

York University Student Centre Proposal



Private Dining or Committee Room

WHY DOES YORK UNIVERSITY NEED A STUDENT BUILDING?

There are a number of reasons why York needs a Student Centre. The principal one is to help to continue to build a community at York. The Student Centre Steering Committee's consultations with students reinforces the evidence that York lacks a clear identity. The committee feels that a centrally-located structure devoted to student use would revitalize that aspect of university life, one which is badly needed here. Such a Student Centre would provide easy access to key services as well as rooms and space for the sharing of activity and knowledge outside the classroom setting. Students benefit immensely from the formal component of their studies, but education is more than curriculum. Interchange with colleagues and friends is a crucial element of the university experience. A Student Centre would be an invaluable catalyst to this type of activity.

Moreover, some student services are simply not provided at York University. For example, there is no large centrally-located multi-purpose hall. Most services are available to students on a decentralized basis. However, there is a distinct lack of campus-wide services or activities. Naturally, some activities can only be supported if a substantial cross-section of the student community is involved. At present time, this sort of activity is impaired by the lack of large centrally available rooms. In turn, the overall social and cultural life of the campus is undermined.

The Student Centre initiative is also a recognition that York University is a major university within a large metropolitan area and adjacent to other rapidly growing regions. The reality of York University is that the bulk of the student population are commuter students. It is generally recognized that the commuter population is not served with the same effectiveness as residence students who live on campus. As a consequence, it is felt that a Student Centre building would be aimed towards

a more efficient provision of services for the commuter population and thus augment their community life, as well as enhancing the services currently enjoyed by residence students.

HOW HAS THE STUDENT CENTRE INITIATIVE DEVELOPED?

Over the past year, a group of student leaders has been engaged in discussing the desirability and feasibility of constructing a Student Centre. Under the umbrella of the Student Centre Steering Committee, considerable investigation of design, cost and management questions has taken place. In September, 1984, the Steering Committee met with the heads or representatives of the fourteen student governments here at York. At that meeting, the committee received unanimous support in principal for the project.

In the intervening months, the Steering Committee has held detailed meetings with a host of student organizations to learn their views about the Student Centre project. At these meetings, the committee explored the specific concerns raised by some student governments about aspects of the project. As well, the committee received a large number of suggestions as to what ought to be included in the Student Centre. The range of those suggestions has been enormous indeed and has greatly helped the committee's efforts. In addition, the steering committee has undertaken a number of other tasks. Extensive investigations of the operation and financing of other student buildings on university campuses elsewhere have been done. Tentative planning and design work has been launched with the assistance of a professional architect. Discussions have begun with the university administrators, particularly with the Department of Facilities Planning and Management and the Provost's Office, about the feasibility of proceeding with the initiative. The possibilities of securing grants from the provincial government and the corporate sector have been and continue to be explored. Finally, the committee is conducting a survey of student attitudes towards a Student Centre and to learn what preferences they have about what ought to be included and where it ought to be located.

