

# A N A L Y S I S

## New Colleges Minister McLeod discusses funding, accessibility

for whatever causes enrollment to rise.

**EXCALIBUR:** *But isn't a university's degree of accessibility largely dependent on government funding? Some analysts say that the system requires \$500 million to meet international challenges, and yet the government recently allocated only a \$6.4 increase in basic operating grants. Do we have to begin considering reorienting our entire rationale towards universities? Because presently it's like a two-tier system, with universities like York only receiving 80-90% of the funding average while research-intensive institutions like Western receive close to 130% of the average. How do you grapple with such problems?*

**McLEOD:** You certainly do it step by step, because the needs are great. I would never deny that after a long period of underfunding of post-secondary education that we can redress all those needs in a short space of time. We must take it on a step by step basis. The same thing is true for capital needs. I still think that there is going to be great variability from university to university. I have a sense that one of the strengths of our university system is the diversity of our universities, that they are autonomous institutions, and that they have made unique decisions about the way in which they will provide programmes . . . And York has made decisions in the past in terms of accessibility, and its beliefs about the particular community that surrounds York University . . . and other universities have made different decisions. So I think it's important for us to find some means of dealing with that kind of diversity.

**EXCALIBUR:** *What about the funding*

*formula which still funds universities? Two York professors recently published a book attacking the government's matching grant formula (where the university must match each dollar through, for instance, private sector grants, that the government allocates for a certain research project), because it allows the private sector to heavily influence university research priorities. How do you feel about the matching grant system, and what do you see as the corporation's role in university research?*

**McLEOD:** There are two equally important factors in my responding to that question. One is that I don't think that the matching grant and the involvement of private business in research should ever be exclusive. So I think we need to ensure that we are recognizing the broader research needs of the university community and are attempting to respond to that. And there's obviously a very strong federal component in funding research to universities, and I have some very grave concerns about the level of federal funding for research and the federal commitment, and I think we have to try and address that at a federal level as well as provincially. So I do believe that the matching grant approach to research should not be exclusive. Have said that, I think that process has several advantages in the sense of increasing the amount of money that's going into research in universities—bringing the private sector in as partners in some aspects of university programming and research and development. I think there was a need identified to deal with very expensive high technology research with some long-term gains. And it would have been very difficult to fund that research without the participation of private corporations. So I think it has some very definite

advantages, as long as we don't see that as being the exclusive way of funding research.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Talking about the federal government, transfer payments to the provinces play an extremely crucial role in funding universities. Yet over the past eight years, the federal share of PSE has dropped considerably. How do you get the federal government to live up to its commitment, and how do you make the public aware that Ottawa is also partially to blame for the state of universities in Ontario?*

**McLEOD:** We have been concerned about cutbacks in federal transfer payments, in general transfer payments as well as the research funding that has clearly been a federal responsibility in many ways. How do we deal with that? I think there is room for increased dialogue on post-secondary education between the provinces and the federal government, and I'm optimistic that the forum in Saskatoon was the beginning of more of an emphasis on PSE. I think there is a recognition that we need to spend some more time talking about post-secondary needs, and I think that David Crombie (Secretary of State) has expressed a real interest in that kind of dialogue. So I'm hoping that maybe there can be some cooperative exchanges between the Council of Ministers of Education and the federal governments and that funding issues will be a part of the discussion . . . One of the things that I could logically see was happening if the Council of Ministers of Education would give post-secondary education more of a priority, is that perhaps we will begin to recognize publicly PSE as a priority on a national level and the issues related to PSE would then become a priority for discussion, for instance, at the First Ministers Conference.



