

STU program off to good start

St. Thomas University's new writing program is off to a good start. With an enrolment of 230 students and a staff of eight professors, the program is the only one of its kind to be offered by a Maritime university.

Program Director Jim Reither, looks forward to a successful first year. Says Prof. Reither, "So far, response to the program seems very positive, and morale, particularly among the faculty, is high."

The program, proposed by a university committee on language competence and designed by Professor Reither, was approved by STU's Academic Senate in March. The committee's plan called for a major change in the university's curriculum aimed at helping students improve their writing.

Under the plan, faculty members from the various University departments would devote part of their time to teaching the writing

course. The course would be required of all entering students except those who elected to write an exempting examination and passed it.

Eight sections of the course, including one for non-anglophones are being taught this year. Professor Reither, who taught a pilot section of "Effective Writing" last year, talked about its objectives.

"The idea behind the course is to teach students how to perform the

kinds of writing tasks which society expects university graduates to be capable of performing. The assumption is not that the students can't write, but that they haven't been doing the kinds of writing that is done at the university level."

The first term of the new course deals primarily with composition. Students concentrate on developing good sentences, good paragraphs, and on exploring various writing styles. In the second term, students use these writing techniques to prepare essays and research papers.

Commenting on his own experience with the course last year, Professor Reither noted the importance of encouraging the student to develop a sense of confidence in his or her writing. "I think we did a good job of achieving our objectives in this area last year. It's a goal for the program this year, too."

Mary Ellen Batt, a first year student who wrote the exempting exam and passed it, decided to take the course anyway. Says Mary Ellen, "Even though I passed the exam I know I need the extra practice. It's one thing to have ideas and it's another thing to know how to put them across well to someone else."

A number of students have been hired to work as proctors with the program's teaching staff. They assist in correcting papers and tutoring students who need extra help. Proctor Debby Franz is a veteran of last year's pilot course. Says Debby, "The year is just

getting under way and, so far, I haven't been too busy. But I know how much work we did last year and I expect that I'll have plenty to do before long. The writing course last year was really demanding. It was worth every minute."



Peter Allen appeared at the Woodshed

MADELEINE DEWOLFE Photo

Editorial

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repetitive. Further, some of the Board members most senior in industry and government supported the outside candidate Cassano.

Voting for Condon, the inside candidate, were the other half of the faculty representatives and three *ex-officio* members (i.e. they hold their seat by right of office). The main block of votes for Condon, however, came from people appointed to the Board by the Board itself and by government. Most of these have never been directly involved in academia *per se*. Some of these have been on the Board for years.

No other conclusion is possible but that the Board was polarized along the lines: students/some faculty/successful business and government people, and, on the other side: *ex-officio* members/those on the Board for years/very senior faculty. (Perhaps more simply it could be said, disregarding faculty, who cancelled each other out, younger and closer to UNB-Cassano, the outside man, older, *status quo* types-Condon, the inside man.)

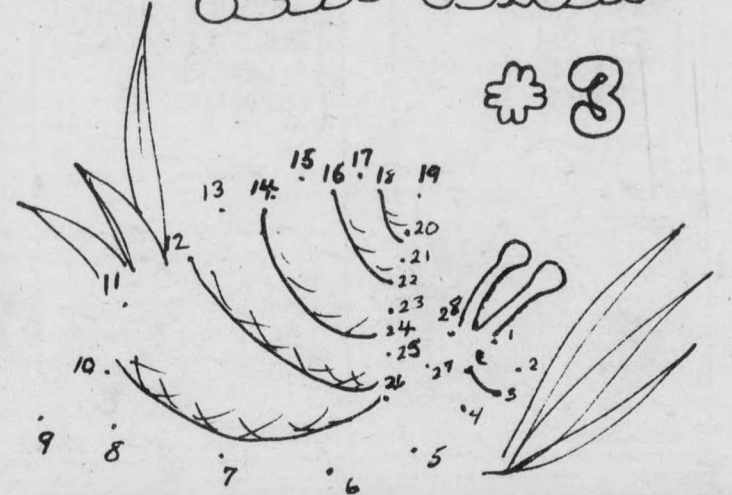
It does seem that the Deans and the 'status quo governors' were quite far away from the feelings of the faculty and students. Perhaps this is where the failure lies.

After some delay, perhaps many delays, a new search committee will get going and come up with a candidate. The Brunswickan reiterates its stand that an outside candidate capable of academic and managerial leadership be selected from among the best in Canada. It would be impossible to suggest that there are not competent people here at UNB, but The Brunswickan feels there is little to be gained in getting an inside president. It is doubtful whether such a person could effectively make changes in a management system which he or she was a part of when it became so out of hand.

The Brunswickan hopes a new search committee will be effective in selecting a candidate a reasonable majority can agree to. There were, after all, many who did not agree with either Cassano or Condon's nomination.

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