

ANALYSIS

Is apathy eroding the senate?

By MARK HUNTER

In last Thursday's Senate meeting a motion was carried to introduce a masters degree in computer science at York University. The vote passed by a margin of 18 to 12. Of those 30 votes, eight were cast by student senators; that means just 22 senators from University faculty and administration out of a possible 148 were on hand to vote on such an important issue. According to Paul Dutka, chairperson for the Student Senate Caucus "The idea of a senate is to get input and opinions from all areas of the university, unfortunately at York, that just isn't happening."

On the first Thursday of every month, the York University Senate, comprised of elected faculty, administrative and student representatives, sits in the Senate University Chambers on the ninth floor of the Ross Building and makes decisions that shape the direction of York University.

Among other powers, the Senate is responsible for structuring the academic policy of York, for determining and regulating admission and graduation requirements, for determining the content of curricula for all courses of study, and for recommendations concerning the appointment of Chancellor and President. The Senate is without a doubt one of the most important and

powerful decision-making bodies in the University.

Because of the pressing importance of these issues it would seem vital that testimony be heard from all areas of the University before new plans are implemented. Yet under the Senate guidelines a quorum will be achieved with just 20% of the total number of senators present. Technically speaking, 80% of all the senators can be absent and crucial motions concerning the future of York campus can still be passed. According to Dutka this is a very serious problem because "It is not mandatory that senators attend, and often if the subjects addressed do not concern their faculties, they don't show up."

There were 60 senators present when role call was taken at the November 27th Senate Committee meeting, roughly 1/3 of the total Senate size and according to Dutka that number thinned out as the meeting wore on. Two important issues were raised at the November 27 sitting. One was the introduction of a double major in Creative Writing and Women's Studies; the other was a change in the requirements of academic standards for admission to the Faculty of Arts. Both motions were carried in the absence of the majority of senators.

"One problem," says Dutka, "is that the meetings are too long." Dutka argues that by the time President Arthurs is finished addressing the Senate and the minutes from last month's meeting has been reviewed "the allotted time is used up before any new issues have been raised."

Political Science Professor and Senate member Robert Drummond echoes Dutka's sentiments: "The meeting almost always carry on past the 6PM deadline and Senators have other obligations and commitments to attend to." Mr. Drummond cited dinner as one of the items. "It is unfortunate," Drummond noted in an address to the Senate last Thursday, "that many members choose to vote with their feet."

"The least amount of Senators are on hand at the end of the meetings," says Dutka "and that is when the critical decisions are made." What Dutka suggests to remedy this is the creation of two shorter bi-weekly senate meetings. One in which President Arthurs can address the senate and the minutes from the previous meeting can be reviewed, and another to introduce and vote on new motions. "This way" says Dutka, "when it comes time to vote on new issues, there may still be some senators left."



ANDRÉ SOUBRIER

SUICIDE SURVIVOR: York Professor Selma Sage gave a frank account of how she dealt with her son's suicide during a talk for Death Awareness Week.

Suicide survivors are in high-risk group themselves

By JERRY JORRITSMA

When someone commits suicide, it is likely that a previous member of their family has committed suicide, said Karen Letofsky, director of Suicide Survivors Support Program in Toronto, at a seminar this past Monday. Members of that family go through depression, embarrassment, and guilt which puts them in a high suicidal risk group, she explained.

York professor Selma Sage of the Women Studies Programme and Letofsky headed an informal talk entitled "Suicide: How to Break the Trend," as part of the Jewish Student Federation's Death Awareness Week.

Sage's son Robert committed suicide 1980 when he was 24. She explained that he was addicted to drugs and was stealing to support his habit. He shot himself to death in his ex-girlfriend's bathroom. Sage gave a frank account of how she dealt with the suicide. She was telephoned by her daughter and told that her son had killed himself.

This led her to seek help with Karen Letofsky who is a specialist in dealing with suicide survivors, who are the family of the deceased. Explained Sage, "Never does a day go by that I do not think of my son, even though I have come to understand why he did it, it was his only way out, so he thought."

"There are three very important things that helped me through my son's suicide," explained Sage. "The first was to maintain a healthy sense of humour (which was reflected in her talk), the second was my belief in God, and the third was having a good peer support network."

