

Editorial

Adlington Task Force could spell trouble for Ontario universities

Despite the lack of fanfare heralding the recently appointed Adlington Task Force, it has the potential to generate as much controversy and ill-will as did the much maligned Bovey Commission last year.

The committee was formed as a result of a high level meeting initiated by representatives of McMaster, Queen's, U of T, Waterloo and Western with the Peterson government. The representatives raised the issue of funding for what the Bovey Report called "research intensive" institutions (such as theirs) which generate at least 15% of their budget from externally funded research.

At a glance the Task Force's mandate sounds noble enough—briefly put, to look into how basic research at Ontario universities can be developed to "enhance the strength and competitiveness of Canadian industry." However, this has raised serious concerns from several fronts including York University. In a submission to the Task Force, York President Harry Arthurs expresses the fear that "the notion that university research should be driven by the needs and interests which industry defines for itself is extremely dangerous to both parties."

One must be wary of industry becoming involved in research. As Arthur's report points out it is highly unlikely that industry will merely subsidize research without any expectations or assurance of a return on investment.

There is also the question of whether the findings of this commission will be used to absolve the government of the responsibility of adequately funding the university system.

Of more direct concern to York students is the possibility that the government may start placing value priority on research programmes at the expense of the humanities and social sciences.

Without proper consultation amongst universities a hastily assembled committee such as this could cause harm to the university system. Any rash recommendations could endanger the already tenuous relations between Ontario universities, as well as relations between the universities and government. Ironically, it could also harm future endeavors between industry and post-secondary institutions.

It's no wonder York regards the work of the Adlington Task Force "with mixed apprehension and hope." Any rash decisions could further impede the long road to recovery of the Ontario universities.



TASK FORCE DECISION-MAKING MECHANISM

Letters

Reader wants no part of 'excellence'

Open letter to David Bell, Dean of Graduate Studies:

I received your invitation to a reception on December 11 in the Faculty Lounge "to honour York's outstanding graduate students."

Thanks, but no thanks. The last thing we need is another event "In Pursuit of Excellence." Excellence is just trendy 1980s jargon meaning Elitism and I want no part of it. I am no more excellent than dozens of my fellow graduate students who applied for government funding and didn't get it. Receptions and rewards for "excellence" simply serve to mask the shameful fact that only a handful of grad students are getting financial support from the government whereas there are many who need and deserve it.

May I suggest that next year you set aside the money budgeted for such affairs and give it to the GSA or CUEW instead? Then the money that comes ultimately from taxes paid by working people outside this ivory tower might go to fighting for policies that will make graduate school training more available to them and their children instead of to an ever smaller elite.

—John Cleveland

York literary malaise diagnosed by *Existere* editor

Editor:

Your editorial of Dec. 5/85, which lamented the absence of a York campus literary journal, helped to partially illuminate a distressing state of affairs, and as editor of *Existere*, the Vanier College literary journal, I feel compelled to comment. Why can't this country's third-largest university consistently produce high quality student literature? York's emphasis on fine arts makes this even more puzzling. I think there are a number of key reasons that deserve discussion.

I believe there is a vicious cycle of inactivity at the root of our literary community. It runs something like this: many writers producing good work on campus don't submit it for consideration because of negative impressions they have about York publications. This is understandable, when one notes that these publications are either few and far between, like *Existere*, or are embarrassingly pretentious. In turn, campus editors are forced to print whatever they can get whenever they can get it. Thus their finished products often look padded (because the selection of submissions was small) or cliquish (because there is only a small handful of people with the courage to

submit their work, and so their names reappear in tables of contents). It's essential that York writers break this frustrating cycle, not only so there can be more good literature printed, but also to preserve what dwindling credibility the York writing community has.

I've taken creative writing workshop courses here at York and attended readings by student authors. I know only too well how much excellent prose and poetry is being produced here and how little of it is being exposed, but I can't expose what I don't get submitted to me. If you don't like what you've seen on campus, then give me an alternative to print. If you can't reconcile yourself with *Existere*, then submit to *Excalibur's* sesquimonthly review.

Apathy is not the only problem. Christopher Keep (last year's editor) and myself have encountered a myriad of problems this year with *Existere*, not all of which have been within our power to prevent. We hope to be able to vindicate ourselves at least partially this year, with one issue completed for this month, and another one close on its heels. We still need more material to work with, so please, please submit your humble efforts to 121 Vanier College, and help make York student literature an inspiration instead of an indictment.

If you don't think your efforts are humble, then take them downtown and spare us your pretention. It's the one commodity at York that's not in short supply.

—Peter Alexander
Editor, *Existere*

'No short-cuts to peace in Ireland'

Editor:

Like so many other commentators on the situation in Northern Ireland, James McDonall gets himself bogged down in the question of support for violence (Letter, Dec. 5). As always, the questionable support is for the violence of the oppressed, never of the oppressor. Yet, it can easily be demonstrated that the former is a direct result of the latter. In the case of NI, violence was built into the fabric of the state upon its creation by Britain, just as it was built into the fabric of the apartheid state of South Africa. In both cases, the violence of the state begot counter-violence.

At her press conference in Toronto, Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey dealt with this question. When asked if she supported violence in NI (the oppressed brand, of course), she replied that her support or lack of it was irrelevant. She did not create it, and her condemnation would not eradicate it. What Ms. McAliskey advocates, as is clear from the *Excalibur* interview, is the elimination of all violence through a just resolution of the

underlying problem. Mr. McDonall's charge that she "solicits support for the IRA" is a typical sensational distraction which throws a great deal more light on his biases than it does on her words and deeds.

Ringed condemnations and wild charges are no substitute for honest and rigorous analysis. The real peacemakers are those who undertake such an analysis and then act on their findings. There are no shortcuts to peace in Ireland or in the world at large.

—Aidan Buckley, PRO

Excal prints ads 'willy-nilly': reader

Editor:

It is regrettable that the editors of a university-based newspaper agreed to publish the advertisement of Casey's Restaurant at the Yorkdale Shopping Centre. (Back page, *Excalibur*, 5 December, 1985).

I would assume that whilst most of us (women) within this university community can appreciate the fact that advertising is necessary for the survival of *Excalibur* (so I am told by the staff) surely the editors could have displayed some sensitivity by rejecting this advertisement because of its language:

Where the girls come to be girls. And the guys come to watch them. Where the girls come in their gladrags to be treated like visiting celebs. Where the girls come to see if they'll be our new Cinderella of the week and win the use of Casey's chauffeured limo for 4 hours of cruisin'...

I would suggest that the editors of *Excalibur* take a second look at material before printing willy-nilly. In this environment of higher education, one would hope that the educational process is not confined to class-room learning only.

—Joyce Thompson
Administrative Assistant
Bethune College

'Thanks for the "ink" on York's swim team'

Editor:

Thank you very much for the excellent articles that have appeared in *Excalibur* this year on the Swim Team. The articles are accurate (name and times), interesting and informative. The team members really appreciate the "ink" that they have received. I understand the time and energy required to write and edit good sport articles.

You and the staff should be commended on the wide range of sports that are being covered as well as more equal reporting of men's and women's sports. The pictures are great.

—Carol Wilson

excalibur

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