

# Fight looms as Space U choice narrows

by Pat Micelli

York won't be chosen as the location for a space university if objections to it are as strong as opponents say, the project's president told protesters last week.

Belgian scientist George van Reeth made his remarks after being challenged by York community members at a press conference in Washington, where a selection committee announced a shortlist of possible sites for the International Space University project.

"If Canadians have to tell us 'well, we're sorry but there is such objection in our country that you cannot come to Toronto,' we won't go," said van Reeth.

A bid by the York-based Institute for Space and Terrestrial Science, supported by the Ontario government and York University, was one of the three that made the shortlist.

Advocates say the project will promote the peaceful exploration of space, provide education in "space studies," and help Ontario's aerospace industry.

Opponents say the space university's ties with military contractors will lead to military research, and its high priced tuition will be out of reach for most students.

York student federation employee Nick Marchese interrupted the announcement to ask

van Reeth if he knew about the extent of the opposition.

"Are you aware that there are groups representing more than four million Canadians who are opposed to the presence of [the International Space University] in Toronto or anywhere in Canada?" he asked van Reeth.

Several labor groups, women's organizations, peace activists, environmental and academic groups joined forces this summer to stop the project from coming to Canada.

Although expressing skepticism at the numbers, Van Reeth said the space university's board of directors would not choose Toronto if opposition was that strong.

"You mentioned four million. Possibly true. I'll give you my answer: If that is true, we won't go to Canada. It's as simple as that," said Van Reeth.

Bob Richards, a founder of the project, said the conference was not an appropriate place to raise objections.

"If they have concerns they should take it to their respective governments, not to the ISU," Richards told *Excalibur* the following day.

But in a recent interview, Marchese said the purpose of the protest was to "cut through the media blackout on the opposition to the bid for the ISU in Ontario."

"There isn't unanimity on this question and

that's what we wanted the media and ISU delegates to know, and we were successful," Marchese added.

Peter White, a graduate student and secretary of a York branch of a space science exploration group, said he was looking forward to having the space campus at York. An institution of this sort is needed to keep Canadian graduate students in Canada, White said last week.

"One of my best friends has moved to the U.S. [to get a graduate degree], because there isn't the support for the space sciences here," White added.

York President Susan Mann has not publicly declared support for either side, but said in a prepared statement to *Excalibur* that the space university project "is worth exploring for the potential and promising fit" with administrative plans for the university's future.

"Shortlisting of the Canadian (Toronto) bid certainly recognizes the strength of York and in particular our scientists," said Mann.

Officials said space university's directors will probably announce the final choice in January next year. Directors planned to make the final choice in August, but introduced an additional negotiating phase this summer.

"We came to the conclusion that it's better for us to negotiate a little with everyone," said

Van Reeth at the conference.

Critics say the extra step is designed to get the shortlisted places to improve the bid.

"York and the government will be under pressure to give more," said Janice Newson, a York sociology professor and member of a York-based group opposed to the project.

The Ontario government has promised \$11 million towards capital costs plus \$3.5 million annually towards operating costs.

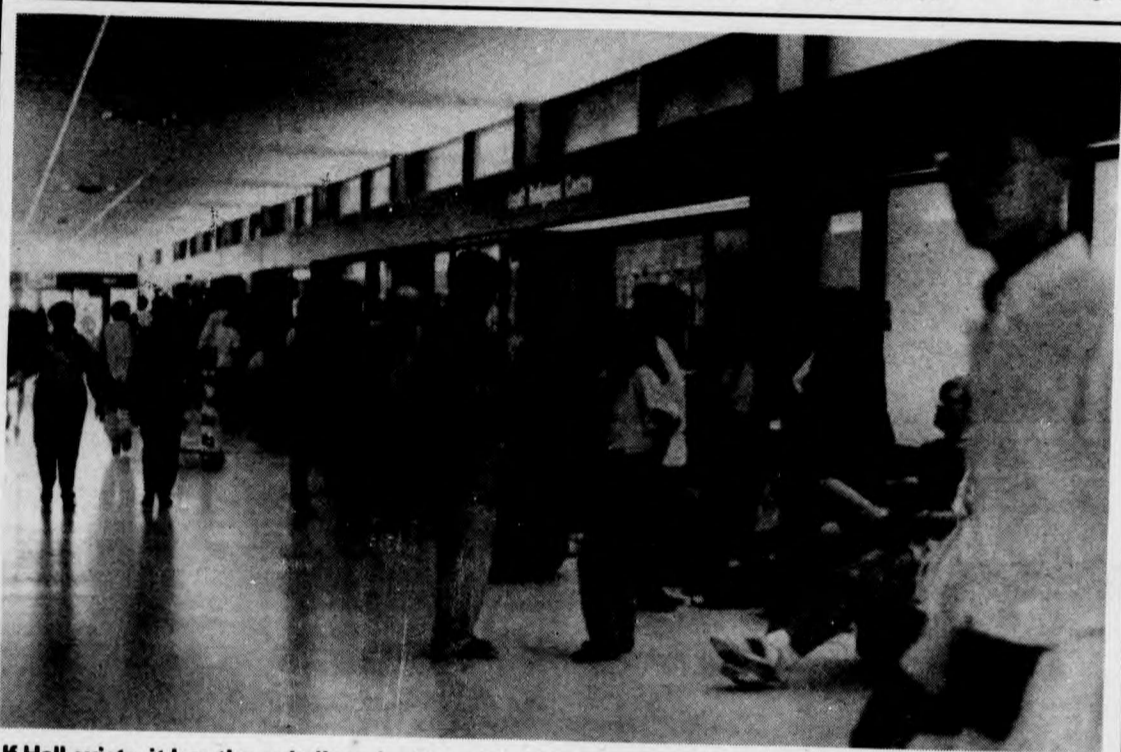
York has promised seven acres of its land for a 450-seat amphitheatre, student and faculty housing, and headquarters for affiliate campuses around the world. Classrooms would be located in an 25,000-square-foot Space Studies building, also at York.