Sage explained that "There are certain things you never tell a suicide survivor, such as: it was God's will, at least the suffering is over, and you'll be a better person after this."

Letofsky said that survivors of suicide are themselves in a high suicidal risk group because of the emotions of guilt and shame which they experience. It is Letofsky's job to help survivors overcome these emotions and take them out of the high-risk group, hence the title of the seminar, "Breaking the Trend."

Letofsky stated, "There is a high reality distortion amongst suicide survivors, and anger is prevalent along with a loss of identity and a feeling of failure."

Letofsky says "there still has to be a lot of research done on suicide and suicide survivors, so that the trend can be slowed down or stopped." Some good news said Letofsky is that Toronto has a stable suicide rate, and two years ago the suicide rate was the lowest in Metro than ever before.

Police aid needed to stop vandals

By BLAIR COSGROVE

Vandals responsible for damaging campus property come from all walks of life; while most are not members of the York community, some are actual employees of the security and parking department. Either way, the cost to repair damages incurred by vandalism has been staggering for the University.

In 1987, vandalism cost the University \$54,853. Damage to campus property between November 1987 and January 1988 amounted to well over \$5000. Vandals are painting doors, damaging soap and condom dispensers, and breaking windows and glass all over campus. "It's not a prank," Michael O'Neil, Director of Parking and Security, said.

A case in point is York student Lyle Huska who was apprehended by officers from 31 Division and charged with malicious damages after pulling an emergency telephone from a kiosk on Sat. Jan. 28. "We are not anxious to give anyone a

criminal record, but we need to reduce vandalism on campus," according to Michael O'Neil, Director of York Security.

The student was employed part-time as a parking attendant and had just finished his shift prior to vandalizing the phone. According to O'Neil, the no-dial, direct-line phones cost \$1000 each and were installed for students in case of emergency. They connect directly with York Security. "What if someone was in danger and needed to use that phone," O'Neil said.

In the past, many vandalism incidents were handled internally by York security. But according to O'Neil, pressing charges will help to deter vandals. However, Metro Police are not responding enthusiastically to York incidents, O'Neil said. "By comparison to what goes on around us, our (York's) major events are minor annoyances."

Metro Police would not charge a student who pulled a fire alarm at the Stong residence. "This is a criminal

code offence. If the police are not going to charge offenders, we (York Security) will bring the case before the justice of the peace," O'Neil said.

Statistics indicate that 40% of vandalism occurs pub nights: Thursday night and early Friday morning. Obviously, alcohol consumption is a contributing factor, according to O'Neil. "We (security department) have increased student patrols and plain clothed, anti-vandalism forces for pub-nights, from 8pm to 4pm." Hand-held spot lights were purchased to shine between cars in the parking lots and parking attendants' shifts were extended to deter vandals, O'Neil said.

A lot of property is damaged by non-students, according to O'Neil. Security now issues trespassing notices on the spot to people who have no business on campus and are potential troublemakers. In 1987, 46 trespassing notices were served. "If trespassers return they will be arrested and charged," O'Neil said.

PREPARE FOR:

**LSAT GMAT
MCAT SAT
GRE DAT**

SPEEDREADING

**ADVANCED
MEDICAL
BOARDS**

KAPLAN
STANLEY H. KAPLAN EDUCATIONAL CENTER
OF CANADA LTD.

(416) 967-4733

Certified General Accountants have a natural place in the business world.



As a Certified General Accountant, your career path could lead right to the top.

CGAs have a thorough grasp of fiscal management and possess skills that are in high demand. Computer technology has put today's CGAs at the forefront of their field and is helping them provide professional services faster and more

At the top.

effectively than ever before.

You can study while holding an accounting job. And relevant university or college courses earn you advanced standing.

Discover how you can join Canada's fastest growing body of professional accountants. Call today (416) 593-1103 (toll free 1-800-268-8022). Or return the coupon.

Session application
deadline: February 19, 1988.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

YU-2-1

Mail to: Certified General Accountants Association
of Ontario, 480 University Avenue, 4th Floor, Toronto,
Ontario M5G 1V2.

