

excalibur

YORK UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Advisory group criticizes target funding formula

By JAMES FLAGAL

The provincial government is increasing the amount of targeted grants at the expense of basic operating funding to universities, says an advisory group to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU).

According to Paul Fox, a spokesperson for the Ontario Council of University Affairs (OCUA), while the group welcomes targeted grants such as the library enhancement and faculty renewal funds, the government must start making an effort to address the shortfalls in basic operating allocations first. Last year alone, the government's contribution was a \$31.8 million shortfall which amounted to \$58.1 million. In total, the cumulative shortfall for the past decade has been about \$225 million, says Fox.

Fox noted that part of that problem is the decrease in the federal government's commitment to post-secondary education. The federal government facilitates MCU funding through transfer payments. In 1979-80, these payments provided 52% of the necessary funding for both the health and post-secondary education ministries, but in 1986-87 the federal government's share of both ministry budgets dropped to 43%. Fox says that the provincial government currently negotiating with Ottawa to get an agreement that will secure the present funding level and prevent that percentage from dropping any further.

Fox also says that the surprise increase in enrolment in universities has also contributed to shortfalls. He explains that last year enrolment in post-secondary education rose 5% at a time when many analysts were predicting a decrease. Fox added that another factor is the retention of students—more people are staying in the system rather than dropping out. Usually, Fox says, students

drop out of university in good times, and go back to school in bad times. But with the economy presently flourishing, he explained, for some reason students are remaining in school.

But Fox notes that both OCUA, the Council of Universities and MCU have set up a joint committee to study next year's OSIS bulge. This refers to next year, when Grade 13 will be formally eliminated from the Ontario high school system, allowing secondary school students to fast-track through the system in four years instead of five. Fox, however, points out that the preliminary findings show that despite the new option, as students get closer to graduation and they begin to find the fast-tracking route difficult, they may choose to stay on an extra year.

Fox also noted that it's time universities stopped relying so heavily on the government for their funding needs, and began turning to the private sector for financial assistance. Fox said it's encouraging to see institutions such as York establish a fund-raising programme. In the United States, Fox said, the mentality is there for universities to lobby private enterprise for funds, and many American schools have a more committed alumni.

However, Steven Dranitsaris, Director of Development in York's Department of External Relations, says that comparing Canadian and American universities is like "comparing apples and oranges." York, he said, has launched many initiatives to raise money, and last year raised a total of \$3.5 million. He also explained that since York is a young institution, it does not have an established alumni. Dranitsaris noted that the alumni contributions to the university have increased from \$79,000 in 1979 to \$90,000 in 1986.

OSAP lost \$4.2 million to student deception

By JEFF SHINDER

Last year the Ontario Students Assistance Plan (OSAP) granted 4.2 million in loans to students with inaccurate applications, according to a report released by the provincial auditor general.

The report indicated that 5% of applications are proven inaccurate after verification. Of these, a small fraction are found to be fraudulent. Funds allocated to students with inaccurate applications are presently being recovered by collection agencies.

The Auditor General's Report echoed figures already disclosed by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. According to Bill Clarkson, director of student awards at the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, OSAP cannot verify the details on every application.

The programme, however, has in the past three years hired additional staff for its verification department. As a result, once an application is accepted it is checked by the verification section. Verification procedures include referring application claims to Revenue Canada, in addition to checking with the applicant's former employers.

The verification section has been successful in discovering the typical application inaccuracies. These include understating the parents income as well as creating fictitious brothers and sisters. Application inaccuracies do not necessarily imply that the applicant has committed fraud. To prove fraud, OSAP must establish the student's intention to deceive the programme.

Students who have been caught with inaccurate application statements, will have their loans suspended. They will, in turn, be compelled to return all funds received with interest charges being included. If the student fails to re-pay the money, a collection agency will be assigned to track that student down. In addition, if OSAP can prove intent to de-fraud the programme, the case will be referred to the Ontario Provincial Police.