Details of the proposal will be voted on by York's Senate this fall, but the York's board of governors still reserves the right to affiliate York and the space university, Mann confirmed.

"Senators can most certainly vote to have no academic link with ISU," said Mann in the statement.

"The board... looks to the Senate for advice. Senate certainly can also recommend to the Board that there be no affiliation agreement and that York lands not be used. Senate can also do the opposite," she added.

The two shortlisted bids Toronto is now competing against are from Kitakyushu, Japan, and Strasbourg, France.



If Hell exists, it has the only lines for financial aid longer than those at York's Central Square office last week. One student who showed up when the office opened reported the queue was 100 yards long. "I understand from other students that the time to be served reached six hours by early afternoon," Graham McCready told the university counsel Harriet Lewis in a letter urging the office to be more efficient • photo by Roseanne Bailey

## Memo has promotional plan, opponents say

Opponents of the International Space University circulated a confidential memo last week they say "outlines a carefully constructed plan to sell" the project at York.

Members of a York-based group distributed the report during an appearance by Ontario Universities and Colleges Minister Richard Allen's at York's faculty club.

"It's a way of trying to make it look like York is supportive...like they can contain the conflict," said Janice Newson, a York sociology professor and a member of a York-based group opposing the Toronto bid.

University officials and members of the bid team deny the allegations.

"This was not designed to be a propaganda campaign," Peter Mueller, who heads the team, said last week.

"The opposition have tried very hard to convince people of their views.

We have done very little of that because there is a lot of support [for the project]," Mueller added. "I think we have the same right as anyone else does."

Communications official Chris Cable asked bid-opponents David Noble and Janice Newson to leave shortly after they began distributing the memo, but the two continued handing them out without incident.

The document, called "International Space University, Update No. 5," summarizes discussion at an Aug. 17 meeting of York senators and administrators, including President Susan Mann. A media schedule for August and part of September was attached.

Mueller who had not seen the document, said it probably referred to "various actions and activities that have been considered with respect to the [bidding] process."

Actions outlined in the document include:

- an on-campus bid information booth and open forum in September.
- building support in York's Senate, its governing academic body.
- developing a York chapter of Friends of ISU, a lobby group for the Institute for Space and Terrestrial Science's bid.

The media schedule includes a Friends of ISU event in the week of Sept. 21.

York officials met on Aug. 17 for an update on the bid but ministry officials were not involved, York President Susan Mann said in a prepared statement to *Excalibur*.

"Misapprehensions like this shift the focus from a discussion of the facts, and I find that very disturbing," she added.

—Pat Micelli

## Tuition deposit shutting out needy students

by Sara Singer

Some students say they are being denied an education at York because they can't pay a \$75 tuition deposit by a university deadline.

According to York's registration policy students must officially register by paying a portion of their tuition within two weeks of enrolling in a course. Officials say this is done to avoid what they call "ghost enrollments," where students register but never show up, blocking students who really want to attend.

Jeff Zoeller, a central student government vice-president, said many students who are waiting for their student loans are having trouble paying the deposit by the deadline but are not being given any flexibility in payment by the registrar's office.

Associate Registrar Lorie McRae said university policy does not allow deferrals for the deposit.

"If you can't pay seventy five dollars now then how are you going to be able to pay the rest of your fees?" asked McRae.

This summer, fourth year Politi-

cal Science student Heather Dryden asked to postpone the payment of her deposit fee until she got her loan in September but was refused.

"I was told if I couldn't afford to pay a \$75 fee then I obviously wouldn't be able to afford to come to university," said Dryden, who is also a student vice-president. "But a lot of people don't have \$75 to spare. It was a bad summer for jobs and people have debts to pay, families to feed and are just barely affording to pay for university."

Reaud Safraj, a third year English student, was de-enrolled because he was away for the summer and missed the deadline for paying his deposit.

"Between residence and tuition fees I've spent thousands of dollars so far at York and I can't get back in because of a \$75 [deposit]," said Safraj. "You have to buy your way through the system; basically, if you don't have money, you can't go to school."

In a letter to Zoeller, York Registrar Gene Denzel said the notice and the deadlines for payment of the deposit are prominently included in the

lecture schedule and students failing to pay on time are given a warning letter.

But according to Safraj and other students the information about the deposit is not prominent enough and should be made more noticeable, especially since it is only in its second year of existence.

"A number of students have complained to me about the information not being prominent enough," said Zoeller. "Students are inundated with information during registration and don't read everything, especially if it's buried in the pages of a handbook."

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