

editorial

Draft AIDS policy too Farr gone

Ignorance about AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is still present at York despite AIDS Awareness Week and the York Council on the Prevention of AIDS (YCPA).

This became evident at last week's open forum with Bill Farr, vice-president (finance and administration), in the east bear pit in Central Square.

Founder of the YCPA, Ron Kelly, complained about the provision in the university's draft AIDS policy which states that information about a person's AIDS infection "...shall not be released to parents or to any member of the university including faculty and administrators except in cases where the information becomes necessary for purposes of their administrative responsibilities, and normally only after the express written consent of the patient." (italics ours).

"That's discrimination and I'll take it to the Supreme Court," said Kelly. This provision, he said, violates a section of the Ontario Health Act which states that confidentiality is absolute except for governmental departments of health.

Farr said the reason this clause is in the draft is because of the dangerous nature of the disease. Letting his own fears and ignorance show, he said, "Can you catch multiple sclerosis from someone who has it?"

No, Mr. Farr, you can't. But you also can't catch AIDS from teaching a person with AIDS, or from sitting next to a person with AIDS in a lecture hall. There is absolutely no circumstance that could possibly arise at a university where the unauthorized release of this medical information would be warranted.

Billie Mullick, Farr's assistant, is coordinating the policy. She said that "in circumstances where students are requesting academic concessions, such as permission to extend an examination date, the administration may request such information."

So, a student requesting an academic concession because of a disability does not have the right to keep the specifics of that disability — if it is AIDS — private. A student's AIDS status will be disclosed without permission.

It goes without saying that a student requesting an academic concession should provide proof of a disability, but is it really necessary that the exact disability, for example AIDS, be specified? A letter from a doctor stating that the student is seriously ill should be sufficient.

AIDS can only be contracted by direct contact with the body fluids of an infected person, primarily through sexual contact or by sharing needles used for intravenous drugs. (These activities do not normally take place during the course of a request for academic concessions.) York should seriously reconsider this portion of the AIDS policy draft.

If it does not, we fully support Kelly in his inevitable fight in the courts.

EXCALIBUR

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Cows must provide 2 pieces of i.d. and are eligible for a special opinion section, if we find their letters moo-ving.

OUR World...

BILL FARR'S SECRETARY HAS GREAT DIFFICULTY TAKING DICTATION WHILE THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S FOOT IS IN HIS MOUTH.



Letters

Prof driving up book prices with sale

Dear Editors:

I read with a great deal of interest your October 12 article "Prof runs 'academic garage sale'." While I am not in a position to pass judgement on Professor Propper's motive or means of disposing unwanted books, I believe that these are good reasons why students should be hesitant to accept this means of acquiring 'cheap books' in future.

University faculty routinely request, and receive, complimen-

tary copies of books that are to be considered for course use. This happens because faculty will not pay for books and other teaching materials such as instructors guides, text banks, etc. Some instructors are conscientiously selective about their sample requests. Others are notorious 'book collectors'. In either case, the student pays. Publishers are obliged to build a percentage of 'unpaid' books into each title we produce for student use. Text-books are expensive, and becom-

ing more so.

If faculty garage sales are to be an accepted practice in future,

Thank you again for your well written and informative article. I will be interested to see how the university reacts.

Sincerely,
Craig Laudrum
Sales Manager, Academic &
Reference Butterworths
Publishers

Protester angry "cool guys" in Central Square held up forum with Farr

RE: Open Forum November 15, 1989

Dear Editors:

I am sure many letters have been written in regard to the forum held Nov. 15 at the East Bear Pit. This letter is not addressing the discussion between Mr. Farr and the students but to certain students themselves.

I realize many students fail to see the importance of sessions such as this one, but I am dumbfounded by the absolute disregard certain students showed for the small but concerned group in attendance.

It is to these students I address this letter:

Dear Cool Guys:

When the CYSF president Peter Donato opened last Wednesday's forum, he asked that those groups of students uninterested in the discussion kindly find another sitting area until the forum was over in order that concerned students could participate. Not only did you ignore Mr. Donato's request, but you took it as some juvenile challenge to perform for the crowd. And what a stunning performance you gave to those within earshot (I believe the range included both the Curtis Lecture Halls A&B not to mention many of your colleagues in the Smoking Area)!

As many of us little people around you grew increasingly annoyed with your game, you became more obnoxious than before, feeling you had not made your presence known. It then occurred to me: "Perhaps in lieu of their intensely absorbing conversation, they don't realize there is an open discussion going on, and that a significant number of students (in relation to the handful of you "Cool Guys") wanted to

hear what was being said!"

I took this revelation as a cue to remedy this ignorance. When I requested that the noise be kept down so the speakers could be heard, I was not only ignored but insulted as well. I was later informed of certain finger gestures made at the supporting students, a move showing quite a degree of class on your behalf. Being the level headed person I am, I checked my growing disdain for your group and again asked sternly that you show some consideration for others. One of you — I'll call you Captain Cool Guy — flippantly said "Why should I?," followed by several other mature comebacks. In fact I was surprised Captain Cool Guy did not did stand on his seat, protrude his tongue, stick his fingers in his ears and taunt "WHY DONTCHA MAKE ME!" Well Captain C.G., here are several reasons why you should have held your tongue.

- 1) You might ACTUALLY learn something! But this, of course, would defeat the purpose of your being in school.
- 2) It would be really nice of you and your fellow cohorts to show respect for your dare I say fellow students. Unfortunately you see no value in this or you would not have behaved like infants.
- 3) I realize that, though the Bear Pits are common areas, they also serve the purpose of being platforms for things like forums and must benefit the student population. I realize you have "claimed" your territory in the name of apathy and Cool Guyness, but, my poor, mislead Captain, the interests of a majority must

be met, especially during a STUDENT ORGANIZED RALLY!!

I could have tolerated your insensitivity to this point and blamed it on poor upbringing, lack of oxygen or overexposure to hair spray, but I lost ALL respect for you Cool Guys as human beings when a student expressed concern about York's policy for AIDS cases and your clan as well as others, jeered him. Not only are you ignorant, but homophobic. WHAT A WINNING COMBINATION!

I am not suggesting you should not "hang out." Sit where you like, you do have the right. Realize that we "geeks" also have the right to inform ourselves and others about issues concerning all of us. Central Square is for everyone, and you Cool Guys mustn't be threatened by invasions on your territory.

The bottom line is, some of us care what happens to our money, our parents' money, and the little grant money we receive. More-over we want to be informed and consulted. If you Cool Guys have such a disregard for how "your" dollars are spent, perhaps you could band together and hand more over to the administration, solve our problems, and guarantee your spot by the Bear Pit for all eternity.

P.S. Do you suppose Cool Guys read Excalibur?

Sincerely,
Jodi Koberinski