

Security under fire; Black students charge racism

excalibur march 11, 1992

by Jeannine Amber

Director of security Don Magee says he was "out of step" for saying he would launch no investigation into the misconduct of a campus security officer.

"I am new in my job and I made a decision very quickly," Magee said.

Last week Magee said no investigation would be launched into the conduct of a security officer who asked three Black students to show I.D. claiming the students "looked young." York security officers are not mandated to ask for identification unless an offense is being committed.

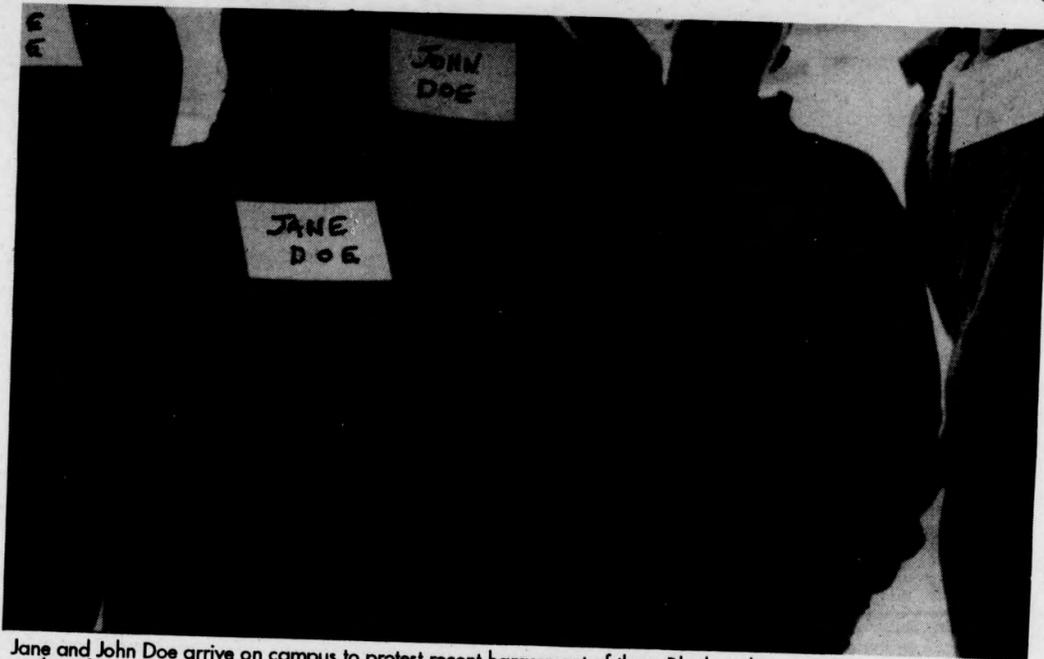
Magee's turnabout came after Pam McDonald, executive director of security, ordered an investigation into the situation.

"I'm very unhappy about the incident, that's why I've ordered an investigation," said McDonald.

"I said it seemed to me that we need an investigation, upon consideration [Magee] agreed to it immediately."

However, Alwyn Fredricks, president of the Caribbean Students Association said students should be concerned Magee didn't originally see a need for an investigation.

"It's a reflection on security itself if the head of security doesn't immediately realize there's a problem," said Fredricks.



Jane and John Doe arrive on campus to protest recent harassment of three Black students. Security asked the students for identification while they were spending time in the Student Centre • photo by Alok Sharma

"I think that if he's going to try and throw a blanket over the issue then he's not on top of what exactly motivates people to act. And you would think that someone who's head of security would be sensitive to the fact that these tensions exist."

According to Magee, the incident in question is not an issue of race. He

said he didn't ask the officer why those particular students were approached out of the hundreds in the area.

"My main concern was that he questioned a student...once he admitted he was wrong it didn't matter if [the student] was Black or not."

According to Magee, accusations

of racism are subjective.

"One race may say [an officer] is racist but he goes into another group and [the behaviour] is [considered] perfectly normal," he said.

The investigation will be conducted by Al Mossman, coordinator of Security's service standards.

Mossman said that although his

paycheck comes through the security department his position requires "non-bias."

Fredricks said he doubted Mossman's impartiality. "I don't see how any unbiased investigation can be conducted by someone on their staff."

Meanwhile, students at York have been taking the matter into their own hands by launching a massive awareness campaign about the issue.

For the past week, many Black students have taken to wearing tags bearing the name John or Jane Doe on a string around their necks.

"We are trying to show that we shouldn't have to state who we are if we are not causing a disturbance," explained Dwayne Morgan, one of the students organizing the campaign.

Several students have also lodged complaints with the Office of Race and Ethnic Relations and with Pam McDonald over the conduct of her officers.

Other Black students are distributing flyers informing students of the incident and asking them if they have experienced similar harassment.

"We are trying to establish that the incident wasn't an isolated occurrence. You can't ignore there is an element of racism at this institution," Morgan.

National women's group to report on campus safety, harassment

Canadian University Press

Vancouver--Canada's Universities are being surveyed to find out how they deal with women's concerns.

The Canadian Federation of University Women, a national alumni group, is surveying university faculty groups, students and administrators, said CFUW president Peggy Matheson.

"We expect to have the kind of report that will be impossible to ignore," she said. The organization wants to aid universities in determining how to help women, she added.

The survey asks whether the university has an effective sexual harassment policy, and whether it ensures physical safety for women on campus. It also inquires about employment equity, tenure and curricu-

lum issues.

Anne Innis Dagg, an academic advisor for the University of Waterloo in Ontario, co-authored a 1988 book on women in Canadian universities. She said the survey is very important.

"I suspect that they'll find that things are getting worse against women, especially with sexual harassment, because women are starting to speak out," Dagg said.

She said she is pleased the survey addresses gender bias in university curricula.

"We have 53 per cent of undergraduates being women, but what they are getting is still this male-based curriculum that is sometimes destructive of their self-esteem by implying that women are unimportant."

Nancy Hepinstall, the national women's commissioner for the Canadian Federation of Students, said the situation for female students varies widely across the country.

Quebec's Laval University has a student population of 35,000, but it does not have a women's centre, while the much smaller University of

Victoria boasts a women's centre and a feminist newspaper, she said.

"Today's students are also tomorrow's professors, and tomorrow's developers of curriculum, and they'll be the ones that will be turned on or off by the current academic climate, and that is important to recognize," she said.

She said the survey will be very useful for feminist activists, who will be able to use data to back up their claims of discrimination.

"It will be good to point to numbers or findings in the survey when it comes out and say 'Look, there are problems and it's not just us who are saying that there are.'"

excalibur staff elections

MARCH
11 Wednesday 4pm
12 Thursday 4pm

in the Common Room
3rd floor Student Centre

Staff Members that can vote

Jeannine Amber
Doug Saunders
Stephen Perry
Pat Micelli
Riccardo Sala
Catharine Soukoreff
Ira Nayman
Alok Sharma
Jill Skorochod
Jennifer Lim
Cindy Reeves
Josh Rubin
Tom Schneider
Brian Rigg
Francis Limfat

BE THERE

Eric Alper
Elaine Bellio
Prasad Bidaye
Maggie Borch
Trevor Burnett
Lilac Cana
Patricio Davila
Jim Hounslow
Sheena Jarvis
Samuel Putinja
Lee Romberg
Harry Rudolls
Adrian Graham
Merle Menzies
Patty Milton-Rao

If you're not on this list, but you think you should be, contact Sam at the office or call at 736-5239

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