

Sexual harassment is a buzz word at York

TORONTO (CUP) — Dubbed "The Hidden Issue" and "The Secret Oppressor," sexual harassment at York was, until last year, constantly forced into a dark corner.

But following the investigation of an alleged rape case on campus in March, 1980, sexual harassment became something of a buzz word at York.

In April, discussions between Ann Shteir, advisor to the president on the status of women, and university president H. Ian Macdonald led the university to set up a committee to study specific means of handling complaints of sexual harassment: The Presidential Committee on Sexual Harassment.

The committee, chaired by Shteir, presented its preliminary report to the York community in September.

The report stresses that the Committee on Sexual Harassment was not formed because of a belief in a high level of sexual harassment on campus. The disturbing factor,

according to Shteir, is that there is relatively little information as to just how widespread the problem on campus really is.

The report states: "The absence of such data at present prevents comment on the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment, but does not preclude the formulation of policy and the adoption of procedures for dealing with allegations of sexual harassment."

The report has now been open to comment and discussion. If the proposals now under consideration are adopted, a sexual harassment complaint centre may be established within the year.

An official channel for complaints would signify the University's acknowledgement of the existence of the sexual harassment problem on campus. Furthermore, an official definition and guidelines on conduct for all members on campus would set firm boundaries for behavior. According to committee members, these

are long overdue.

The definition of sexual harassment proposed by the committee as follows: "Unwanted attention of a sexually-oriented nature: implied or expressed promise or reward for complying with a sexually-oriented request: or implied or expressed threat or reprisal, actual reprisal, or the denial of opportunity for refusal to comply with a sexually-oriented request."

"The problem with sexual harassment is that it is a grey matter, it is not black and white," said Shteir. "It is all a matter of perception. A student may feel that a professor's friendly manner is a subtle advance. The professor, on the other hand, may not mean anything by his friendly manner. It is all a matter of interpretation. Because of this, it is a real problem indeed."

The preliminary report proposes guidelines on conduct for all members of the University. Shteir explains that, "this includes staff, students,

teaching assistants and professors. Also, the nature of the sexual offense can be heterosexual or homosexual. It can be student-student, staff-student, or professor-student."

The committee suggests a three-step procedure for processing complaints. The first would involve the offended party's reporting an incident to the sexual harassment complaint centre. The centre would keep such reports on file for twelve months; after six months the accused would have to be informed of the complaint. The second procedure involves a formal, written complaint, which the centre would keep on file for two years. At any time during this period the complainant could demand hearing, adjudicated by the ice-resistant (employee & student relations). If they wished, the complainant could proceed directly to the second step.

A range of possible actions have been suggested, from an

apology to a dismissal, to be used against the offender, if found guilty.

Committee members feel that the adoption of these suggestions will "remain sensitive to the plight of the victim and to assure procedural fairness to the accused."

Approximately 2,000 preliminary reports have been distributed across campus.

The final report is to be published sometime in the new year. Until then the committee invites York's members to state their views on the preliminary report.

Although Queen's University and U of T have shown interest in York's preliminary proposals, York remain the first university in Canada which has published any concrete definitions and advice on ways of dealing with the problem of sexual harassment within a large organization. If York's endeavour is successful, Shteir is hopeful that other universities will follow suit.

CUP comes to the Atlantic

by Cathy McDonald

The Atlantic provinces will be the scene of next year's eight-day Canadian University Press (CUP) extravaganza, the 44th national conference, from December 26, 1981, to January 3, 1982.

Atlantic student newspaper staff are now searching high and low for that special hotel at that special economical rate that will draw CUP delegates from all over Canada. Additional organizational tasks involve securing photocopying and printing equipment, a sound system, and

transportation for around 200 delegates from 64 Canadian student papers.

CUP conferences are held during the Christmas break, the only time when all student papers are not publishing. It is a critical eight days during which CUP's goals and principles are redefined giving direction for the ensuing year. National Executive staff are elected. Business decisions are made concerning national advertising, a crucial part of most papers' budgets, admitting or rejecting certain memberships, and the kinds

of services that will be provided by CUP staff to member papers.

Each national conference is a landmark in CUP history and requires thorough planning, starting a year in advance. The eventual location of CUP 44 will not only mean a financial boost to the hotel, some tourism and "national prestige" within student press circles to the municipality, but also a competition among breweries for a share in the profits from an estimated consumption of 500 cases of beer.

Although this year's conference at Camp Edphy in Val Morin, Quebec ski resort country was without major upheaval to the proprietors, a prominent Edmonton hotel found their Christmas tree missing from the lobby during the CUP 41 conference. It was eventually located in a dele-

gate's room on the fourth floor.

Conference organization will begin immediately with site selection and fund raising, according to *Gazette* editor Paul Clark. People interested in helping on the organizing committee are welcome.

CUP Executive Positions Go To Atlantic

By Paul Creelman

Two journalists in the student press from Halifax have been elected to the national office of Canadian University Press.

John Parsons, the field worker and bureau chief for the Atlantic Region of Canadian University Press (ARCUP), was elected the CUP president, and Paul Clark, the editor of the *Dalhousie Gazette*, was elected the features co-ordinator. (This position was previously named that of vice-president.) Parsons and Clark will take office for a term of one academic year starting next fall.

Last year, Parson was ARCUP president and editor of the *Muse*, the student newspaper at Memorial University in Newfoundland. Parsons is presently residing in Halifax.

Paul Clark is the ARCUP president and editor of the *Dalhousie Gazette* this year. Last year, he

was News editor on the *Gazette*, and a full-time student at Dalhousie. He has been going to Dal for 3 years, and will graduate with a B.A. in philosophy this spring.

Clark sees his job on the national executive as a three-fold role. He will co-ordinate researching and writing of feature stories on national and regional levels and assist in the production of the national news exchange. As part of the 3 person national executive, Clark says he will "be participating in making decisions taking into account the wishes and needs of CUP newspapers."

However, the most important role of CUP in the upcoming term will be building strong, socially conscious newspapers, according to Clark.

"I think that's what it all comes down to in the end", says Clark, "everything we do is directed towards that goal."



Gazette delegates Cathy McDonald and Paul Clark mull over an issue at the final plenary of the Canadian University Press National Conference held in Val Morin, Quebec, over the holidays.