

During the past few months, the words 'politically correct' have become loaded weapons on North American university campuses. For some students and faculty, they are the symbol of a terrifying threat to the academic *status quo*. For others, they are vehicles of scorn and condescension, used to silence cries for diversity and tolerance on campus. Excalibur brings you the debate from three perspectives:

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Financial crisis in store

by Doug Saunders and Clive Thompson

Ontario universities are about to receive the biggest financial blows in their history, the Ontario government warned last week.

Though funding usually increases by at least eight per cent annually, the government could go as low as two or three percent when it announces 1991-92 funding levels, government officials said.

"The transfer payment that will be announced in a month or two will be the lowest in history," said Bob Kanduth, an official at the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

On Friday, Ontario university presidents met with Richard Allen, minister of colleges and universities, and Tony Silipo, chair of the cabinet's Management Board.

Silipo made it clear that freezing or reducing the deficit is the government's goal, which will

mean smaller than usual increases to all forms of social spending, said Kanduth.

For universities and student groups, the news is deadly.

York President Harry Arthurs said a further reduction in funding would be tragic.

"We said to them again and again, we're desperately, desperately underfunded. We told them what the consequences would be of further cutbacks."

Currently, Ontario spends \$1.96 billion on colleges and universities.

Bill Farr, York's vice president of finance and administration, announced ten percent across the board cuts to campus budgets last spring, claiming operating costs and inflation had far outstripped last year's 8 percent funding hike.

Premier Bob Rae, who was visiting York on Friday, said his government was willing to talk, but was determined to cut or freeze the provincial deficit.

"We don't think the public is going to be served by our facing a double-digit deficit in the years to come. We don't want that to happen."

University of Toronto President Robert Prichard said he would press the government to find alternatives.

"Our job is to present them with the reality that if cuts continue... eventually, people are going to be hurt."

The government isn't ruling out higher tuition fee hikes or private sector investment as ways of filling the gap, Kanduth said.

The government has limited universities to a 7.3 per cent hike in tuition fees for the current academic year.

Allen will be discussing the province's finances with student and faculty groups in the upcoming weeks, and has already set a meeting with the Ontario Federation of Students and student governments October 19.

"It's completely offensive that students

haven't been talked to about these things," she said. "Who do these people represent? They represent the affluent sector."

Silipo also told the presidents they will have to cut back on wage increases to bring them more in line with the private sector, Prichard said.

Public sector wages, including universities, have increased by five to six per cent this year, compared to approximately 3.5 per cent in the private sector, according to Silipo.

For a government that spends roughly 45 per cent of its budget on wages and benefits, those increases are too much, he told the presidents.

"They were saying wages were central to this discussion [about finances], Prichard said.

But this doesn't mean the government will interfere with collective bargaining practices by legislating pay increases, Prichard added.

Ontario faculty representatives were unavailable for comment.

Fight heats up to get York subway station

by John A. Vink

Future York students could be riding the subway right onto the edge of campus, if the university wins a heated battle currently underway.

The Ontario government's \$5 billion Let's Move program calls for a subway route linking the existing Yonge and Spadina lines. Of the nine loop route proposals submitted to the TTC last year, five are still being considered by the government.

One proposed route, the Steeles Loop, brings the subway to York University's doorstep with a station on Keele Street across from the Kinsmen building. Trains would run along Steeles Ave., linking Wilson and Finch stations.

This route is the most expensive, with a price tag of \$1.25 billion.

A campaign was formed last year to lobby the government to choose this route. Called the Loop Group, it is a coalition of organizations, municipalities, and ratepayer and homeowner associations. York University is also a member.

The Loop Group is currently preparing their Fall campaign. Rob Centa, external vice president of the York Federation of Students and a Loop Group member, said the campaign may include public rallies.

"There's been talk of a demonstration at Queen's Park to show the strength of conviction of northwest Toronto, saying 'We are under-served by the TTC and if you are going to make the loop, the logical place is across Steeles.'"

The TTC's original plan was to construct the shortest and cheapest path, possibly running up Bathurst St. and across Finch, according to John Sepulis, project manager of the Let's

Move department at the TTC.

Sepulis said the shorter route is still a popular proposal, and politicians will have to decide if more can be gained from a longer and more expensive route.

The TTC and the consulting engineering firm McCormick Rankin will release a report early next summer which deals with the environmental impact of each of the five proposals.

Centa said he expects the report to cast the Steeles loop in a positive light.

The Loop Group has hired University of Toronto Dean of Engineer-

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Ontario Premier Bob Rae twiddles his thumbs as York Chancellor Oscar Peterson delivers his inaugural speech. Earlier, Rae traded

verbal jabs with York Federation of Students President Michelle Hughes, who reminded him he'd broken his tuition freeze promise.

Student appeals ban from campus

by Harry Rudolfs

On September 12, a York University disciplinary adjudicator listened to a series of challenges by former student Martin Bracey.

Bracey is appealing the disciplinary tribunal's August 8 decision to bar him from enrolling in classes at York. A preliminary hearing was held in the Senate chamber September 12.

The four-hour hearing was the forum for Bracey's claims that the tribunal — a branch of the university senate — was an invalid body

since it contained fewer than the required eighteen members.

Bracey also challenged the university's claim that one of the appeal panel's three members should be dropped because of an alleged conflict of interest.

Harriet Lewis, the university's legal counsel, claimed that Diamond Tobin-West, president of the African Students' Association, "appears to be in a position of bias" because he had earlier spoken in defense of Bracey.

Lewis cited a February 18 meeting between Tobin-West and Elizabeth Hopkins, vice president

of student affairs, where Tobin-West allegedly commented on Bracey's case.

According to Hopkins, Tobin-West asked at the end of the meeting that Hopkins exercise "leniency and mercy" with Bracey.

Tobin-West denied saying this. However, he announced his resignation from the panel in a letter drafted the same day by the executive of the African Students' Association.

The letter, signed by Tobin-West and ASA Vice-President Alex Martey, describes the university's case against Tobin-West as "unfair, unjust and unfounded."

Bracey also argued that the hearing's adjudicator, Professor J.G. Castel, had no authority because he was not appointed by the Chair of the Senate.

Castel puzzled over Bracey's challenges, and at one point offered to disqualify himself. However,

Lewis informed him he did not have the jurisdiction to make this decision.

Bracey's problems go back to January of 1991, when Hopkins convened a panel to deal with five complaints of harassment filed against Bracey by York students and staff.

While the university presented the case as a matter of repeated verbal harassment, Bracey argued that he was a victim of racial and political discrimination from the university community.

The tribunal ruled in favour of the university on August 8, and ordered Bracey rusticated (barred from enrolling at York).

Bracey cannot enrol in classes until a ruling is made on the validity of the appeal.

The hearing adjourned after listening to arguments from Bracey and Lewis. A decision on the challenges is expected soon.

erratum

An article entitled "Student to appeal ban from classes" in the September 11 *Excalibur* incorrectly stated that a York disciplinary tribunal "accused" a student of "meting out public embarrassment and/or public vituperation." In fact, disciplinary tribunals do not make accusations in their rulings. *Excalibur* regrets the error.

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