without the college's consideration). This is a blatant misrepresentation. When Excalibur got wind of our grievances with CYSF they phoned us and proceeded to blow our comments out of proportion. I told them at the time in no uncertain terms not to say that we were withdrawing. We had a number of specific complaints about the council but there was absolutely no mention made of any intention to withdraw.

The original motion for a study defeated at our general meeting said in effect that we were not satisfied with CYSF and we wanted some answers and action. While Mouritsen may object to the tone of that motion he surely cannot object to the idea that CYSF has a responsibility to its constituents to justify itself. Apparently because of the fact that under their present constitution they are effectively beyond any control by the colleges, CYSF did not see fit to waste their time by listening to our complaints.

The point about the funding of such things as Excalibur, Harbinger, Daycare etc. is that these should be priorities in the budget allocations. While Mouritsen chooses to hide behind the fact that council as a whole approved the budget, my complaint is with CYSF as a whole for exactly this type of thing. While council has the authority to allocate money it does not have the right to allocate it in ways detrimental to the community. For example, Harbinger did not function for the first month and a half of this year because they were busy trying to get enough money to function due to insufficient funds. Going through the last issue of Excalibur I found that five and one quarter of the sixteen pages were advertisements. This is due to the fact that CYSF saw fit to cut their budget of \$18,000 (a bare-bones operating budget) to \$13,500.

Another example of CYSF's priorities is shown in the club allocations criticized in the editorial in Excalibur's last edition. What the editorial failed to mention was the fact that the final date for clubs to submit budget applications was advertised in only one issue of Excalibur; a three by five inch ad on the seventh page. Although CYSF has a list of all recognized clubs on campus they did not bother to notify any of them save for the solitary ad in Excalibur mentioned above. As a result many clubs were not aware of the date and hence were denied any consideration. The York Masquers, a theatre group based in Stong, were among these unfortunates despite the fact that they have been in existence for over four years and received \$1,000 from CYSF last year.

When this situation came to my attention last week I asked one of our CYSF reps, Bill Osmars, to bring the matter up at last week's meeting. A motion to have the club allocations reviewed, on the basis that: a) they made a mockery of their own criteria in their allocations, b) they gave insufficient notice of the final date for budget proposals, was defeated at that meeting.

At the end of his article, Mouritsen labels our attempts to shape up CYSF as "frivolous" and terms the outcome "a fiasco." All I can say to that is our attempts are frivolous only in that we are attacking a council which has put itself effectively out of our reach under its new constitution. CYSF has set itself up outside the control of its constituents and our present attempts to change that have met a brick wall in that we are passed off as frivolous. I feel that we do have legitimate complaints and despite the seeming frivolity of trying to make ourselves heard we will continue to try.

BILL BATES
Editor, The Walrus

ed. note: Excalibur, not Michael Mouritsen, was responsible for last week's headline. Mouritsen's column, however, is not edited for content.