

Speaking of CYSF -- who are they, and what on earth are they doing?

The oft-publicized body of the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF) was formed in 1968 by Founders, Winters and Vanier colleges, and the graduate business and graduate student associations, under the title of the York Student Council.

Since then, the organization, which represents the environmental studies and graduate students' associations, and all colleges except Bethune, Glendon and Atkinson, has grown to an annual budget of \$87,000, collected through tuition fees, and three full-time employees.

As the election of next year's council draws near (March 10 and 11), Excalibur takes a look at the operation of the current CYSF body.

By OAKLAND ROSS

Anne Scotton took office as CYSF president last May.

On her first day in office, she and her executive committee sent a council member, Brian Green, to a three-day student conference in Vancouver. He returned in late September.

His report consisted entirely of a copy of the conference minutes. This was of limited value, since Scotton had received another copy by mail several months earlier.

It was not what one would call an auspicious beginning.

During her first month in office, Scotton also organized a committee composed of six council members for the purpose of "investigating student government at York". By the end of July, only two meetings had been held, neither of which was attended by more than two people. According to Scotton, that committee is now "inoperative".

The Council of the York Student Federation has 31 members from eight constituencies. Seven of these send three constituency members and one delegate member. The environmental studies association sends one constituency member. Scotton and president Macdonald (the sole honorary member) round out the total.

For the 1974-75 fiscal year, the council has budgeted expenditures of \$87,000, which will yield a deficit of \$1,000. Almost a quarter of the budget (\$20,000) is taken up by salaries for the council's three full-time employees: business manager Doug Wise, secretary Dianne Godsoe, and president Scotton.

TOO MUCH SPENT

In the January issue of the Stong Walrus, CYSF executive member Bill Osmars criticized the council for spending too much money on administration.

"Administration costs should be cut," he said. "For instance, I see no reason for a full-time business manager, and his salary is a tenth of our budget."

In an interview this week, Osmars explained that one of the major reasons for hiring a full-time business manager this year was to ensure that the \$3,000 Winter Carnival debt run up by last year's council was paid off.

"But if you think about it," said Osmars, "you start to realize that if council did not have to spend \$8,600 on the business manager's salary, the entire debt could be paid off this year."

When she was contacted this week, secretary for the council Dianne Godsoe explained that Wise has more than enough work to keep him busy.

"When we still had the coffee-shop (the George, closed last fall for lack of space), Doug was extremely busy," she said. "Now, he's just busy."

In any case, the management of the council's "entrepreneurial activities", such as the coffee-shop, is constitutionally the responsibility of the vice-president for student services and communications, the office held by Osmar. He explained that his interest in the coffee-shop was limited to questions of policy.

Scotton is paid \$4,600 for her job as president. She is also a full-time student and was one of the central organizers of this year's Winters Cosmicon. How does she manage it all?

"Well, it doesn't leave me much time for dates," said Scotton.

CYSF did not acquire its full complement of members this year until after the November by-elections. However, the budget for the current year was adopted two weeks earlier, on October 31. The October meeting was attended by only seven members, which at the time just met quorum.

When asked why the council had not delayed voting on the budget until after the fall by-elections, so that all constituencies could be represented, vice-president for finance J.J. Koonstra replied, "It might logically have seemed a good idea to have waited, but as an administrative body we needed a workable budget."

Could the by-elections not have been held earlier?

"There were reasons why that could not be done," said Koonstra. He would not elaborate.

Although each vice-president has a budget of his own, he does not in fact control the money. Any expenditure must be recommended by the finance committee and then ratified at a general meeting of the council.

It was this lack of executive autonomy which, among other things, led to the resignation, last fall, of academic affairs vice-president Tony Burzotta. In an interview last week, Burzotta complained that the funding procedure of the council is "utter madness".

"The executives are there in order to speed things up and get things done," he said. "But really, they are almost powerless."

The now-vacant academic affairs post

is currently being administered by Scotton.

"In a very unambitious way, I'm taking care of Tony's responsibilities," said Scotton. "If someone else wants to pick up the ball, they're welcome to. But it won't be me."

The \$2,400 budget for academic affairs includes funding for student societies, a speaker programme and a course evaluation. Most of this money has sat idle since Burzotta's resignation.

Both Koonstra and Osmars have publicly criticized the council for centralizing too much power at the top. Osmars complained this week that the vice-presidents are reduced to the level of "caretakers" and that ordinary backbenchers are almost completely uninvolved in the council's activities.

Although Scotton has lamented the lack of imaginative input from council members, there is little being done to remedy the situation. The CYSF constitution provides for each vice-president to establish a five-member committee. Aside from the finance committee, no such body has been formed.

"I have no faith in committees," said university affairs vice-president David Walker.

"There would be nothing for them to do," said external affairs vice-president Ted Kapusta.

When asked about her philosophy of student government, Scotton summed it up this way: "I try not to do what is not generally acceptable."



