

Student Federation Notes

On behalf of the Council of the York Student Federation Inc., I would like to welcome you to York if you are a newcomer, and congratulate you if you are returning. I hope we can both enjoy a profitable year at York.

The Student Federation has a double role of priority services to students and monitoring the academic and political activities of the University Members of the of the University. Members of the Federation sit on almost every Committee of the University and ensure a strong student voice is present before any decision is taken.

One of the areas that the Federation is moving into is a speaker series. This Friday at

noon, New Democratic Leader Ed Broadbent will speak on the subject of Petro-Canada in Curtis Lecture Hall "A". This will continue throughout the year as we attempt to provide some lines of discussion, usually in the Bearpit.

I encourage all the York community to become involved in the activities of the Student Federation this year, and hope you will drop in to the office during your spare time. This column will be published weekly and I will endeavour to keep you informed as to the activities of the Council.

D. Keith Smokum
President, Council of the York Student Federation

Student Governor's Report

Peter Brickwood

To those of you who haven't been here for a while or ever, the case may be—Welcome.

And those are about all the cheerful words I have to say, although the Executive officers of this institution seem to think we're in finisshape. At least so they seemed to say in their reports to the Board last Monday.

The surplus of 1.4 Million dollars was reported in terms of another fine step in the direction of completely clearing up our unsightly deficit. No mention was made of the decline in quality of life and education at this University which is providing these operating surpluses. In fact the new Vice-President for Academic Affairs assured the Board that there has been no significant decline in the quality educational services provided to students.

The politics of government funding for universities was discussed extensively. It was made clear by Chancellor Robarts (former premier) that he thought the government is more than ready to raise our fees but they don't want to face demonstrations at Queen's Park alone. They want the universities to go with them.

The best bet is that the 5 percent fee increase we got last year will be forthcoming again this year. And next year. And the year after. And so on ad infinitum.

Then there's the Ross report. Remember that? That's the report that the Minister (of Colleges and Universities, Bette Stephenson) had a business consulting firm do on university fees. It recommends unpegging fees. Thus each university would be able to charge what it could get and if you want to study something expensive, like Medicine, it will cost you more; within limits of course.

Before they came up with that bright idea they talked to the administrations and boards of all the universities in Ontario—and a mere 18 students. Increases in fees would doubtless enable our administration to run up an even larger surplus.

And what does the average taxpayer make of all this? They see a university which cuts 2.8 million dollars from its 78/79 budget and then saves another 1.4 million dollars. Obviously they conclude that there is lots of fat left at this university and support the government in cutting us back even further.

Meanwhile our classes get larger, the number of courses gets smaller, the number of books in the library dwindles and familiar faces on the faculty disappear. For this they want to charge us more. The government continues to cut back and our own administration is giving them the perfect excuse to do so.

Perhaps we should invite Chancellor Robarts to join us the next time we go to Queen's Park. At least it's more fun on our side of the steps.

STRIKE

The strike that wasn't—thank goodness. But are we to have the threat of a strike to greet us every year as we wend our way back to these hallowed halls?

Other universities get their labor relations settled in mid-summer. Why can't we?

Well, to start with, the administration made the staff association (YUSA) a wage offer which was completely the opposite of the union's policy. Then when things were beginning to get sorted out at the beginning of August—the administration's chief negotiator takes a previously unannounced holiday.

These kinds of tactics by the administration are totally unnecessary. We don't need to come back every year to the threat of a strike and it certainly doesn't encourage new students to come. Let us hope that contracts are settled before term starts next year.

REACHING ME

You can always leave messages care of the Student Federation in Room 105 Central Square and I am frequently in that office (phone 667-2515). I also keep erratic hours in Room 132 Calumet College (Atkinson Phase I).

For Glendon students I will be in the GCSU office every Tuesday morning from 9:00 to 11:00.

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