

## Averting the crunch

## Career management is life-long concern

By OAKLAND ROSS

University students may be "God's gift to the world of career counselling," but that doesn't mean they don't need help.

Elizabeth McTavish, director of York's Career Counselling Centre, is worried about the number of students who, several months before they graduate, come into her office for the first time.

She's even more worried about the students who never come in at all.

"As soon as young people come to university," she says, "they should have set themselves a goal, and they should be asking themselves 'how can my three or four years at university help me reach it?'"

## CAREER GOALS

The Centre has been open since last January. McTavish and her two full-time and five part-time colleagues are there to help students set and pursue career goals. They provide technical advice on job-hunting, writing resumés and handling interviews, as well as offering seminars in course selection and goal-setting. These have limited enrolment

and, like all services provided by the Centre, are free of charge.

First-year students are encouraged to come in and prepare personal resumés and fill out "interest inventories".

"There won't be much material to put in a practice resumé," admits McTavish. "But that's part of the value: the student will be able to set out the kind of things he'll want to have in his resumé by the time he graduates."

## ORGANIZED INTERESTS

The "interest inventories" are questionnaires which are filled out and sent away for computer processing. The student may reject the conclusions of the inventory. But, according to McTavish it will at least help him see the value of organizing his interests.

Planning and organization are the central components in what McTavish likes to call "career management". It's a life-long concern and requires an ongoing ability to make decisions.

Many students, she feels, have been rarely forced to make decisions. Society has gently guided them through adolescence

and into university. The crunch comes when they graduate: suddenly, society isn't telling them what to do anymore.

Other students refuse to come into the Centre because they've taken an unshakeable grip on their goals and have no time for pussy-footing around over coffee in some guidance counsellor's office. But what happens when the Law School says "no", or the job isn't available?

These two extremes are exactly what McTavish and her staff want to help students avoid.

"Kids have to determine what their goals are and then learn how to go about achieving them," says McTavish, "but that doesn't mean that students should become slaves to those goals."

## CONFLICT

Part of McTavish's job is to help students resolve the conflict between "keeping options open", on the one hand, and making a firm commitment, on the other.

"In this world, we have to think in terms of limited commitment. Things change so quickly and drastically that we must always be ready and willing to shift our goals as circumstances change.

"It's like walking through the dark with a flashlight. The goal changes with each step; it's always a temporary goal; and it's always ahead of you."

McTavish, who holds an M.A. in Psychology and has taught guidance and worked in industrial relations, thinks of career counselling as a developmental affair. It may take two weeks or two years, depending on the student. But it almost always involves



Elizabeth McTavish, director of York's Career Counselling Centre, stresses planning and organization as the central components in career management. She and her staff are eager to help students develop these skills.

## The CDC solves your private woes

Any closed, pressure-packed environment encompassing 14,000 students, staff, and faculty members is bound to create a multitude of problems for its people.

York is no exception, but there is no shortage of agencies willing to guide the problem-riddled person out of his maze.

First there is Father Gerard Tannam for those seeking guidance from a compassionate and somewhat liberal Catholic priest. And of course, Harbinger and health services, not to mention your friendly professor.

But while most of these are johnny-come-latelys in the field of personnel counselling, the Counselling and Development Centre on the first floor of the Behavioural Sciences building has been around since this campus was built.

"We handle all kinds of personal problems in the community, and if we can't deal, we refer them to some other campus organization," said Joan Stewart, the centre's chairperson.

CDC handles some 2,000 to 3,000 cases a year, and these range from serious psychological problems to milder cases requiring only one visit. Some people in the community go to the centre for counselling weekly.

The variety of problems seen at the centre is staggering. Anything from sexual hang-ups to problems

in relaxation and studying are personally looked into by professional psychotherapists in the department of behavioural sciences.

"The number of serious problems we've had to handle is a small percentage of the total," Stewart said, "but we have had cases of severe depression and threatened suicide.

"On the whole, however, people just want to talk over worries and anxieties that just will not go away."

Stewart stressed that the centre didn't want to become identified with the administration, so it states in both its brochures that the centre will not take any disciplinary action against its clients or reveal the nature of its clients' problems.

Not even to reporters.

The centre is by no means a small counselling organization in the university. It has a staff of almost 30 people and a budget of \$300,000.

All-night emergency service is available at 667-3333, but the week-day number is 667-2304.

## Poli. Sci.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome all students to York University. In particular we wish to welcome these students enrolled in Political Science courses, and would like to draw their attention to the Political Science Undergraduate Student Union, their representative within the department.

It is the job of the Union to act on the students behalf, not only as a source of student input with regard to departmental decisions, but also as a liaison between the students and the faculty when difficulties arise. To be effective we need student participation. We ask each class to send one representative per fifteen students, to the first meeting of the General Assembly.

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