Lyn McLeod was appointed Minister of Colleges and Universities by Premier David Peterson this past October. The challenges she faces in addressing the problems associated with a decade of chronic underfunding are overwhelming. But as *Excal's* James Flagal discovered, McLeod is undaunted, prepared to take on fresh approaches to old problems.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you became involved in politics?*

**McLEOD:** My background in politics was in schoolboard politics. I'm from Thunder Bay, and I have been a schoolboard trustee in Thunder Bay for some 19 years and towards the end of that tenure I went back to school—to Lakehead University. I had done an earlier Bachelor of Arts degree and a year in education, and I decided I would go back to retrain in political psychology. So I did the part-time undergraduate work, and got the psychology background I needed, and then went into a two-year Masters Programme, and I retired from the board and left politics. I did spend a year working as a counselor in a psychology department, working with children and adolescents, and then was persuaded to put my name forward for nomination last election. I couldn't resist the temptation of trying, because I was so excited about the kind of government that was being provided, and I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to a part of it.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Have you found it difficult as a woman in politics?*

**McLEOD:** I think it has traditionally been more difficult for women to take on the political role, and I think what we've been dealing with are situations where a man has run for politics in the past for provincial and federal office. There has been a tendency for that to become a one-career family with the wife in a position to maintain things at home and look after raising the kids, and so on. What happens when women have the political career, then we're dealing with a two-career family—because it hasn't been typical for the husband to give up his career and be at home raising the children. So, I think that part of the dynamic is that it's dealing with two career families where one of those careers is a political career, and it means a lot of time away from home . . . It wasn't so much in our family, because our children are older. It was a question of whether or not we could deal as a

family with my being away from home.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Now to the problems of universities. Isn't full accessibility something impossible to achieve, that is giving all students with a 60% high-school average an opportunity to get a post-secondary education (as the provincial policy states).*

**McLEOD:** Since I have come to the portfolio, I have not talked about the 60% average, because I think that one of the things that we have done is try to increase accessibility to universities through funding and leave to the universities the discretion to make decisions about admissions. That's traditionally been the role of universities and we haven't attempted to change that in any way. Each university has decided that what constitutes qualifications for entry to a certain programme. Clearly, the entry criteria are going to vary depending on the number of applicants. So it is going to be different from university to university and programme to programme. And I think it's important that this autonomy be maintained. What the government did when it came into office was recognize that it has been very difficult for universities to grow, because of the funding problems that accompany growth. And I think that one of the reasons for taking a look at it in a very specific way in the past two years was to recognize that there was likely to be an increase in enrollment over a period of time, because of the changes in the secondary school programme. But as I understand it, as they looked at creating greater accessibility to meet the needs of the increased secondary school applicants, they also said that we need to look at accessibility for groups that aren't traditionally participating on large numbers—such as francophone students, the native students, and students with special needs. So the accessibility funding, as you know, is not limited to funding the OS:IS bulge (the elimination of grade 13 next year, resulting in an increase in applicants). It is really quite an unprecedented funding for growth that occurs in the university

## WINTERS COLLEGE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

JANUARY 1988

**JANUARY 5th-15th**

Installation, Robert Nemeth "Body"  
Winters College Art Gallery, T: 1-4, W: 3-6, Th: 12 noon to 4

**MONDAY, 11th**

FELLOW'S LUNCHEON

Winters Senior Common Room, 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

**TUESDAY, 12th**

POETRY READING: Nik Katsabas, Janet Broomhead, Lise Lafond  
Winters Senior Common Room, 5:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY, 14th**

Canadian Opera Company's THE MERRY WIDOW,  
Talk by Prof. A Clarkson  
Winters Senior Common Room, 4:30 p.m.  
(Departure for Opera 5:45 p.m., Curtain Rises 7:00 p.m.)

**MONDAY, 18th**

OPENING: Works by Spencer J. Harrison "Your Own Room"  
Winters College Art Gallery, 5:00-9:00 p.m.

**JANUARY 19th to FEBRUARY 12th**

Works by Spencer J. Harrison "Your Own Room"  
Winters College Art Gallery, T: 1-4, W: 3-6, Th: 12 noon to 4

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1st**

WINTER/SUMMER SESSION COMMENCES