

*Is it worth it?*

# York's TV system cost \$500,000

By ANDY MICHALSKI

If you had \$500,000 to help enrich the quality of instruction at York, where would you spend it?

Serving the 846 full time faculty and 13,993 students at York, the audio-visual centre has the money to do exactly that. Director Art Knowles likes to stress that his department is not out to replace faculty.

The concept was taken by the University of Toronto's Scarborough College which has spent over \$1,000,000 to serve just 3,000 students. The system has received a great deal of criticism from both students and faculty.

York's a/v centre has come under attack in recent years from students as being a million dollar boondoggle of technical razmatazz that serves its technicians rather than students. But as Knowles likes to point out, over one quarter of the faculty use the facilities in some form or another.

Officially known as the Department of Instructional Aid Resources, this department carries on all the jobs from running language labs, to producing films.

Business is booming so that the a/v centre has produced a film called At Home which explains just exactly what the centre can do. According to a press release, the centre deals with everything from directing medieval French drama to carrying out serious conversations with incipient schizophrenics.

One of the heavier users of the centre is Osgoode Hall where litigation procedures are videotaped to prepare students for the real thing. As tv production manager David Homer points out, if you had a car accident with someone else, the two parties' lawyers would sit down together with each client to discuss the case.

The a/v technicians are mostly full-time and the centre offers no courses on operating equipment. That's been left for

the community colleges to do. Homer says that they did offer part-time jobs to students a few years ago but students weren't reliable enough. The centre now employs 31 personnel including secretaries. Like many of York's departments, it's dominated by men.

Knowles blames this on the community colleges for not producing enough women technicians. In the recent advertising for a full-time photographer, he said he got 48 applications — all men.

In Poland, he said, he saw a great number of highly trained women technicians operating equipment but that sort of push has yet to come in Canada. His centre employs women — secretaries, a graphic artist, librarian etc.

Knowles feels it's unfair to compare York's centre with any commercial operation. He feels the centre has done well in coping with the extremely varied needs and demands of the York community as compared with the specialized demands that any commercial outlet faces. He points out that the commercial outlets are concerned with a high dollar output for the investment and of course, it's more efficient to specialize. Because York's a/v centre offers such a wide range of services, they are able to give cheaper and better consulting services to York's various departments.

The amount of contact the centre has with the average student is rather limited. Last year, it offered a course at Stong on media and society but otherwise seems to deal almost exclusively with faculty.

The centre has three bases of operations: a studio, broadcasting and editing centre in the basement of Stedman; an editing and broadcasting centre at second floor of Lecture Hall Two and an audio-visual centre in the basement of Ross.



## It's the key to future problems

By PAUL BOURQUE

"Increasing numbers may make it necessary to design new fundamentally different patterns of instruction," said Bernard Trotter Thursday at York.

The author of the report Television and Technology in University Teaching said new methods of instruction must be compatible with the ideal of individual instruction.

University enrolment is rising, and will continue to rise if recommendations laid out in the Report on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario are followed, said Trotter. Expansion of university resources are not keeping pace with the rise in enrolment because of the freeze on university spending, he continued. To maintain the present quality of teaching in

the face of these pressures, Trotter said the resources of the universities must be put to more efficient use.

He feels increased co-operation between university faculties in first and second level courses with a standardized first and second year course is the answer. Here the problem of crowding is most acute.

Such a system would save the teacher the time of preparing and presenting materials in basic subjects. This task often involves duplication of efforts by professors working independently of one another. Professors could then spend more time in personal contact with students.

Trotter recommended the establishment of a centre for instructional development to

"assist the faculties of Ontario universities in improving the effectiveness of instructional process." Such an institution would provide course consultants to aid in the inter-university design, development and use of course materials.

Those present asked about the desirability and practicality of these instructional innovations. Some asked to which disciplines these approaches would apply.

Chemistry professor Brian Cragg said first and second year courses were already the cheapest courses to run in a university. He said savings at these levels subsidized third and fourth year courses. Some said it was not feasible to create courses to be used for a period of three years in all Ontario universities.

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