

Presidential Candidates

Collins Cont'd

keeping an archive on hand. Presently, the CYSF cannot do that and neither can the college councils because they just chuck everything out. I think that we need to be a good, effective watchdog to the administration and we have to learn when to protest and when to collaborate. Sometimes protesting and banging signs and wearing war paint really isn't all that effective. People just walk out.

On the other hand, if you believe the promises and if you figure a promise delivered is a promise fulfilled, then you can be really taken advantage of. That happens all the time with student government because they are always trying to convince themselves that they are being successful.

EXCAL: What are your feelings regarding the changes to student government that are in *The White Paper*?

COLLINS: I don't know how far ahead students have thought of *The White Paper*. I don't think that student government has thought too far ahead in the sense that *The White Paper* leaves students pretty much to do their own thing. That has a good side and a bad side. It's almost like saying, "Go play in the backyard kid and don't bug me anymore," and that's the bad side.

On the good side, it means that students have to assert themselves if they want something. It won't be delivered to them. That can be really liberating to students who take advantage of it.

On the other hand, by assigning an academic mandate to different colleges and having this volunteer affiliation system, the colleges are likely to compete with each other for membership, which is usually not very productive. Secondly, *Lexicon* editor John Montesano brought up the term "academic ghetto," and that is a term he applied to what will happen to colleges so taken over by one academic interest that you really couldn't have a liberal arts education anymore. In the case of Bethune, it is a bit more predominant.

In the case of all colleges with the departments moving in and out, with the clubs being told where they have to go, students told where they have to go, there is a possibility that people will start to spend all of their time with the same kind of people 24 hours a day. You don't learn anything that way, and you become little partisan groups. The one thing that York has to offer is diversity. It's the foundation of what makes York a liberal arts university.

I don't think *The White Paper* really helps out there. I think that it was a great economic move. Specializing is always economically feasible but it isn't always academically feasible. It is only into its first year so I don't know how it is going to work but I certainly see a great danger if we say, "Okay, you're a science college, forget your arts programme, forget your film festival. You should be spending your money on science."

There's this assumption that the colleges should just hand their events over to the colleges responsible for promoting them. We shouldn't be saying, "Okay, we're Vanier so we'll just do humanities."

EXCAL: Should York belong to the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS)?

COLLINS: My only contact with OFS was five years ago when I was at Western and my view of it was pretty positive because Western made full use of all the researching that the OFS does on a regular basis. I don't know much about the current OFS situation, whether or not they are worth the money.

I don't think, however, that OFS has produced a convincing enough argument to York students to pay their own student government to pass the money on to some other group. The OFS is just too far removed. It makes sense for UofT and York to have some kind of confederation programme that Peter Merrick was talking about. But to compare Western with Guelph doesn't make any sense at all. What could you possibly get out of it?

I'd have to investigate the OFS first before I could make any decision. I'd have to see their files and see what they really do and if previous governments had pulled out in the past, they must have done it for a reason.

EXCAL: How do you feel about the CYSF vice-presidents' new status as full-time for 35 hours a week during the summer and 25 hours a week from September on for \$13,000 a year?

COLLINS: Considering that I work in a college council office and I don't get a free room and I don't get paid at all, I think they are getting an awful lot. I understand that when you get involved in the projects and you set aside your academic work, and you think to yourself if only I got paid for this I could set aside more time for this and do a better job, it is easy to raise your hand and vote yes for a salary increase.

On the other hand, the raise is something that you do after you have had a series of three or four years of fantastic student service. The students are happy with you, they

DeMatteis Cont'd

cerned, we had a couple of events this year that we asked for funding, in advance, and there was no problem with either of the events. We got the funding with no problem.

Now, it's too bad because we had a clubs week here and Stephanie Infurnari (clubs commissioner) worked pretty hard to get it together and unfortunately only five clubs showed interest. I think that giving them more money is important and would go a long way in closing the drift between the two.

The money is obviously the main problem. But I think that club awareness is even more important. I think they should make the club week even longer. We need more publicity in the media. I think it is important that everyone has an understanding because some people don't even know these clubs exist.

I think the Student Centre is going to help. There is going to be a place where we can meet. Presently, we don't even have an office. We invite guest speakers and we have to meet them in Central Square. I think it will prove that clubs are taken seriously at York. I take clubs seriously and so do many other people but, unfortunately, many don't.

EXCAL: How will you deal with the lack of spirit of York students?

DEMATTIEIS: I believe the present council has not been successful because they are not together. Everyone says they are always fighting. What kind of credibility can an organization, which is supposed to be representing students, have if they're not together?

If we had a stronger central government that gets the students more involved in rallies, demonstrations and general meetings, there would be more school spirit.

EXCAL: What services would you like to see the CYSF provide that it currently doesn't?

DEMATTIEIS: I'd like to see more outside intervention like the American Express card coming in. That's good for the CYSF because it is providing a service for the students and, at the same time, the CYSF is profiting from it. And, in the end, it could help obtain other services.

I think an escort service for the campus should be a priority. It is important people feel comfortable walking around at night.

EXCAL: What qualities and experiences will you bring to the job that will make you an effective president?

