

Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

Fletcher's folly foils Founders

It appears that a debate over the \$1,500 debt incurred by CYSF president Mike Fletcher is beginning to materialize. CYSF treasurer, Rob Macrae, has indicated that he is not completely convinced that CYSF should, in fact, accept full responsibility for the Fletcher faux pas. By the same token, Founders College Council president, Bob Thompson, doesn't want to be stuck with the bill either.

In short, it appears that Fletcher's folly has created a bit of a campus predicament.

Macrae's position is quite understandable. Why should CYSF be responsible for every councillor's individual actions? On the other hand, Founders' only crime seems to be that they trusted a fellow human being (although we are not so sure that political and financial naivete is a strong defense for parting so leisurely with \$1,500 of Founders students' money).

Unfortunately, Fletcher, himself, is going to have to accept full responsibility for the confusion. He had no

business masquerading as a CYSF representative knowing full well that he did not have council endorsement to borrow the \$1,500. Nonetheless, the harm is done and there is no use beating a dead horse. If it was an honest mistake then O.K., Mike, let's admit it and try to find a solution.

And what solutions are open? Clearly CYSF has no legal obligation to pay Founders for the loss. It may, though, have a moral one, since Fletcher is a member of the council and CYSF does have to accept some responsibility for controlling its own members. (Perhaps a policy statement is in order at this time.) Founders, having lent money to a CYSF member in good faith, has a right now to expect some compensation.

Consequently, we feel that the only fair solution to this problem is first of all an admission by Fletcher that he made a mistake and secondly a 50-50 split between CYSF and Founders to cover the financial loss. It certainly doesn't rectify the error, but it's probably as close as we're going to come.

Letters to the Editor

Small chance

After reading your issue of last week I felt the impulse to write a scathing letter to the Editor and acquaint him with the facts surrounding several incidents that came up at our last Council meeting and which were reported by EXCALIBUR. But then I thought for a moment and realized that EXCALIBUR has cried 'wolf' so often in the past year that few would be inclined to agree

with the latest efforts, even though, there is small chance that they are aware of the whole story. However, I did enjoy your issue and a little character assassination never did anyone any harm. The cartoon was excellent and I hope that there will be a continued improvement.

Rob ('Power-Without-Policy') Macrae

Ed. note: thank you Rob for clearing up all of the questions for us.

Inadequate regulations

I am beginning to feel like a very little man.

Wilhelm Reich wrote a book called Listen Little Man. His "little man" is a man who has no opinions of his own, a man who follows leaders blindly, who, in short, is afraid to act unless he knows his action has the approval of someone in authority.

But even if you do have opinions of your own, take leadership, and act on your own convictions, you can still be made to feel like a very little man.

Last November, Rob Barlow wrote an article for EXCALIBUR which makes reference to York University as an "anti-life regulation machine". This is perhaps stating the point a bit strongly, but the question bears looking at.

