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# CUASA

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## PRESS RELEASE

### CARLETON PROFESSORS ANGERED BY STEPHENSON'S STATEMENT

Carleton University professors are angered by Queen's Park's attempt to by-pass a report that documents the serious underfunding of Ontario's universities.

On November 14th, 1980, the Presidents of the province's fifteen degree granting institutions naively asked Bette Stephenson, the Minister of Colleges and Universities, to establish a tripartite committee "to study the situation of Ontario universities in further detail and bring forward specific recommendations relating objectives to public funding". This committee was to include representatives from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, the Council of Ontario universities, which is dominated by university administrations, and the Ontario Council on University Affairs (OCUA), the government's designated advisory body on higher education.

Today in the Legislature, Dr. Stephenson announced the formation of a nonrepresentative committee to "develop a public statement of objectives for Ontario universities" and to relate these objectives to funding levels. In addition, the committee is required to identify funding mechanisms which can be used in a carrot and stick manner to induce university acceptance of the objectives.

Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA) protests this move in the strongest terms.

CUASA feels that the Minister's committee will, at best, only duplicate the effort of OCUA at outrageous expense to Ontario taxpayers. OCUA represents the community at large. It holds annual hearings in all parts of the province at which the universities and other interested parties make submissions. As a result of the information that it receives, it is able to advise the government as to university policy on an ongoing basis.

At worst, the Minister's new committee will provide a smoke screen behind which the government can hide its record of woeful neglect of the university system. This neglect has been exposed in OCUA's report of last September, "A Financial Analysis of the Ontario University System, 1980", which reveals that Ontario spends less on its universities per student than any province except for Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. CUASA believes that there is no credible argument for Dr. Stephenson's committee. However, if there is a widely perceived need for yet another investigatory body, it should be one with a much wider mandate and more autonomy than that proposed by Stephenson.

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