

Goals and objectives commission explores

Presidential task forces plot York's future

By TED MUMFORD

The President's Commission on goals and objectives, formed last January to plot York's future path, has created task forces to facilitate the commission's understanding of four crucial issues.

The topics being examined by the task forces are: the future role, development and organization of research, chaired by sociology professor Anthony Richmond; the physical and cultural ambience of the university, chaired by fine arts chairman Joseph Green; the philosophy of undergraduate education at York University, chaired by political science professor Douglas Verney; and the future of the college system, chaired by former administrative studies professor Donald Rickerd.

The commission's discussions and hearings last spring identified these topics as worthy of detailed exploration. The task forces are charged with investigating them and reporting to the commission by December first. The four groups are made up of faculty members and the occasional student or alumni representative.

The commission has also established a research group headed by the director of the office of research administration, Dr. William Found. The group will provide a framework of data through research projects as a background for the consideration of proposals.

GREEN PAPER

The formation of the commission itself was a reaction to many developments, some of which also led in part to the reorganization which the York administration and the uncertain financial future of universities had a part in necessitating both the reorganization and the formation of the commission.

Impetus for the creation of a body that would look at York's future also came from other directions. Last May, the Senate requested that its Academic Policy and Planning Committee draft a statement of York's academic priorities and an outline for a means of achieving them.

President H. Ian Macdonald stressed the need for a systematic study of York's future as early as November 1974. A green paper issued by the Council of Ontario Universities in April 1975 also urged that such a study be undertaken by all Ontario universities as a basis for dialogue with the government.

When a motion came before the Senate in September 1974 to institute the commission as a five member body consisting of two faculty members, one student, one alumnus and President Macdonald, several student senators charged that the representation of the various sectors of the York community was imbalanced. The motion was passed.

TWICE WEEKLY

On January 16 of this year the commission, comprised of Macdonald, John Yolton (faculty, and former President of York), Robert Haynes (faculty), Naomi Wagschal (alumnus) and John Bankes (an Osgoode Law School student) held their first meeting. The commission has since been meeting on an average of twice weekly, with the addition of ex-officio member George Bell (York's executive vice-president) since August.

The Commission sought input from the members of the community last spring by inviting individuals and groups to submit briefs on their views of York past, present and future. The Commission also planned to meet with as many groups as possible.

The response from individuals to the invitation for briefs was less than overwhelming. Many staff and some faculty members made submissions, but none were received from individual students. Some faculties and departments sent in their ideas, but the only contributions from student groups were president's commission short briefs from CYSF and the Graduate Assistants Association.

The commission has been more successful in arranging meetings with various sectors of the university. To date they have held discussions with each of York's faculties and research units, the

Alumni Association, the Women's Centre, some Senate committees, the council of college masters and several North York citizen groups.

The apparent lack of interest in the commission on the part of York student organizations prompted President Macdonald in October to ask CYSF vice-president for academic affairs Andrew Madden to co-ordinate future student input.

Madden told Excalibur that the student effort will concentrate on the future of the college system and the problems caused by the proliferation of student governments at York. He has called upon the college and faculty student governments to submit summaries on how student government might be made more efficient, and hopes that individual students will bring their suggestions to him.

The task force on the physical and cultural ambience of the university has been little more successful in receiving student input. An open forum in the bearpit on October 26 showed "a lack of imagination" on the part of students, according to commission member Naomi Wagschal. "But this problem exists in every sector," she added, "People seem to accept it (the university) as it is. We want to change York for the better. There could be some major changes made, and we want people to make some input." Joe Green, chairman of the ambience task force told Excalibur he felt that "It may take some consciousness-raising", before York members can make a positive contribution to the commission and the task forces.

TASK FORCE

The ambience task force has also contacted most campus organizations to present briefs on November eighth and tenth on how York's social environment may be improved. At press time, only the council of college masters, the

Atkinson College Students Association and York's faculty Association (YUFA) had announced their intention to participate.

The assignment of critical issues to the task forces has allowed the commission to concentrate on other important aspects of York's future. The commission's priorities include the development of suggested policies on the creation and disbandment of research units, and on faculty consultation for interests outside York. As well, it will study the future of libraries and graduate programmes at York.

The commission will incorporate its own findings and those of the task forces in its report, hopefully to be completed by April 30. It is likely that the commission will not disband at that point, but rather continue as an ongoing review group.

The degree of implementation of the commission's proposals will be up to the President, the Senate and the Board of Governors. According to commission member Naomi Wagschal, the group's proposals will likely be based on York's needs, rather than its monetary situation.

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