

Committee asks students to support CFS

Next week, on April 5 and 6, we will be voting to decide whether or not to retain our membership in the Ontario Federation of Students at the cost of \$3.00 per student.

OFS represents over 200,000 students across Ontario from 30 university and college student councils. Some successes it has had in the last year include: a roll-back of the 7 per cent sales tax for residence students, the provision of student aid for part time students at the federal government level, and a 5 per cent limit on tuition fees for Canadian and visa graduate students. Over the years it has pressured government into increasing OSAP cost of living allowances, increasing funding for universities (although not enough) and improving student summer employment programs.

Regular contacts

How do these success occur? One meeting between students and government officials does not bring immediate change. OFS has grown from a small organization of 5 schools in 1972 to a strong voice for students in 1983. It regularly meets with government officials such as Dr. Bette Stephenson, Minister of Colleges and Universities, Bill

as the Ontario Confederation of

With a simple cost benefit analysis, the \$3 paid to OFS and the \$1 paid to the national organization, is returned many times over to students through the many success outlined at the beginning of this article. However, there are many more activities which occur through OFS than simple lobbying.

Last year a petition campaign was waged against federal government threatened cutbacks to education, demonstrations have been held to improve student aid, and national campaigns have been organized to support a particular campus, such as against the library cutbacks occurring at the University of Toronto right now.

OFS holds 3 conferences a year at which student leaders from all campuses come together and decide which are the most crucial issues to work on. At these conferences an Executive of 10 members is elected. The Executive is responsible for ensuring that conference decisions are carried out. To assist them, there are 8 full time staff members. This includes an Executive Officer who is responsible for much of the lobbying and contacts with other groups. An information officer continually keeps the campus and commercial media aware of student issues

assist with on campus campaigns on issues such as fee increases, decreases in library and residence services etc. There is also a Financial Manager.

Although executive and staff are available to assist with campaigns, the organization is a federation and is only as strong as its weakest member. All campuses must work together through lobbying, petitions and other activities - the more students who are involved in activities, the stronger the federation will be. 200,000 students in Ontario and 450,000 across the country are a powerful voice to government if they are organized. That is the strength of OFS and CFS.

The YES OFS committee feels that York students should belong both to our provincial and national student organizations. By ourselves, we are weak and have only a small voice to put forward to government. With thousands of other students, we can attempt to improve our situation.

Accessible education

In times of economic recessions, weak groups are always the ones which are hit the hardest. We feel that post secondary education is necessary to the cultural, social and economic growth of our country. Therefore, to cutback educational funds at this time would be a mistake. It would also be a mistake to limit accessibility through higher fees or reduced student aid. Both levels of government are continually considering these options. To ensure that our situation is both maintained and improved, to provide a quality and accessible education, we need a strong student voice. VOTE YES.

HOW IS IT STRUCTURED?

The OFS was set up in 1972 in response to tuition increases and reductions in university funding. At the same time, the National Union of Students was established; it has similar functions to OFS at the national level. Both groups deal with the issues already listed in this article as well as others: women's issues, unemployment, academic problems, housing, student transportation etc. Another national

organization, also established in the early 1970's is the Association of Student Councils. This is the national student service branch and it organizes services such as the International Student Identity Card, the Student Work Abroad Program, and the Canadian University Travel Service.

York's status

In 1980, students realized that all three of these organizations had similar functions and similar memberships. Therefore, all three were amalgamated under one united banner, the Canadian Federation of Students. The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario is the Ontario branch and is similar to the Ontario Federation of Students.

At this moment, OFS, NUS and AOSC are in a transitional stage to the CFS. By belonging to the 3 original organizations, York students have the right to be prospective members of CFS at no additional fee and participate in its development.

WHAT IS YORK'S STATUS?

Through a referendum, York students joined OFS in 1972 and NUS in 1976 and we have voted to allocate \$3 from our fees to OFS and \$1 to NUS. Last year, the CYSF voted to become prospective members of CFS.

This year there has been some problems with York's participation

since CYSF has not had a Director of External Affairs. The person who holds this position is responsible for bringing OFS representatives on campus, ensuring that information is distributed, and organizing around campus issues. This year OFS began to distribute information directly to campus groups such as Excalibur, the GSA, the Women's Centre and campus clubs because of the above problem.

Most campuses have an external affairs or anti-cutbacks committee which assists in organizing local campaigns around university budgeting, residence and food fees, library services and other issues. This has not happened at York this year, and as a result, students have not been informed.

The people in CYSF who called for the referenda state that it is for a "review" of the organization. The person who seconded the motion has moved to reconsider it on the basis of lack of information.

The YES OFS committee feels that a yes vote will indicate to CYSF that we care about a quality education and we want CYSF to work on these issues and provide a stronger student voice on this campus and across the province.

Persuasio is an open forum for the exchange of opinions. The views expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or staff of Excalibur.

Persuasio

Clarkson, Director of OSAP, Premier Davis, Frank Miller, the Treasurer, and others. Regular lobby days are set up where students from all campuses go to Queen's Park and meet with all MPPs to raise various concerns. Just last week, OFS representatives met with the Ontario NDP caucus and the Liberal caucus to discuss the federal reductions in education transfers.

