

Escort service cut in secret move

by Doug Saunders

York escort vans will turn into low-cost shuttle buses starting next month, in a change that comes with no advance notice.

Tom Arnold, coordinator of student security, announced the proposed changes in a private meeting held in early August with security employees.

The escort service, introduced in 1986, delivers passengers to different locations on the Downsview campus. It was initiated as a result of increased incidents of sexual assault and harassment on campus.

Arnold said starting in October, the service will be transformed into a shuttle, which will cover a fixed route.

According to Arnold, complaints about long waiting times and the high cost of the program prompted the decision to change the service.

Arnold said the service costs the university at least six dollars per ride.

Nancy Johnston, external representative for CUEW (the Canadian Union of Education Workers, which represents teaching assistants and part-time professors), said she is offended by the suggestion that the service is too expensive.

"What are they saying? They're saying your safety isn't worth six dollars. This is an essential service. Women's safety is worth more than that."

Johnston also said the changes have been made without enough public input.

"We're concerned about these changes. We want consultation and we haven't been consulted. It sounds very secret."

Sharon Chimming, an advisor with York's sexual harassment complaint centre (SHEACC), said the centre has not been consulted.

"We haven't been given any proposal, any

route, any specific information. I think if they're going to consider anything tied to a fixed route, they're going to have to take the safety of women in mind."

But Chimming said a shuttle bus service could be acceptable if it reduces waiting time while maintaining passenger safety.

"If they can cut back the cost but still maintain the service in terms of safety for women, then it would be fine."

Chimming suggested the shuttle bus stops be equipped with 'blue light' emergency telephones, used elsewhere on campus.

Arnold agreed this would make the system safer, but said the telephones and blue lights would be too expensive.

"We'd need \$100,000 for this, and we can't get it."

The details of the shuttle system are still being discussed, Arnold said. Arnold organized committees in August to study alternatives

to the escort system. A student security employee sits on each committee.

An executive member of the student security union, who asked not to have his name printed, said he believes the administration planned the changes in advance and then organized the committees to make the process appear more open.

"They have been very clever on this. They have presented this as something not yet conclusively decided upon. I think certain fundamental decisions have already been made and they have working committees which would put into effect these decisions."

He also said the escort service receives few complaints, and the student security employees are being used by the administration as "scapegoats" for the university's financial problems.

Arnold said he plans to have the new system completely phased in by January.

Student to appeal ban from classes

by Jeannine Amber and Doug Saunders

A student who was barred from enrolling at York says he will appeal his disciplinary conviction this month.

A university disciplinary tribunal ruled on August 8 that Martin Bracey, an undergraduate mature student, was guilty of repeated verbal harassment. The three-member tribunal, selected by the York Senate, ordered Bracey rusticated (forbidden from being a student at York).

The tribunal's decision was based on five complaints which were filed against Bracey by students and staff between August 1990 and February 1991.

While the university argued the case as a simple matter of verbal harassment, Bracey contended that he was a victim of systemic racial and political discrimination from the staff and administration of York.

Bracey, is outspoken in his condemnation of power and privilege and his support for Marxist-Leninist ideology.

In an interview last week, Bracey described both the tribunal process and the complaints filed against him as "political and racial harassment."

"The process was discriminatory. It was politically and racially motivated, and it is a reflection of the atmosphere of political and racial suppression that has occurred here over many years."

But Fred Morgan, president of the tribunal's panel, said the panel "wasn't able to discern any evidence of racism on the part of the university."

Based on the evidence of the five complaints, the tribunal accused Bracey of "meting out public embarrassment and/or public vituperation" and repeatedly misjudging the actions of others.

However, the tribunal gave only marginal consideration to Bracey's claims of racial discrimination.

Although Bracey was not willing to describe the nature of his appeal, it will likely be based on the tribunal's rejection of his arguments, as well as a variety of procedural errors made by the university.

In a letter to the tribunal dated August 19, several administration and student groups condemn the tribunal for failing to listen to Bracey's case.

"While the university is willing to allow a hearing for a student, it is only on the terms of the university," the letter reads.

"Any activist who wishes to oppose the university will be open to draconian measures including the removal of an individual's right to post-secondary education."

The letter demands a fair appeal and more representative composition on the tribunal panel. It is signed by representatives from the York Federation of Students, the Centre for Race and Ethnic Relations, the Sexual Harassment Education and Complaint Centre, The African, Sri Lankan and Arab Students associations and the Pan-African Law society.

