

# UNIVERSITY NEWSBEAT

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## President Macdonald reports to the York community

At the last meeting of the Board of Governors on Monday, December 15, 1980, I reported on three major activities of great significance for the future of York University:

- preparations for the 1981-82 operating budget;
- plans for a major York University fund-raising campaign;
- the current process of public policy bearing on the future outlook of Ontario universities.

I would like to describe briefly the status of these activities and, in particular, offer my opinion and view about the third.

### The University Budget 1981-82

On Tuesday, December 16, the University Policy Committee discussed a report from its Budget Sub-committee which outlined the options for 1981-82 depending upon certain assumptions. As always, the principal considerations are the forecast of enrolment, the expected level of government operating grants, and the prospective rate of increase in salaries and wages. Those of us who have been optimistic about university enrolment prospects have been reassured by the performance this year, where York University had a 5.5 per cent increase in its own enrolment. Current conjecture about next year's grant varies from an increase of 7 per cent to 9 per cent, and we are momentarily awaiting word from Queen's Park about its decision.

The persistence of chronic inflation naturally raises the expected levels of increase in salaries and wages. Since approximately 83 per cent of the York University budget falls in that category, this is the most significant variable on the expenditure side of the budget. However, books, fuel, postage, telephone and other services are subject to even greater rates of inflation, although of smaller magnitude in the budget. Therefore, the need for greater income is self-evident.

As a result, we face an important decision again in the matter of student fees. The Government of Ontario has indicated that it expects to raise "formula fees" at the same rate this year as the increase in the provincial grant. Therefore, we could face an automatic fee increase of 7 to 9 per cent unless we were willing to see our income diminished by that amount. At the same time, we will be under great pressure to increase fees a further 5 per cent to take up the remainder of the discretionary latitude granted to us last year, when we took one-half of the potential increase of 10 per cent.

Last year, the Board of Governors approved a new policy whereby the university could carry an accumulated operating deficit up to 1.5 per cent of the current operating budget. We are presently running very close to that limit, which creates a further constraint on our movement. We expect to make final budget decisions over the next few weeks, in order that our financial planning can be coordinated with the academic planning currently under the direction of Vice-President Found and Senate's Academic Policy and Planning Committee.

### York's Financial Campaign

The Chairman of the campaign, board member Roy Bennett, provided the Board at its last meeting with an outline of the campaign organization that he is

currently assembling. The campaign, with its \$15 million target, has been carefully planned on the advice of the Project Steering Committee which reviewed inputs from the University at large. During the next few weeks, Mr. Bennett plans to meet with various members of the York University community to discuss his plans and to enlist its support.

The campaign provides a great opportunity to enrich our academic life and to compensate for some of the deficiencies of public funding. It is important that it should be a united effort with the support of our whole community.

### Public Policy and Universities

The two categories just described involve matters requiring our own internal decisions and actions. However, there are presently discussions underway in the public arena which will have far-reaching implications for the future of universities in Canada. It is important that every member of the university community should understand those activities and feel free to contribute constructive input.

The relative decline in Canada of the Ontario universities in terms of financial support has been a source of concern for several years to the university community. However, the consequences of this situation are not confined to the universities; rather, they will have an impact on our whole social and economic future. What is surprising is the lack of recognition of the fact by informed opinion in Ontario. Nourished by gloomy forecasts in the media about the prospects for employment of university graduates, the conventional public wisdom is that there will be an inevitable "shrinkage" in universities, and moreover, that there should be. In my opinion, this is precisely the opposite of what is required.

The future of Ontario, in its economy and society, depends directly on the quality of its human resources and on the availability of "knowledge workers" as never before. We urgently require not less but more investment in education if Ontario is to compete in the world economy and to recapture its traditional place in the life of the nation.

Public spokesmen who should know better have been suggesting that we require fewer university-educated because we require more technically-trained people. In fact, these groups are complementary and we require more of both. Strategic planning for the Ontario economy must involve a mix of enhanced research and development, professional training, technical skills, and general education.

Therefore, the university problem need not be an enrolment problem. Although we face a few years of reduced numbers of post-Grade 13 students, social equity and economic opportunity demand a higher participation rate and vastly extended "adaptive education" for adults at all stages of their lives. Therefore, as an article of faith, I believe we should not be contemplating the shrinkage of universities in Ontario, but rather the maintenance of a varied and high quality system.

Social commentators have made the familiar mistake of a static-economy diagnosis. Rather, we must ask what kind of economic future we want, and recognize that

development will only come about if we believe in it, and make the correct public policy decisions to support it. I admit that this view places me in a lonely minority of so-called "informed opinion". It is also subject to the criticism of special pleading on behalf of the community I serve. However, if I were not part of the University system, I would feel exactly as I do. In fact, if I may be forgiven a personal comment, I returned to the university world a few years ago precisely because I believed it to have the highest priority in the economic and social profile of today.

The future of our universities has been the subject of much debate in the various policy bodies where these matters are discussed. My own position and the position of this university for several years has been that underfunding is the problem. The extent of that underfunding has been documented by the Ontario Council on University Affairs in *System on the Brink* and other studies.

Recently, the Council of Ontario Universities accepted the challenge of the Ontario Government to respond with suggestions for dealing with the current problem. This resulted in a report *The Situation of the Ontario Universities* submitted to Premier Davis on November 5. As with any such document, it represented in part the views of a variety of people, with varying diagnoses and remedies. In particular, it suggested three possible approaches:

- ad hoc adjustments by the universities year by year to annual shortfalls in public funding;
  - the provision by the government of additional revenues closely related to increases in costs incurred annually by the universities in order to meet the current objectives and expectations;
  - the scaling down of objectives and services to conform to the level of funding expected to be available.
- Without denying that there are still potential opportunities for co-operative ventures among universities, my position has been that the second objective is the only acceptable one.

