

Campaign moves into consultation phase

cont'd from p. 1

Bovey Commission which, as part of its mandate, was studying the possibility of raising the tuition fees of Ontario universities.

Costello's advice for this year's student centre initiative led by Blink and Castle is to simply "Go for it." He also added, "You know what happened (in 1984/85). Don't make the same mistakes as I did. When people start abandoning projects, find out why."

While Costello's campaign involved a planning and research stage in which he wrote to various universities in Canada to enquire about existing centres, the Blink/Castle campaign involved a much more thorough and extensive research period. The strategy involves four basic phases: planning, consultation, negotiation and information and dissemination.

While the Costello campaign depended on a small core of active York students, the Blink/Castle campaign will try to involve as many York students as possible. "It's important that the student centre is not planned by a few people," Castle said, "but by the entire York community who can meet the needs of the centre." Castle also said that they are debating whether or not to use a consulting firm for the actual planning phase of the centre.

MBA students are already being used to conduct a feasibility study for the proposed centre as part of a course requirement for Microeconomics for Management. The idea arose out of a discussion with Blink and three constituency members of the Graduate Business Council (GBC) who in turn proposed to Administrative Studies professor Tillo Kuhn that the feasibility study be undertaken by business students as part of their course credit. "We're putting great MBA talent to work for the York community," Kuhn said. The six students working on the study will present their preliminary findings on November 15 and a final proposal on December 15.

Contrary to the Costello campaign, the architectural drawings for the proposed 75,000 square foot stu-

dent centre will not be drawn until after the February referendum, Castle said. "We are dealing with the concept of whether students want a student centre right now," Castle said. "If you start making actual designs of the proposed centre, then that becomes the issue."

The consultation phase with student leaders, students and the Administration will determine what types of services and facilities will go in the proposed centre, Castle explained. The aim of the centre, according to Castle, is to "create a place that will bring a sense of community to the University, a place where students can go for various reasons, either to study or relax, to have good food, or to enjoy athletic facilities."

Castle also mentioned the possibility of the student centre housing various student organizations, clubs and academic groups, while still preserving existing college space. "There will be no loss of college space," Castle said. "The centre will be designed to complement and enhance existing space. Colleges are welcome to move in, but they probably won't because they would want to maintain their autonomy," he added.

Blink said that York's chronic space shortage is a major reason for building a new student centre. "Right now six or seven clubs are sharing space in Fouders College," Blink said. "A new student centre would provide lots of extra space for students."

Castle and Blink also foresee that a new student centre could curb York's poor retention problem. "Only 12 percent of York's approximately 33,000 full-time students live in residence," Castle said. "If students aren't involved with their colleges," Blink added, "then they just go home." Blink and Castle are aiming to provide a place for the commuter student population who are not motivated to stay on campus after classes are over.

"It's crucial that we change the physical face of the University to make the commuter students feel at home at York and not regard it just as a cold monolith," Castle said.



HI HO, HI HO IT'S OFF TO WORK WE GO: CYSF president Gerard Blink (right) and summer researcher Rob Castle survey the campus looking for the best place to build the Student Centre.

STEPHEN WISE

Management Board has yet to be implemented, Blink said that he is optimistic about the students' bargaining position. "We hold all the cards right now," he said. "If the university doesn't negotiate to our favour before the referendum, and if it's a successful referendum, then we can go to them with an assurance of \$8-million."

"It's critical," Castle said, "that if students are going to be putting their money into the centre, that we negotiate in their best interests. Recommendations between students and the Administration shouldn't be difficult," he said. "Terms of reference for management and control over the building would be established."

Provost Meininger said he thinks the revival of the student centre initiative is "terrific," adding that the Blink/Castle campaign should be easier because "some lessons were learned in the last campaign," such as "assuring students of adequate consultation and establishing a set terms of reference for the centre," he said. "The Administration, in my opinion, has every reason to welcome this initiative and to listen carefully and responsively to anything that is to come forward" out of negotiations.

While it is likely that the University will provide the initial capital for the centre, Castle said they have to work out a levy fee that will not be implemented until the building is actually usable which would be anywhere from one and a half to two years after a successful referendum. Although Castle did not offer a precise levy figure, he said it would be "considerably less than the last year's projected \$50 figure."

Blink and Castle are now asking for student input for the proposed centre. "The decision to build a student centre is ours (the students)," Blink said. "The university will not fund a centre because it has academic priorities, nor will the provincial government. If we want a centre, then we must make that choice."

Blink also assuaged any worries that the new centre would take away existing college pub's revenues. "The entire college pub facilities can hold about 1,000 students," Blink said. "The new centre would not try to detract from that market; it would focus on attracting the remaining 32,000 students who do not comprise the pub business. We're not interested in taking any business away from the pubs."

Now that the research phase is over, Castle said the next phase will be to consult the various constituencies, clubs and students on campus. At a special June conference for constituency leaders held in Collingwood, Blink said that he received approval in principle for a new centre. He also said that he has received similar club approval through the Club Commission. "Nobody is going to be hurt by a new student

centre," Blink said. "It would benefit all."

The critical phase for the student centre will be the negotiation phase with the Administration which Blink said should begin at the end of this month or early November. This phase will determine the legal terms of reference for ownership of the land, financing and management of the proposed centre. "I can foresee the University renting space from the student centre," Blink said.

Castle said that ideally he would like to see student ownership of the land, but said a more feasible scenario was to have a 99 year lease at \$1.00 a year with the Administration.

As with the Costello campaign, Blink and Castle will be insisting on a majority student run Management Board which will oversee the running of the centre. Although the

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
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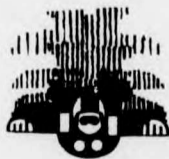
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