

Ontario fees strike begins

WILLOWDALE, ONT. (CUP)

— More than 30 students occupied the office of Glendon College Registrar C.A. Pilley, January 9, to protest withholding of Ontario Student Award grant cheques to students who have not paid the second installment of their fees.

The action highlighted the first full week of the Ontario-wide second term fee strike organized by the Ontario Federation of Students.

Although several universities have co-operated by releasing OSAP cheques, the Glendon administration has refused. And the University of Western Ontario is taking an even tougher line by reminding students of financial sanctions available if they don't pay their fees in time.

At Glendon shortly after 3 p.m., January 9, students moved into the Registrar's office and decided to remain there throughout the night.

"A group of people got things together and decided to take the place over," exclaimed one undergraduate.

Only one security guard was on duty during the occupation, and students inside the Registrar's office reported "No hassles."

At one point 70 to 80 students were present, according to Glendon College student union president Dave Moulton. The student union held a meeting at the office and the students decided to continue to occupy "indefinitely". They brought in sleeping bags and established food committees.

Students have issued two demands that must be met before they will terminate the occupation. First, they want York University to establish a policy similar to that of the University of Toronto with respect to OSAP grants.

The University of Toronto, Queen's, Laurentian, Lakehead and Carleton Universities have decided to turn OSAP cheques over to students even if they are participating in a fees boycott. Students will not be required to pay their second term fees installment to receive their OSAP money.

The Glendon students have also demanded that York University (to which Glendon is affiliated) waive all penalties

for late payment of fees.

Moulton said the decision to withhold the cheques was made by York president, David Slater. He "followed the policy of previous years."

"We only found out about it (Slater's decision) at three o'clock this afternoon (January 9)," Moulton said. "The university's action is jeopardizing our fees strike against the government's policy. The action undermines the whole fees strike."

Moulton remarked bitterly that Slater's action "shows our enemies aren't just in the government, but also in the university."

York Vice-President of Student Affairs, John Becker, spoke to the occupiers last night, saying he had not made the decision to hold the cheques.

Students complained "That he was just bullshitting us around." After Becker left, students voted to continue the occupation.

Students launched a poster campaign and distributed flyers outlining the position of the student union and the reasons for the occupation throughout the college.

The student union had placed \$2,000 into a "special account" for students who are "caught short" by the administration's move," a union spokesman said.

Support for the occupation has come from the council of York Student Federation (CYSF). But council president, John Theobald, has discussed the possibility of using similar tactics at York's main campus.

At the University of Western Ontario personnel in the fees office are refusing to release the grant portion of the student awards unless the student either pays or makes satisfactory arrangements to pay for his second term fees.

The Ontario Student Awards Plan cheques are "being released on the same basis as last year" according to George McLeod of the UWO fees office.

McLeod says he is responsible for the distribution of the OSAP cheques, as agent for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

"I am responsible to MCU to release the cheques only when the student has made

arrangements to pay," he said, "The fees have to be paid."

McLeod does not consider the decision of the student to deposit his fees owing in a trust fund as satisfactory arrangement to pay his fees. The student's council has set up such a trust fund.

He felt students should appreciate "The university's bad financial position" when they are considering participating in the fees strike. McLeod cited his loss of two adding machines due to cuts in his office budget.

Students who owe fees must go to the fees office to pick up their OSAP cheques. Students who have paid their fees in full can obtain the grant portion of their award in the awards office in the university community centre.

University of Western Ontario student council representatives will be distributing letters and posters at the fees office during the week to convince students to strike.

The council will also be manning an information booth in the Bank of Montreal in the university community centre where arrangements have been made to deposit fees owing in a trust fund.

Council President Bob Stikeman admitted few funds are available to lend students who are financially hard pressed. Despite the administration's decision to withhold the OSAP cheques, "We, (the council), are making an effort to participate in the strike." Some students have already deposited their fees in the trust fund.

He hopes 1500 students at Western will withhold fees, giving some support to the provincial strike.

The administration cancelled a council request for the list of names of students who had fees

owing, so an information mailing over the Christmas holidays was not possible.

Stikeman proposes that fees in the trust fund be held until the end of January. Students who deposit their second term fees are able to withdraw their funds at any time.

The council will meet January 30 to decide further action.

Craig Heron, general coordinator of the Ontario Federation of Students admitted Friday that "a monumental silence has set in" regarding the strike. Few member institutions have resumed classes for long, and none are able to report progress of the strike on their individual campuses.

Heron reported that the OSAP cheques are being released at the University of Toronto, Laurentian University, Carleton University, Queen's and Lakehead.

Posters promoting the strike have gone out and are displayed on the campuses. The OFS newsletter with additional information will be out next week.

The decision to release the OSAP cheques has been put off by some university administrations, Heron said, and he cited York as another place where the cheques may be given out.

There is some doubt about the penalty that would be imposed on those students who participate in the fees strike. Senate regulations call for suspension of student privileges or the more severe tactics of deregistration if the student avoids paying his fees. But the regulations are not considered mandatory. Students who are deregistered must pay an automatic \$25 fee to register again along with a \$100 penalty

fee that may or may not be applied.

McLeod said (January 9) that the collection of fees usually lasts three weeks.

After two days, McLeod reported the turnout has been larger this year at the fees office. Nearly 500 letters containing fee payments were received Tuesday alone.

McLeod said the fees strike may cause two unforeseen problems for students.

"It will be difficult to find those students, usually between 500 and 600 who don't have any money," McLeod said.

The fees office annually assist those students "on an individual basis" to locate bursaries, loans, or part-time employment. This year the office will not be able to discern them from amongst the students who are participating in the fees strike.

The second problem comes towards the end of the month when the fees office prepares the tax certificates for the fees paid. Because university computer time is at a premium, any delay in complete collection of fees will uphold the release of the certificates for income tax purposes.

At Queen's University some 4,000 students have not paid their second term fees installment, about 2,500 more than usual for this time of year.

The fees strike is in progression on ten campuses — Carleton, St. Patrick's College in Ottawa, Glendon, York, Lakehead, Laurentian, Queen's, University of Toronto, University of Western Ontario, and the University of Windsor.

Heron said he expects some preliminary figures on the boycott's effectiveness by about January 17, but no conclusive results until the end of the month.

The fees strike, endorsed by a majority of Ontario university students last October 11 and 12, called for the withholding of second term fee payments as a protest against higher tuition fees and higher loan ceilings imposed by the provincial government.

Grad council meets

The first council meeting of 1973 took place Monday, January 8, at the Grad House. Since the Christmas party was such a success the Entertainment Committee is planning a Valentine's party. Watch for notices of the date. The Grad House is slowly being improved; a cable outlet has been installed for the color T.V.

Representatives of the Schools of Social Work and Library Service attended and presented their views on the distribution of D.A.G.S. funds. Further discussion will take place at the next council meeting, Monday, January 22, and a General Meeting at 7:30 p.m., Friday, January 26. All grads are urged to attend.

WRESTLING CLINIC

January 19 and 20

Friday Evening:

7:15 p.m. — 10:00 p.m.

Saturday Evening:

9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

Dalhousie Gymnasium

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