

Presidential Candidates

Kelly Cont'd

level of service and the quality of life for students must not be diminished.

EXCAL: What are your feelings regarding the changes to student government that are in The White Paper?

KELLY: I very strongly support *The White Paper*. It clearly recognizes the CYSF as the central student government. On the other hand, colleges must be encouraged to thrive by the central student government. We must not purport to be gods. It is the CYSF's responsibility to inject life into the colleges and we have to work together. But there should be a central agency that will be responsible. *The White Paper* forces the CYSF to be extremely responsible.

EXCAL: Do you think the CYSF should be involved in political issues that aren't specifically related to student universities, for example, abortion?

KELLY: No. It is not the mandate of the CYSF to reach into the minds of York students and ask for a majority opinion on an issue whether it be abortion or the death penalty. The CYSF's mandate is to assist in solving problems on campus which are important to students in general. We have to try and assist as many students as we can. If we take an issue like abortion and we ask for a majority opinion, whether that opinion is pro-choice or pro-life is not important. It will create an instant division between different sectors of the community.

It's unconscionable to imagine that anyone would want to take the abortion question to a referendum or any other question such as that. There are more issues that are prevalent on this campus that we can work on and I'm going to commit myself to working towards things one step at a time. That's why there are only four points in my platform. Those are four things I'm committed to doing this year.

EXCAL: What are your specific plans for combatting underfunding and rising tuition fees?

KELLY: I want to lobby hard against the Ontario government. I believe we've got to sit down and discuss, within the university firstly, how we are going to brace ourselves for the cuts that have happened in the last week or so. We have to figure out what areas are going to be cut and once we've realized what the damage is, it is then our responsibility to go to the Ontario government and say, "This is not the way it is going to be, we cannot deal with this, we must enter into some kind of negotiation."

In the absence of an immediate response, because lobbying is a very long-term process which must be affirmative but non-confrontational, I am fiercely committed to ensuring that OSAP is not severely jeopardized. If we are going to raise tuition, we need to have a commitment to continued OSAP assistance. Students cannot be forced into a situation when a university becomes an elitist place.

EXCAL: What is your position in recognizing fraternities and sororities on campus?

KELLY: Fraternities and sororities are protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. However, it is not the mandate of the CYSF to decide whether they should be recognized on

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Kim Cont'd

down their college and each person paused and thought, "Which is my college?" Some of them said, "Does it really matter?" I said, "Of course it does, you don't go to your college?" They said, "No, I haven't been in the building, I think it's Bethune, or I think it's Vanier." So obviously, there is a failure on campus to service the students through the colleges.

I think *The White Paper* is a solution. It's just starting out so I don't think we should crucify it yet, until we see how badly it's doing. I think it will take at least five years until we get a good grip on it. Faculty governments may get people more involved.

EXCAL: Do you think the CYSF should be involved in broader political issues that aren't specifically related to students or universities, for example, abortion?

KIM: If you start making referendums on abortion or the death penalty, where do you draw the line? There are environmental issues, which are on Jean Ghomeshi's platform, that you have to obviously be concerned about as a broader issue, but to say that York University takes a definite stance on certain issues is not necessary.

EXCAL: What are your specific plans for combatting underfunding and rising tuition fees?

KIM: First of all, we have to join the OFS. I know we have had problems with them in the past but I'm sure they can be worked out with any reasonable person who can negotiate with OFS.

Because Michael Wilson's budget makes federal grants to Ontario universities unconditional, giving the universities a lump sum to work with, it gives us a great field to work in, in which we could have a huge amount or a small amount of post-secondary grants depending on how much effective lobbying we do.

York is the second largest university in Ontario and if we joined UofT and everyone else with the OFS, we could lobby the government together. How can they ignore us? They can't.

If anything right now, we have to try and shoot for stabilizing tuition fees. Decreasing it is very hard but we can stabilize tuition fees or at least adjust to the inflation rate. If we can get together with OFS, that's how we can combat underfunding.

If the students decide to say yes, we will pay for OFS. But if they decide to say, "No we pumped our money into the CYSF, you have a lot of it, you are responsible to represent us and you should pay to get into the OFS, not us," then the CYSF would do that.

EXCAL: What is your position regarding fraternities and sororities on campus?

KIM: Well, what *The White Paper* is trying to do is make students feel more a part of this university. My idea of a frat is a place to party and drink a lot of beer. I'm not saying that it's a lot of fun — it may be a lot of fun — but I also see that frats have a tendency to divide the university.

I think we need to come together first as a university to feel part of the university rather than say, "This is my frat, but I go to York." You should be saying, "I go to York first

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Merrick Cont'd

could go and process this. Students want it. And we would want to incorporate it. And since the administration's not willing to do it the CYSF would take the initiative and offer it.

The CYSF would hold a referendum and would break down the \$13 to something like 'will you pay \$5 for the photo ID, and do you think that when you graduate you should have a yearbook?' Things that will make this university better because this place to a lot of people is not enjoyable because they never have the opportunity to participate, they are never approached.

And that's why we sent out two mailers this year to all the students. The first one was fantastic because resulting from that mailer we're 200 CYSF volunteers who were very active. That's why I think that students know who we are. With just 19 people we're just not able to get to all the students but with all these volunteers people were able to know what was going on. All 36,000 students were sent the second mailer and they know about the election.

EXCAL: What do you think about *The White Paper*?

MERRICK: I think it's fantastic because in the late 1960s and in the '70s there was no centralized student government at York. There were all these different territories within York University. There was no focal point. *The White Paper* basically gave a mandate to CYSF to be the umbrella organization, and that's important because every other university has this and they're more effective. The fact that students have been railroaded in this university for the past 28 years is because there hasn't been a strong centralized student government because there hasn't been a mandate. And now there is and this is fantastic.

EXCAL: Do you think the CYSF should be involved in broad political issues that don't directly affect post-secondary education, for example, abortion?

MERRICK: We would have to go to a referendum because our mandate doesn't say that we're supposed to take these stands so we would have to ask our students. The first question I would propose (and I've worked on this with equality commissioner Brian Archdekin) would ask whether they would support the recriminalization of abortion, yes or no, and the second one would ask, do they, as a member of the federation, want the CYSF to take a stand on the recriminalization of abortion. If we do take broader stands on issues we should go and ask the students. If we're going to expand our mandate the students should be involved.

We should set an example for the federal government. They're fighting over this, they're not going to the Canadian citizens. We are a post-secondary institution. We are supposed to be the leadership for the country and this would show leadership by going to the students and showing [the government] this is the way it should be done.

EXCAL: What are your plans for combatting underfunding and rising tuition costs?

MERRICK: I've been vice-president (external) and I've been to lobby sessions and I've seen how ineffective they are. I know when once a year when the OFS [the Ontario Federation of Students] goes to Queen's Park they go, "here comes those kids again. We'll listen to them for a few hours and that's it."

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