According to the auditor general report of the 115,000 students who received assistance in 1986-87, 6,869 were caught with inaccurate applications. Of that total, 181 were suspended with fraud. Only 31 cases, however, were referred to the OPP. Six cases have gone to court resulting in four criminal convictions.



EIGHTY-EIGHT TAKES FLIGHT: In like a lion, out like a . . . seagull. Sure, we're stretching a metaphor but we had to find some way of linking this fine photograph with the start of a new year. Think of it. Flying all day, eating, taking a dump. No exam pressures, no classes—ah, for the life of a barely sentient creature.

Government sales tax to be applied to photocopy cards

By LIDIA CABRAL

Prices on photocopy cards are going up from 7.5 cents to 8 cents per photocopy starting on January 18, said Library Director for York University Ellen Hoffman, who explained that this increase is in response to a provincial government's ruling in the fall that effects all data card transactions. Cash transactions will not be affected.

Executive Officer with York libraries Bev McKee, noted that the government's ruling stated that sales tax must be applied on all individual transactions greater than 20 cents. Sales tax is applied to photocopy card users only, noted McKee, because they are considered an individual item, and users spend at least a couple of dollars to place credit on their copycards. Individual photocopies, which are made by cash transactions are less than 20 cents, and are therefore exempt from the photocopy sales tax, she added.

Hoffmann stated that the provincial sales tax on copycards was not applied at York libraries previously, because the administration assumed that the only transaction which

should be considered is the actual photocopying. But Hoffman noted that purchasing the cards must also be considered a transaction. "It's like buying a package of M&M's stated Hoffman, "you don't just buy you buy the whole package."

York library administrators were made aware of the price increase through The Retail Sales Tax Branch of the Ministry of Revenue, who contacted the University's accounting department. York's accounting department in turn notified the departments that would be affected.

McKee stated that the provincial government will allow some leeway for York library administrators for not applying the sales tax sooner, and feels that there will be no retro-action costs the university will have to pay for their delay.

Prices on photocopies will be changed starting January 18, noted McKee, to reflect the new cost. Because there are so many photocopy machines at York, price changes will not be made throughout campus libraries at the same time, she said. Students will not be charged for the difference on those machines which have yet to be changed, noted

McKee. Once all the machines have been changed, however, photocopy cards having money on them will be charged 8 cents per copy rather than the present 7.5 cents.

INSIDE

"Tax payers in Northern Ontario are entitled to the same resources as those in the South."

JOAN MACNEIL,
AN O.F.S. RESEARCHER

NEW FACE, OLD PROBLEMS: The new minister of Colleges and Universities has a legacy of chronic underfunding to deal with, and in this *Excalibur* interview, she shares some of her views on how to redress the problems in the system. Page 7

CALLS OF DISTRESS: While the act of suicide remains a mystery, analysts are trying to attack the problem of prevention through education. Do you know how to detect suicidal behaviour? Page 9

FOURTH-YEAR SHOW-OFF: In the final four weeks of last semester, four shows took place at Winters College Gallery featuring some of the best stuff fourth-year students have to offer in the areas of painting, drawing and sculpture. Page 10

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS: York hockey alumni assembled a team for the recent Varsity Graduate Alumni Hockey Tournament, and while it's been close to 15 years for some players since their days of playing, they still seem to have the edge. Page 15

Excalibur basketball squad demolishes seedy CHRY team

By BRENT MUSSBERGER

In one of the most exciting basketball games this reporter has ever witnessed, a team from *Excalibur* defeated a squad from CHRY by a score of 74-56. The victory was sweet for *Excalibur*, who had not beat a team from Radio York in the last millennium.

CHRY entered the game heavily favoured to win, but were surprised by an aggressive *Excalibur* team. *Excalibur* took advantage of their height

and were able to control the boards offensively and defensively. "We were unable to hit our outshot shots said Karim Hajee, sports director from CHRY.

Standouts for the game included Oded Orgil and James Flagal. Orgil quarterbacked the offence, while editor Flagal dominated the boards. Mike Krestell played a solid game for CHRY leading their attack. The two teams expect to meet again in some distant future.