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Free Speech

Peter Brickwood on Council external policy

When I began writing a critical appraisal of CYSF External Affairs Policy and Campaigns, my immediate thought was that there is nothing a criticize because CYSF has no external policy.

The CYSF post of Vice-President External has effectively been vacant since Barb Taylor completed her term last Spring. Ms. Taylor was recently elected Chairperson of the Ontario Federation of Students and not, as Malcolm Montgomery wrote in confusion, OFS Chairman (*Excalibur*, February 26, 1981).

Unfortunately confusion is the ideal word to describe External Affairs at CYSF this year. The trouble began last spring with a V.P. who spent the entire summer out-of-town. That V.P. lost their seat but requested reinstatement, was granted it and then resigned anyway—all in the same meeting. Since then things have gone from bad to worse.

Peter Mednis was elected Vice-President External there has not been an effective campaign on a single issue that falls within his portfolio. The most concerned and aware students could not possibly have any idea what external issues are or what has been happening because Mr. Mednis has not given anyone any information.

There has been no information available for students on issues such as Established Program Financing, Canada Student Loan interest rates, the Student Aid Task Force or tuition, nor have any of the campus clubs, or College Councils been informed.

Even worse, the relevance of these issues for York students has not been advertised. Raising the Canada Student Loan interest rates, for instance, is under consideration by Secretary of State Francis Fox. This is especially important for York students because low interest rates were the main reason that the Toronto-Dominion Bank reduced the number of student loans it would make causing so many hassles for York students last fall. CYSF has done nothing on the interest issue all year.

Established Program Financing which provides 60 per cent of the money for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities is being renegotiated. At present the Federal Government is proposing to cut 1.5 billion dollars, which

would result in a 30 per cent cut in the funding to York and other universities. CYSF has done nothing.

The Student Aid Task Force will have a major influence on OSAP and other student assistance programs. Most major university student governments submitted a brief on behalf of their students. Mr. Montgomery will doubtless tell us that he inherited a disorganized council too late in the Fall to be able to do anything about the Task Force.

Well what about tuition? Mr. Montgomery received a memo from University Vice-President Farr on December 19 which informed him of impending tuition increases. Three days before the Monday February 9 Board of Governors meeting he asked Barb Taylor what he should do about tuition increases. Did he think that last year's tuition campaign which cut one-third off

the possible tuition increases could be done again in one weekend?

CYSF never so much as produced a pamphlet on tuition this year.

The only pamphlets, posters, banners and campaigns being mounted on External issues at York this year are being done by the Students Against Underfunding which is also using the Ontario Election as an opportunity to publicize these issues and fight for the good of all students. CYSF has finally gotten its nose out of the Rationalization issue which is the only external issue it was doing anything about, if you can call attending a lot of meetings and making a lot of longwinded speeches doing something.

Mednis and Montgomery have adroitly clambered aboard the Students Against Underfunding bandwagon. The question now is will CYSF pay its way?

Bethune College and Calumet College have contributed considerable amounts of money to the CYSF External Affairs budget this year, not to mention the student activity fee every CYSF student has paid. What is this money being spent on? It cannot have been spent on External Campaigns because there have not been any.

As the CYSF meeting held on Wednesday March 4 a motion to contribute \$300 for expenses of the campaign being run by Students Against Underfunding was to have come forward. Did it pass? Who spoke against it? What were their reasons?

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