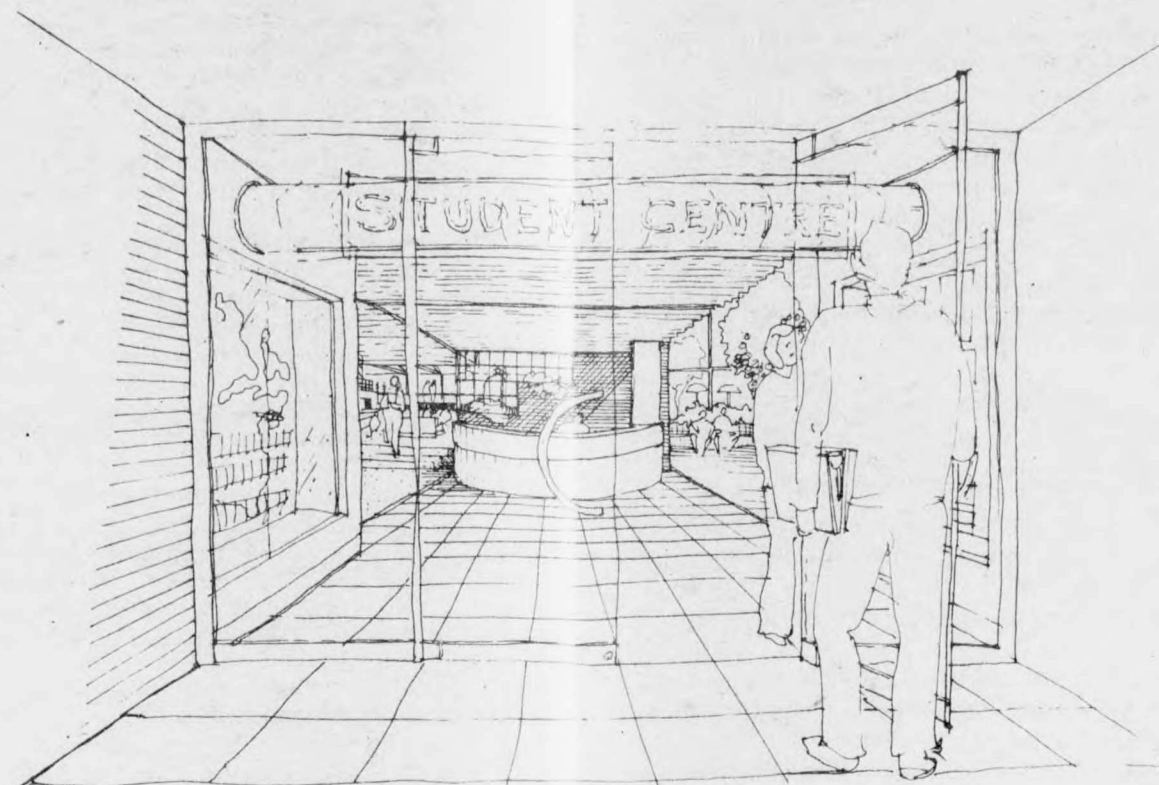
WHAT COULD BE IN A NEW STUDENT CENTRE?

Within the Student Centre would be university wide services that do not take away from College activity and present a Campus-wide setting for activity that benefits the whole student community. These can be broken down into a number of categories:

First we would find student services administered by student governments themselves. Consequently, some of the student governments would have their offices within the building. As well, other student-run services might be found there such as a typing service for students or a student-run photocopy service. Meeting rooms and club rooms for students could also be deemed essential.

Second, there could be university offices which students must use throughout their university career. These could include such things as the Office of Student Affairs, the Foreign Student Advisor, the Career Centre and other offices that might be called front-line student services.

Third, there could be services which would be student run



Entry and Information Desk

or operated under the aegis of student organizations. These might include a cafeteria, a restaurant, a pub, and other generalized food and beverage services that might be of interest to students.

Fourth, their could be services of interest to the general university community. Among possible commercial establishments, there could be a convenience store, a drug store, and other stores similar to those that are now found in Central Square.

Fifth, services to the wider community such as community Legal Aid, or the Daycare Centre could be located in the Student Centre.

In addition, it is possible that student organizations could negotiate a commercial lease or a shared-cost agreement with those interests that are currently investigating a university club for its possible inclusion within the Student Centre building.

Further, academic resources could be located within the new building. Provisions could be made for study space or word-processing and computer facilities as appropriate. It might as well be convenient for the University bookstore to be located in this central location.

It is also expected that such a Student Centre building would obtain meeting facilities and large multi-purpose facilities such as a hall which could be used not only for meetings and guest lectures but for dances and other social activities on campus such as film presentations. Others have suggested that the Student Centre building include sports facilities. Among the suggestions have been squash and racquetball courts, or gymnasiums and a swimming pool.

DOES THE STUDENT CENTRE THREATEN COLLEGE AUTONOMY?

No, the Student Centre represents the provision of new services for students and making sure that the bulk of students have access to student services. The Steering Committee has welcomed the enthusiastic support of various student

The location that is strongly preferred is the first one (between the Administrative Studies building and the Scott Library). It would provide direct links to the Ross Building and Central Square. This would generate traffic, attention and optimal use of the building. The matter of site, it should be noted, has also to be determined with reference to the ongoing question of general campus design.

HOW WOULD THE STUDENT CENTRE BE FINANCED?

It is expected that the bulk of funding for a new Student Centre Building would come from a levy on student fees. Such a levy would be phased in after the project is initiated. The exact size of the levy and its duration would, of course, depend on the following:

- The size of the building
- financing arrangements
- revenue from university-leased space
- availability of outside funding
- maintenance and operating costs, etc.

