

editorial

Speechless

The restriction of views by a university is not an action to be accepted lightly.

By definition, a university is a forum for the free expression of a wide range of controversial viewpoints and opinions—a forum guided by the notion of freedom of academic expression.

Until now, York has been a firm advocate of this philosophy. Consider its motto, *Tendata Via* (The Way Must Be Tried), and its use of general education courses to expose students to many different perspectives.

Yet, York's Conference Centre Manager Jack Moore has severely restricted activity in Central Square's Bearpits—the liveliest centres of discussion on campus—as the result of a decision by “a consensus of people involved with Central Square” to prevent certain events from taking place in the Bearpit.

Only when the York Association for Peace (YAP) was forced to move its forum on the cruise missile from the Bearpit to a lecture hall due to possible “congestion,” did this decision become public.

Although Moore says the decision was made last spring, several activities that caused considerable congestion have already taken place in the Bearpit. Why has YAP been singled out?

We certainly hope it's not because of their political viewpoint. While the University will strongly deny this, the fact remains that annual events (which annually cause congestion) like the Imagnus art show/sale and Career Day were *not* moved to a lecture hall.

YAP correctly points out that for such events, only those people who are really interested will make the effort to go to a lecture hall. This is especially true of political events. The reason these are held in Bearpits is to get as many different people as possible involved in discussion.

And what about this “consensus” of people involved with Central Square? This must surely include CYSF and, as most people know, CYSF's election forums are held in the Bearpits. They are also a cause of considerable congestion.

Clearly, Moore is right to be concerned about security at certain events. Since he books all groups into Central Square, however, we wonder why he can't simply inform York Security of the possibility of an overly “active” event.

We hope Moore will recognize that his restriction of forums will only serve to add to the considerable apathy already prevalent at this university, and that the perceived problems can be solved without using his restrictive measures.



letters

Witless critic

Editor:

The person who inscribed his or her uninspired comment on the Mark di Suvero sculpture is not only a vandal and witless, but also factually inaccurate. The internationally respected sculptor donated the work to York University as a permanent commemoration of the 10th International Sculpture Conference held on campus between 31 May and 4 June 1978, an event which brought together a large number of the world's most eminent sculptors and writers on art among the more than 1,500 attending delegates. Di Suvero has received princely rewards for commissioned public sculptures in a number of countries around the world. His gift to us was therefore one of great generosity which if unappreciated by some should nonetheless be treated with respect and gratitude.

M. Greenwood
Curator of Art

Inaccuracies

Editor:

Gary Symons' report on the Bookstore's break-even policy (*Excalibur*, 29 September) was tainted by some unfortunate inaccuracies. The 30 to 40 percent publisher markups discussed at our interview, September 19, had nothing to do with wholesale price increases and *everything* to do with publishers' conver-

sion of U.S. list prices for the Canadian market. Local publishers' formulae include the cost of buying U.S. dollars (\$1,2405 in Canadian funds on October 6) and other ancillary, importation costs. In this context, I suggested to Mr. Symons, Prentice-Hall's 30 percent markup on their U.S. list prices is reasonable indeed, while the formula of 35 to 40 percent used by other publishers seem difficult to justify.

The jury is still out on wholesale price increases, but recent information suggests these may range from our optimistic seven to eight percent interview estimate to as high as 15 percent. There are, as usual, individual exceptions to these general estimates.

R. Barreto-Rivera,
Director, York University Bookstore

Overcrowding

Editor:

The University is overcrowded. This presents serious problems on two levels:

Firstly, due to the surplus of students, teachers have found it necessary to close their courses (which have already exceeded their enrollment list) at the beginning of the year. When this occurs, the student is forced to either give up his original course selection, or hunt down professors to get special permission. Further, it seems that if this permission cannot be obtained, even second and third choice courses are very often unavailable.

Secondly, it creates problems in the classroom environment. If the student is lucky enough to become enrolled in the

course he chooses, he is confronted with an over-populated classroom, whereas one professor put it—"he must be willing to sit on the floor at the back." This atmosphere means that his ability to actively participate in classroom discussion is constrained.

Personally, I experienced added difficulties in my attempt to acquire a thesis supervisor, which were intensified by the knowledge that my completion of an honours thesis this year is imperative. The issue was not so much that I could not find an available supervisor who was well versed in the field that I wished to study, but that I could not find one *at all*. I spoke to at least seven professors during the first week of classes and the week preceding it; each complained that he/she already had a surplus of these students and could not possibly add me to their list. I had to give up my field of interest and prepare, I realized, to speak to every professor in the department if necessary, in hope of finding one who had one more space on the list, and an interest that was compatible with mine.

The fact that I was successful does not change matters. A sense of futility is all pervasive throughout the student population at York. The university is providing a facility (supposedly in the interest of the student) for higher learning, and all administrative decisions filter down through that facility, affecting the student and his decisions which are pertinent to the quality of his present and future life. I feel that it is important that the administration re-assess its ultimate purpose and function. There is a distinct poverty in the educative system. We are really suffering down here.

Christina M. Basciano

excalibur

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