

Daycare funds frozen

Leora Aisenberg

York's day-care centre is feeling the icy effects of a funding freeze recently implemented by the Metro Social Services and Housing Committee. The freeze, intended to help stabilize an increased deficit, came as a major setback to parents who cannot afford day-care without government subsidies.

Funding for the program is obtained through parents' fees, as well as a grant from the university which goes towards rent and cleaning costs. "Although much of the general population thinks everyone gets subsidies," said program director Jane Beach, "less than 50 per cent receive it."

Money is also allocated by Metro on an attendance basis. Normally, attendance throughout the city is much lower during the summer months, but this year, the programs remained full. Because costs rise with attendance, according to Beach, an anticipated \$200,000 deficit was actually closer to \$500,000. As a result, Metro instituted the freeze.

Consequently, parents who did not have a subsidy appointment by Sept. 10 were not eligible for financial assistance. Maureen Lynch, whose four year old daughter is enrolled in the program, made the deadline by three weeks. If there was no subsidized care available, she



Anger and frustration have spread throughout the campus in the wake of a freeze in daycare funding.

claims, she would be forced to quit school. "I needed a B.A. to go farther in what would otherwise be a dead-end job."

At a meeting on Sept. 25, the

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York issues central

Neil Wiberg

York issues dominated the Ontario Federation of Students fall conference. The September 25-28 convention, held at the University of Toronto, attracted over 100 delegates and observers.

Two issues attracted the major share of interest in the Sunday plenary session. These were women's affairs, particularly sexual harassment, and the labour dispute involving the Canadian Union of Educational Workers and York University.

The plenary session passed all nine motions hammered out in the women's issues workshop. The motions covered a wide variety of topics, and required OFS schools to:

- assist off-campus organizations, such as the Rape Crisis Centre, in municipal election work and lobbying
- send letters to the editors of major daily newspapers
- research rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment at each campus
- prepare materials on women's issues for distribution prior to the provincial election.

The report issued last week by York's Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment (see *Excalibur*, Sept. 25) was well received at the convention. OFS is considering using the York proposal as a model for all campuses.

The debate was not as good natured when the subject of the labour dispute at York arose.

Brian Robinson of University of Toronto Graduate Students Union wanted the plenary to assign an OFS fieldworker to help organize a student strike support committee. The convention amended the motion to replace "assign" with "consider assigning".

A heated discussion ensued over the fieldworker assignment. Most speakers favoured splitting the fieldworker time between organizing the strike support committee, and campaigning in the OFS fee hike referenda.

An obviously shaken Robinson was angered by the compromise. "My motion has been de-personed (sic)!" he complained.

The plenary also adopted a short-term strategy of "mass lobbying" MPP's on October 29, followed by a Halloween meeting with Colleges and Universities Minister Dr. Bette Stephenson.

York's contingent at the meeting was smaller than many other schools, but nevertheless proved effective.

The CYSF was represented by a delegation consisting of Jenny Gonsalves, Elaine Hick and Keith Smockum. York Student Barb Taylor and BOG representative Peter Brickwood were also prominent at the meeting in their capacities as OFS executive members.

Chris Elwell of Atkinson College ran for a vacant executive position, but was unsuccessful.

Unions still talking

Reg Hunt

In the event of a strike, joint action by the York University Staff Association and the Canadian Union of Educational Workers is still a possibility.

Following a meeting Tuesday between the two unions, YUSA President Karen Harrell said the matter is to be "discussed further". Last week YUSA members voted 86 per cent in favour of a strike if mediation is not successful by October 16.

According to Noel Berman, First Vice-president of YUSA, the main issues in the union's dispute with the university administration are seniority, working hours, sick leave, and paid holidays. Wages and length of contract are also issues, with the university insisting on a two-year contract.

Regarding seniority, Berman said the administration wants YUSA-exempt employees to be guaranteed equal seniority rights with YUSA members. To accept this demand, the union would be on the verge of breaking the law, he said, under the Labour Board rulings regarding YUSA's certification, the union cannot represent these employees, which include secretaries in the personnel department.

Berman also elaborated on the other issues:

- Personal leave: The current

contract does not now require a reason if an employee wants personal leave. The administration is demanding that the new contract specify that reasons be given.

- Hours of work and overtime: Currently the normal work day for YUSA members is reduced by one hour each Friday in July and August. The union is asking that this be extended to June.

- Sick leave: The administration has proposed new limits to sick leave with ceilings on the number of days that can be accrued; currently there is no limit. They have also called for a restriction of six sick leave days per year that can be used if an employee's child or spouse is ill.

- Paid holidays: YUSA has asked for the 22nd and 23rd of December as extra holidays. The administration has refused this.

- Wages and length of contract: The university has offered eight and a half per cent each year of a two-year contract. The union wants 12 per cent or a lump sum of \$1,375, whichever is greater, and is resisting demands for a two-year contract.

When asked if the YUSA is prepared for a long strike, Berman said that a large majority of the membership voted for a strike. "I'm sure they've weighed the possibilities," he said.

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