

February 2009 Student Trustee Report

Ariya Hagh

STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT

At this time, Student Trustee A. Hagh made the following remarks.

“Good evening Madame Chair, Mr. Director, trustees, superintendents, ladies and gentlemen.

Here we are in the productive month of February! Exams have recently finished, and a new semester filled with numerous opportunities and bright prospects has started. With this, I would like to immediately begin with our recent activities, in particular regarding the talks of potentially changing the examination system. There has recently been some interest in converting the manner in which examinations are run to a method that places less stress on students. This strain applies to all students, in particular those who may be forced to write numerous exams within a relatively short time. Such a situation may compromise the success of the student greatly. Since many examinations account for a large portion of the final mark, the establishment of a system that reduces unnecessary tension may prove to be greatly beneficial.

We have recently been informed that a committee of principals and superintendents has met for the discussion of such a notion, and have elaborated upon the possible benefits and fallbacks of the application of such an examination system. As expressed by a number of teachers, the imposition of this model may be seen as potentially useful for students in grades nine, ten, and eleven. Should the advantages provided to students from such a change be deemed valuable, and the conversion of examination procedures feasible, then we may expect further meaningful dialogue regarding this matter.

Vithushan and I have already discussed the possibility of promoting such a system with members of the York Region Presidents’ Council, who showed great enthusiasm and interest for its establishment. Most students seemed to agree with the fact that their performance on examinations depended, to a certain degree, on the organization of the exam timetable. As stated by one student, the assessments with the worst results seemed to be ones that directly followed another examination. In such cases, students found that they forgot a large quantity of the concepts that they had studied, or had insufficient time to prepare for the stated examination. Although some students were of the opinion that the current system allows for a faster completion of exams, and therefore reduces the amount of stress over an extended period of time, a strong majority were ultimately in favour of the proposed changes.

It should be noted that the opinions presented were of a relatively small sample population, and thus do not accurately depict the sentiments of the entire student body. As such, the presentation of a small survey may perhaps be beneficial in gauging the opinions of students in regards to this matter.

I would also like to take a moment to provide a few details regarding several possible improvements that Vithushan and I would like to propose to the selection procedures for the upcoming student trustees. Due to the ever-rising number of potential applicants, 13 in the 2008-2009 school year, as well as the increasing difficulty of making a selection from a collection of highly capable students, Vithushan and I are contemplating the addition of several amendments to the election process for the upcoming school year. Such adjustments would divide the process into two sections. The first would involve a written response, possible letters of recommendation, and one or more oral interviews, which will weigh the aptitude and psychological idiosyncrasies of the potential candidates. Those who pass the first section will partake in the traditional elections, from which two students will be chosen by a jury of their peers. Such changes will attempt to ensure that the selection process is both fair and effective, and that the students chosen are compatible with the nature of this role. A meeting is being set up with senior staff to look into this issue further.

Lastly, I would like to take a moment to mention the seemingly ubiquitous interest in the creation of a potential environmental activity targeted around Earth Day. We shall hopefully provide more information on such an initiative in the near future.

Thank you very much for your time and patience.”