Peter Hsu graphic

Preparing petitions, serving on boards, skipping meetings: they all help to fill up the day for the CYSF vice-presidents

In addition to its president, the CYSF has six vice-presidents: one each for academic affairs, university affairs, finance, external affairs, social and cultural affairs, and student services and communication.

At least, it should have six vice-presidents. But, so far, there has been no replacement for academic affairs vice-president Tony Burzotta, who resigned late last October.

The following list presents the CYSF vice-presidents and their respective areas of responsibility.

David Walker, vice-president for university services, is responsible to the council for such things as food, parking and the bookstore.

In an interview last week, Walker cited the completion of a housing survey for the National Union of Students and his activity on the health services committee as his major accomplishments in university affairs this year.

He admitted that he never goes to food service committee meetings.

"I have a class conflict, so I send Mike Hennessy (food service committee deputy

chairman) as my representative," said Walker.

Walker also admitted that he does not go to parking committee meetings. "I have no use for that committee," he said.

When informed of Walker's failure to attend these meetings, president Scotton expressed amazement and promised to take the matter up with him.

"That's strange," she said. "David is usually one of our most diligent workers."

J. J. Koonstra, vice-president for finance, is chairman of the finance committee. That body is responsible for the budget and for making recommendations to the general council with regard to funding for student groups and projects. The finance committee must meet at least six times annually.

Ted Kapusta, vice-president for external affairs, is responsible for such things as conferences to which the CYSF sends delegates, and for maintaining a liaison with Ontario secondary schools and community colleges.

Of his \$6,000 budget, \$4,800 is earmarked for membership fees to OFS and NUS. The remainder is intended for conferences and liaison.

However, Kapusta said last week that "no one from the community colleges bothers us, and we don't bother them".

"SHEER IDIOCY"

He added that liaison with secondary schools is "sheer idiocy". "They can't get together on anything," he said.

Kapusta has recently prepared a petition which demands various reforms of the Ontario Student Assistance Programme. Once the petition has been ratified at a general meeting of council, it will be distributed to the student body.

Angus Watt, vice-president for social and cultural affairs, is responsible for dances and various "social events". Social and cultural affairs has a budget of \$4,000, most of which is used to co-sponsor dances with the colleges. Watt said that CYSF is not in competition with the colleges and, therefore, does not schedule many events on its own.

"The big event we handled on our own was orientation week," he said. "That took up quite a lot of our budget; we're not quite sure how much yet.

"This may sound a bit crude, but we're working on it."

Excalibur later discovered a memorandum in CYSF files which was addressed to president Scotton from business manager Doug Wise. It was dated September 29, and it placed the cost of orientation week at about \$2,350.

Watt is currently involved in setting up a central agency for coordinating the social activities of separate clubs and colleges. He is also planning a big end-of-year dance open to the whole university.

"But somehow we've got to make it self-financing," he said. "We've already filled our budget."

Bill Osmars, vice-president for student services and communications, is responsible for maintaining a liaison with campus media (Excalibur, Radio York, Manus) and for supervising the council's "entrepreneurial activities".

"My department is really a catch-all," he said. "I'm involved in odds and ends, here and there. None of them amounts to that much."

Osmars serves on the board of publications, a body which oversees the finances and administration of Excalibur. It meets four times a year. He also serves on the Radio York board of directors, which has yet to meet during this academic year.

The council no longer has any "entrepreneurial activities" for Osmars to

administer. Until last fall, the council operated the George coffee-shop and its two pinball machines. However, the George (along with the pinball machines) was closed down last fall when the council moved to its new offices.

According to Osmars, the CYSF also used to "take a cut" from campus prophylactic machines. But that doesn't happen anymore, either.

"I don't have a highly visible job," said Osmars. "I do mostly behind-the-scenes work."

Backbenchers feel uninvolved

Several CYSF backbenchers are disillusioned with their ability to affect the decision-making process of the council.

According to Gord Graham, a constituency rep from McLaughlin, "you're nothing if you're not on the executive". He explained that in order to make the most of their power, six or seven backbenchers have recently formed a "left-wing caucus", which attempts to vote as a block on certain issues.

Paul Kellogg, a constituency rep from Founders, said that at times it seems that the only function of backbenchers is to provide quorum at general meetings.

"But, to an extent, that's our fault," he said. "We don't make much of an attempt to organize ourselves."

Bob Panzer, the rep from the environmental studies association, recently dropped out of the council altogether.

"The whole thing didn't seem to have much to do with environmental studies," he explained.

According to Richard Langley, a constituency rep from the graduate students association, the GSA is actively considering dropping out of the council, "although that plan is still at the committee stage".

Like Graham and Kellogg, Langley gave a less than glowing report when asked about the responsiveness of the executive committee to ideas and suggestions from the backbenchers.

"I'm on a first-name basis with Anne Scotton, if that's what you mean," he said.

