

Room 105 R6/6

Get angry and fight Queen's Park's attacks on York

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Busting at the seams:

Budget cuts mean fewer Profs and larger classes next year

by Doug Saunders

The faculty of arts has eliminated more than a quarter of its teaching positions for the 1992-93 year in response to budget cuts. This will result in larger and fewer classes.

The teaching cutbacks, which will mainly affect part-time instructors, are the arts faculty's response to across-the-campus budget cutbacks resulting from a decrease in Ontario government funding for universities.

In September, the faculty of arts will have 76 to 78 less course director positions than it currently does, without any significant reduction in students. An additional 45 course directorships will be lost following the elimination of the winter-summer term, which was announced by the faculty of arts last week.

The combined teaching cuts represent more than 26 per cent of the 456 course directorships currently held by part-time arts faculty. The

cuts will save the faculty approximately \$1.2 million next year.

Robert Drummond, associate dean of arts, explained that "the bulk of the cuts" will affect part-time instructors because full-time faculty are bound by contracts and operating budgets are already too small to reduce.

A part-time course directorship typically costs the faculty around \$10,000.

The Canadian Union of Education Workers — which represents York's 2,000 part-time professors and

teaching assistants — is planning to protest York's and Ontario's decisions to slash budgets.

"We've just got to make it very clear that this is unacceptable," said CUEW spokesperson Doug Allen. "I have a concern that whole programs are going to be cut if there isn't a significant protest."

Allen said the university has sacrificed its quality of education when it could have fought the province's budget cuts or run a deficit instead.

"I'd like to see the university administration get involved in organizing a fight-back. All the fighting they're willing to do is against their own staff and their own students."

Most departments in the faculty of arts have responded to the budget cuts by expanding lecture sizes and turning smaller classes into larger lectures. Most departments also plan to eliminate some courses, though none

were able to give specific details.

Peter Mitchell, chair of humanities, said many 2-hour tutorials in his department would be reduced to one and a half hours. Humanities is also "experimenting with semi-lecture formats" in formerly small classes, Mitchell said.

Mathematics Chair William Tholen said he did not expect the structure of classes to change much in his department, but that some 90-student lecture would be expanded to 120 students.

Last week the CUEW executive voted to support a newly-formed protest group calling itself the York Coalition Against the Cuts. The student-staff coalition, organized by the York Federation of Students executive, is planning a mass forum on the budget cuts to be held in Vari Hall on Feb. 12 at noon.

York experts propose constitutional reform

by Harry Rudolfs

York President Harry Arthurs and seventeen other Toronto-area constitutional experts are trying to defend their newly-released constitution reform proposal against the scorn of the Quebec media and the indifference of the federal government.

The eighteen experts, hailing from York University and University of Toronto law schools, released a report last Thursday which proposes to accommodate Quebec and Aboriginal peoples within a united Canada.

The 162-page report by the York University Constitutional Reform Project is the culmination of 11 background studies and ten months of meetings.

Project coordinator Lynda Cavello said the project members felt the debate that was going on in Canada after the failure of the Meech Lake accord was very superficial. "It wasn't being researched at a deep enough level," she said.

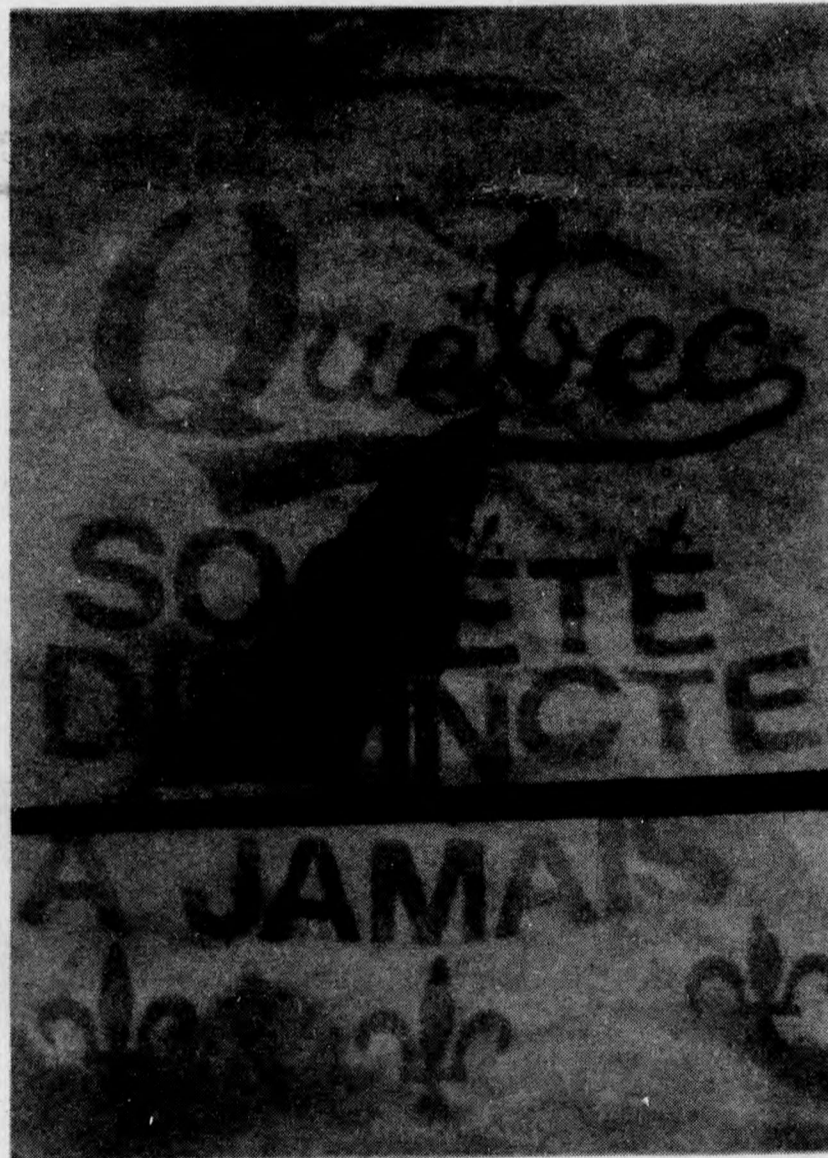
The crux of the report's 48 recommendations deal with the recognition of Quebec's "distinctiveness", the reform of federal institutions such as the senate, and the right of aboriginal people to self-government — albeit "within the framework of the existing Canadian constitution."

