

# The YFS Executive

by Salman A. Nensi

The following two-part article will deal with our student council, the YFS/FEY (York Federation of Students/Federation des etudiant(e)s de York). What it is. Who runs it. What they are supposed to be doing. Ideally, it will provide a better understanding of those looking out for our interests at York.

For further information, or should you wish to volunteer your help, contact any of the people mentioned in parts one or two by calling the YFS office at 736-5234.

Part one deals with the Executive, who are elected at large every May. Part two will give an overview of the YFS infrastructure, letting you see all of the committees and boards that deal with students at York.

## President — Jean Ghomeshi

Jean Ghomeshi won the 1990-91 presidency with a record-breaking number of votes. Only a few credits away from finishing a joint Honours BA in History and Political Science, Ghomeshi has been involved with clubs and student movements since arriving at York.

He received a Faculty of Arts scholarship two years in a row, was a member of the Nelson Mandela Law society, co-chair of the York New Democrats and a founding member of the York Pro-Choice Network.

According to the YFS constitution, Ghomeshi's job is to supervise and direct the implementation of policy and general administration of the YFS. The President may sit on York's Board of Governors, the Senate, the Student Centre Board of Directors and the Council of Masters. In addition, the President is directly responsible for the staff, Vice-Presidents and the Equality Commissioner, and holds ex-officio status on all YFS committees.

To do all that, the President's salary is only \$17,500. Some student council Presidents at other universities are paid considerably more (Ryerson: \$24,000, Waterloo: \$23,000, Western: \$25,000). But, according to Ghomeshi, "the point is not to make a lot of money. Many other students are active in student politics and don't get anything at all."

Ghomeshi sees his job as overseeing and

directing the Federation, based on the goals and initiatives that he promoted during the election campaign. "The Federation is supposed to inform the students and build a student movement to fight for student rights at York," according to Ghomeshi.

To do this, he is convinced that the YFS must become part of the OFS (Ontario Federation of Students) and OFS (Canadian Federation of Students). "We must not be naive. Joining [these groups] will enable us to effectively lobby for student interests, such as battling sexism and racism on campus."

For the coming year, Ghomeshi's main goal is to get all students involved and speaking up for what they want and need. "Students will get the most out of York if they get involved. Not necessarily in politics, but any of the clubs, services, and interest groups.

## Vice-President (Finance) — Brad Abrams

Before joining the YFS, Brad Abrams spent time as an auditor for a small accounting firm. Now finishing his BA in Political Science, he hopes to become a CA.

Unlike previous VPs (Finance), Abrams has a working knowledge of accounting and business management. It is his responsibility to ensure the smooth running of the day-to-day finances of the YFS.

"Ultimately, I would like to have all the student governments at York united in their financial dealings. We should be able to work together to save ourselves considerable money. For example, we could hire one auditor to audit all accounts, instead of having each college hire a separate person."

In addition, Abrams would like to see the elimination of the Financial Liaison Officer (FLO), an administrative position which deals with the YFS and colleges' money. He is concerned that some of the money allocated to YFS never reaches them. Last year, \$47,000 of the money students payed for YFS did not go to their student government, but rather to the College Master's fund.

"The college Masters are not required, as we are, to provide an accurate accounting for their money. We have no control over where it is spent. We cannot even ensure that the money is directed toward the stu-

dents," said Abrams.

## Vice-President (Internal) — Caroline Winship

Halfway through her Honours BA, Caroline Winship is a double major in Sociology and Mass Communications. Before being elected as VP Internal two years in a row, she had been active in Calumet college politics and was the Calumet CYSF (YFS' previous name) representative in her first year at York. As VP (Internal), Winship attends many activities sponsored by York. "I enjoy supporting York's athletic teams and I try to get to as many functions put on by other York groups as possible."

The VP (Internal) portfolio is quite involved. Winship chairs the Constituency Committee, represents YFS to the administration, sits on the Programmes Standing Committee and is responsible for the Academic Commissioner. Winship said, "my job is to unite the colleges together when I represent their position to the administration. I am merely a vessel for the students' collective voice."

Winship said she ran for the executive again so that she could finish what she had begun last year. "Last year, we put the health care plan to referendum and it comes into full effect this September.

According to Winship, things will be easier for her this year. Having already served one term as VP (Internal), she is ready for all the bureaucracy and red tape the administration can throw her way.

## Vice-President (External) — Mitch Blass

Since his arrival at York, Mitch Blass has been active as a member of the the university's Biological Society, Chemistry Club, PC Club, and a student representative on the Faculty of Science's council. In addition, he sat on two faculty subcommittees and three CYSF committees. Blass is currently working on his BSc in Psychology or Biology. Like many of us, he's not sure which.

As VP (External), Blass is responsible for "representing the interests of York students to groups outside the university and conveying information back to the students." His two main concerns at the moment are the environment and the provincial election. "I have to ensure that the students know what is going on. They have to be aware of the issues and of the mechanics of voting and enumeration."

Blass is also frustrated with bureaucratic

red tape, and as he puts it, petty politics. "I am here to represent the students. I have no time to play political games and stroke people's egos."

The environment is Blass' main focus this year. He is VP for Education of Environmental Focus Youth, and he sits on the OFS' Ad Hoc committee on the environment. "I want the students to be more environmentally aware. I am trying to coordinate the different environmental groups: the administration, the Faculty of Environmental Studies and the students at York should all work toward the same goal," said Blass.

## Vice-President (Programmes) — George Sanghera

As VP (Programmes), George Sanghera chairs the Orientation committee, manages all services and social functions initiated or administered by YFS, and sits on CHRY's Board of Directors and the Board of Publications. Along with all this, he is continuing work on his Psychology BA.

Sanghera sees his job as two fold. First, to organize events and programming for students. Secondly, to represent the students as an executive voting member of YFS.

"I looked at what last year's council was doing and it seemed interesting. This portfolio gave me the opportunity to organize events for York students. Also, many things happened last year that I did not agree with. I thought the best place to change things was from the inside... so I ran for VP."

Sanghera's big concern this year is alcohol awareness. Because younger first year students are beginning to attend York, he has brought BACCHUS (Booze Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students) back to campus. BACCHUS is the main Canadian alcohol awareness group operating in colleges and universities. They have the support of brewers, the Ministry of the Attorney General, etc. Sanghera said, "It does not condemn drinking. Neither does the YFS, because we know we can't stop it. What we are trying to emphasize this year is responsibility: no excessive drinking and no drinking and driving."

This year's YFS executive is very concerned that they remain open and approachable. Should you have any questions or concerns, they will be most happy to hear from you. Do not hesitate to call them and voice your opinion.



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