

editorial

# Beyond VRES

Efficiency? Efficiency was the reason that York administration spent more than \$250,000 on a Voice Response Enrolment System (VRES). But efficiency for whom?

Certainly not the frustrated students using VRES to enrol. Numerous offices on campus such as the Office of Student Affairs, Office of Student Records, CYSF and *Excalibur* have been bombarded with complaints from students who received busy signals for three to 17 hours only to be put through and be cutoff midway through their enrolment or to be told that none of the courses they wanted were open.

Some students also experienced a financial loss as they took days off work to sit at home and dial the phone. One student's written complaint on a VRES petition being collected by the CYSF described how she had lost her job after taking three days off work to attempt to enrol.

Out-of-town students experienced the same problems, only at a much greater cost. Each time a student received a recorded message telling them all circuits were busy, they were charged. One student's phone bill was as high as \$216. \$216 just to enrol?

The administration has, of course, taken immediate steps to rectify this situation. It spent \$31,096 for ads placed in non-campus newspapers informing students of a change in the hours of operation and a phone number. These changes were an attempt to make enrolment easier for students. The ad also suggested students be patient and advised that it is not necessary to call immediately as the system will be open all summer.

But, it doesn't matter that the system will be open all summer because the popular courses, courses with a high demand, will likely remain full.

No matter what the enrolment method, the same number of spots for courses would be available to students. But, because VRES supposedly gives students more of a feeling of control over their enrolment than the old system of pushing papers and standing in line, it is even more maddening for students when they are denied. It's like dangling the carrot even closer to students' faces.

The system is obviously not the problem. The problem is the inefficient planning and implementation of VRES on behalf of the administration. Sheldon Levy, vice-president of institutional affairs, admits, "It wasn't planned well enough." The fundamental error, said Levy, is that York didn't realize that it was different from other universities and had limited courses in many areas.

How could the administration not consider factors such as overcrowding and competition for classes at the third largest university in Canada? Why only 31 phone lines? Why no priority system?

Levy said, "We didn't think there would be a volume problem." VRES is just the tip of the inefficiency iceberg at York caused by the lack of planning and foresight. Overcrowded, underfunded, overworked and understaffed, York is suffering from chronic mismanagement.

Can students do anything about it? Using VRES as an example, it is clear they cannot. Students are given no enrolment options and when they complain to official York offices, they are told that they can't be helped, be patient, keep trying.

CYSF has a petition. But what it can do is another good question. Signing the petition will relieve a little frustration for students but it is not a substantial solution. What can CYSF do?

Peter Donato, elected CYSF president, says, "The CYSF will act as an educator for those who've put the system together. We want to help in a constructive way." CYSF will present the petition to the administration and offer its help to solve the problem for next year.

"Maybe we can make this one small thing better for next year," said Donato. It seems clear that students are powerless to effect any change whatsoever in the real problems of the university.

As Donato says, "Welcome to York. Get used to it."

ADMINISTRATION AGENDA FOR MONDAY	
8:00	8:00
8:30	8:30
9:00	9-11 Faculty Brunch with Harry
9:30	9:30
10:00	10:00
10:30	10:30
11:00	11-12 Inconsequential Meeting
11:30	11:30
12:00	12:00
12:30	12-2 Lunch
13:00	1:00
13:30	1:30
14:00	2-2 <sup>30</sup> VRES planning session with Sheldon Levy
14:30	2:30
15:00	3:00
15:30	3:30
16:00	3-6 Golf with Peter Merrick
16:30	4:30
17:00	5:00
17:30	5:30
18:00	6:00
18:30	6:30
19:00	7:00
19:30	7:30
20:00	8:00
20:30	8:30
21:00	9:00
21:30	9:30

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ADMINISTRATION AGENDA FOR TUESDAY	
8:00	8:00
8:30	8:30
9:00	<del>9-11 Osgood appointment</del>
9:30	9:30
10:00	10:00
10:30	10:30
11:00	11-12 Inconsequential Meeting
11:30	11:30
12:00	12:00
12:30	12-2 Lunch
13:00	1:00
13:30	1:30
14:00	2-3 Return phone calls
14:30	2:30
15:00	3-3 <sup>30</sup> VRES planning session with Sheldon Levy
15:30	3:30
16:00	3-6 Golf with Peter Merrick
16:30	4:30
17:00	5:00
17:30	5:30
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19:00	7:00
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20:30	8:30
21:00	9:00
21:30	9:30

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## Muslim Student Fed. disgusted over Herzog's degree

Dear Editors: I was disgusted to learn that York University has granted an honorary doctorate degree to Chaim Herzog, the President of Israel. Furthermore, I can't believe Mr. Herzog's audacity in making a plea for human rights around the world, while accepting this degree. If York University feels that Mr. Herzog is the most qualified person to talk about human rights, then it hasn't been keeping up with world news or PLO propaganda as Mr. Herzog calls it. It is one thing to allow a person to talk, and another to grant him an honorary doctorate degree. For what? Is it for presiding over a nation known for its human rights violations? Or is it for being an expert in avoiding the issue, with

respect to treatment of Palestinians?