OFS also maintains regular contacts with provincial groups such

University Faculty Associations, the Council of Ontario Universities, the Ontario Council on University Affairs and other groups.

through press conferences news releases and the publication of pamphlets, posters and research papers. Two researchers keep abreast of government policy and decisions regarding post secondary education as well as campus administrative decisions. Three fieldworkers are also available to

Italian Department

Language and literature courses

PAUL PIVATO

For the third straight year the Italian Department at York is offering summer courses in Italy. Combining both travel and study, the program consists of two three week segments in Florence and Rome that can be taken individually or together.

Language, literature, and culture courses make up the summer curriculum. An elementary language course will be offered in which no previous knowledge of Italian is required. Two half-courses in literature, one on 19th-century poet Leopardi and the other on Modern and Contemporary Poetry will also be offered.

April 1 deadline

Of special interest, however, are the culture courses, in interdisciplinary look at two different periods in Italian history to be taught in English. The 300-level courses, Medieval-Renaissance and Post-Unification, examine political, social and aesthetic aspects of Italian civilization through the use of literary texts and visual arts. Included in the programme will be trips to museums as well as trips to areas of cultural importance such as Pompei and Assisi. Trips will also be made to Paestum, Orvieto Capri and Naples.

The deadline for enrolment is April 1. A meeting will be held on April 13th in Founders Senior

time there will be a draw for a free airline ticket courtesy of Alitalia. For students with financial difficulties, bursaries of up to \$300 are being offered by various businesses in the Italian community. The total cost for the entire six week package, including room and meals, is \$2,400.

"We feel the cost of the package is rather low," comments Professor John Picchione, who will teach the culture and literature courses along with Marina Frescura, who is teaching language. In past years,

groups of 45 students made the trip. "I personally hope we will get students from the other departments," notes Picchione.

Depart May 21

Students will depart May 21. The first programme in Florence runs from May 23 to June 10, and the second programme in Rome from June 13 to July 1. The return date is July 3, however students who wish to stay on in Italy need only make arrangements with the travel agent before departure.

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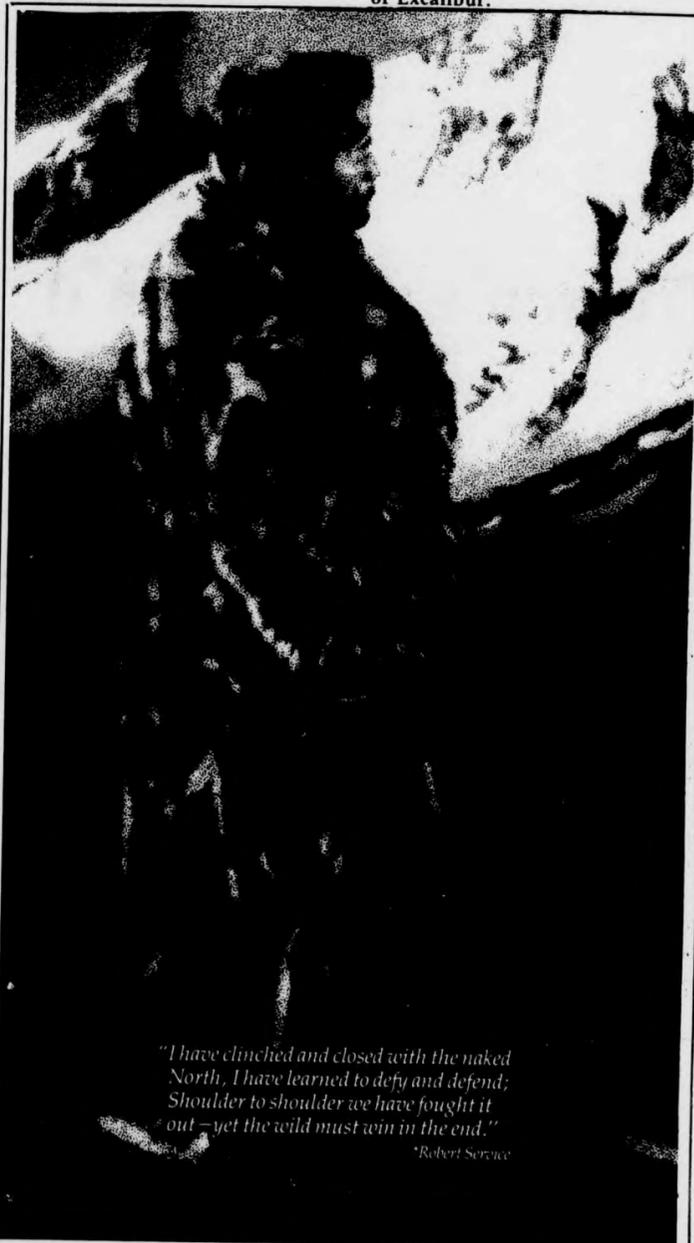
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