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Louis Gliksman, PH.D., Addiction Research Foundation,  
University of Western Ontario, London, ON, N6A 5B9

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## Campaign to focus on university overcrowding

By JAMES FLAGAL

Suffering from chronic overcrowding, Ontario universities will pull together from March 7-10 for the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) spring campaign—an attempt to make government and public aware of deteriorating conditions in post-secondary education.

York leads the pack as the most overcrowded Ontario post-secondary institution, according to a study conducted by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). The study is conducted every two years, and attempts to determine how much space a particular institution needs in order to offer quality education, administrative services, and research facilities.

Based on figures compiled during the 1986-87 school year, York has only 70.1% of the overall space it requires while Wilfred Laurier runs a close second with just 71.6% of its space requirements. York also suffers from a severe shortage of study space; according to the COU study, York has only 49% of its required study space. The campus contains only 75.5% of its required class space, and 70.9% of lab space. The area hurting the most, however, is the Athletics and Physical Education department with only 38.3% of its space requirements.

According to the study, Ontario universities possess only 88.3% of the space which they require in order to prevent deterioration of the quality of the education they offer. Only a few universities, such as Queen's and Lakehead, are fortunate enough to have space figures close to the set standard.

Joan McNeil, a researcher with the OFS, stresses that the figures are probably even worse this year, considering the fact that enrolment in

Ontario universities has increased by 6.1%. Applications to universities have already increased by over 10% over last year's figures. With this kind of "admission pressure being placed on institutions, overcrowding will get even worse next year," McNeil explains.

Starting March 7, the campaign will begin with Flashback days at Laurentian University in Sudbury, during which students will compare the level of government support to post-secondary education to long-term trends for the future. On Tuesday, March 8, horror-tours of overcrowded universities will be presented for local media across the province. Province-wide room-jamming contests are slated for Wednesday, March 9, and on the 10th students from across the province will meet at U of T's Convocation Hall at 1:00 for a march down to Queen's Park.

Last fall, thousands of students packed Convocation Hall for the "Stop the Gap" rally, with both politicians and university administrators demanding that the condition of post-secondary education be improved. Tammy Hassfeldt, External Affairs Director for CYSF, hopes that the rally at Queen's Park is just as successful.

"Numbers are important if we are to be an effective voice in getting the government's attention. We must show government that post-secondary education is simply not high enough on its list of priorities," Hassfeldt said.

CYSF has planned activities for Flashback Days, and will supply transportation to and from the rally. Details on the programme can be picked up at CYSF offices, 105 Central Square.

## ACT helps AIDS victims and carriers deal with disease

By PETER ILVES

Although everybody is aware of the AIDS epidemic, very few people are aware of the many services available to people suffering from AIDS and AIDS Related Complexes (ARC). Unfortunately, media coverage of the disease has neglected to concentrate on ways of best dealing with AIDS patients. The AIDS committee of Toronto (ACT), through its comprehensive counselling programmes, is attempting to make the public more aware of these issues.

According to Phil Shaw, a spokesperson for ACT, the Committee offers several types of counselling services including an AIDS Support Division, which operates a telephone hotline service, one-on-one counselling, and a support group structure offering group therapy.

There are several types of support groups including those specifically designed for people with AIDS and for people with ARC. People with ARC don't have AIDS, but the ill-health that they feel is a result of being infected with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). Only a small percentage of those with ARC will eventually develop AIDS. ACT also has support groups for people who are not ill, but have rated positive on an AIDS test. Support groups for the friends and families of AIDS patients are also provided.

According to Shaw, the major role of a counsellor is to enable those afflicted with the disease understand that they are not alone. Those people who learn they have AIDS tend to isolate themselves, says Shaw, and it's important that they be brought into a support group immediately after they learn they have the disease. This way, AIDS sufferers can learn how to handle the disease by sharing their experience with other sufferers.

ACT also provides a peer support counselling service which is called

the "Buddy System." This is a one-on-one service where volunteers are matched to persons with AIDS. According to Shaw, there are currently between 100 and 150 buddies in the programme.

An often difficult subject to broach with a terminally ill patient is that of writing a will because the patient may feel that by writing a will he is resigning himself to death. However, because of the importance of such a document, ACT attempts to deal with the issue and convince the patient to set his or her estate in order.

ACT counsels people who have acquired the virus through blood transfusions, heterosexual intercourse, and IV drug use. However, almost 100% of all reported AIDS cases in Toronto have been of gay men. Subsequently, most of ACT's counselling is directed to this group. Shaw notes, though, that between 50% and 60% of the people who use the AIDS information hotline are heterosexuals. ACT, being more established now, is trying to service all groups within society, he added.

ACT was established in 1983 through the cooperation of various community groups concerned about AIDS. One of the inspirational groups, according to Shaw, was Gays and Lesbians in Health Care. ACT receives two-thirds of its funding from the federal, provincial, metro and municipal governments. The remaining one-third comes from private sources, including individuals, foundations, and corporations.

Besides a commitment to counselling, ACT is also concerned with the prevention of the spread of AIDS through information campaigns. According to Shaw, they "are working for long-term cultural changes; healthy cultural changes. When we hear back that safer sex information is taking hold, then that legitimizes our work."