"We are looking at those issues that haven't been examined outside of Quebec and beginning a debate," Monahan said.

The report calls for a meeting of the Prime Minister, first ministers and representatives of provincial legislatures, opposition members and representatives of the territories and aboriginal organizations. If an agreement were reached between these parties, a referendum package would be placed before the Canadian people.

But it is the report's final section — which deals with relations between Quebec and Canada after a separation — which drew bitter comment from the Quebec press.

The report examines what would happen if Quebec were to opt for independence. In that case, according



York experts make big plans for nation's constitution. photo by Alok Sharma

to Russel, "the ground rules change; in this scenario we treat Quebecers as citizens of a foreign country and our main objective is to maximize our self-interest."

At the press conference, heated debate arose over the contention that the borders of an independent Quebec might not be the same as the present boundaries of the province.

"We are not saying, necessarily that any borders would change," said Monahan; however, "we don't want to create stranded minorities. We don't want to create enclaves if there are

people contiguous to the rest of Canada."

Russel admitted that violence is a possibility if, for instance, Quebec secedes from Canada and then the Cree Nation secedes from Quebec. Russel said violence has historically been the case in other states and that he is "deeply concerned" that it could happen here.

Cavello admitted that the only consensus the panel reached was "that it would be better to stay together than for the country to divide".

New course evaluations: better late than never

by Elaine Bellio

Course evaluations planned by the York Federation of Students won't look like ones we've seen in the past — but we probably won't see them before the end of the year.

"There have been a lot of roadblocks on the way," said Elissa Horscroft, vice president of equality and social affairs for the YFS.

For the last several years the YFS has compiled booklets of end-of-year course evaluations. The evaluations rate the courses in all faculties according to student opinions, with the intention of helping students select courses.

However, the booklets have traditionally been produced after the end of the winter term — too late to be of much use to many students.

This year, the task is even more difficult because the YFS executive has planned an innovative new approach to the evaluations.

"Our aim is to present an alternative to the traditional course evaluations," said Gershain.

"We have decided that there are a number of problems with the traditional course evaluations and we wanted to do a more inclusive one this year."

The new evaluations would not be limited to critiquing instructors' classroom manners and grading records. They would also provide information on European bias in the curriculum; on gender, race and sexuality bias in teaching strategies; and on cultural diversity in reading lists.

Gershain said the YFS has sought assistance by meeting with numerous student groups and unions, as well as the university's sexual harassment and race and ethnic relations offices.

Chet Singh, director of race and ethnic relations, said the YFS has to proceed slowly. "They have to look at how these evaluations will contribute to change and will cause the curriculum to change in a positive manner."

"This is a very complex procedure," Singh added. "It can't be done for sensationalism. It has to be done in a strategic and political way to effect change."

Horscroft said many of the groups were not satisfied with the original YFS proposal. "We had to go back to the drawing board and that's partly why we've been held up."

Gershain, on the other hand, said the course evaluations were not held up. "They're right on schedule."

The YFS may have to save the new-style evaluations for future years, Horscroft said.

"We're looking at using some of the course evaluations from last year. If we don't have this year's done, this would be the last resort."

The evaluation proposal will still have to be approved by the university senate, and volunteer workers will have to be recruited, Horscroft said.

"The course evaluations could be incredibly valuable information," Gershain said. "In the long run, this could be one of the best things that comes out of this year."

"We have started the ball rolling bigger than anybody else at YFS in the past."