

OSAP's not fair

Dear Editor,

OSAP discriminates against mature students.

In my naivety I believed that the OSAP program was a fair one. But, like many things in life, the reality of the situation is hard to accept. We the mature students, are evaluated on the basis of income and homes. This, I believe is discriminatory. Why should we be penalized for providing our families with a home? OSAP drags its heels over processing the applications, leaving many of us in doubt until well into the semester. There is an appeal process, but this process is a total invasion of one's life-style and a totally degrading experience. One is left feeling that we are criminals, that we have done something terribly wrong by asking for assistance. Even if we do go through with this humiliating experience, there is no guarantee that the appeal will be a success. In speaking with a representative at OSAP I discovered that if you make more than \$18,000 - \$20,000 per year, you are expected to fund your own education. This base amount automatically excludes mature students, which I feel is yet another form of discrimination. I strongly urge other mature students to write to: Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 6th floor Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto, M7A 1L2, Attention: Dr. Richard Allen.

The ministry is presently reviewing their policy concerning acceptance or denial of OSAP funds. The more letters he receives, the stronger our voice becomes. I would also urge York University to take a greater interest in its mature student population. We also have a lot to contribute to York and to the community.

Sandra Iantorno



Book Sharma

Will Harry pick up AMEX tab?

An Open Letter to President Harry Arthurs

Dear Harry,

We are outraged to find that all full-time staff members have received a pre-approved York University "corporate" credit card from American Express.

We contend that in issuing these credit cards, York University has acted in a socially and financially irresponsible manner. We support these contentions by offering these facts:

Although described as a "corporate card," the accompanying document-

tation notes that "we are not against the use of the card for personal expenses". Cards were sent out indiscriminately, regardless of whether staff members incur legitimate expenses on behalf of York University.

Since the individual is financially liable for debts incurred on the card, it is a personal credit card. Its promotion as a "corporate" card is misleading. The claim narrowly escapes being fraudulent because the University pays the annual \$5.00/card fee.

Credit cards hold their greatest appeal to those least able to afford them. To make Amex membership more enticing, the card has "no pre-set spending limit". Through this easy credit program, the University is encouraging its employees to risk

personal indebtedness at a time of financial crisis. This apparent lack of social conscience may predict the nadir in the University's quest for a dollar.

We are concerned that employee information given to American Express may be used to conduct unauthorized credit checks. Employee information, including names and addresses is confidential and its release is a breach of trust.

We believe that money spent in legitimizing the "corporate card" claim might be better invested in improved facilities and services. The card fee is small, perhaps, in terms of the total budget but every dollar wasted is still wasted. We suspect, however, that York planned to make money on this scheme by (1) selling

employee information to Amex and/or (2) taking a kick-back each time the "corporate card" is used. We cannot estimate the net profit, nor do we know the current market value for integrity.

York may insist that the "corporate card" is genuine and is intended for University business. We argue that the wholesale distribution of the cards

Letters

encourages additional spending while most faculties are facing severe cut-backs.

We recommend that you direct comptroller R.J. Goudreau to immediately cancel this program.

Rena Singleton
Pat Finch
Debbie Mojzes
Michael Belanger
Helen Lee
Leona Andrews

Pessimistic view of Peace Talks

Dear Editor,

I was disappointed with Gamal Abdel-Shehid's article, "Peace talks have little to do with peace" (Bearpit, November 6) because it displayed an attitude which is not only pessimistic, but rigidly dogmatic as well. If it is "relevant" to discuss to histories of Israel, the U.S., and the U.N., then surely it is also relevant to examine the histories of the Arab participants.

There's no doubt that some students would fill a whole paper detailing the negative actions of Israel

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Help for ASA members

Dear Editor,

With great determination and commitment, the African Students' Association has successfully coordinated the establishment of an emergency relief fund for its members to be administered by York University. The need for the establishment of this relief program speaks for itself. Recently, five ASA members could not afford to continue their studies at York and two others were threatened with eviction from their homes due to financial difficulties.

The financial problems facing ASA members extend to the area of books, stationary, and even food. The importance of the relief fund is underscored by the fact that the majority of ASA members are foreign students who are not entitled to official means of financial support such as OSAP or credit cards. Unlike their Canadian counterparts, most ASA members cannot turn to their families in the event of financial difficulties.

Who May Apply: The fund would operate similarly to a university bursary to financially assist African students during difficult times. It will be available to students at York (including Glendon College) in critical financial need only.

How You Can Help: The ASA is coordinating activities to generate funds, and is also soliciting

for financial donations of any amount from interested community members, faculties, departments, colleges and student governments, as well as corporate sponsors.

Financial contributions and donations of any amount are welcome and tax deductible. Any contribution will be fully tax receipted by the University in accordance with Revenue Canada guidelines. Donations and contributions should be directed to the York University ASA Relief Fund, Office of Private Funding, External Relations, West Office Building, York University, 4700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario, M3J 1P3; or to the ASA office, Room 310 Student Centre, tel. 736-2100 ext. 20435; or call Diamond at 665-1372.

Finally, getting the word out to interested community members will be of great help. We have tried, but we may have missed some possible contributors during our recent mail-out.

It is important that students and communities try to help each other in times of need. Your contribution, either personal, financial or both, will be greatly appreciated by those students who will benefit from it.

Sincerely,
Diamond Tobin-West
President of ASA

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