

Psych Services: an inadequate solution

By WENDY DENNIS

Its only a week into term, but the Psychological Services Department of York University is already finding itself with plenty to do.

Psych Services is situated on the ground floor of that rather unobtrusive looking structure — The Ministry of Truth (Behavioural Sciences Building) — and perhaps it is due to some campus planner's bitter sense of irony that a department created to deal in part with growing problems of alienation should be dwarfed by the fortress-like Ministry of Love (Ross Building) — the epitome of the over-centralized, impersonal multiversity that this institution is fast becoming.

Psych Services is headed by a team of senior staff members, cross-appointed from the Department of Psychology.

These members, all trained psychologists, and either assistant professors or above, are responsible for the development, supervision and evaluation of the programs available to students. Program assistants and graduate students aid in the execution of programs and front-line counselling.

There are no psychiatrists on the staff, although one consultant is available at all times for "extreme" cases.

"Our chief responsibility," said Dr. Dov Friedlander, one of the senior members, "is to assist students in any way possible in functioning more effectively in a university setting. Generally, our programs are designed to assist people in helping themselves."

Psych Services' "self-help" programs cover a wide range of problems from improving study skills to learning how to listen more effectively in lectures.

With the help of a morass of audio and video-taped equipment, Psych Services can help a student increase his reading speed to catch up on interminable assignments or even break a few nasty habits.

For instance, the "tension-control" program is designed to teach someone how to relax in a tight situation. If you get all tied up in knots whenever you have to speak out in a certain prof's class, Psych

Services can get to the root of your problem by hooking you up to mission control and recording your physiological reactions in various situations.

"There's no hocus-pocus involved in our methods," Dr. Friedlander stressed. "Students are well-aware of what will be happening to them before we begin."

And, if you're concerned that Psych Services is an over-zealous collection of shrinks ready to nail you down to the infamous couch and drill you on your relationship with your mother — guess again.

"We're trying to dispel the notion that this service is for the real nuts and freak-outs. Basically, we're catering to the average student with the normal problems of late adolescence."

Those "normal problems" that Psych Services handled for over 800 students last year included anything from inability to speak out confidently in tutorials to freaking out while on drugs.

Although Psych Services has no drug program it has been instrumental in disseminating information in seminars about drug use and abuse.

Dr. Friedlander noted that people seem to be initially reluctant to avail themselves of Psych Services. Once inside, however, few regret the move.

"We do get a lot of freshmen in here at the beginning of term, and during exam time there is a noticeable increase of students with mild anxiety and tension states. Mostly we help them to organize their time wisely."

Psych Services is also involved in various research programs and innovations on campus. Members of the department were involved in the special tutorials and student-centred courses last year.

"Since all the senior members are on faculty, we keep in close touch with the students' needs."

Because Psych Services extends its facilities to anyone on the university grounds, it has found that nine to five service is inadequate. Consequently, this year an after-hours emergency line will be installed and anyone who feels the desire to talk about his hang-ups in the early hours of the morning, need only pick up the phone and dial. An answering service will

take his name and number and within minutes one of the senior members of the department will call him back to discuss the problem.

And so, we seem to have reached the point where we must depend on technology to solve the problems that technology has created in the first place. Perhaps the fact that Psych Services is usually

one of the fastest growing departments on most North American campuses speaks eloquently for the irony of the situation.

As the university churns out more so-called misfits Psych Services swells its ranks to accommodate them, and help them adjust to the system. And characteristically, the university functions on, oblivious to the real prob-

lem.

There is no doubt that Psych Services performs a needed function on this campus. It is a sort of infirmary for the walking wounded. But isn't it time we stopped accommodating the effect and started eradicating the cause?

The fault, it seems, lies with the university and the larger society, and not with the individual.



Excalibur — Dave Cooper

When the lights went out last Monday at least one professor had the initiative to move outdoors from his darkened seminar room. Here Richard Schneider conducts a discussion outside of the Petrie Science Building.

Glendon to remain bi-cultural

By JOHN KING

Glendon College has been "unreservedly endorsed as the small, residential liberal arts college of York University" by the presidential committee which has been investigating the college since June, 1968.

In its report, released last week, the committee said the college should keep its bi-cultural and public affairs orientation, and should stay at the Glendon Campus.

Rumors in March hinted that the college might be moved to the York Campus because of its high cost of operation. After a secret meeting of the Glendon faculty council executive committee York president Murray G. Ross issued a statement denying the validity of the rumors.

Glendon's high operating cost was reduced last year by registering 164 faculty of arts and science

students at the college.

The committee's report said provision had been made for Glendon to operate at a loss for the next two years. It is expected to achieve financial stability in 1971.

There were four members on the committee: George Gardiner, a member of the board of governors; Harry Crowe, dean of Atkinson College; Dennis Healy, now

acting president of the university; and John Becker, assistant vice-president in charge of student services.

In an interview last September Ross said committees like the Gardiner committee are set up to study aspects of the university so facts will be available "in the event that a problem might arise in the future."

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