Constitutional amendments require "a two-thirds vote of the president"

The constitution of the CYSF is a contradictory and vague document.

For example, article 18 of by-law one states that the amendment of by-laws requires a two-thirds vote "of each of (a) the members of council, (b) the members of council plus the delegate members, and (c) the president of York University."

A two-thirds vote of the president is, at best, difficult to envision.

In any case, the council violated this article during its October 31 meeting, when articles 19 and 20 of by-law one (dealing with procedures for the removal from office of council members) were amended. At the time, the council had 14 members, only seven of whom attended the meeting. That was three less than the required number.

And President Macdonald has yet to register his vote, two-thirds or otherwise, on the amendment. Questioned this week, Macdonald said he had not even heard of the amendment.

Article 18 of by-law one also states that the executive committee must submit proposed amendments of by-laws to the constituency reps for their comments during a 10-day period prior to the meeting at which the amendments are to be discussed.

But article 24 of the same by-law states that a proposed amendment need be circulated only seven days prior to the meeting at which it is to be discussed.

CYSF has three kinds of members: constituency reps, delegate reps and honorary reps. Delegate reps are "ex-officio members" of the council and can only vote on amendments of by-laws and adoption of a budget. But according to article 24 of by-law one of the constitution, delegate reps need not be informed of any general meeting of the council, regardless of what is to be voted on.

There is also a constitutional discrepancy between rules used in executive committee meetings and those used in

general meetings. During a meeting of the executive committee, the chairman has a regular vote on any motion and also has a casting vote in the event of a tie. But during general meetings of the council, the chairman has no regular vote and, in the event of a tie, the motion is considered defeated.

Article 24 of by-law one also states that at least one general meeting must be held each month from September to March inclusive. Since there was no quorum, the December meeting met but was not, in fact, held. Whether or not this violates the constitution is unclear.

As a formal constituency of the university senate, the CYSF is entitled to send two appointed members to senate. This year, those members are Anne Scotton and Dale Ritch. However, Ritch has not attended a senate meeting since early last fall. Scotton admitted that "he should be replaced".

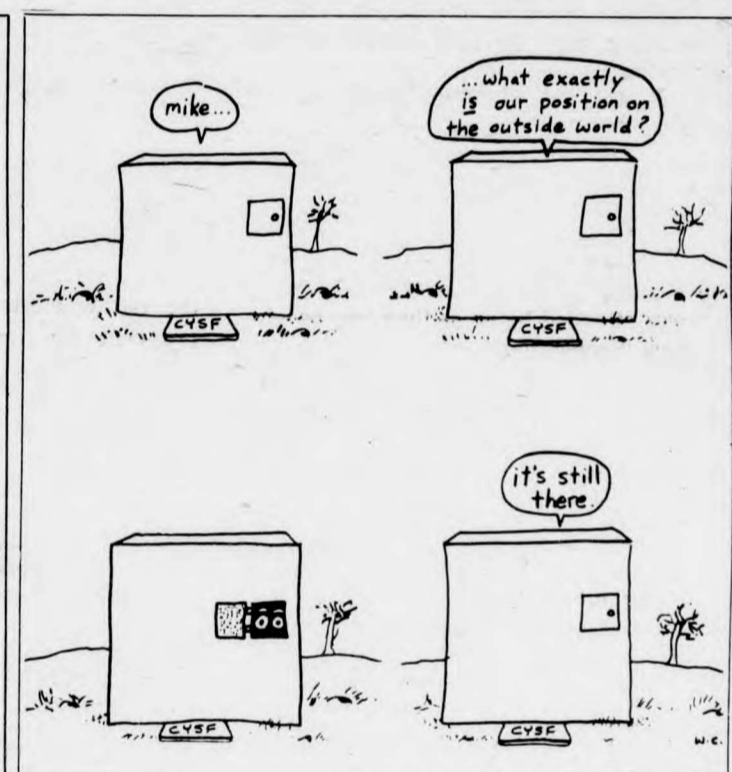
So far, he hasn't been.

A mini-gallery of past cartoons

Council sits in caricatured glory



"Eight hundred bucks for the Red and White Society... Okay, who's next?"



"What exactly is our position on the outside world?"

From nurses to straitjackets

Tuesday night deadlines hit the editorial cartoonist in mid-inspiration, and what finally hits the page after hours of yammered suggestions is likely to be weird, unintelligible and frequently funny.

Over the past years, Excalibur has used CYSF sparingly for its cartoon topics, since the august body has either proved too easy a target, and therefore boring, or a dry source of inspiration, and therefore boring again.



"And now, for a few more dollars, you can have a whole week's fun at Orientation!"



CYSF secretary Dianne Godsoe talks with student Hal Tryhorn in the new CYSF offices, across from the grocery store in Central Square. The president and business manager have separate offices.

C.T. Sguassero photo



CYSF president Anne Scotton

Susan Cooper photo