

Clubs' protest gets results: VP Farr agrees to answer students in open forum

by Heather Sangster
and Daniel Wolgelecenter

About 50 students confronted vice-president (finance and administration) Bill Farr about student rights last Wednesday in the ninth floor administrative reception area in the Ross building.

The students demanded direct meetings with Farr and other administrators to voice their concerns and have more say on issues directly affecting them.

President Harry Arthurs was downtown preparing for his business trip to Italy and was unavailable for comment.

The four main areas of concern raised by York NDP co-chair Jean Ghomeshi were: 1) tables in Central Square, 2) student consultation on major policies directly affecting students 3) rents for student use of junior and senior common rooms and 4) concerns about food quality and scrip policies.

Farr agreed to increased consultation with students, starting with an open forum yesterday in the east bearpit.

Farr also agreed to address the issue of payment for junior and senior common rooms but said he was not sufficiently informed about the issue. He agreed, however, that students were being unfairly penalized for underfunding by being made to pay the rent.

Farr also said he has asked York fire marshal John Colpitts to

negotiate with the North York fire marshal to try and allow tables in the post office area.

"We've asked for everything that we can possibly get away with under the fire code," he said.

When asked why students were not consulted about tables being removed from Central Square, Farr said, "I'm not satisfied with that myself. I don't think you should screw people up without consulting them first."

Three weeks ago, tables were ordered out of Central Square by Colpitts after Norman Crandles, director of housing and food services, called North York fire marshal David Gazey looking for an acceptable location for Marriott's hot dog stand. Crandles was told by Colpitts to call, after complaints that the stand's two previous locations in front of the west bearpit and the library entrance were unacceptable.

Gazey said Crandles asked to put the stand where the vendors were set up. Gazey subsequently called Colpitts to clear Central Square.

Gazey said that a 1987 directive prohibits any tables from being in Central Square except in and around the bearpits. Crandles made the phone call without informing Farr or Provost Elizabeth Hopkins.

The demonstrators demanded to know what the administration was doing to combat chronic underfunding, which they said was having a severe negative on the quality of education at York.

Farr replied that Arthurs has been more successful than any other president in recent memory in improving York's share of provincial grants. "Unfortunately, university funding is not seen as a high priority in government," he said. "We work at it all the time but we are rarely successful."

The ninth floor confrontation followed a rally in the east bearpit attended by about 150 people, about half the amount that attended the rally the Wednesday before.

At the rally, CYSF president

Peter Donato said the protest against having no tables for clubs in Central Square would continue.

"If the fire marshal wants to take away our tables because they are a fire hazard, they'll have to check on all the other fire hazards here at York," he said.

He said he told the administration this at a meeting on November 2.

Speakers from other clubs complained about a whole range of issues from overcrowding to food quality to lack of availability of athletic facilities despite ancil-

lary fees for upkeep.

Winters College president Joe Zammit raised the issue of business interests in Central Square taking precedence over student democracy and rights.

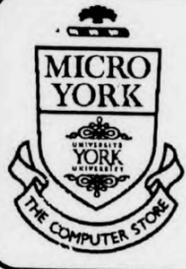
"The question I would have if I were sitting in Harry Arthurs' office today," Zammit said, "would be, 'Is this a university or is this a hotel?'"

Only two members of the administration attended the rally, Colpitts and assistant director of security Eric Pond. Neither addressed the rally.



About 150 people gathered in protest in the east bearpit last Wednesday.

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