

York security under fire in wake of offensive report

by Doug Saunders

The training of York security officers came under scrutiny this month after racially offensive language was found in an officer's report.

In the report dated April 13, squad supervisor Dragan Spasojevic describes his attempt to ticket a student for smoking in Central Square. A second student, who argues with Spasojevic during the incident, is also named.

Spasojevic describes the first student as "the alleged offender" and "the female." However, the second student is repeatedly identified as "a black female" and "this black female."

Chet Singh, York's race relations officer, described Spasojevic's language

as "insensitive" and said it may indicate a more serious problem.

"When you refer to someone's race and ethnicity when it's unnecessary, it means you're either devaluing or valuing that person on an irrelevant criterion," Singh said.

"Why does he not refer to that other student as 'the white female'?"

Nikki Gershain, a vice president in the York student federation, was the first to draw attention to the report. Gershain was acting on the request of the ticketed student, who had taken offence when Spasojevic searched her knapsack for identification.

Gershain obtained a copy of the report from Al Mossman, staff supervisor at York Security. Spasojevic was act-

ing within his rights when he searched the discarded bag, Gershain said, but the language he used in his report became a more important issue.

"I was reading [the report] and I got to the second paragraph and I thought 'holy shit!' and the reason why I had it in the first place became an aside when I saw the document itself."

In a May 6 letter to Mossman, Gershain calls the report "a reflection of systemic discrimination" and recommends intensive training for security officers on issues of race and gender.

In a reply to Gershain written last Thursday, Mossman said Spasojevic "recognizes his error" and that he apologized for failing to edit the offensive material out of the document before sending it to student representatives.

Mossman later described the report as "very unusual" but would not say if similar language is used in other reports.

Singh agreed that officer training is a major concern, especially since York is considering a plan to give policing powers to officers.

Under the plan, some officers would become special constables and would have the power to arrest and detain suspects. Proponents of the plan claim special con-

stables would be more reliable and accountable to the York community than Metro police officers. Opponents argue that policing powers could be dangerous in the hands of poorly-trained guards.

"I have not made up my mind" whether to support the proposal, Singh said, "but if they do plan to go ahead with constable status it certainly means that appropriate training for anti-racist, anti-sexist ways of doing things will be required."

Singh is currently working with Pam MacDonald, executive director of security, to implement a three-week training program for officers which includes classes in race and gender relations and "intercultural communications."

MacDonald said she is confident this training will make special constable status workable. "We have the opportunity here at York to train our officers the way the community wants them trained," she said.

According to MacDonald, Spasojevic's report is an aberration and is not a sign of racial intolerance in York security.

"You are always going to have people, no matter what the job is, who are going to make bad judgements. There are safeguards in the special constable status report to prevent this from becoming a problem... I don't think this incident itself indicates anything wrong with constable status."

However, the report on special constable status is still a secret document. York vice president Bill Farr is expected to release the report and hold a public forum this fall.

Atkinson dumps student-run cafe after two decades

by Cindy Reeves

Need a warm bowl of vegetarian chili and a toasty bagel piled sky-high with cheese and veggies but only have \$4 to spend? Well don't expect any sympathy from Atkinson College—they just closed down the only place on campus that offered such economical fare.

After twenty years of operation the Ainger, a cozy vegetarian cafe in the Atkinson College building, was closed last Friday. Atkinson's acting dean, Tom Meininger, has asked Petal Food Services to run a food outlet out of the Ainger space.

The manager of Petal Food Services, Lena Kaitsis, says she will keep the Ainger's menu and will freeze the prices for one year but plans to cut the hours of operation.

"We will not be open in the evening. We can't afford to stay open for those who just want to hang out and drink coffee," she said.

Many students, faculty and staff consider the student-run Ainger a vital part of the York community.

"This is the only place where I can come and be who I am. It is the only place I can wear this T-shirt [referring to a lesbian and gay film T-shirt] and not only not be harassed but feel loved and appreciated. This place accepts



ANDREW BROUSE

We're all gonna die! The only healthy food outlet on campus is gone.

everyone," said Elissa Horscroft, an employee of the Ainger.

The Ainger question came up three years ago when it was announced that Calumet College would be leaving the building they shared with Atkinson College.

Negotiations between the Calumet College General Meeting—owners of the Ainger—and the Atkinson College Students Association over the future use of the Ainger space were cut short when Tom Meininger became Atkinson acting dean, informing everyone that he planned to close the Ainger.

In an April 11 memo, Meininger

defended his decision, writing that it is not the purpose of a student government to generate revenue, but to develop a range of projects and services for the student body of the college.

"Responsibility for something like the Ainger—a daytime food outlet—seems pretty far removed from what I understand to be the more general objectives of the Association," he wrote.