On the basis of the most conservative projections the likely increase, once implemented, would be in the range of approximately \$10 a full course.

This range has been determined by means of the capital cost budget estimate later in this proposal and by making the following assumptions:

- The building may be roughly 77,000 square feet in size, based on a preliminary functional program, although the precise range and number of desirable services and facilities has yet to be determined.
- The figure for costing is based on \$104 per square foot. Hence, the student body would be asked to contribute—over a number of years—approximately \$8,000,000 in 1985 dollars from a special levy on their fees.
- The university would contribute the land for the building, parking required, insurance during construction and legal and mortgage finder fees.
- The university would assume some housekeeping costs, such as, caretaking services once the building is in operation.

It is also assumed that the university is the only body able to assume contingent liability for this structure. The Steering Committee envisages that the university would put up the original capital expenditure for the structure with the students paying back that original cost through the special levy on their fees. As a consequence, definitive decisions on the location, nature and financing of the building are naturally subject to negotiation between the student organizations, the university administration and the Board of Governors.

HOW WOULD THE STUDENT CENTRE BUILDING BE MANAGED?

In the best interests of the students, the administration and the Board of Governors, the management should consist of a Management Board who would have formal responsibility to operate the building, formulate policies for the building, provide overall direction for the building and administer the funds derived from the special levy on student fees. The Management Board should have a majority of students so that student

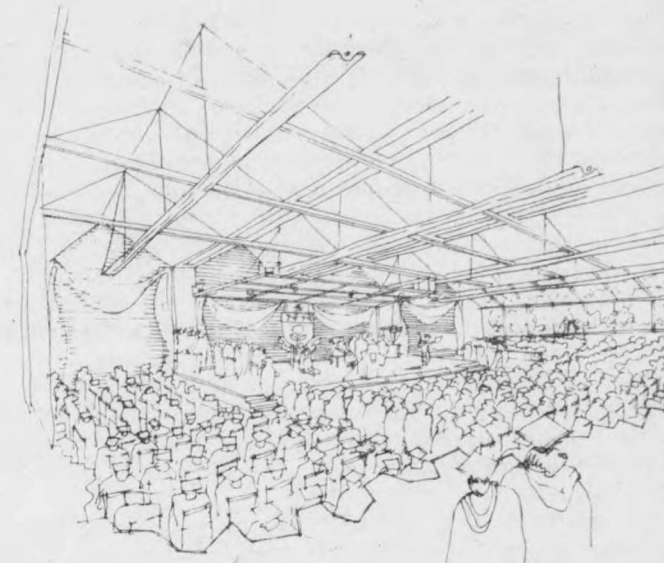
governments for this new initiative. Over the past few months the Steering Committee has kept close contact with various student governments, meeting with representatives of college councils and college masters for discussions about concerns affecting particular colleges. As well, reports have been made to the Constituent Colleges of York University (CCOY), a body which includes representatives from all student governments and meets on a regular basis.

In addition, the university has undertaken to assure the Steering Committee that to the extent that College councils require adequate space for the provision of their student services and to carry out other functions, these will be maintained. It is expected that the Student Centre building will enhance the social and cultural life of the university in a significant fashion. New services will be provided and students who currently feel themselves to be underserved by various organizations on campus will have their needs more effectively met.

WHERE SHOULD A STUDENT CENTRE BUILDING BE LOCATED?

It is generally felt that in order for this building to be used fully it has to be centrally located. Naturally, some parts of the campus experience more traffic than others. These include Complex 1, Complex 2, the Science buildings, the Ross Building and the Scott Library, and Atkinson College, Osgoode Hall and the Administrative Studies building. Four locations have been suggested that would tie together some of these areas. These locations are all centrally located.

- The four locations under discussion are:
- Between the Administrative Studies building and the Scott Library.
 - Between Norman Bethune College and the Petrie Science Building.
 - Between the Steacie Science Library and the Farquharson Life Sciences Building.
 - Between Founder's College and the Stedman Lecture Halls.



Large Meeting Hall - Convocation

interests are maintained. Student representation on the Management Board would try to mirror as much as possible the various constituencies within the student body. It is expected that other elements of the university community would also be represented and be welcome.

