

## Restructuring of student gov't needed

Opinion by GREG GAUDET

The recent CYSF elections bring to surface an issue that has never been properly addressed at this University: the question of why we keep paying money into student governments that are largely ineffective and inefficient.

One has only to look at other Ontario universities' student councils to see what we're missing. For instance, Western's University Student Council (USC) operates a wide range of student-run services and businesses. One is a photocopying centre offering print-quality reproductions at competitive prices. Not only are students able to use this business, they can also gain experience and have a part-time job working for it. And the USC earns a profit that can be put into other services.

Record stores, top name bands, a bus service for students living close to campus, well-written briefs to the Ontario government, bursaries—all these are provided at many Ontario universities by student governments. How does York compare?

We have a typing service no longer owned or run by students; a record store was given less than a year to live; our "campus" radio station is clamoring for money so it can finally be heard by students in places other than the bearpits; there is no venue on campus where it is feasible to bring in quality bands for concerts; and the only central area for students to sit and talk are the pig sty-like halls of Central Square.

The main cause of this ineffectiveness is the governmental structure at York. Most universities in Ontario have a college system similar to York's. And most of these colleges have their own student councils. But in virtually every case except York's, there is also a central council of which every undergraduate student is a member.

Although CYSF represents a large number of undergraduate students and is considered the central student government, it is in fact, only a quasi-central body; it has no legitimate authority. Bethune, Calumet, Atkinson, and Glendon colleges continue to remain separate from CYSF and have been generally opposed to the idea of any kind of central student council.

There have been personality conflicts. There have also been valid concerns with the way CYSF has operated in the past or that the members of their particular college will not be adequately represented by a central organization. You begin to wonder, however, about the validity of some of these arguments when you realize the problems we have here. For instance, there is no one body at York which speaks for all York undergraduate students—to the administration or to provincial or national bodies. The University has used this state of affairs to its best

advantage; they can pick and choose specific councils or groups, depending on the circumstance, which they feel should represent students.

I've heard the administration argue in some cases that CYSF represents students; then I've heard them argue that Board of Governors representatives reflect students' opinions; that only the Senate Student Caucus can play this role; or that a consensus of all student councils is necessary. We're left with virtually no legitimate, elected body of representatives that can voice our needs.


Beyond representation to other organizations, however, are the services that a student council is supposed to provide. These have not been developed at York due mainly to a lack of proper finances and planning.

Take, for instance, the total budget of a major University's central student government. Chances are it's very close to \$1-million (\$50 per student). This is not at the expense of college councils; they continue to collect revenue at the rate of about \$5-\$10 for each student member. At York, however, the colleges get \$27.50—while CYSF—the "central council"—gets only \$18.50 for a total budget of about \$250,000. It is, though, expected to serve some 18,000 students (not all of whom are CYSF members).

There are more problems: because there are 13 councils granting money, clubs and course unions must approach all 13 of them; because there is not enough money properly utilized, student councils have not been able to build, with the University, a student centre; and with no central council, there is little student government interest in the general problems that undergraduate students have.

What we need is a better structure; one that will not be redundant and inefficient. Such a system would require one centralized, elected student council of which every York undergraduate would be a member. Seats on this body would be filled, not only by representatives of college councils, but also by representatives of faculties. An office for this organization would be set up on the Glendon campus, and the offices on the main campus would be open late for part-time night students.


I am not, however, suggesting the elimination of the college council system. Clearly, York is a diverse community and small, locally-oriented bodies are necessary to ensure that many needs are filled. In fact, college councils would play a vital role in participating, through their representatives to the central body, in policy-making and decisions that influence their students. Presently, college reps on CYSF rarely attend meetings. Mr. Gaudet was president of CYSF in 1981-82



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With a view to providing full academic and an all-student community for those undergraduate students studying at York University during the summer of 1984, Housing and Food Services are establishing a centralized summer residence in Winters College for students. The College will act as host for those who wish to live in collegiate surroundings - summer residence accommodation for those who prefer to live and study in an all-student community, separate from the many guests offered temporary housing at York between May and September.

Reserving Winters Residence for York undergraduates from May to September is intended to establish a small but dynamic community of summer students. The same services will be offered as in the regular academic session: there will be a Residence Tutor and Don to initiate activities and provide help when necessary; there will be a full-time Porter to continue the linen and mail services, etc. The services of the Housing Department and the College will also be available to York Summer Residence students.

Rooms are available for whole, or part, of the summer, dating from May 15, 1984. The minimum length of stay is 30 days. Details and application forms may be obtained from the Residence Secretary, Valerie Bruce, Room 275, Winters College (667-2203). Rooms will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis, so interested students are urged to make enquiries as soon as possible.