

## Tradition of cooperation?

**Control of fees: councils versus governors**

By ABIE WEISFELD

Although the relationship between the CYSF and the board of governors has not been seriously tested in the past, the questions of a guaranteed student fee and the nature of the breakdown of those student fees promise to provide the issues around which the independence of the CYSF will be determined.

Not only is the continued existence of student fees in the hands of the board of governors, but the present breakdown of that money comes under its jurisdiction as well. The CYSF's budget of \$96,000 compares unfavourably with the approximately \$300,000 of the University of Toronto's Students' Administrative Council. SAC has a per capita fee of \$15.50 compared to the CYSF's \$10 share of student fees. Both are considerably lower than those of many other universities. The student council at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, for example, receives \$32 per student.

**FEES ARE DIVIDED**

The crux of the matter at York is that student fees are divided up among many different student councils. At present, \$17 per student is allocated to the college councils, where they exist, or to the college authority, where they don't. Thus, although York students pay up to \$27 in fees to student government, this money is widely decentralized.

The issue of control over student fees at York is highly contentious as well. Money collected as part of the overall tuition fees for student activities is presently merely considered to be part of the overall university budget by the board of governors. Control over decisions to increase or decrease the student fee or even to stop giving the money to various student governments and activities lies in the hands of the board.

**NO GUARANTEE**

Although there has been a "tradition" set up whereby the university authorities hand over a certain amount of money to the CYSF and the various colleges, there is no guarantee that the tradition will continue. The CYSF "operating grant" (as it's called by assistant vice-president for student services John Becker) is what the student governments' budgets are called by the university administration.

The CYSF budget came into existence when the CYSF was

established in 1968. In 1973, the student fee was formalized by the university administration in a policy statement approved by the president.

He stated that fees would be "guaranteed by the University". The motivation for this particular move was the proposal, made during the presidency of Mike Mouritsen, for the CYSF to incorporate itself. When the same thing was tried at Brock University, the student union was faced with a run on the bank as individual students wanted to be reimbursed.

**UNABLE TO COLLECT**

Despite the university's guarantee of funds to the student councils, York's Glendon college was unable last fall to collect \$4 per student which it had allocated for a student café — even though a referendum of the students had supported the plan. About \$5,000 is at stake.

Glendon Student Union president Mike Drache responded to that controversy by stating that "I believe that the board of governors is only an agent for the student union, but some administrators see the student union as only another department of the university. This is a question of whether students have a right to their independent organization."

**TALKS BROKEN OFF**

Negotiations between the Glendon student union and the university administration have broken down even though, in 1973, the president of the university issued a statement which stated that "the University supports student government as one of its educational functions believing that significant benefits are available to both the active participants of councils and to those who enjoy the program offered by student governments."

This contradiction can best be explained by the subsequent statement of policy that "student governments receive operating grants from the university which are drawn from general university revenue. A student is not paying a compulsory membership fee to the university which is passed on to a society legally separate from the university. He is paying a tuition fee to the university which, in turn supports a wide range of departments, agencies and activities furthering the university's educational goals... The university (i.e., the board of governors) may promulgate regulations from time

to time concerning relations between itself and student governments."

**NOT A UNION**

John Becker pointed out that the CYSF does not have "a closed shop check-off of fees" since the CYSF is not a bargaining unit under the Labour Relations Act and that consequently considering the CYSF to be an independent student union "doesn't apply... is a rhetorical position, is not a legal fact."

While Becker admitted the possibility that the operating grant could be withheld from the student government, he pointed out that every increase requested so far in the money allocated to the student government has been granted by the board of governors, except the recent Glendon request.

He considered that the relationship established between the administration and the student governments is that of a "tradition of being supportive and benign."

**CURRENT REQUEST**

The current request from the CYSF is to increase the fees by \$1.50 to cover the referendum passed last year increasing membership fees in the Ontario Federation of Students from 40



York assistant vice-president for student services John Becker admits that operating grants can be withheld from student governments. However, he says, they are almost always approved.

cents. That increase was not included in this year's fees since the increase had not been submitted for the decision of the B. of G. by the previous council. The referendum to increase National Union of Students membership fee from 30 cents to \$1 will now also be up for the consideration of the B. of G.

While the B. of G. has decision-making power in these matters, it is expected that the tradition of

cooperation will be continued, at least according to Becker.

When he was asked how the students' activity fees could be guaranteed above and beyond the assurances of Becker, CYSF president Dale Ritch said, "There should be a contract set up between the administration and the central student government to guarantee student fees, as was done recently at Ryerson."

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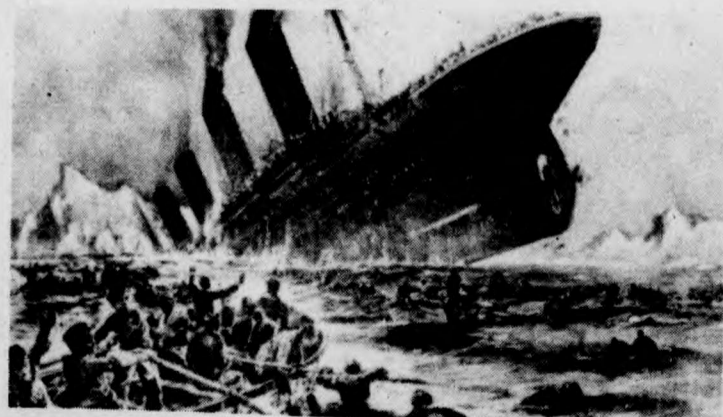
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