

Protest raises students' awareness of York's individual problems

# Turnout poor at mini rally in Burton

By SUJATA BERRY

About 300 people gathered in Burton Auditorium last Thursday in conjunction with the downtown rally to protest post secondary underfunding.

The prevalent mood of the rally was captured by York history student, Adam Robinson, who asked, "Where are all the people?" He further expressed disappointment "in the face of the general indifference" shown by the majority of the York community who didn't attend the rally.

Sheldon Levy, York's associate vice president, described the effects of the underfunding with the use of a graph that contained quantitative analyses.

Since 1977, York's funding from the provincial government has declined by almost 25 percent, whereas the number of graduate and undergraduate student enrollment has increased by 20 and 50 percent respectively. In contrast, the full time faculty has remained almost stable while the number of part time faculty has increased considerably. The amount of space has increased only marginally.

"Underfunding hasn't allowed part time faculty to become full time faculty and this has increased the

reliance on part time faculty," Levy said. It is this "big sacrifice (that) has helped to reduce the effects of the cuts," said Hollis Rinehart, the York University Faculty Association (YUFA) representative.

He further added that part time faculty do not have the rights and facilities which full time faculty take for granted, for example, grants for research.

Levy also stated that another effect of underfunding has been the rising entrance requirements in order to stabilize the first year enrolment. The demand for entrance to first year has been increasing steadily. This means that more and more students are being refused admission to university every year.

Susan Watt, a member of the Music Council at York, informed the gathering that the Music Council has decided to "sign petitions and send them to the responsible authorities, and continue to send them till we get some response." She further suggested that the Council of York Student Federation (CYSF) should also consider taking similar action.

Allan Armstrong, the Academic Affairs Director for CYSF urged everyone to "get out and vote" or "to get up and do something about it (underfunding)." He alluded to the

slogan "Up York" as being symbolic of such action. Such calls to action were echoes frequently in the duration of the rally.

Leslie Garant, representative of the Calumet College General Meeting, said that the areas affected by underfunding at York were space and the quality of education. Garant pointed out that the problems are further compounded by the elimination of the York Fund student fee (\$3), which might have sufficed in paying for small improvements on campus. The York Fund is currently supported by the alumni and its undesignated funds are presently used for scholarships, bursaries and library acquisitions.

The lack of space is felt by every department on campus. The chairman of the Political Science department, Bob Drummond, said that

"there are four teaching assistants to an office and if a person is not teaching for a while, their office is taken away."

Maurice Elliot, the master of Winters College, referred to a report from the Director of Libraries which stated that "3,000 more trips than the previous year had been made to service the overhead projectors" but the staff had remained the same size (14). He further stated that "all services, try to service individuals to their fullest capacity" but this is getting increasingly difficult to accomplish with the decreasing funds.

Dina Mirutello a Physical education student and sign language interpreter said she was "appalled at the lack of services for the handicapped (deaf)." Similarly, Debbie Marinoff expressed concern about safety and security on campus. "We need a lot

more to be done," she said.

The organizers of the rally provided entertainment in order to boost morale. A group of faculty members sang parodies of songs from the sixties: "This land is your Land, This land is my land. . . Oh York is your place, Yes York is my place. . ."

Ron Kelly, a music student, performed one of his compositions titled "You Can't Run Away From Us Anymore." The song dealt with the issue of university underfunding.

Wayne Livingston, an employee at the Physical Plant started working at York 20 years ago at \$3,000 per year. Today he earns \$22,000 per year. "The irony is that the \$3,000 bought more (than the \$22,000)—the dollar is deflated," he said. "I feel like the old horse in 'Animal Farm' who had his hay supply cut down."

## University consensus needed

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the Government." Bob Rae, leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, concluded the speeches by telling the students to "get off your butts and fight for what you believe in."

Both Sorbara and York President Harry Arthurs stressed the importance of a consensus among university constituents in solving the underfunding problem. Arthurs saw the funding protest as "evidence of a consensus so unusual, so complete, so urgent. . . it must bring results."

"Universities have done all they can do," Arthurs said, "but now we must stop the gap." Ontario universities' funding has dropped 16 percent since 1977, according to the COU. Arthurs added that universities are now dealing with 25 percent more students than a decade ago. He described the consensus as demands for "a modest realignment to restore education to the support it enjoyed a decade ago."

Sorbara began his speech by placing underfunding in a historical perspective, claiming "this problem was something our government inherited." Sorbara commended the Progressive Conservative government's initial commitment to post secondary education, but said that the government soon lost its enthusiasm.

Larry Grossman accepted the blame for neglecting funding of post secondary education. However, he also proposed a new funding program formulated by the Progressive Conservative caucus. The new program would consist of a 28 percent increase for operating grants over the next three years, and a \$400-million capital grant to be allocated over a five year period.

