

# Bette battles belligerent mob

**Michael Monastyrskij**

Armed with a lemon meringue pie, Minister of Colleges and Universities Bette Stephenson was ready for battle as she faced the howling masses in Curtis L on Tuesday afternoon. She had learned her lesson from Monday's appearance at the University of Waterloo where she had been "pied" by a mischievous student.

If the television cameramen, photographers and reporters in Curtis L expected a rational discussion of tuition increases they were disappointed. Throughout Stephenson's half-hour speech, groups of students hurled insults at her, hardly giving her a chance to be heard.



Bryon Johnson

In her presentation Stephenson attempted to "correct some misunderstandings." For example, she argued that despite some claims, a federal-provincial task force is studying the subject of student assistance. However, few people were interested in what she had to say and the heckling in the question and answer period following the talk increased dramatically.

Students were particularly angered by the Conservative government's decision to give universities the option of raising fees up to 10 per cent above the compulsory 7.5 per cent. Some charged that this was an attempt to deflect criticism from Queen's Park to individual administrations.

## OSAP insufficient

Others complained that OSAP grants are not sufficient to allow members of low-income families to attend university. One student brought to light the special problem of single parents who are unable to receive aid from OSAP. Although many students who leave home are legally adults they are also ineligible. One woman argued that her work in the Jane-Finch corridor did not allow her to have a job. As a result she is unable to pay back her student loan and the federal Justice Department has threatened legal action.

## Two-tier

Perhaps the most serious charge came from the student who echoed the Ontario Federation of Students' contention that the government is allowing universities to create a two-tier system of education. According to the organization, some universities are using their "autonomous fee-setting power" to increase fees in faculties where the demand for entrance is high. The OFS argues that by doing so, the universities are effectively restricting enrolment in professional faculties to high-income groups, and creating a second tier of those who can't afford the fees and enter other programs.

Stephenson denied most of the charges.

## Occupation Pointless

She stated that universities should be allowed some fee-setting power because they are

responsible for their own programs of study. Then, amid heckling, the minister listed a number of institutions which have not raised their tuitions the full 18 per cent. She added that occupying the president's office would not guarantee lower fee hikes.

## Defended OSAP

Stephenson also defended OSAP's ability to help low income families. "Of the approximately 72,000 students—one third of the post-secondary population—who are assisted by OSAP, 70 per cent come from families with annual incomes below \$15,000.

With regard to single parents she stated that the government "was looking into ways of assisting those families."

Summarizing her position, she stated: "As you all know, there are economic facts of life, which we are all subject to, and to which we must accustom ourselves." This provided the mob with its last chance to boo.



Bryon Johnson

Let them eat pie. Battling Bette showed off her culinary talent (a lemon meringue pie perched on the podium) on Tuesday afternoon but nobody dared take the taste test.

# Sexual harassment at York

**Erina Ingrassia**

Sexual harassment on campus "is not just a buzz word."

Just ask one third-year political science student who says she was headed for an A before refusing the advances of one of her professors; she claims she ended up with the "lowest mark in the class."

Panel members and students like these who gathered together last Thursday in Curtis Lecture Hall all agreed with Dr. Norma Bowen, who said harassment is a "very real problem" which threatens women, particularly in

the academic environment. She said it is yet another symptom of sexism in our society, which, like rape, is a form of social control that serves to limit women's autonomy and mobility.

## "Subset of rape"

Panelist and author of the book, *The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, Leah Cohen, described sexual harassment as being "a subset of rape."

"Sexual harassment includes verbal innuendo, a brush, a pat, the pursuit of dates, to attempted

and actual rape," she said. Most importantly, it is an expression of male power, and not of desire. It is not an attack on one's sexuality, but an attempt to manipulate female powerlessness—especially in student-teacher relations.

"Professors should not use their classrooms and labs as recruitment grounds for their bedroom practices."

Any female student who is a victim of sexually-oriented abuse by her professor, suffers from feelings of psychological defeat because of the threat which undermines her academic

studies, she said. Those who refuse to submit to their professor's sexual advances risk the reality of receiving lower grades because of their non-cooperation.

