

York group meets with Sorbara on enrolment, funding policies

By JAMES FLAGAL

A report presented to Minister of Universities and Colleges Gregory Sorbara recommends a system where each Ontario university is designated an enrollment limit and would be funded according to that limit.

The report, assembled by Reya Ali, president of the Council of York Student Federation (CYSF), Wayne Burnett, president of the Faculty of Education Students Association and Graham Thompson, Researcher for CYSF and titled "The Resolution of Contradictions in Post Secondary Education Policy," was presented to the minister last Wednesday.

In the report proposed, recommendations are made "to resolve the long standing contradiction between government's accessibility policy and its punitive funding formula." The government's accessibility policy promises post-secondary education to all students with averages of 60 percent or better.

These recommendations include ways to create a "rough equity system such that each student would be receiving the benefit of roughly equal funding per student."

In the past decade York enrollment has increased from 24,000 to 40,000.

Ali said that the rough equity sys-

tem would discourage universities to grow past their designated capacities, and each university would receive roughly equal funding per student, Ali said. "A rough equity system would correspond to annual enrollment changes in each institution, instead of basing allocation figures on past enrollment which does not represent the true figures of today," he added.

Ali told Sorbara that presently a two tier university system exists where universities such as York are being chronically underfunded.

Ali added that York has been a "safety valve" for the government because of its accessibility policy. "There will have to be cuts in student enrollment at York or a change in the funding formula," Ali told Sorbara. "We at York are actually being penalized for increasing our enrollment while universities like Queens and Western, which have decreased their student body size, are benefiting from the present funding formula."

Also included in the report is a discussion of overcrowding at York. York currently rates as the second most overcrowded university in Ontario and is suffering from lack of capital funds. Ali told the minister that even if they equalized the present formula, it will not rectify the



Minister of Colleges and Universities Gregory Sorbara.

building problem at York. "An artificial injection of money straight from the government will be needed in order to put York back on par with the other universities," Ali said.

Other recommendations include that each university submit a proposal outlining its present building condition, future outlook in enrollment, and an assurance from the universities that they will erect buildings that are easily modifiable to correspond to changing demographics.

The report proposes that buildings be versatile to adjust to varying

enrollment so classrooms could be easily changed into labs or study halls, and buildings could be expandable at an affordable sum of money.

Ali told Sorbara that the entire funding system for universities needs restructuring based on a rough equity system so everyone could receive an equal amount of funding without discrimination involved.

In the final segment of the report, transfer payments are discussed outlining the past government's transferring of education funds to other policy areas. In the past equalization payments given to the province by the federal government contained set budget allocations for each policy area, forcing provincial governments to allocate the appropriate amount to universities and colleges.

During the meeting, an aide to Sorbara told Ali that universities and colleges are an easy area to transfer funds from since most of the public views this as low priority when compared to other areas such as health. He said that political will to upgrade post-secondary education is usually low because of apathetic public opinion.

The aide used the senior citizens as an example of a group which mobilized opinions in their favor when their programs were in danger of being reduced by the government.

"Universities need a higher profile in order to get a bigger slice of the

budgetary pie," the aide said. "Otherwise funds will always be extracted from the post-secondary's purse unless public opinion is mobilized."

The aide told Ali that the Liberal government is fully committed to Excellence in Education. He also told Ali that the government is setting up commission changes for the funding formula, requesting presidents from each university to submit proposals.

Sorbara and his aide both complimented CYSF's proposal. The aide said the brief was both creative and comprehensive in dealing with the present allocation problem.

Sorbara, however, could not assure Ali on any future government action to remedy York's present dilemmas, but promised that he would look into the matter.

Sorbara's aide added that the funding formula is "a huge monster which no one understands," adding that revisions in the formula are needed.

Sorbara concluded the meeting by promising Ali that his government would be responsible for allocating the appropriate funds to universities and colleges, instead of transferring funds to other policy areas.

"Hopefully this government will react to the needs of the system," Ali said, "because already the detriments are being felt right here at York."

Student employment plan unveiled by government

By JAMES FLAGAL

Ontario Skills and Development Minister Gregory Sorbara has unveiled his government's student employment program for this summer. Sorbara, who also fills the University and Colleges portfolio, announced the program at University of Toronto's Erindale campus last Wednesday.