Sorbara questioned Grossman's promise, asking "Where were Mr. Grossman's priorities when he was treasurer?"

Grossman assured both the Minister and the audience that the Progressive Conservatives would deliver the \$800-million proposed funding package to post secondary education. Grossman, furthermore, claimed that "post secondary education grants are more important than industrial grants and freer trade discussions."

Sorbara informed the audience that he was to speak to the Priorities and Planning Committee at Queen's Park that afternoon concerning post secondary allocation in the upcoming pre-budget announcement. He was suddenly interrupted by a protester's shout, "We'll come with you Greg."

Sorbara replied, "I'm not sure if the room is that large." The protes-

ter rebutted, "We have the same problem."

The final political speaker, Bob Rae, chose not to try and "score partisan points," claiming "it would be very easy for me to say that whatever Mr. Grossman offers, I will double." According to Rae, protesters are not only representing themselves, but the future condition of post secondary education. Rae demanded that faculty, staff and students "stop being so damn polite about what's going on in your institution."

Rae declared that he "want(s) a system where more and more people have an opportunity to attend university." He explained, however, "there are limits in what governments can do. . . so don't couch what you are asking for in the language of self-interest."

Brian Hayward, student council president of Ryerson, spoke on behalf of students' concerns. Echoing Rae's commitment to accessibility, Hayward asked, "Are we destined to making our universities a haven for the economic elite?" Hayward claims that the moral of the story is clear: as "the future of the universities in this province (goes), so goes the future of our province as a whole."

Rose Shannon, of U of T's Faculty Association, claimed that faculty is "conscious of the fact that we are teaching the future generation," and that this deserves "state of the art teaching equipment which is now threatened" (by the cutbacks).

Celia Harte of the York University Staff Association (YUFA), also questioned the present condition of university facilities, stating that university staff have been forced to "do more and more with less and less. Our staff is suffering," she said. "It's

harder to achieve your expectations of ourselves and our own expectations of ourselves."

A last minute addition to the list of speakers was Polanyi. He compared winning the Nobel Prize the day before the rally to being on Pompeii when Mount Vesuvius erupted. Even more ironic, was the fact that on the same day as winning the prize (October 14), Polanyi learned that the National Research Council, which he once worked for, had slashed their budget by \$20-million, thereby eliminating 200 research jobs.

George Connell, president of U of T, declared that university faculty and staff "cannot afford to lose a single person. . . we cannot afford to be second place." He affirmed that "quality and accessibility will be costly," but stressed that "we definitely will" get value for our money.

A question period was scheduled to follow the speeches, but was curtailed due to time constraints. Only two questions were asked, by Terry Johnson of the Association of Part-time Students at U of T, and Iggy Pitt, speaking for undergraduates at U of T. Original rally plans had included further questions from the floor by representatives of the Canadian Union of Education Workers (CUEW), staff, graduate students, faculty, and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS).

The speeches, which were scheduled to run 32 minutes in total, took 85 minutes, leaving only five minutes for questions. "There were a lot of good questions that weren't addressed," said Blink.

Blink concluded of the rally "no new concerns were raised, but old ones were reinforced in a big way."



**ON THE HOT SEAT:** When a student offered to join Sorbara at Queen's Park that afternoon the Minister said "I'm not sure if the room is that large," to which the protester replied "we have the same problem."

## Campus pubs closed for rally

By PAULA TORNECK

In a bid to support the "Stop the Gap Movement," the campus pubs were closed last Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

"It's an historical event," says Tammy Hasselfeldt, the President of Vanier student council and initiator of the idea. "Never before have all Ontario Universities fought together to support a cause."

The 'stop the gap' movement is an effort to make both government officials and public aware of the underfunding problems universities are presently experiencing. The movement also represents an attempt for universities to achieve at least the national average of post-secondary funding.

By closing the pubs, the college

officials hoped for a better attendance by York students down at the rally. "This makes the day off school more a fight for a cause, than a reason to party," added Hasselfeldt.

The student council presidents for each college on campus were unanimously in favour of the idea. "It took less than 24 hours for all the colleges to agree," said Hasselfeldt.

Although the pub managers must comply with the wills of the colleges' councils, they were not in opposition to the idea. "From a business point of view, closing the pub was not ideal," said Pat Chester, the manager of the Open End Pub in Vanier College. "However, it was a good cause and unfortunately, it's the only way to get students to support it."



**THE TRIUMPHANT NOBEL LAUREATE:** John Polanyi (with arms raised) acknowledges standing ovation before speaking at Convocation Hall last Thursday.

STEPHEN WISE