

Varsity screwed by council

TORONTO (CUP) — The University of Toronto's student council has refused to allow a campus newspaper to ask its constituents for a fee levy increase.

At its Feb. 28 meeting, the council decided not to allow *The Varsity* to ask full-time undergraduates if they would support an annual cost of inflation increase in the paper's \$1.25 per student fee.

Titch Dharamsi, the council's chief returning officer, said it was the first time a campus group had been refused permission to put a question on the ballot.

Varsity editor Karen Hill was outraged. "It's quite clear the reason the question was rejected was slimy political opportunism," she said. "(Members of the council) have no right to take it upon themselves to make such a decision. They're steamrolling over democracy."

Council member Charles Levi admitted politics played a part. "One of the major grumblings was that (the council) only gets coverage when it's doing something wrong. There are people who believe that *The Varsity* has something out for it."

And Peter Naglik, another council member, said it would be "sneaky" to pass the cost of living allowance, because "students may become more right wing or more left wing and may not want to increase *The Varsity's* levy every year."

But Daina Groskaufmanis, who also sits on the council, said it should not be up to council to decide questions such as that.

"They didn't give students the chance to vote yes or no. There are council members who felt *The Varsity* is undeserving of the student levy. Then let them vote no

or run a no campaign."

The cost of living allowance would have increased *The Varsity's* levy by about six cents next year. It would have remained the lowest student newspaper levy in Canada.

Naglik said if *The Varsity* wanted to hold a referendum it

could do so on its own. "If they want to increase their student fees they have the wherewithal to take the question to the students."

Hill called that suggestion "obscene." Asking the paper to spend around \$1,000 on a referendum when the student council already has a mechanism in place is ludicrous, she said.

Budget cuts get York journal

TORONTO (CUP) — January 23, 1990 — the *Canadian Women's Studies Journal* gets a letter from Barbara McDougall, the federal minister responsible for the Status of Women Secretariat. It thanks the staff, telling them how much she enjoyed the journal and wishing it many years of continued success.

One month less two days later, her government revokes all \$90,000 of the York University-based journal's federal grant.

And now the journal may fold, says Monica Gallagher, the journal's office manager. She said the grant from the Secretary of State's Women's Program was about half the journal's budget.

Other cuts to women's groups, announced in the February federal budget, include a 20 per cent reduction in funding for five feminist action groups and the elimination of core funding to 80 women's centres across the country.

Gallagher said the cuts have broader implications to the women's movement in this country.

"In a lot of smaller communities, these centres were the only place for women to go," Gallagher said. "The federal government is trying to silence women in this country."

"It came without warning," the journal's literary editor, Maria Jacobs said. "It's unbelievable, we've all been struck with disbelief."

The cuts are effective April 1, 1990 and the magazine was given no shut down money and no

warning of the impending cuts. Gallagher said the group has to find another source of funds or shut down.

Recent issues of the magazine have included a Summer/Fall 89 issue on Native Women and Winter 89 issue on Soviet Women.

"That kind of analysis and grassroots activity will be lost if the journal folds," Gallagher said.

Sharon Jones, a women's studies student at York, calls the journal one of the best for Canadian research and says it is used often as a reference in her courses.

"I am very upset about it and to see it cut is a statement in how the government values scholarship being done in the area of women's studies," she said.

Conservative MPs defended the budget in Commons the next day when Secretary of State Gerry Weiner, whose department was financing the magazines, called it a plan to ensure our (Canadians') future security and prosperity and emphasized that deficit reduction is a priority.

The cuts represent about \$1.6 million of the overall budget.

"When the government will spend \$14 million on ads for the GST and gave out \$11-12 million loans to strip parlours, this amount is negligible in terms of deficit reduction," Gallagher said.

The journal's next issue was to be its 10th anniversary issue, but plans for this special issue have been postponed since it could be their last.

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