At a May 21 Atkinson community meeting Meininger said, "any attempt to keep the Ainger student-run would have a negative effect," citing the Atkinson student government's poor track record running their own pub, the Crowe's Nest.

R. Gordon Albright, Secretary of the Atkinson Faculty Council, stated: "One person is defying the will and the best interests of Atkinson. This I consider an abuse of power... this originates ultimately in the [York] president's office. He [Harry Arthurs] isn't doing anything to stop it and he appointed Meininger acting dean."

Griffiths Cunningham, an Atkinson professor, points out in defense of the Atkinson council's financial competency: "All college councils have had bad track records at one point or another. Even Calumet had a bad track record at one time. The [students] should be given the chance to try," he said.

Kaitsis, the Manager of Petal Food Services added regarding the Ainger, "I wanted to do a reno job but this may only be a short-term venture. There are rumours that someone may be taking over the catering on campus," she added.

"Things may still work out. Professor George Hopton [master of Atkinson College] had indicated that there is at least a possibility that the Ainger will remain the same. Willow Management might even be asked to run the Ainger for Petal," said Albright.

Future plans for the Ainger space have not been finalized and no contracts have been signed.

Arthurs retires

by Jeannine Amber

York University President Harry Arthurs has announced plans to retire after six years of serving in his post.

Arthurs said in an interview that he "enjoyed immensely" his years at York but feels it is now time to move on. Arthurs plans to return to Osgoode Law School to resume teaching.

The former Osgoode dean said he had always planned to retire within the next two years, but the final decision to retire in June of 1992 means he can get back to teaching one year earlier and "be that much less rusty."

Arthurs said the area he made the least progress in during his tenure was in bettering the quality of life on campus, something which he hopes his successor will be able to continue.

"We still need more to make this a coherent environment in which people can lead an enriched life apart from classes," said Arthurs.

This year's president of the York Federation of Students Michelle Hughes, however, criticized Arthurs' building initiatives, calling expenditures such as the entry pavilion "a waste of money."

Last year's YFS president concurred. "What is important to students is not just flashy buildings but accessibility to education; Arthurs has left a lot to be desired," said Jean Ghomeshi.

Arthurs said one of his greatest disappointments was the effect of governmental funding policies on York. "We are desperately underfunded," he said.

Arthurs said as president he argued as "hard as he could" for better funding but at this point he is not "terrifically optimistic" about more funding for York.

Students have borne tuition increases of eight per cent annually for the past two years. This approximates inflation. Government contributions to the university have not kept up.

"While President Arthurs may be deemed a liberal in context of other draconian university presidents, his accedence to continual massive increases in tuition fees demonstrates a dangerous and damaging course for accessibility," said Ghomeshi.

Although he has "no idea" of who his successor might be, Arthurs hopes the new president will continue work on the Green Paper: a long-term university plan for academic expansion, which, according to Arthurs, calls for new faculties "in the area of applied science and technology... a faculty of design and an expansion of the health policy administration program."

Hughes, however, argues the Green Paper leads York in the wrong direction, suggesting that the new programs would overlap with some already in place at UofT.

Arthurs said that while planning for York he has tried to "look into the future and anticipate what society will need from a university."

"I think he's tried to turn this (university) into UofT," said Hughes. Despite Hughes dissatisfaction with the president, Arthurs said he still has "15% of [his] term left and I plan to use every minute of it."

As of yet, plans for establishing a search committee to find a new president have not been finalized.



President Arthurs makes a rare appearance outside the ninth floor of the Ross Building.

On-campus deli closes

No more kosher food

by Mike Adler and Steve Bergson

The only restaurant on campus serving kosher food has closed.

Deena's Pantry announced its decision last month, after spending a year in Winters College as a replacement for Marky's, also a restaurant with kosher food.

"This is an absolutely crucial service to Jewish students on campus," Claire Sookman, executive director of the Jewish Student Federation said last week. "There are residence students here who are kosher and would have difficulty eating here without it."

York's Jewish community did not seem willing to support the restaurant, Deena's co-owner Tom Schaffer told the university's food service committee last month.

Sookman said Jews would support a kosher restaurant on campus as long as it fol-

lowed all the rules for certification.

Deena's served kosher food but for several months it did not pay an extra fee to have the restaurant itself certified.

Part of York's Muslim community also depended on Deena's for kosher food, according to Tariq Mohammad, president of the Muslim Student Federation.

"They have no other place to go at York," he said.

Other bidders on the restaurant's space last year will be offered the chance to start another kosher operation, the committee determined.

Caroline Winship, student federation representative on the committee, said York is the only university in Canada to provide kosher food and she believes it should be done on principle.

"Even if there are only 10 people eating there, there should be that option," Winship said Monday.