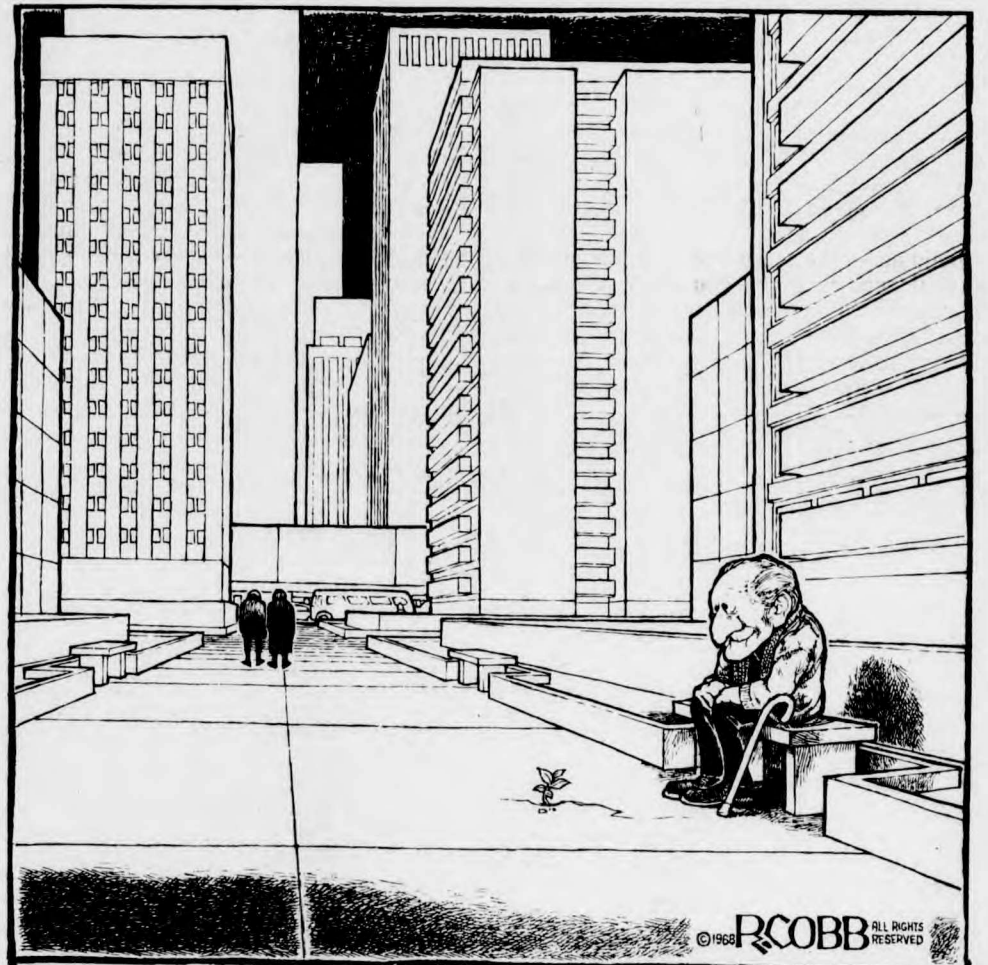
Rob says he is in favour of regulations but protests "when these regulations are enforced at the expense of the human factor." With respect to my petition, it is not enforcement of regulations that is hanging me up, but their unclarity and the seeming inability of those responsible for university government to come to agreement.

Right now a hassle is going on between the Council of the Faculty of Arts and the Senate Committee on Examinations and Academic Standards (CEAS). Professor Terry Olson, chairman of CEAS, holds that the faculty council in granting my petition has stepped outside its bounds and that Senate legislation is necessary. Faculty council, judging from their response at last Thursday's meeting, seem to concur but don't seem to feel any need for hurry.

At the beginning of this year I was given to understand that at York University there is such a thing as a petition. In a recent letter to Senate CEAS, Professor Hugh Parry, chairman of faculty council, makes reference to an unwritten rule that "everything is petitionable."

On this assumption and with the express approval of the psychology department I

"BESIDES... JUST HOW FAR DO YOU THINK YOU CAN GET IN TODAY'S WORLD WITHOUT A GOOD EDUCATION?"



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submitted a petition to take my six courses (I now have five) on an ungraded basis. That was in October. This is March, and I have yet to receive a straight answer.

The main reason I have not received a straight answer is that there is confusion as to whether I have the right to petition: confusion as to what the regulations are.

To this day no one has come out point blank and said that not everything at York is petitionable. As far as I can see, no one has said definitively one way or the other, even though the whole matter has been given considerable publicity from as far back as November.

If, in fact, a student has the right of petition, clearly he has the right to know the decision within a relatively short period of time. Considering that the academic year starts in December and ends in April, five months is not a relatively short period of time, and five months have already passed.

As things stand, I have no assurance that I will be able to (1) receive credit for five ungraded courses or (2) receive a degree at the end of the year.

The situation is this: the regulations are unclear. Because the regulations are unclear, I am left uncertain as to whether I in fact have the right to petition and if so, whether my petition will be approved. I am not demanding the right to take ungraded

courses. But I do demand knowledge. I feel I am entitled to a straight answer.

Arts Dean John Saywell assures me it will come at the next Senate meeting Thursday March 25. The matter, he says, will be placed on the agenda. President David Slater promises to discuss the issue with the senate executive committee before the Senate meeting next Thursday.

Meanwhile, I have no legal recourse. The Senate is the highest academic decision-making body at this university. There is no one person responsible for the failure of faculty and administrators to come to agreement and come up with a reasonable answer to my request to take ungraded courses.

I'm not saying it's the petitioner's job to follow his petition around in order to insure that it is dealt with. (that's another story.) But even if I want to, at this stage I can't. I don't even know where it is.

The answer to my problem apparently lies in the regulations. But the regulations are unclear. Faculty and administrators cannot agree as to what they are, and until such time as they do, no one can act.

Ironically, the confusion over regulations resulting from my attempt to petition points up the inadequacy of these regulations in dealing with a particular case. Which is precisely why we need petitions.

Howard Halpern