

## Students urged to vote 'no' on student center

### Survey results were 'manipulated'

Editor:

Having participated in the study of the student centre for six months, I eagerly await the coming of the referendum in March of this year. I believe the campus is badly in need of more student services. But first, several issues surrounding the proposed Centre must be scrutinized and evaluated.

As of now, the Student Centre Steering Committee, feels it has the go-ahead to continue study of the Centre. This opinion was derived from a two-page survey, conducted by the Committee, and administered to 1,500 students. The results of the survey (published in *Excalibur*), suggested that 70 percent of those polled were in favor of creating a York Student Centre. However, having spoken to persons involved in the data analysis at the Institute of Social Research, I discovered that only 40 percent of the 1,500 surveys had been coded and that the analysis was preliminary in nature. The published results are therefore, at best misleading, and at worst an example of data manipulation for political purposes.

The survey, for the most part, consisted of a list of possible services, the majority of which are already provided in Central Square. Having spoken to a number of students on campus (including a group of MBA students who wished to work on the survey), it is obvious that York students have no conception of what a student centre is or can be. For all intents and purpose, the survey painted a picture of the Centre, as being a glorified Central Square which is exactly what this campus does not need.

The size of the building being proposed is woefully inadequate. The Student Centre Steering Committee has proposed a building of 75,000 square feet is roughly the same area as the upper two floors of Scott Library. In comparison, the University of British Columbia, which has an equivalent student population, has a Student Union Building of 190,000 square feet which they are now expanding. Furthermore, it is unclear as to whether the proposed Faculty Club has been included in this figure. It is also apparent the kinds of uses being proposed for the York Student Centre are inadequate given its size. Articles in *Excalibur* portray the Centre as a glorified cafeteria, and party room as well as an office complex for the York Student elite. These services are already provided by York in one form or another, and it

makes sense that the Centre should avoid duplication and centralization of services. This is partly because the York economy can support only so much activity, and partly because should the Centre draw away all the campus activity, there is a very real possibility that the University will reclaim college space that is now providing much needed services.

A Student Centre provides far more than a place to eat. It can serve as a meeting place and functional core for campus life. In this respect, the favored location (between the Scott Library and Faculty of Administrative Studies) is far from ideal. A Student Centre should be, by nature, central and accessible. The favored site is hardly central, except to MBA and Law students. This kind of thing must be considered when deciding on the Student Centre location. Those who choose to vote on the referendum should bear this in mind when they cast their ballot.

It is my hope that these issues will be clarified before the referendum. However, if they are not, students should seriously consider voting no to the proposed Student Centre.

—Ravi Pendakur  
Faculty of Environmental Studies

### Student center 'just a showy idea'

Editor:

When a showy idea come around it is far from fashionable to criticize. The proposed students' centre is just such a showy idea. Part of the reason that it is drawing little flack is because it has been practically invisible until now. I read with interest the two recent publicity articles in the *Excalibur* which introduced the centre to the students of York. I can speak with some authority on the subject having studied this very idea intensely over the last four months. I worked on a team of Environmental Studies students who won a prize for redesigning York for the winter. I am very familiar with the problems of the campus and the politics of York University. At issue is the multi-million dollar student building which students will be asked to approve at referendum time. Is it in the best interests of York students to pass this referendum? I say it is not.

the main reasons why I am against the idea of the student centre are:

1. It has not yet been shown what problem for which this building is a solution. Although the Student Centre Steering Committee (SCSC) claims that 70 percent

of York students want this type of building, it has not shown that we need this building.

2. It has not even been considered how this building will fit into the present scheme of the campus. How many people will actually use the student centre, and how many of those people will be teaching faculty and staff who will not be putting a dime into its construction and operating costs?

3. The referendum which you will be asked to approve is not merely to approve further study, which is the normal, plodding way of approaching such a huge project. The referendum is to approve the going ahead with design and construction. From experience I know that most of you don't even know what a student centre is, York is your first university experience. Do you feel comfortable with this process? If so, how does it strike you that the SCSC gives a 250 percent margin for error on their cost figures? "This could cost students anywhere from \$4.00 to \$10.00 per six credit course, Costello added." (Chris Costello is the SCSC Chairman, from his February 7 *Excalibur* interview)

4. What perhaps is most disgusting is that the few politically active students who vote in CYSF elections will be voting on spending your money. Another Ontario university with a population of 7,000 students recently won a referendum of the type proposed at York with a difference of 98 votes, out of only 132 ballots cast.

5. Last of my larger objections is that the \$8-million solution (Costello is quoted as having said the centre would cost \$7.5- to \$8-million) is the only one being considered. For a quarter of that sum we could turn the colleges into virtual palaces, build a decent central cafeteria, and keep the disruption of business and activity to a minimum. And when was the last time you heard of a large project coming in under budget?

There are just too many things wrong with the SCSC's approach to this project. It is terribly premature to go ahead with this idea at this time. To my knowledge the SCSC is planning a single public meeting to hear your concerns. Be there, and listen hard to what the committee is saying. Be critical, sensible and serious—they want to spend a lot of your money. Ask the questions that you want answered, don't wait for someone else to ask. Most importantly—VOTE IN THE REFERENDUM—don't leave such a large decision up to just a few people. I urge you to vote No.

—Lorne Leman

## Excalibur abortion article rankles readers

### Pro-lifer employed 'false analogies'

Editor:

My purpose in writing this letter is not only to refute Paul Pivato's arguments in "The Abortion Debate," but also to state quite emphatically that I am not pro-abortion and to my knowledge, neither is anyone else in the abortion rights movement. Rather, I am pro-choice with regard to every aspect of reproductive freedom, including abortion.

