

# Glendon

## Is small really beautiful?

by Zubin Hooshangi

York University, the third largest university in Canada with an ever-growing population of students and faculty, is felt by many to be too big, too ugly, too impersonal, and too bureaucratic.

Of course, when anything becomes too big, it usually becomes ugly, and with buildings that resemble settings from such movies as *Aliens*, and *Dungeon Master*, it is no wonder that the average York student, especially the undergrad, shows signs of acute depression and alienation.

Long waits seem to be the given, from selecting and cancelling courses to paying academic fees, purchasing textbooks, to even the gruelling wait in line for the bus, which can prove testing during wintertime.

Fortunately, memories of York do not have to consist of long line-ups, over-crowded classes, ugly windowless, concrete buildings (the only exception being the fine arts building), and the endless masses of people, in which an individual is just another face, and feels like a lost nobody. Glendon College may be the answer.

Evidently, for those York

undergraduates who are following a course of study that comes under the broad area of liberal arts, Glendon College may offer a better alternative than the concrete jungle of York Main.

Founded in 1965, Glendon College is a small, bilingual, liberal arts college, offering a York degree in such disciplines as history, English, French, international studies, Spanish and Canadian studies, just to name a few. The college also boasts a school of translation, which is one of only three in Canada, and a faculty of education.

In addition, the campus also accommodates parts of the teaching programmes of Atkinson College and other York units.

In a college which is ideally small, students have direct and ready access to professors, fellow students, and even administrators, thereby making relations more personal, informal, and less bureaucratic.

Located on Bayview Avenue at Lawrence Avenue East, and extending for 34 hectares into the valley of the West Don River, Glendon College could easily pass off as a nature school, in a setting that resembles something out of *The Hobbit*.

Away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Toronto, and

less than a half hour drive from York Main, the college is hidden in a world that is extremely tranquil and beautiful, yet conveniently close to the heart of the city. Popularly known as a 'walkers paradise,' one of the signs that has been hung on the B-wing building welcomes "all pedestrians who like and respect trees, flowers, birds and animals."

Historically, the property on which Glendon is now sitting was bequeathed to UofT in the early 1950s. But in 1959, UofT sold the grounds to York for a mere \$1. Soon the property was too small for the growing student population. So in 1966, York moved to its current North York campus on Keele Street.

It was at this time that Glendon was created as an affiliated, yet somewhat autonomous part of York. Known by many as the 'small bilingual campus' of Toronto, today, both anglophones and francophones can obtain a degree in the liberal arts and learn Canada's 'other' official language.

Nevertheless, the college, in seeking to be small and bilingual has narrowed itself somewhat. For instance, the only other language department, besides the French and English, is the Spanish department. As student pro-

grammes officer, Jennifer Waugh pointed out, "The college is limited by its size, so that Glendon students interested in taking courses such as anthropology, Japanese, Italian, fine arts, or even phys. ed. would have to go to York Main."

Understandably, the colleges' emphasis on bilingualism, biculturalism, and small classroom size have kept things from becoming too big. Waugh further pointed out, "with a population of about 1,743, of those 276 being francophone, the college caters to a certain type of student, with certain individual needs. Needs which may include a tranquil, more personal environment, comprised of small classrooms, in which one can study courses in either of Canada's two official languages."

For those students at York Main who would like to take courses at Glendon, and for those at Glendon who would like to follow courses not offered at their college, there is a shuttle that transports students three times a day between the two campuses. Ironically, only 30 students from York Main were cited as taking courses at Glendon, and about 10 students from Glendon make the trip to Keele and Steeles to take one of the many exotic courses that are

offered at there.

So does Glendon really offer the liberal arts undergrad a better alternative than York Main? Many would suggest that Glendon resembles a boring fairyland, where chipmunks and sparrows frolic side by side, and where people are perpetually happy and friendly in a Walt Disney setting where nothing really bizarre or out of the extraordinary ever happens.

At York Main, on the other hand, something out of the blue is always occurring. People from different parts of the world, with diverse backgrounds are more predominant, and issues that are more universal are discussed and dissected, rather than Canada's language issue, and how all signs on campus should be bilingual.

Nevertheless, Glendon offers a community setting where the individual looks forward to being a part of the college, which is definitely lacking at the Main Campus with its thousands and thousands of strangers, who impatiently wait to get their piece of paper and take off into the real world.

Could small then really be beautiful and preferable to a colossal monster? For the liberal arts undergrad, it comes down to a matter of choice.

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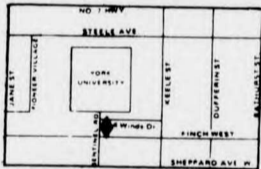
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