

# Rites, roles of caucus

As we proceed into the academic year, a little known group of students begin their duties as student senators. They are your representatives to the highest body holding the jurisdiction over academic matters: the Senate. These academic matters include such areas as the University Academic Plan, Tenure

and Promotions, student assistance, the granting of degrees, approval of new programmes and changes to curricula as well as a host of matters relating to the academic quality of the University. While the University Senate can pass all kinds of policies for the establishment of new programmes, faculties and policies concerning the requirements of degrees and departments, it cannot allocate or even dictate the allocation of monies to a particular area. The Board of Governors is the body responsible for the areas concerning the financial administration of the University.

Student senators are elected on a faculty basis, the number depending on the size of the faculty, and are supposed to represent student interests as they pertain to Senate policies and procedures. They are supposed to do this keeping the interests of the overall student body in mind as well as the particular interests of their own faculty.

There are 28 student senators at present, with the Faculty of Education destined to lose one seat because of decrease in enrolment. Student senators who from the Student Senate Caucus have a very important role to play in that they form the most important body of academic representation that students have on this campus and which affect all students regardless of faculty or faculty "college." All in all, this sounds like a very arduous task and at times it can be. I suppose that is why student senators can be forgiven for showing a maximum attendance of 40 percent at one meeting. The rest of the meetings did not exhibit such a "high" attendance, but this is not a reflection of all the faculties, as some have shown due diligence.

The reasons for this poor turnout are threefold: Firstly, the non-academic orientation of the vast majority of recognized undergraduate student governments means that they have very little connection with academic matters. As a result, very little attention is paid by the college councils to what the student senators do. As well, these senators whose faculties have no recognized government, are not answerable to any faculty body.

I shall not dwell on these two reasons as both are matters of controversy and shall be dealt with in the coming months. They basically premise faculty based governments and as such face opposition from the entrenched interests.

The third point is that there is a lack of support staff and materials for the Student Senate Caucus. Student senators do not have any offices, secretarial support or any internal organization to keep track of previous Senate policies to monitor the senator's performance.

The chairperson of caucus is able to access CYSF resources to compensate for this lack of funds, but only to a limited degree because of the council's commitments. The new chairperson has a formidable task in their hands if they wish to change this situation.

The chairperson has to organize caucus to meet on a regular basis over the year with the appropriate documentation. There has to be sufficient resources to maintain secretarial and office support and these are likely to be found in the various student governments and the offices of the Provost and the Deans. Senate caucus has to develop coherent Standing Orders which should include all procedural motions as well as the full documentation of past practices. One of the past practices which should be retained is the automatic expulsion of a student senator who misses three consecutive meetings and/or their assigned committee meetings. There would be, of course, the recourse to appeal to caucus. Concurrently, there has to be a documentation of caucus meetings and decisions including statistics of attendance. As well, there should be the maintenance of an ongoing "small" library of materials to which senators can refer.

There has to be the organization of a bulletin or newsletter to inform students of the issues with which the senators are dealing. Social gatherings are also necessary to establish a more cohesive group of senators, as well as provide some incentive to caucus members.

The financial support for caucus shall not be easy to find. But even if the chair is unable to accomplish these tasks, this does not abrogate any student senator of his or her responsibility. This responsibility is, after all, one which deals with our primary relationship with the University; the academic relationship.

*Reya Ali, last year's CYSF President, is acting chairperson of the Student Centre Caucus and a student representative of the Board of Governors.*

# QUESTION ENGINE

AUNT DIXIE'S EDITION

By LISA OLSEN

"Have you had any problems with your schedule, and (b), what courses do you think should be offered at a discount price?"



**Mark Everett**  
"No, my schedule is satisfactory. b) All first year psychology and sociology courses, as well as natural science—if only to encourage that area."



**Iman Zalat, Biology IV**  
"No, and I usually don't have any problems. b) Humanities and social science courses because they have just been requirements, but not a part of my major."



**Maria Grace Iaboni, Math for Commerce III**  
"My first two years were rough for getting courses, but this year it's fine. b) Natural science because the easy ones fill up really fast."



**Tim Fleming, Computer Science I**  
"No, my schedule is just fine. b) Definitely science, biology and physics courses."



**Philip Fiuza, Political Science III**  
"No, it is just fine for the first time in years. b) All social sciences and fine arts courses because I never see them doing anything."



**Arcangela Riggillo, History III**  
"I'm trying to add one course, not in my major. b) Psychology because they're not worth it."

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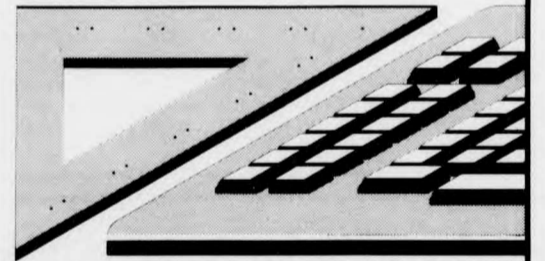
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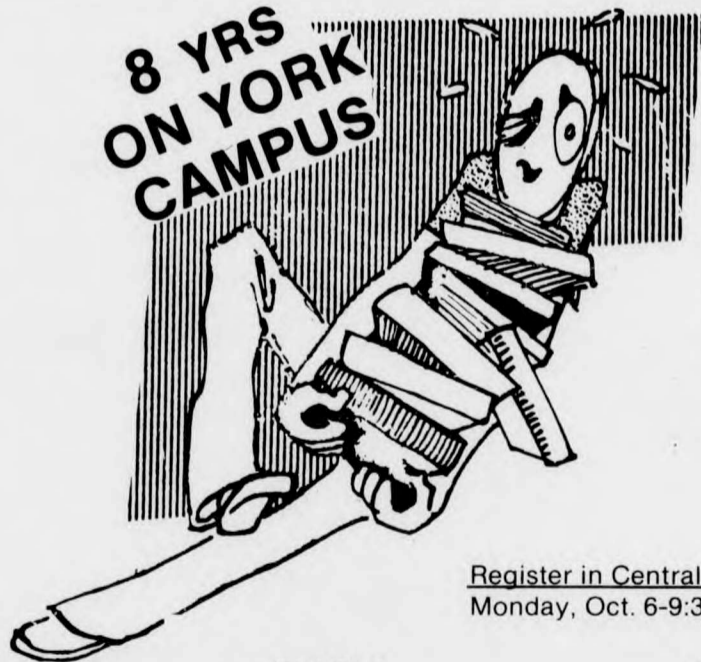
### WHO QUALIFIES FOR THE AWARD?

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### Letters Cont'd

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and Elite Food Services, who doubtless put him up to this ban—for any positions in the new centre).

Let's erect a Central Student Square, one that is designed to support the multi-activities of the York student community; one which can accommodate the masses of people who stop for a quick bite or dally over a double lunch, who engage in marathon coffee-and-study sessions, who gather for gossip gabs or seek space to scribble their creative spurts—in other words, a place tailored to the multi-faceted student lifestyle.

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Ross Van Ihinger

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