The ministry has allocated 43.8 million dollars for the program which promises to make 61,000 jobs available to students this summer. The entire summer program has been broken down into the following three separate programs:

1) Experience '86; which provides

7000 jobs in more than 100 ministries and associated organizations where students gain first hand knowledge in areas that they are considering as careers. The jobs vary from teaching water safety to research work in labs.

2) The Ontario Youth Employment Program; pays a wage subsidy of \$1.25 an hour to Ontario employers to encourage them to create 53,000 new summer jobs.

3) Student Venture Capital; provides interest-free loans up to \$2000 to operate their own business.

Additional summer employment is available through other programs of the Ontario Government including the Junior Ranger Program of the Ministry of National Resources.

OFS works to improve OSAP

By LAURA LUSH

The Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) will continue to lobby the provincial government for improvements to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) despite an eight percent boost in funding to the 1986-87 budget.

OFS Chairman Bernard Drainville said the federation is "satisfied with the increase, but are still working on improving other areas of the OSAP program." The OFS lobbies on behalf of more than 200,000 students from 14 universities province-wide.

Colleges and Universities Minister Gregory Sorbara announced the details of the \$10.8 million increase on January 16, three months after Treasurer Robert Nixon said the 1986-87 OSAP budget would increase from \$135-million to \$145.8-million.

"It's essentially a victory for OFS," Drainville said, adding that \$10-million of the \$10.8-million increase would be allocated to the Ontario Student Grant Plan instead of the Canada Student Loan program."

Sandra Antoniani, CYSF's Director of External Affairs, said she doesn't "credit OFS with securing the increase," because "one of the Liberal's campaign promises was to increase the OSAP budget."

Drainville said that Sorbara announced that most of the grant

increase will be allocated to low-income families. A student coming from a family of three children with a combined income of \$20,000 will receive a maximum of \$4,520 in grant assistance, an increase of \$600 from 1985-86. "It's going to make accessibility to post-secondary education easier," Drainville said. Married students will also receive more grant money because of changes to the grant calculation method that will take more account of the level of cost of living, and reduced the working spouse's expected contribution. A 33 percent increase in the Ontario Special Bursary Plan will also increase funding for part-time students.

Drainville said that the OFS is addressing other problematic areas of the OSAP plan, such as expect student contributions and the grant eligibility period. A five member team, the OFS Analysis Team, submitted a preliminary report, based on their review of OSAP, to Sorbara two weeks ago. Some of their recommendations including increasing the personal living allowance, and increasing the eight semester grant eligibility period to 12 or 14 weeks.

Drainville said the four percent increase to OSAP's personal living allowance is not enough. "An increase from \$95.00 to \$99.00 is not adequate for students living away from home to cover their food,

transportation, and housing costs," he said.

Drainville said that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities is also conducting its own internal review of OSAP. "We hope that Mr. Sorbara will continue to listen to student concerns as expressed by OFS and will take in account our recommendations," Drainville said.

OFS is expected to submit their final review and recommendation of the OSAP system to the minister in June.

OFS/CYSF: issues and views

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Blink, "if there is enough support for an issue then there is a committee." People bring ideas to OFS; OFS doesn't put the ideas in their head," Blink added.

"The staff doesn't spend days and days on it," Blink said. "It's not a major priority; the central priorities (of OFS) are quality and accessibility of education."

• *The Issue*—The lack of OFS presence at York.

CYSF—CYSF feels that OFS has no visibility on campus. The fieldworker for York is also responsible for eight other universities between Toronto and Thunder Bay, which leaves her

only three days a month to visit the campus.

OFS—According to the OFS chairperson, Bernard Drainville, "the fieldworker depends a lot on activity on campus . . . (and) CYSF is not doing much." "It's hard to provide assistance when we can't get cooperation with CYSF," Drainville complained, "we're received like a stranger."

Blink feels that it's not necessary for a fieldworker to be around that often at York because of its location.

"OFS is right downtown at Yonge and Bloor," Blink said. "York's in the same city and doesn't use it."

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