

editorial

BOG irresponsible

When students come streaming into the university next Monday for the first day of classes, over half of them may find they have no classes to go to.

Why? Simply because the intransigence of the administration in dealing with the York University Faculty Association (YUFA), under the cement-handed guidance of the Board of Governors (BOG), has forced the union to the brink of a strike that nobody, least of all students, can afford.

YUFA's demands are for the most part reasonable, and they have lowered their demands three times in an attempt to end the impasse, but the administration has yet to return a single new counter-proposal.

Vice President (Finance and Employee Relations) Bill Farr, head of the administration's negotiating team, claims a five percent provincial wage guideline prevents him from offering a more reasonable settlement. He also suggests going beyond the guideline could be "dangerous" on the basis of vague warnings by certain shadowy provincial cabinet ministers.

Both these claims are absurd. York's faculty members have fallen behind in both earnings and benefits in relation to other provincial institutions, and they quite reasonably want to catch up. The BOG, however, are allowing misguided political pressure from Queen's Park obstruct an equitable settlement with YUFA.

Worse, the BOG's hard-line attitude to contractual negotiations applies equally to the current talks with the Canadian Union of Educational Workers (CUEW), which raises the ugly possibility that all York's teaching staff could be off the job by early October.

Not only are the university's employees being treated unfairly, but the BOG has created a potentially disastrous situation for the university, and shown little concern for the students of this institution whose lives the potential strike would most disrupt.

The BOG must realize that their first responsibility is to the students and faculty of this institution, not to Queen's Park. After all, while neither provincial politicians nor members of the Board will suffer much from a strike by the faculty, the students and the institution itself will.

As this edition of *Excalibur* goes onto the stands, the administration's negotiators will be meeting with their union counterparts in a last-ditch attempt to resolve their differences. But, as YUFA negotiating committee chairperson Hollis Rinehart said, if the Board gives Farr nothing new to offer, it will be a short meeting indeed.

And a short school year.

excalibur

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"... GUY ON THE WIRELESS SAYS I CAN FINISH MY DEGREE AT ATKINSON- AND AT MY OWN PACE!"

Student centre proposal unethical

You know there is something not quite right with the apparent movement for a student centre when York administrators are more eager to see it built than the students it's supposed to be built for.

Seeing the meetings for the student centre loaded down with such heavyweights as Chairman of the Board of Governors Bruce Bryden, Vice-President Bill Farr, Provost Tom Meininger and Dean of Arts Tom Traves, it's not hard to conclude that the centre is particularly important to the university.

The scenario goes something like this: York is in the midst of an acute space shortage and can no longer squeeze any more space out of the overcrowded buildings by shuffling people from college to college. But look at all that space students are squandering on their campus groups, councils and pubs. Perhaps we could get them to buy their own building—we'll call it a student centre—so they could move out of the space they occupy in the Ross Building and colleges and leave it for us. What a savings. Why didn't we think of that before?

A little cynical perhaps, but not far off the mark.

While the administration didn't create the underfunding problem we are all suffering through, it isn't ethical to have students pay for the shortfall. While a student centre in itself is a reasonable idea, to promote it merely as a way out of their space shortage is nothing less than a misguided attempt at manipulating the students who earnestly desire one.

If student pay for the student centre under such circumstances, they would in effect be shouldering the cost of the university's expansion by providing the university with free space in which to stick more faculty and staff.

A student building is a great idea. As a way to provide the university with free space it is little more than a rip-off. Let's think twice about the conditions under which we obtain a student centre before lining up behind its supporters.

As Bill Farr has said, "The students are in the driver's seat for bargaining" because "if they control (campus) space the world will beat a path to their door." So let's use this leverage to get what we want under more reasonable conditions.

FOR MANY, THE SUMMER JOB EXPERIENCE ONLY REINFORCES THE SCHOOL WORK ETHIC.

