

PERSPECTIVE

BY ROBERT CASTLE

Leadership key to CAB

As fall rapidly approaches, York students begin their annual search for refuge from the pending storms that traditionally plague the campus. There is a little known, yet perfect place to escape the weather at York and the congestion of Central Square, that terror of terrors. Were you to walk over to the Fine Arts building and stroll through its

corridors, you would be struck first by the levels of excitement and creativity that pervade the place and, second, by the incredible displays of the artistic talent of your fellow students. Our Faculty of Fine Arts is alive and its students reflect that not only in their talent but in their organizations.

Last year, at the initiation of Reya Ali, then president of the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF), the various departmental student associations came together under an umbrella organization—the Creative Arts Board. Since that time the Creative Arts Board, or CAB as they like to call themselves, has experienced slow but persistent growth in its activities and in the respect it has been shown by students and administrators alike. Today CAB is on the threshold of being all a student government can and should be: an organization sensitive to both the social life and the academic life of its students. Both aspects of the student experience are essential for effective student representation at the University.

However, much work needs to be done to full develop CAB's potential. Before all else, CAB must wean itself from the uncomfortable dependence it has of CYSF. Ali, in a fit of paternalistic rage, insisted that CAB be chaired by the Social and Cultural Director of his executive and not by a Fine Arts student, such as Simon Jacobs, who was the Fine Arts senator last year.

This year Carl Tacon, a visual arts student, will chair the Board. But having a Fine Arts student at the helm is not in itself enough. With the loss of its two spokespersons, Jacobs and Peter Fyfe, CAB will have to turn to new leadership and actively recruit people who are willing to devote the time necessary to institutionalize CAB's programme.

Continuity with last year's CAB will be maintained by Vicky Fusca

who chaired CAB last year under CYSF and who has abandoned her home Faculty of Arts and now counts herself as a Fine Arts student.

CAB must now learn what it means to be a student government. Although it is good to enjoy a healthy working relationship with the Dean's office, CAB must develop the ability to criticize constructively. The faculties at York, because they lack any effective opposition, have tremendous power. It rests with organizations like CAB to put forward the interests of students and to ensure we are getting value for our money.

Student governments must not pander to the different levels of administration, rather CAB should expend its energy mobilizing Fine Arts students in the departments, or lobbying the University to get more funding for equipment rather than using student money from the CAB budget.

A faculty-based student government must recognize the duality of its role. It will not suffice for CAB to satisfy itself by sponsoring an orientation or a Fine Arts Festival—no matter how successful or well-staged. It must look beyond the social to the academic and the political. CAB must apply pressure to the faculty to allow student-run course evaluations to be published. (Arts and Science both encourage such publications; it's time for evaluations to become a matter of course in each Faculty.) Fine Arts students must begin to look critically at their programmes and express their criticisms through CAB.

Leadership, accompanied by the political will of students, will be the key. It remains to be seen whether CAB will rally to the challenge and show the rest of us how to do it.

Rob Castle was last year's Academic Affairs Director and summer researcher for CYSF.



Photo: Ian Maceachern

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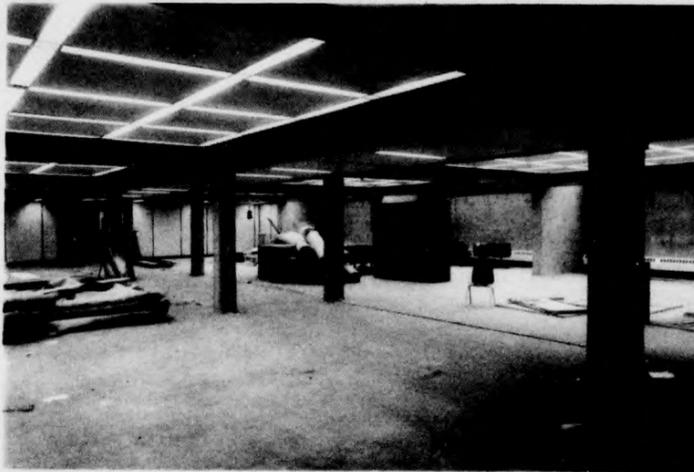
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Picture Making

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this week: Forensic Photography



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by Gary Blakeley

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