

Students can attend senate meeting-will they?

by Sue Himmer
Student Senator

Last Thursday the Senate voted by a large majority to 'open' its meetings to all students of York University. I would like to repeat here the reasons I put forward in support of the motion.

The Senate deals with issues directly affecting the students' lives at university and as a consequence these students have the right to witness the decision-making process.

But notions of participation, involvement, and contribution are not mere abstractions. To speak of these ideas is not enough. Students need actual representatives on various committees.

At York, students are sitting on the Council of the Faculty of Fine Arts and Sciences, food, parking, library committees as well as the Senate itself. Hopefully, the rationale for accepting student senators was not tokenism — an attempt to forestall student 'unrest and disturbances' at this campus. Rather this was seen as the first step in an 'enfranchisement' of the student. No longer was he only to be consult-

ed — a passive member in the community — but have a vote on these decision-making bodies.

However, to exercise any vote rationally there must be a knowledgeable informed student body — there must be access to information. Students must hear issues being discussed and debated in the Senate especially, to form rational opinions. It is recognized that some issues (tenure and promotions, land purchases) require secrecy but this is certainly no justification for holding all meetings in camera. Open Senate meetings is the first step in integrating the administration, faculty, and student so that York can form a community of scholars.

Fine. Great. The Senate meetings are open. So what. Student radicals are still crying 'student is nigger', and advocating the abolition of the Senate, the relegating of the Board of Governors to a 'University Appeal' fund raising group, etc. They scream that having five students on the Senate is useless. I disagree with these views for several reasons.

First students are on the Senate. Certainly Senate member-

ship is 105 but the quorum is 10 — this speaks volumes for the influence that five active student senators can have in those meetings. The faculty are largely sympathetic to the student viewpoint.

One of the last arguments against having students on the Senate was they they could not contribute to the proceedings, especially on committees. The task of the student senators this year is to disprove that allegation. Membership on Senate committees requires a considerable amount of 'homework' as well as the actual meetings. It is in these committees that the student senators can most effectively demonstrate that students are capable of participating intelligently. Then, with a good record for committee work the student senators can press for increased student membership in the Senate. Lengthy speeches advocating abolition of all decision-making groups (to be replaced by what?) are seen for what they are — pompous tirades.

Five senators are obviously not enough to represent the students — I am not a violent revolution-

ary but neither am I a reactionary — but the numbers will be increased if proof is given of the students' abilities on these committees (where policies are largely formulated). In theory, students should not have to prove this ability, the community of scholars model gives the student the right to a large voice in decision-making. Unfortunately this model is not going to be adopted overnight.

This brings us back to the beginning of this rather lengthy article. Students can attend Senate meetings, but will they? Only a

concerted effort of the college councils and YSC — backed by the student body — is going to continue the enfranchisement of students. The open Senate meetings are a challenge to the students at York. We must demonstrate that the notions about meaningful participation, involvement, student role, etc. are not synthetic phrases but are relevant to the average student at York.

This week, do something different — attend a meeting, talk to a student rep, or even, think about why you are here.



— So you thought festival was only for girls. Even York men will bare all for festival, Nov. 8 - 9. (Is something wrong here?)

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CUSO
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Women's sports briefs

BADMINTON

York has entered the big league this year. Practices are held Tues. and Thurs. 8-10 p.m. in the Tait McKenzie building with a coach who has been ranked 5th in Canada.

BASKETBALL

New players are encouraged to turn out for practices on Monday and Wednesday at 6 pm and Tuesday and Thursday at 4:15 pm in the Tait McKenzie building.

GYMNASTICS

Practices are at 6 pm in the upper gym of the Tait McKenzie building. This year the team will compete against Toronto McMaster, Queens and Waterloo. Be a swinger and come out to the practices.

ICE HOCKEY

Practices are well under way with 23 idiotic girls competing for places on the team at 8 o'clock in the morning. The next practice is on Wed. Nov. 6, 8 - 10 a.m. The coach is a tyrant so be on time or you're cut.

SPEED SWIMMING

Swimmers are desperately needed to keep the York team afloat. If more people don't turn out there won't be a team. Practices are at 5 pm in the pool (where else)?

SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING

Practices for the graceful start Mon. Nov. 4th in the pool. Inquire about times at the Tait McKenzie building.

VOLLEYBALL

Players are still needed for the varsity women's team. Practices are held on Monday and Wednesday night at 6 pm in the upper gym at Tait McKenzie.