For the past two years, York University has suggested in its brief to OCUA that we should have a Commission to conduct a fundamental examination of the future of universities in Ontario. Whereas the new Tripartite Committee (described in the *Gazette*, Vol. 11, No. 12, page 4) falls short of that objective in scope and period of inquiry, it provides an important opportunity to place the issues squarely before the public. It is also essential that York University should prepare a well-documented public statement, representative of the views of our community.

Therefore, I have established a Presidential Advisory Committee, chaired by Vice-President Found, and consisting of Vice-President Bell, the YUFA Chairman, Howard Buckbinder, Atkinson College Dean Harry Crowe, Senate Chairman David Logan, and CYSF President Malcolm Montgomery, to prepare our input to the new Tripartite Committee. I wrote to the Committee members in the following terms to spell out my own objectives:

"(1) I have the impression that there is an implicit agenda to phase down

the universities and to reduce the participation rate, if not the accessibility, of students. This comes about in various discussions about the problems of employment for university graduates compared with the opportunities for the technically trained. In my opinion, we should be having more, not fewer, students in universities, and we should be enlarging opportunities in every possible way. This is not only important for the universities, but indeed it is a prerequisite for the future of the Ontario economy and society which will depend so much more on human resources and technological improvement than on material resources. My objectives would be to see some agreement on:

"(a) the widest degree of accessibility with such student financial assistance as is necessary to make that objective a reality;

"(b) an increasing proportion of the population attending university.

"In that case, the general presumption that enrolments must at some point decline seems to be unfounded. If one agrees with my objective, then the only problem that we face is the chronic underfunding of universities. This university has been on record constantly and repeatedly stating that the problem of the universities is simply underfunding. Thus, we must continue with our attempts to convince OCUA as well as the Ministry that the university system requires more support rather than less, and that this is essential for achieving the most effective future for the people of Ontario.

(2) "The new catch-word—'rationalization'—is, in my opinion, a convenient label for not facing the earlier issues I have described, and for not dealing with the real problems of the university. Undoubtedly, there is always scope for co-operation and co-ordination, and this university has several notable joint programmes with other institutions. However, rationalization as a device for

dealing with excess capacity must be by proving the existence of excess capacity; I believe that case has not been made. Therefore, it should be the starting point and the principal consideration in the exercise."

On December 16, I presented these views to our Policy Committee, following which Vice-President Found along with the Deans has written on December 18 to individual members of our faculty, encouraging their consideration of the issues and their input to the exercise. May I also urge all members of York University to take an interest in these issues and, where possible, to support the public position which I have been taking.

Finally, there is a sleeper on the scene of even more profound potential consequence. Within the next few months, there will be discussions at federal-provincial meetings of the re-negotiation of the Established Programs Financing Act and the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act. According to the notice served in Finance Minister MacEachan's budget last October, the federal government proposes a radical reduction in its contribution to the Provincial Treasuries of funds which find their way into higher education.

Such a prospect could be absolutely devastating, after a decade in which grants to the universities have fallen short of the rate of inflation. In this instance, the universities and the provincial governments have a common interest in achieving close cooperation prior to negotiations with Ottawa.

Our task must be first to convince the Ontario Government of the position which I have described here bearing on the future of universities, then for the provinces and the universities together to persuade the federal government that the need is no less for Canada as a whole. The time for this crusade is now uncomfortably short, and will require all our effort.

## York faculty hockey team scores resounding victory

Among the less well-known sporting organizations in Metropolitan Toronto is the York University Faculty Members hockey team. However, so far this year, it is also one of the undefeated teams in the local community. Composed of various faculty members, reinforced from time to time by members of the staff, the York team practices regularly each week and engages in a variety of exhibition games.

On December 3, the annual encounter with members of the Ontario Legislature and Press Gallery took place at Maple Leaf Gardens, resulting in a resounding 15-0 win for the York team. Rumours have it that various officials of the Toronto Maple Leaf organization were impressed by the York power. To restore any loss of goodwill that might have occurred on the ice, York hosted a luncheon following the game with the usual post-mortems about great moments from the preceding action and laments about opportunities missed.

The following week saw York travel by bus, through snow and blizzard, to Montreal for its first contest with McGill in the Winter Stadium. The game originated in a

challenge thrown out by President Ian Macdonald during the installation of David Johnston last February. Once again, York skated to a convincing 12-2 victory.

Just before the Christmas break, York defeated Waterloo 7-3.

The balance of the York team is demonstrated by the widely distributed scoring talent with goals coming from the sticks of Larry Kredl of Geography (6), President Ian Macdonald (6), Stu Proudfoot of Administrative Studies (5), Ralph Barbeito of Psychology (4), Secretary of the University Mel Ransom (3), Ron Okada of Psychology (2), Paul Stager of Psychology (2), Steve Fleming of Psychology (2), John Unrau of English (2), Michael Creal (Humanities), and Dan Cappon (Environmental Studies), one each.

Several other engagements are planned in the coming weeks with the highlight being the Annual York Invitational Tournament on February 20 with McMaster, Queen's, and Trent. In the previous four years, Queen's and York have each won a tournament while Trent has prevailed in each of the past two years. York will be working hard to reclaim the title this year.