## Harassment a secret

Panelists agreed that sexual harassment on campus is still largely a secret due to the fact that women are repeatedly ridiculed, ignored, and accused of provocation in those cases which are brought to light. "We must find out why a female believes that she cannot say no and mean it, or that her 'no' will be interpreted as a 'yes,'" said Bowen. Nevertheless, panelists agreed that students who would otherwise relate their experiences, don't do so because of the absence of a formal channel of complaint.

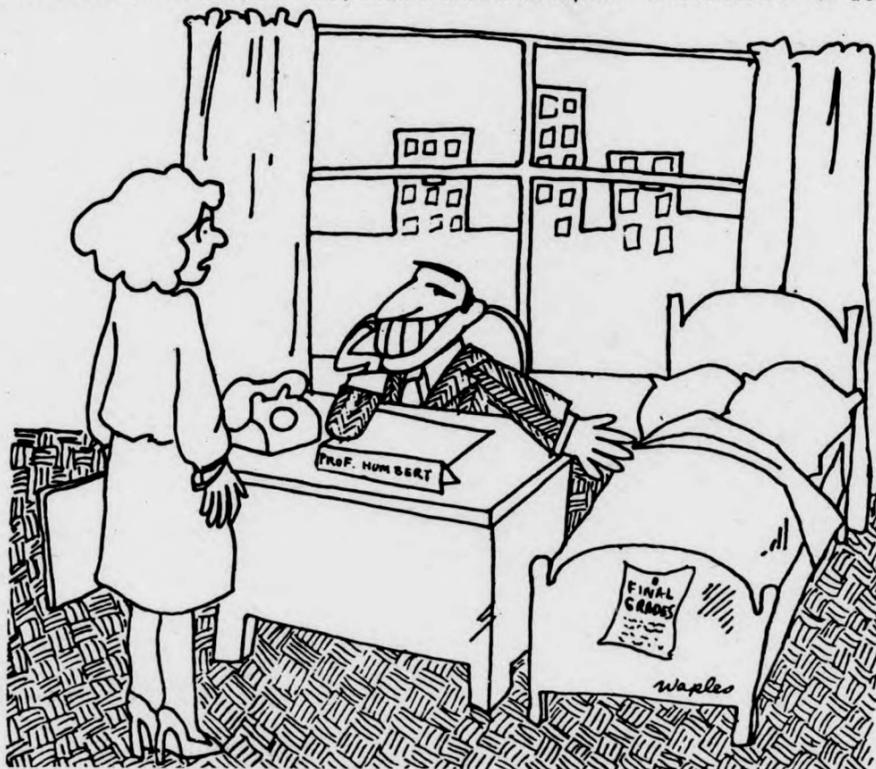
Professor Ann Shteir, advisor to President Ian MacDonald on the status of women, agreed. "We need channels of complaint," she said. "There has to be some place for a student to go and discuss the matter confidentially, and a channel through which to lodge a formal complaint."

Shortly after the investigation of the recent rape case here at York, concerning a student and her professor, the university set up a committee which will study specific means of handling female students' complaints of sexual harassment by their professors.

## Lack of understanding

Bowen stated that cases of sexual harassment should not be handled by the university officials simply because they are not trained to handle such problems. Most often, as in the alleged rape case, the problem becomes a legal one and professors, more often than not, lack an understanding of the legal problems involved.

An official channel says that the university acknowledges the existence of the problem of sexual harassment on campus. However, as suggested by Arthur Kruger, dean of the University of Toronto, perhaps codes of conduct and discipline are just as necessary, if not more so, in dealing with the problem of sexual harassment. Kruger's memo to department heads, earlier this month, warned professors to keep their hands off students—"plus an inch."



# Montgomery wins

**Jonathan Mann**

With under three hundred ballots cast, Malcolm Montgomery has become the new student representative to the university's Board of Governors.

Montgomery succeeds Andrea Doucet, and joins Peter Brickwood in the second year of his two year term.

Montgomery spoke with *Excalibur* earlier this week and explained that he will use a more "conciliatory" approach

than previous student reps to the Board. By avoiding confrontations with them, Montgomery hopes "to get the Board working for us."

He blamed the low turnout on the confusion surrounding the CYSF presidential election. "Sure, you can blame student apathy," he explained, "but student politics causes apathy."

The final tally left Montgomery with 199 votes, his opponent Duane Mures with 80, and the spoiled ballot bin with 13.



Bryon Johnson