

## Liberals' funding increase puts 'universities back on road to financial viability'

By JAMES FLAGAL

In an effort to reverse the chronic underfunding of the past decade, the provincial government increased university operating grants by 7.3% in its Monday pre-budget announcement.

"This government has crossed a barrier and begun the process of rebuilding," Gregory Sorbara, the Minister of Colleges and Universities said in commenting on the 148.7 million in new base funding announced by treasurer Robert Nixon.

"This is the second major initiative in revitalizing our post-secondary institutions," Sorbara said. "The first was the (1986-87) \$50 million Excellence Fund."

The \$148.7 million in new base funding is composed of the following:

- \$5.17 million to fulfill operating grant commitments for 1987-88 announced in October 1985.
- \$37 million to continue teaching equipment, library acquisition and faculty renewal grants introduced in the '86-87 Excellence Fund.
- \$60 million in special allocations to recognize enrolment growth and promote accessibility; encourage increased research activity; and address special needs in the north and facilitate programme adjustments.

The reactions from York and the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) were enthusiastic. "York University welcomes this historic decision to place our universities on the road to financial viability," said Harry Arthurs, President of York University. "This recognition of the desperate needs of the higher education sector is the act of a responsive government."

According to Matt Certosimo, chairperson of OFS, "this is the first time in a number of years where government has acknowledged accessibility right in their allocation scheme."

Certosimo is convinced that student lobby efforts are beginning to pay off. "The government funding priorities were based on the realities of the day," Certosimo explained. "We made post secondary education (PSE) a funding issue which the government could not ignore by mobilizing public opinion through the Council of Ontario Universities Toronto Coalition's day of protest, and OFS lobby efforts at Queen's Park throughout the month of October. We sensitized the public and the government about the dilemma post-secondary institutions are now facing, so the environment was fertile to raise PSE funding."

Barbara Sulzenko, a representative from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities echoed Certosimo's remarks. "All three party caucuses thought the issue was important," Sulzenko said, "and so it came time for government to put its money where its mouth was."

Certosimo noted that "tuition increases are being held at four percent. This is the first time government has increased operating grants to one level, and kept tuition strictly in pace with inflation rather than meeting that funding increase."

Last year, Certosimo said, the Excellence Fund was not part of the base, "But since the government has incorporated the Excellence Fund's grants into base funding allocations," Certosimo explained, "post

secondary institutions can begin long term planning in the fields of faculty renewal, improving teaching and library equipment without the fear of only receiving money for these programmes for just one year." (Total provincial operating grants increased by 11.5 percent if only the base funding levels of the last two years are compared.)

According to Sorbara, the allocations set so far have been determined in direct response to specific needs identified by the Ontario Council of University Affairs (OCUA). Sulzenko explained that OCUA will advise the Ministry on the actual distribution of the proposed allocations.

This includes constructing allocation schemes for faculty renewal, Sulzenko said, which is an \$84 million programme to be distributed over a nine year period. This year's portion is projected at \$12 million, Sulzenko said.

The teaching equipment and library acquisition fund will be continued as a funding category for 1987-88 only. After that year these funds will be incorporated into base funding allocations without specified status, Sulzenko said.

"Most targeted grants will disappear into the broad category of base funding," Sulzenko said. "This way governments can ensure that institutions address certain priorities like faculty renewal. Then after the special status is eliminated, institutions can take these grants and put them in those other funding areas which they specifically need to address."

The \$60 million allocation for accessibility and research will be dis-

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BABAK AMIRFEIZ

**MAN IN MOTION:** Rick Hansen, on a world-wide tour aiming to create a greater understanding of the potential of disabled people and raise funds for spinal cord research, arrived in Toronto earlier this week. Thousands greeted the Canadian-born man who has gone through 34 countries and travelled 32,160 kilometres on his journey. Hansen was the inspiration for John Parr's *St. Elmo's Fire* theme song.

## Colleges set up committees to aid in Student Centre planning

By LAURA LUSH

Following the example of Vanier College council, Stong and Founders councils have formed committees to gather input for the Council of York Student Federation's (CYSF) proposed student centre.

Stong proposed the idea of putting together their own committee following an October 21 student centre presentation by CYSF assistant Rob Castle. During a similar presentation with Founders College the next day, Castle said that Founders also "decided to follow suit" and form a similar committee. "Founders asked me the best way to put forward proposals and ideas for the centre and I recommended that they follow the Vanier example of forming their own student centre committee," Castle added.

"I had noticed that other colleges had put together committees," said Mourad Mardikian, president of Founders College student council, "so we decided to do the same thing." Mardikian said that the six member Founders student centre committee hopes to make a final recommendation of their proposals to CYSF within the next couple of weeks.

"We'll have a forum to discuss the student centre," Mardikian said, adding that there is a possibility that the committee will hold a survey to reach Founders students. "Everything is still in the planning stage, but we plan to ask Rob to come back so

we can ask him more questions," he added. "Our council was very impressed with Rob's presentation," Mardikian said. "It will be very nice to work with him."

Castle, along with CYSF President Gerard Blink have been meeting with the various student bodies over the past month as part of a continuing CYSF consultation period that is asking for input and ideas for the proposed student centre.

Stong College council president Jill Shibou could not be reached for comment at press time.

However, McLaughlin College council President Howard Beach said that McLaughlin "would like to meet with Rob (Castle) again to discuss further details pertaining to the student centre before they considered setting up a committee." Castle met with McLaughlin council on October 28.

"We are not against the idea of a student centre," Beach said, "we are just taking our time to examine all the details." He added, "I would like to see other colleges question the project (more)."

Specifically, Beach said that McLaughlin is concerned about the financial feasibility of the estimated \$10,000,000 student centre which students will be expected to provide \$8,000,000 in funding, while the remaining \$2,000,000, depending on negotiations, is expected to come from University contributions.

"We want to know how much potential revenue the centre is expected to earn within the first few years and how the money to build the centre will be paid back," Beach said.

Although Castle said Beach has raised some good questions, he said that the financial terms for the centre will depend on negotiations with the Administration expected to begin within the next few weeks, and the results of an MBA feasibility study on the student centre due for completion in December.

Beach also said they were concerned where revenue from the centre would be channeled after the estimated 30 year mortgage was paid. "Would the revenues be generated solely back into central government, or would they be spread out between central government and the colleges, who initially would have contributed to the project?" he asked.

Castle said that any revenues would be generated back into the student centre, under the guidance of a student majority run management board, that would oversee the operations of the centre.

The McLaughlin council president also said that he thought "that the idea of building a student centre seemed to come up first," taking precedence over actually what would go in the building. "Normally you assess what you need first in terms of services, then you assess if you

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### FEATURES

**THE FUTURE OF YORK'S LANDS:** York is a half-finished university due to changing political and economic circumstances and to expect salvation from the provincial government has proven to be a waste of time. As a result, the University has decided to take matters into its own hands, turning to its greatest asset—land—to raise money for new capital construction. The vehicle for this venture is the York University Development Corporation. Page 5

### OPINION

**CAN YORK STUDENTS READ?** Concern in the University about students' writing skills prompted the establishment of a Writing Workshop. In this week's opinion piece, teaching assistant P.A. Dutil wonders whether the root of the problem has been attacked. Page 7

### ARTS

**WOLFMAN JACK IN WAYNE NEWTON'S CLOTHING:** Resident debunker James Flagal makes his debut in the arts pages with a biting attack on Reveen the Impossibilist. After experiencing the Reveen superconscious state first-hand, Flagal sets out to expose the man for what he is. Page 11