Reproductive freedom refers to the right of women to determine when and if to bear children, and since we lack contraception which is 100 percent safe and effective (I stress safe, given the documented side effects of the Dalkon Shield, the Pill etc.), abortion may be a necessity in some cases. There are many more factors beyond this, however, which would point to the individual's need for choice on the issue.

Pivato compares the denial of legal rights to blacks and women, with that of the fetus, suggesting that the fetus should be considered a "person" before the law. Using this false analogy, the "personhood" of anything can be proven.

Furthermore, Pivato fails to acknowledge that the current debate began, in essence, over the religious question of ensoulment within the Catholic Church. It was not until 1869 that Pope Pius IX declared that "life" begins at conception.

Mr. Pivato's allegation that illiterate, uneducated people view the fetus as human is incorrect. Canadian research on abortion shows that many women throughout the 1800s (who were not always educated and literate) regularly asked physicians for "something to put me right" when a period or more was missed. The prevailing attitude of women was that no "life" was present until they could feel the quickening (approximately three months).

I would also mention that Pivato's argument against Dr. Morgentaler is ad hominum and that the excerpt of poetry is useless since it exemplifies nothing.

The articulate journalist then proclaims that "abortion will one day be stopped." I would rephrase that statement and say optimistically that one day, it will no longer be necessary. This could come about sooner than anticipated if the anti-choice forces were to invest their wealth in contraception and embryo-implantation technology, sex education programs, homes for teenage mothers

and day care facilities. I suspect, however, that this is unlikely.

—Daryl Webber  
Glendon College

### Pro-choice label an ironic one

Editor:

I realize that with abortion, as with any other issue, there will always be two sides to the story. However, I find the use of the term pro-choice, used in describing the pro-abortionist movement, to be very ironic.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the word choice refers to "the power of choosing an option." But who makes the choice regarding life or death? The 'Pro-Choice' movement relegates all choices to themselves and refuses to acknowledge the unborn—thereby denying the unborn of the ability to later exercise their right to choice.

The debate seems to focus upon whether or not the fetus should be allowed to progress further in its growth.

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## IN MY HUMBLE OPINION Free market needed for Central Square

By STUART SCOTT GOLDBERG

Why is it that the only time a student on campus can get a decent snack and service at a reasonable rate, is when the Red Cross blood donor clinic hits Central Square?

We York University students should unite in a "Students-of-York-U-Deserve-Rights-Too" campaign. Personally, I am tired of paying inflated prices for food items that are sold by campus food services, the drug store, the grocery store, and private restaurants on campus. Coffee breaks are quickly becoming the most expensive habit university students are indulging in today.

There is a general rule that states "you get what you pay for," but York University seems intent on disproving that rule. After comparing prices with off-campus establishments, I feel I can safely state that shoppers on York's campus are paying higher prices at campus stores than are paid at equivalent off-campus establishments. Anyone with a minimal aptitude in logic should question why university students are expected to pay more on campus than off. Considering the financial hardships we students are facing today, campus pricing should be at least comparable to the general market retail prices, if not cheaper.

Not so, says John Becker, Vice President of Business Operations for York University. In our telephone conversation Becker clearly stated that York University has no input into the prices we pay for products on campus.

Furthermore, Becker fears that any attempt at price regulation on the part of the university administration will result in empty spaces where the stores now stand. With a little research, one discovers that the leases signed by private proprietors on campus literally assure the various stores of a monopoly. The lease for the drug store, for example, says there can only be drug store, and all the businesses have such leases. No wonder Mr. Becker fears the private store owners on campus. No wonder Mr. Becker cannot monitor prices at York University. He and the administration have created an environment in which private business can take advantage of stranded students and charge ridiculously high prices.

Mr. Becker, I realize that business is business. However, your first obligation is to the students of York University. You cannot justify forcing students to choose between exorbitant prices on campus, and having to travel off campus to find relatively honest pricing. Integrity dictates that the campus is supposed to service the students, not to take advantage of them.

I have a suggestion, Mr. Becker. As part of Harry Arthur's new ideas for entrepreneurial expansion at York University, build a shopping mall that can service all the needs of the York community. With the vast open spaces available on the York grounds, we can surely construct a mall large enough that no one store will monopolize the market. Create a situation of free enterprise. The proprietors will jump at the chance to service such a large market, and the students will finally get fair pricing.

If not our own mall, why not incorporate the competing shops in the new student centre they are considering building in front of the Ross Building (after knocking down the infamous Ross ramp). Such a location would give students convenient access to the services they now sorely lack.

Who knows? With the increased competition, the customers shopping at York might very well begin to enjoy the luxury of good service. Now, wouldn't that be nice?

## Anti-theft signs in Scott prove some are dishonest

By CAROL BRUNT

Sign posts have recently been placed throughout Scott Library which should have been up years ago. It is hoped that the signs will thwart the numerous disappearances of persons' belongings. The signs read, "Someone's looking for your purse Do you know where it is?", "Is the person sitting next to you as honest as you are?", "An untended wallet is 'a steal'."

One's initial surprise upon reading the slogans changes to questioning their need to be there at all. It seems that the little pink signs 'Beware of Theft' were not effective in preventing thefts. After all, with the number of people, not all of them students, moving in and out of the library each day, robberies are bound to occur. It's a relief, that at least to our knowledge this year, something more serious hasn't occurred in the library.

The message portrayed by the sign posts illustrate the reality that not everyone is honest. People will steal. Especially in an atmosphere where people are forced to interact with each other, not all of whom are similarly economically endowed. It's unfortunate in an institution of higher learning that such a fundamental cultural value cannot be observed.