

# York still belongs to the students

Twenty-three years ago Excalibur said this university belongs to the students. It still does.

**We need people who care about what's happening at our university.** We come to this university with the idea that the way things are is the way things have to be. We come here thinking that as students we have very little power to change anything, that we have to settle for an education that isn't exactly what we want and isn't exactly what we need.

Don't believe it.

**We need people who are probing and opinionated.** We must challenge the notion of university and what we expect from our professors. We should put in as much as we take out. We should question authority.

**We need people who give a damn about this university.** We need to fight a bureaucratic system that does not take into account the needs of financially disadvantaged students, foreign students and students with disabilities.

**We need people who think the system here at York is wrong and should be changed.** The executive body running this university is exclusively white and over ninety

percent male. It is no surprise that the university is out of touch with the needs of women and students of colour.

**We need people who think we're not getting a good education.** This university — and the government that controls it — is determined to prepare us for subservient careers by increasing funding for programs in business and applied science and giving less and less funding to the humanities and social sciences, instead of offering the liberal education that many high school graduates want.

**We need people who think the faculty is ignoring us.** This is our university and we must demand the education we want. We must demand a faculty of professors that more adequately reflects the makeup of the student body, curriculum that is more relevant to our interests, and a learning environment that values diversity over assimilation.

**We need people who want administration changes.** The people that run this university do not have our best interests at heart. To them this university is merely a business, and the students get in the way.

We want change

JA

# editorial

YEAH, YEAH!  
Let's increase  
Parking  
Fees  
AGAIN!



V.P. FARR: PORTRAIT OF  
A MAN WHO WALKS TO WORK.

## Time for a change in orientation

This issue of *Excalibur* is part of an old tradition in the student press: the orientation issue. According to custom, we should have something like "welcome to York!" smeared across the cover and lots of articles inside about those crazy colleges and their orientation antics.

But one of the best things about York is that we don't have to follow traditions. And one of the worst is the student governments' insistence on following the tasteless and sophomoric traditions of orientation.

This year we're not going along with all that. In fact, we want to send a very clear message: orientation rites are a humiliating waste of time. And you shouldn't be forced to spend your fees on them.

We don't want to piss on anyone's parade and we don't want to sound like puritans or cops. It's important for new students to get acquainted with the campus, and everyone needs a good party. And if that's what students experienced in September, everything would be fine.

But it's not. If you're a new residence student, you're likely being subjected to something that resembles a frat-house hazing. You won't be left alone all week; you'll be force-marched from beerfest to danceathon; you'll be subjected to mandatory and embarrassing initiation rites; you'll be corralled around the college by patronizing officials.

In short, you'll be treated like a very small child, not like someone who just spent almost \$5000 on tuition and rez fees.

This makes some students feel right at home, and that's why it's done. But 'home' means something quite different to many students — especially at York, where the student body has 40,000 faces and speaks a hundred languages. What is a great time for one student can be a heavy dose of the worst aspects of a foreign culture for another. And that can make you feel pretty far from home.

This assumes you live in residence. If not — and most students don't — you'll get a fine bunch of nothing. Colleges make grand claims about reaching out to "com-muter students," but they rarely unroll the welcome mat.

College councils spend the biggest chunk of their budgets on orientation rites. The vast majority of this winds up inside the residences. Meanwhile, most off-campus students spend September at home counting their noodles and rice. And residence students are forced to endure something many of them outgrew years ago.

Even the York Federation of Students (YFS) — our central student government, this year comprised of activists and crusaders — is not immune from this nonsense. This year they've funneled thousands into orientation extravagance, including a souvenir t-shirt.

As Ian Kelso observes elsewhere in this issue, this garment says a lot more than its intended safe-sex message. To be frank, it emphasizes the worst aspects of orientation. While trying to promote safe sex with a positive message, it lets the wearer boast: "I fucked my way through orientation week, and I'm proud of it."

Aside from the rapacious connotations (it makes any student look like a frenzied fratboy), it's not the sort of thing most students want to advertise on their chests. But you'll have to pay for it anyway.

Nobody wants a university to become an assembly line. We're here to use our imaginations, both in and out of the classroom. The week before classes start should be a big event. It should include everyone, and it shouldn't insult anyone's intelligence or waste anyone's money. In other words, it should involve some imagination.

Student government members have a habit of abandoning their imaginations and replacing them with stupid old traditions. In this case, they'd better reorient themselves.

DS

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Excalibur is York University's  
community newspaper.

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