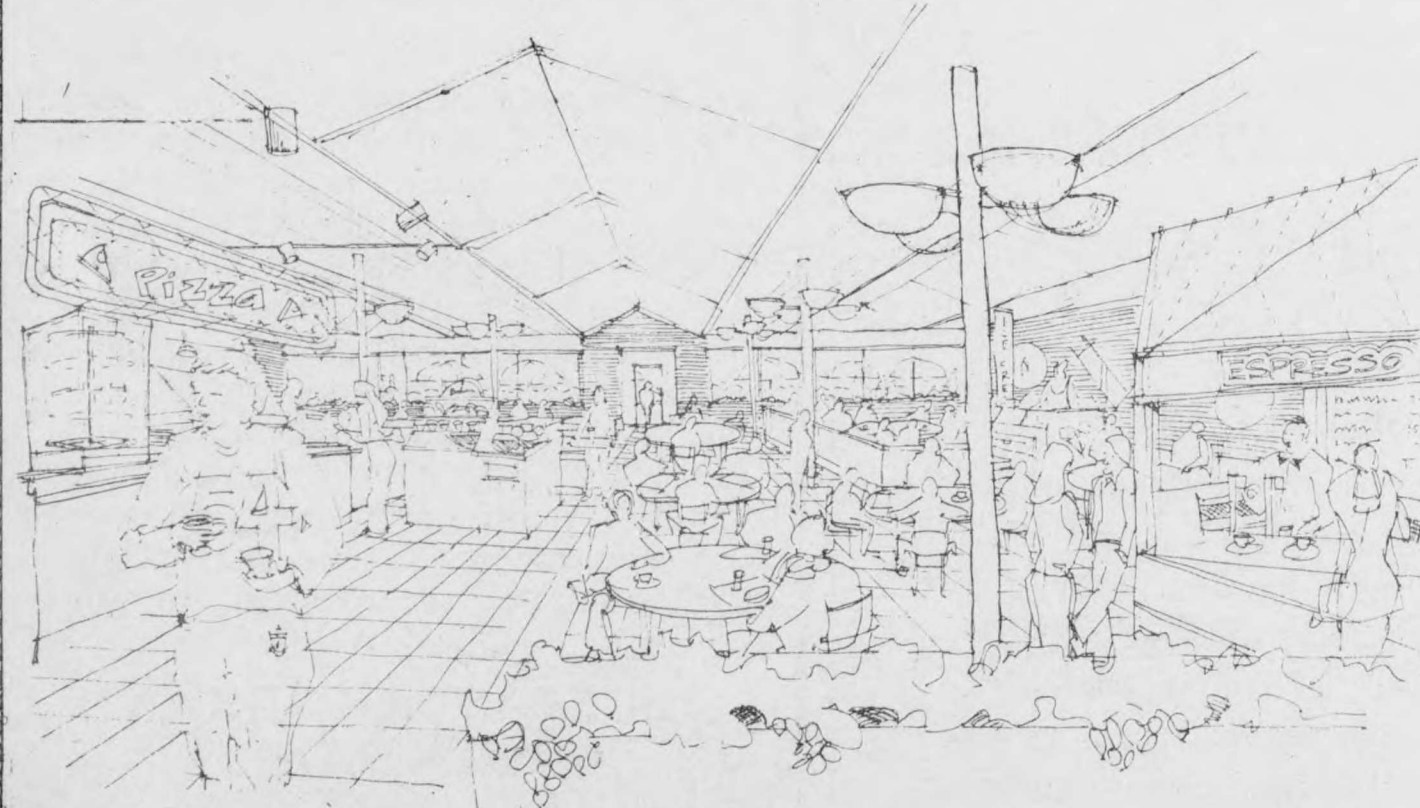
At the level of the day-to-day management, the Management Board would naturally engage a professional manager to undertake the direct control, operation and staffing of the Student Centre Building. In the opinion of the Steering Committee, this manager should be a member of the outside community and who would be an employee reporting directly to the Management Board.

WHERE DOES THE STUDENT CENTRE PROJECT STAND NOW?

The goal of the Steering Committee has been to develop its proposal in a sufficient level of detail such that it could be put to the student body in a referendum. The Steering Committee now believes that their proposal is at that point and should be placed before the student body in March.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE STUDENT REFERENDUM?