DEMATTIEIS: I've been involved in student organizations all my life and I firmly believe I have an open mind. I like working with students and I like working with people in general. I'm a very responsible person. I don't leave things to the last minute like this year's council who find themselves running out of time. I'm an understanding person. I'm a person that sympathizes with people, that like to listen to people's problems and likes to react on that.

I want people to know that it's just not another office where I can go to eat my lunch. I would like to know people can be comfortable coming in at anytime.

I believe my previous leadership skills in high school and the community will help me better understand York University students. I am very social in Central Square and I see what students are always complaining about. I don't like it because we should have a strong central government and we don't. If we did, we would get other students involved, but only if the CYSF would show some credibility.

EXCAL: How do you feel about the CYSF vice-presidents' new status as full-time for 35 hours a week in the summer and 25 hours a week during the school year for \$13,000 a year?

DEMATTIEIS: I think that giving them more money might give them more credibility. I am not close enough to council to know what percentage of time they spend and what work they do. It may be giving them an incentive to produce more.

The president and his executives probably need more help. Giving them more money would probably go a long way, saying, "Here's your money, now produce." I believe, in the long run, it would help the CYSF.

There's no way of actually saying that 25 hours a week is not a full-time job because it depends on how those hours are spent. Obviously, every hour of that 25 hours is not going to be spent doing work. For a responsible vice-president, one that cares, they are going to be here and they are going to be working.

If they work 25 hours or if they work 35 hours, they are going to work until their work is done. I don't think you can pull a number out of the air and say you are going to

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struggling for an education.

Because it is a national issue and because there is a new law coming in, we need to say, "This is a student issue, this is affecting more than half our student population, this is a big deal." This is not to say that I'm going to get in and declare York a pro-choice university, but I'm going to get in and say I've been working on the pro-choice movement and suggest a referendum.

EXCAL: How do you feel about next year's CYSF vice-presidents getting paid \$13,000 a year for working 35 hrs/week in the summer and 25 hrs/week from September on?

GHOMESHI: I was at that meeting when the CYSF announced the pay increase and I wasn't very happy about it. Not just because the vice-presidents are getting that kind of money, but because of the kind of arguments I heard. There seems to be an elitist notion among the CYSF executives this year that they are somehow "something" and the students are peasants. The arguments that we heard for why they should get a pay rise and why the president should get even more, ("we live in Toronto, how can we possibly get buy on \$17,500 a year?"), are ludicrous. The students live in Toronto, too.

I've always argued against increases like this. I would need to see the accountability of the executive council for that money. For next year, I would make some sort of decision whether the pay was worth it or not and review it. A raise now doesn't necessarily mean it will always have to stay up there or that we have to increase it.

EXCAL: Do you think York should belong to the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS)?

GHOMESHI: Philosophically, I think we have to unite with students across Ontario. I see a lot of good coming out of what the OFS is doing and I think the kind of troubles that have been going on between the CYSF and the OFS are outrageous.

My position is that we should belong to the OFS. I think that this is the year to have a referendum and unequivocally say we should or shouldn't join. In the past, CYSF has said, well we'll have to launch a campaign that says, "No we shouldn't belong to the OFS," well, Why?

OFS is an important body. It is organizing a March 15 rally in Toronto to protest the recent federal budget cuts to post-secondary education. Essentially, the argument is, I don't think there is much to writing a letter to Ontario treasurer Bob Nixon saying we are upset about federal finance minister Michael Wilson's budget cuts. We need to unite and protest.

There are a lot of progressive people out there who are apathetic to student government and if they see student government getting political, then they will join the marches the CYSF is promoting. Yes, it's time for a referendum.

A referendum will be essential in terms of the CYSF reflecting its views. Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, if I get in there, I will be turning up at pro-choice rallies and I'm going to be saying this is a student issue. This doesn't mean that I'm York University; it means that that's me, and you elected me, and I made my stand on abortion clear on my platform.

EXCAL: What position do you take on recognizing fraternities and sororities on campus?

GHOMESHI: I think that historic documentation shows that not a lot of good can come out of fraternities and sororities. The answer to your question is no. I'm running on a campaign against racism and sexism. I've heard the arguments from different fraternities that they are different than other ones but, I'm sorry, why are you calling yourself a frat? Fraternities and sororities are exclusive institutions and have no place at York.

EXCAL: What one question did we not ask you that you would like to answer?

GHOMESHI: I'd like to say a few things about *The White Paper*. It's an extremely ambiguous document and there are a couple of things that worry me about it. The sections dealing with the CYSF's money, student money going to the CYSF, being controlled by the administration, worries me. In section A, number 5, it is implicitly stated that the administration retains control over when the CYSF gets the money the students are paying. That seems ridiculous to me. It's student money, it should be in student's hands.

The central student government shouldn't have to apply to "its parents" as to when it can get its money. Also, if we had the money from the beginning, we could earn interest on it.

Corresponding subsections 7 and 11 in section B deal with someone who, after their first year, wants to leave their college. Where is their \$27.50 going to go? Now, half goes into the masters' fund and half goes to the dean of faculty of

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