

**GILMOR:** My view is that undergraduate students and graduate students at York would benefit by having a central student government, period. If a particular college chooses not to exercise the opportunity it has to participate in, let's say in decision making of the Board of Directors, that's fine. That doesn't disenfranchise the individual as an undergraduate, if there still is a voice that is speaking for undergraduate students. Otherwise, you're into a situation where I don't think central student government is going to be very effective. I think you're right back where you started.

**EXCALIBUR:** So the only way to get them in there is to really say "You're a part of it now."

**GILMOR:** I think that's right . . . I'm suggesting that it would probably be more effective to have a central student government able to speak on behalf of all undergraduate students, and not have a situation where the University addresses an issue, let's say parking regulations, where 12 different student governments all claim that they're representing a collective view. All that does is allow the University to do what it wants to do. I don't think that's very effective representation for students in general.

**EXCAL:** Atkinson feels it is different from the rest of the undergraduate community. Why did you include them in CYSF? They have said that all their concerns being older part-time students are totally different.

**GILMOR:** Again, the dilemma I had was whether I redefine the structure

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of the University, or somebody else does. And I've chosen not to redefine the structure of the University. It seems to be the University views Atkinson as a constituent part of the main campus; and that there is movement back and forth between full-time and part-time students.

Given the nature of universities these days, with the changing composition of the student body, these distinctions based on part-time, full-time, age, and so on, are in many ways disappearing. I think it would be sad for the Atkinson community to be totally disconnected from mainstream life on the campus when it comes to representation issues of broad concern.

If a central student government makes a good argument for daycare, it may be that Atkinson students will benefit by daycare. And to that extent they have a stake in the whole. I'm absolutely convinced that they will continue to have a very active programme within their own structure, and that's good as well. But I didn't feel they should be relieved of a contribution to the overall well-being of campus life at an undergraduate level, whether they were full- or part-time.

**EXCAL:** So Osgoode would also be a part of the CYSF?

**GILMOR:** Yes. The only exception I think I've made in the report is to recognize that, given the distance Glendon is from the main campus, (it) would be given a different kind of consideration. But if you start to make exceptions on the main cam-

pus, where do you stop? This is the problem. Everybody's got an argument for special treatment, and they're legitimate arguments, but we've had to balance out whether or not we really intend to have strong local government and strong central government. I don't see those as incompatible dual goals, even though there are obviously going to be adjustment problems.

**EXCAL:** Would you characterize it as positive or negative, and then what changes did you make in the interim report?

**GILMOR:** I would say that it was a mixed reaction, and understandably so. I think people needed to be reassured on certain things. As you know the University is also looking at the non-faculty colleges through the Hare commission, and so I'm certain that I picked up some of the anxiety about that in some of the responses I had.

I think that as in my interviews, the response from students was generally positive. The first report was not intended for circulation. In meeting with students in particular, and that was my bias, I had agreed with them that before I went into the public domain, I would benefit from having some direct feedback to make sure I'd interpreted them correctly, and so on.

So I shared that document, and of course it got pulled out almost as my interim statement. In fact, it's turned out to be very helpful, because it clarified for me earlier where the issues and concerns were, and how much consensus there was and wasn't. The real issue has been around the

**GILMOR:** Student government, by definition, is free and clear, if you like, of administrative influence or control. That does not mean that a college government should be. I think the important thing is that college government be designed to help that college achieve its purpose or its goals. But I don't think one would call it necessarily a student government unless there was a separation between the student interest and the college interest in that sense.

I found there was some ambiguity and some confusion in some of the college structures. I'm not suggesting for a minute they should be changed. If they work, terrific. But I think that you do get into difficulty when you extend what is a mixed model over to central student government.

Then the issue is, is there undue influence on the decision-making of the central student government, which, in my mind, needs to be autonomous from outside interference or Administration interference. I think what defines student government is student, and I'm a purist about that . . .

All I want is some assurance that central student government is not unduly influenced by non-student interest. What I have tried to do is encourage some autonomy and independence of central student government, and accepted the fact that representation on it will be varied, and that there will be some overlaps, and so on. But I think that in the final analysis, central student government should be in a position to make hard decisions, and to feel that they've not been unduly influenced or intimidated.

**EXCAL:** So, you're not touching the role of the Master.

**GILMOR:** No. I have a great respect for the college system at York. My job was not to redesign the college system. It was to see whether I could help to improve the overall framework for student government with a focus on central student government and its role and place—whether there should be one or not, and how could it be more effective.

**EXCALIBUR:** With the interim report out now, you've gotten reaction to that. When will the final report be out, and can you give us a little preview of it?

**GILMOR:** Well, at this stage, it's a discussion paper and I'm sure there'll be more reaction before it's done. The next step for me is to meet with the SRC of the Board (on April 7) to take advice from them on how they read the reaction and comments that they've received as a result of this report. I assume there will be a final report, but I don't know what direction that's going to take.

Quite frankly, I've done, I think, as much as I can do to try to focus on some of the issues and offer some suggestions. At this point, it really moves to the York table to decide whether there's anything wise or useful in the work I've done.

**EXCAL:** How have you found this whole task, enjoyable, or frustrating, or . . . ?

**GILMOR:** Daunting. I've enjoyed it, and I've been most impressed—and I say this sincerely—with the student leadership at York, with the commitment that Faculty and College Masters and student have made to addressing issues and communicating with me. I found all of my interviews open and straightforward, and that, I found very encouraging.

That's what's given me some confidence that I think one will be able to find some consensus to allow this to progress. It's a very complex issue and there are a wide range of viewpoints on what the solution should be. In balance, I would still say that there seems to be a reasonable level of agreement on the general principles and the general approach within the student body. There are clearly differences of view on the mechanics, and will be until the very end, long after implementation of any recommendations.



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