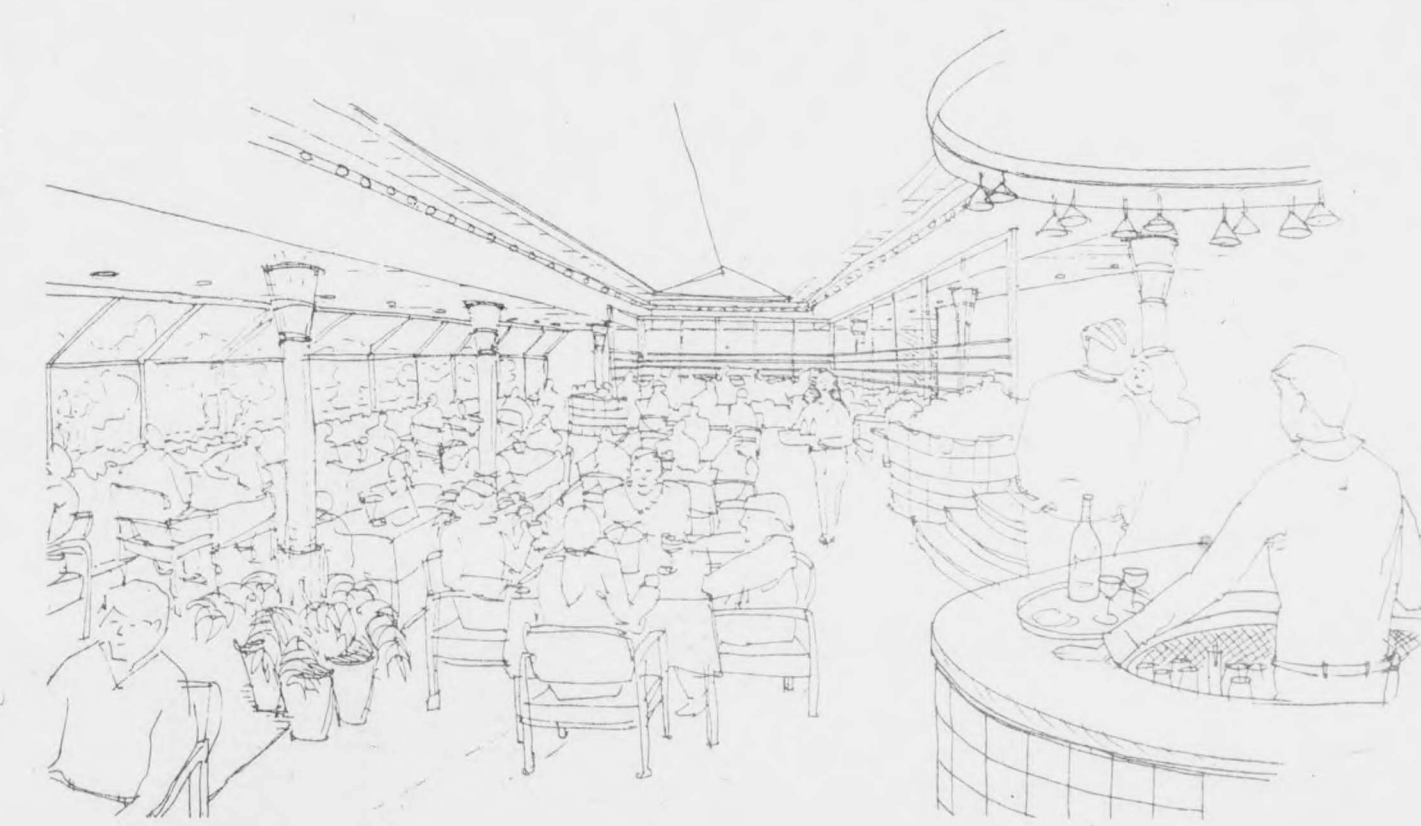
The referendum has two central purposes. The first is to gain approval in principle for the Student Centre project from the student body. The Board of Governors will thereby be advised that an increase in student fees enjoys community support. Second, the referendum will authorize the creation of a Board of Trustees made up of students and administrators who would be responsible for the design and construction of the Student Centre Building. In essence the referendum is asking the student body to approve in principle the construction of the Student Centre Building and to authorize the next phase in the development of this project.



Cafeteria and Food Bars



Fireplace and Lounge



Restaurant

VOTE YES

**Vote on the Student Centre Referendum
MARCH 7, 11, 12, 1985**