

President quizzed

By GRAHAM THOMPSON

York president Ian MacDonald faced tough questions from the York University Faculty Association (YUFA) last Thursday after delivering a speech outlining his administrative and policy concerns for the current academic year.



H. Ian MacDonald

During a question period immediately following his speech, MacDonald was asked about York's hiring policy for full and part-time faculty, the allegedly disproportionate growth of York's administration, as well as the Executive's response to an anti-semitic incident last year.

MacDonald was invited by YUFA to address all interested members of York community in the hope of maintaining an ongoing dialogue between York's executive administration and YUFA. Further meetings are scheduled for February and March.

During the question period permanent faculty and teaching assistants alike queried MacDonald about what was being done to help the faculty accommodate the 40% increase in enrollment since 1979-1980.

Teaching assistants (TAs) remarked that they are in effect being stuck in a TA "ghetto" since they have not been promoted to the new full-time faculty positions.

Others remarked that much of the new full-time faculty hired last year was done on a "contractually limited" basis. They hoped that more could be done to create meaningful permanent positions with an "academic horizon."

MacDonald acknowledged that these were legitimate concerns, but did not propose any specific solutions. One faculty member

claimed the Professional and Managerial (PM) portion of administrative staff had grown by 25% since 1979-80, implying that scarce resources had been misappropriated by the administration.

Bill Farr, Vice President of Employee and Student Relations, later said the rise was only 10% (from 189 to 208) and that 19 front-line supervisors had been reclassified to the PM category along with assorted staff not readily classifiable.

MacDonald was asked about his response to the recommendations of a committee formed to deliberate on a racist incident last year. The committee unanimously recommended that the student, who delivered hate literature to and verbally attacked a female graduate student, be expelled from York. MacDonald upheld a decision not to take punitive action against the student.

The questioner wondered how MacDonald's professed aim to eradicate such incidents at York could be perceived as credible when he did not uphold the recommendations of the committee (whose report will be published shortly). MacDonald dismissed the question as a matter of disagreement between the committee's recommendations and his idea of appropriate action.

York received 25% of Ontario's new student placement

MacDonald began his speech by stressing that the criticisms levelled at York by the Ministry (of Education) and an "uncomplimentary" press were not founded on ill will but were, nonetheless, based on an ignorance of the actual situation at York.

MacDonald then proceeded to explain that for the 1983-84 academic year, York received 25% of the province's new student placements as well as the largest increase in first-choice applications from grade 13 students applying to Ontario universities.

York is also in the unique position of having more than 50% of this year's student body attending on a part-time basis, with that mark expected to rise in the near future.

While cautioning that the Office of the President, the Board of Governors, and the Senate must co-

operate in all policy-making decisions, MacDonald expressed hope that the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, established in 1982, and the Farquharson Life Sciences building would receive special attention in the budget next year. The extension of the Life Sciences Building is long overdue and the faculty and graduate students have been losing potential research grants due to the facility's constraints.

The president's number-one priority is improving York's library system. MacDonald praised the work of the library staff but said that special budgetary attention was an urgent matter to be considered next year.

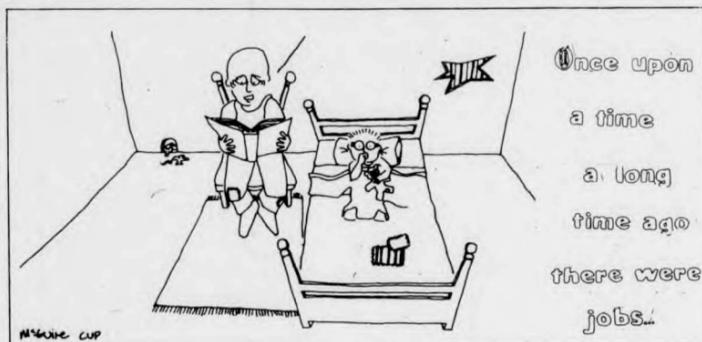
MacDonald spoke of adjustments that will have to be made by the university in the face of technological change, specifically information technologies. The president said that he expects the present structure of the university to be hardly recognizable within twenty years.

In line with York's concern for the effects of technological change a special Task Force on Information Services was established during the summer and a reorganization of York's computer services is being spearheaded by Ian Taylor.

Since academic needs will prevail over administrative needs, the Office of the Academic Vice-President will be in charge of computer services.

Prominent appointments for next year include a new university president—MacDonald is completing the last year of his 10-year appointment—a new Dean of Administrative Studies, and a Director of Library Services. MacDonald commented that in addition to the capacity to subsist on five hours of sleep a night, his successor should have "the stomach of a goat, the hide of an elephant, and the throat of a gravel crusher."

Looking to the long-term future MacDonald expressed his desire to see "a centre for major innovative research" established on available campus land. In reference to the "battle" of university accessibility, MacDonald said there is a "romantic" public perception that academic standards have decreased in the last twenty years. MacDonald asserted 60% entrance requirements have always been the policy norm in Ontario and that York itself is "generous about those who come in but tough on those who go out."



Students hit hard

By CHRIS WARREN

Already bruised by worsening unemployment, students are encountering a double blow from the confessed inability of the province to provide space for the educational development of its youth.

Statistics Canada figures for the period 1977 to July, 1983, reveal a trend of increasing un- or underemployment amongst Ontario's student population. The overall unemployment rate has increased 43% since July of 1977, and this summer's level is 24% above the average for that seven-year period.

"As the economic recession has worsened," according to a recent Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) brief, "more students intending to return to school have sought employment to finance their return to education." But the statistics show that as the number of students in urgent need of work increases, the percentage of those able to find work over the summer has decreased by almost 6% from 1981.

Richard Balnis, an OFS researcher, maintains that Statistics Canada figures are still "inadequate." Students working just one day during the week of the fifteenth of each month (when the surveys are taken), are counted among the "employed." In addition, the figures do not accurately reflect the amount of students unable to find a full three months' work during the summer, hence "underemployed."

"The phenomenon of underemployment is clearly being ignored by the government," says Balnis, adding that it "becomes a very tangible disincentive towards furthering one's post-secondary education."

OFS research shows that the funding for the federal government's two major summer job-creation programs, Regular Summer Employment and Summer Experience, has dropped almost 7% since last year. The federal input to direct job creation has decreased by \$86.4 million over the past four years, the report says. As well, Ontario's "indirect measures for youth job creation," such as the Ontario Youth Employment Program, which subsidizes private sector employers \$1.25 per hour for creating jobs during the summer months, are inadequate, and haven't put a significant dent in the overall increase in unemployment.

The degree of financial desperation is reflected also in the disproportionate increase in applications for government assistance, through OSAP. At York specifically, they are up 48% as of August, that is, an increase of about 4,500 applications, according to John Becker of Student Relations.

Members of the OFS are to meet on November 2 with Ontario Treasurer Larry Grossman and Bette Stephenson, to discuss its concerns about unemployment.



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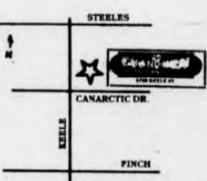
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