What is the difference between the occurrences in Palestine and China? I have had this question in mind, since the massacre of Chinese students in Beijing. The world is fully behind the Chinese students, but forgets about a people who have been suffering for over forty years. I don't want to take away anything from the support of the Chinese students, as I fully support them myself. The world protested loudly on behalf of these students and they did this rightfully. What does the world do with respect to the daily massacres of women and children in Palestine? Nothing at all! Is it because the Israeli strategy of killing a few everyday is better than

killing many at once? Or perhaps, it is because the Chinese government does not have powerful lobbies around the world, as is the case with Israel.

It is about time that we as Canadians take a stand against the human rights violations that occur daily in the ghettos of occupied Palestine, as well as against the employment of double standards when judging between nations. Being members of the York community we can start by protesting the granting of this honorary doctorate degree to Mr. Herzog. Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,  
Faisal Kutty  
President, Muslim Student Fed.

## Cosmo blasted by reader

Editors, It really is amazing how some people's minds work. Take Cosmo Vecchiarelli. Just mention the word administration to him, and immediately ominous images pollute his mind which in turn badly affect his writing. Stereotypes are easy precepts to hide merits involved, it's often a lot easier for people simply to see the players involved and make their judgment from there.

Forget the circumstance of the situation, right Cosmo? If the administration had a hand in it, surely there were evil motives behind their moves. Those insensitive bastards were probably just waiting to nail it to a poor guy like Ron Kelly. Certainly a guy like him has no capacity to lie, whereas the administration, well all they do is try and deceive the student body.

Grow up Cosmo and study the facts of the Ron Kelly story before you render judgement, as surely as the editors of *Excalibur* have done. If you followed the story closely as it unfolded in this paper, compared to what he said in articles such as in the *Globe*, the inconsistencies will even start to be evident to a person like yourself.

No, the university was not questioning whether Kelly actually was HIV positive, as he alleges. Instead they were simply asking him to show proof that he missed his classes for medical purposes, a very reasonable request. And yet, when he would not comply with those demands, they compromised. I'll admit, the administration has many problems in its dealings with students, and these problems usually stem from the university's

failure to communicate effectively with the student body. This case is no exception.

And why Cosmo are you so utterly disgusted with *Excalibur's* editorial style of placing the blame on both parties in a situation? (You seemed to have dubbed this the "one handism" approach.) I know this is hard for you to understand, but usually the forces of good and evil exist on both sides, and it's very rare that one side is faultless in a certain issue. That's what makes the world so complex.

Anyhow, just try to judge the world in a more sophisticated manner than this labelling method you so often use. It's not only completely inaccurate but often melodramatic.

name withheld

## Vandalized tactile map

To the Editors: As the Coordinator of York University's Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD), I was extremely distressed to see that the tactile map in Central Square has been vandalized. Pieces of the map were ripped, phone numbers had been written on the map and it was smudged with handprints in various colours.

Needless to say, I am outraged and appalled at the insensitivity and immaturity of individuals who

would commit such acts. This map was designed by a York student, Susan Wheeler, through the auspices of the OSD for persons who are braille users. It is intended as an orientation tool for people who are blind on the York campus, or for those who come to visit here. A great deal of time and hard work was involved in the creation of these maps and I had hoped that they would be respected.

I have worked at York for almost five years and in the that time have

witnessed a high level of awareness of persons with disabilities, by students, staff and faculty. I find it difficult to comprehend that any individual or individuals could be so insensitive as to deface a map for blind persons.

I hope that in the future we can put up something as important as this without having to worry about vandalism.

Sincerely  
Ilanny Yuditsky, Coordinator  
Office for Students with Disabilities

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EDITORIAL: 736-5239  
 TYPESETTING: 736-5240  
 ADVERTISING: 736-5238

MAILING ADDRESS:  
 Room 111, Central Square  
 York University  
 4700 Keele Street  
 Downsview M3J 1P3

I'm Glad We're Sisters  
 we'll miss you Sally, and Birgit  
 and Caitlin too!