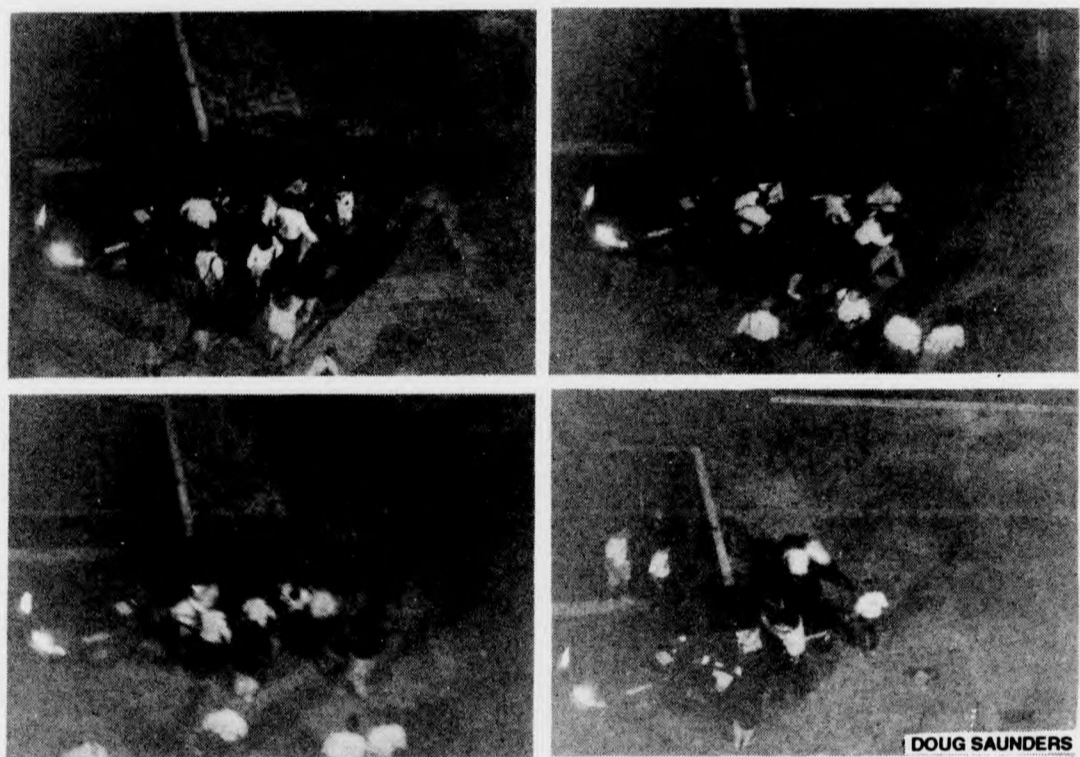
In an 82-page submission to the tribunal, Bracey argues that his case began in the summer of 1990 when the faculty of education rejected his application. While the faculty claimed the rejection was based on Bracey's grades, Bracey says he was given an A+ on his interview for the program and maintains the rejection was founded on the faculty's systematic discrimination against blacks.

During the academic year, Bracey organized and participated in several organizations concerned with racism on campus. He was a vocal critic of the York administration, the York Federation of Students (YFS), the Jewish Student Federation, the International Socialists and the campus media.

Four of the five complaints lodged against Bracey were made by university employees; the fifth came from two employees of the York Federation of Students, who later banned him from their offices.

Michelle Hughes, president of the York Federation of Students, said that the importance of fighting Bracey's rustication "is to make sure that it does not set a precedent for activists on campus — to make sure that if someone speaks out against the university that they are not thrown out of the university."

Bracey's appeal begins Thursday, September 12, at 10:00 in the Senate Chambers.



Clockwise from upper left: 1) the shouting match begins; 2) student takes a swing at guard - note Student Centre manager Rob Castle on lower left; 3) beefy guards tackle white shirt students; 4) two guards pin student to ground (top) and car (bottom).

Violent arrests outside Student Centre Student slugs security

by Jeannine Amber

Three men were arrested outside the Student Centre last Thursday after a violent series of incidents.

The three, including a first-year Founders College student, have been charged with criminal mischief, theft and possession of stolen goods. Two were also charged with assault.

The arrests happened after a car window was kicked in and valuables were stolen from the Student Centre lobby. A witness to the event said one of the men punched a York security officer.

Student Security patroller Richard Ooi said the incident began when he noticed his datebook, which contained two paycheques and two computer diskettes, was missing from a table inside the Student centre.

Ooi followed three men into a parking lot after a cleaner said he saw them near the table. Ooi said he saw the suspects drinking beer out of the trunk of a parked car.

When the men left, Ooi said he peered into the back seat of the car

and saw what he believed to be his datebook.

The suspects were stopped by York Security guards outside the Student Centre after one of them was believed to have smashed a window of a car belonging to M.J. Kelly, program director for the Student Centre.

After arguing loudly for about ten minutes, one of the suspects raised his fist at a uniformed guard. A violent melee erupted, after which one of the suspects was pinned to the ground by two guards and a second was held face-down against the back of a York Security car. The third suspect was detained inside the car.

The suspects were held for about twenty minutes until Metro Toronto police arrived.

One of the diskettes belonging to Ooi was later found on the seat of the York Security patrol car where one of the men was sitting.

One of the suspects later led two guards to a construction site near the Student Centre where the missing cheques were retrieved.

The datebook was found in a car belonging to one of the men charged.

Cheryl Bristol, a student who witnessed the event, said she felt Metro Police used excessive force. Bristol said the police pinned one suspect's head against the patrol car for "three or four minutes," even though he was already handcuffed.

Jim Brennan, director of York Security, said these were the first arrests made since the Student Centre opened in June.

But a student security patroller who asked not to be identified said "Metro [police] didn't even know where the campus was before the Student Centre [opened]. Before that they didn't even need to be here."

Drennan says the number of police being called onto campus is about the same as last year.

Since the Student Centre opened there have been 21 reported incidents involving York Security, Drennan said. Of these, four have required Metro police responses.