

# Censor strikes out at Mount Royal College

by Kent Cochrane

Administrators at Mount Royal College in Calgary are now censoring the College's journalism newspaper, *Journal 3009*, because the paper published an article which criticized College President Donald Baker.

The article appeared on December 12 and featured statements from five Mount Royal instructors who criticized Baker over poor relations between administration and faculty.

The administration says that they are censoring the paper because the College funds it and is thus legally liable for what it prints.

Since December one article has been banned. Six have been altered.

"The Board of Governors becomes responsible when a college puts any of its resources into a publication," says Baker.

"There has to be some kind of procedure developed for accountability," he added.

However, second-year journalism student Greg Pincott offers a different interpretation.

"What it comes down to is that the Board and Dr. Baker don't like criticism," he said.

"It's not our fault that relations are bad between Baker and the faculty members."

"We're just reporting what is happening," said Pincott.

Problems between *Journal 3009* and Baker date back to October, 1982, when an article appeared in which the President of the Faculty Association blamed Baker for Mount Royal's \$550,000 deficit.

Baker had most of the copies of that issue seized before they could be distributed, although the offensive story later appeared in the *Reflector*, Mount Royal's Student Association paper.

After last December's article, the Board of Governors launched an internal investigation into the five instructors who criticized Baker.

The investigation ended on February 8, but it was not revealed whether any disciplinary action had been taken against the instructors.

At the time of the investigation, Faculty Association President Roger Tierney said, "I really don't think the issue is freedom to talk. I think the issue is insubordination."

However, Pincott asked, "is this a corporation, where people do as they're told, or an academic institution, where criticism is part of the process?"

Since the investigation began, David Thomas, Dean of Business Studies and Applied Arts, has been reviewing all stories in *Journal 3009* relevant to the investigation.

Thomas has stopped one story from being printed, and has altered several others.

However, the students working at *Journal 3009* find the very fact that Thomas censors the articles unacceptable, whether he changes anything in them or not.

Since February 15, the students have refused to run any article which Thomas has reviewed.

Pincott declared that Thomas "simply has no qualifications to discern what is libelous and what isn't."

"The Board of Governors simply don't like any criticism or controversy," he said.

He added that the Board is currently involved in fund raising to build a conservatory and is very sensitive to any bad publicity.

The College's lawyer looked

at the December 15 article and found 35 separate defamatory statements.

However, *Journal 3009* had an independent lawyer examine the article and he found nothing libelous.

The students will get a chance to air their grievances before the Board's personnel committee on March 19.

However, the committee is also preparing a set of guidelines for *Journal 3009*.

Pincott says that the imposition of guidelines would set a

dangerous precedent, since no journalism program in Canada currently has to follow written guidelines.

Journalism instructor John Balcers will present a plan to the Board calling for an instructor to be made publisher of *Journal 3009*.

This instructor would then be responsible for the content and would be considerably more qualified to discern libellous content.

However, Pincott doubts that the Board will accept this, since it would take away some of their power.

## Reaction to quotas

by Neal Watson

University President Myer Horowitz's February announcement of quotas on the number of first-year students to be admitted in September is drawing mixed reaction from high school administrators and students.

Harry Ainley Vice-principal Leif Stolee called it a "ridiculous situation," and indicted the provincial government for inaction. Stolee asked what students can do - "they can't go to school, and (because of high unemployment) they can't get jobs," said Stolee.

Unless the March 27 provincial budget contains increased funding, the University intends to limit the number of students admitted to first year in 1984-85 to the 1982-83 level of approximately 4500 students.

With about 6000 expected to apply, 1500 students will be denied admission.

"What do the young people do while waiting?" asked Ben Bachman, the principal of J.R. Robson High School in Vermilion. "Students have fewer choices," he said.

Bachman blamed the provincial government for putting students in the middle of a "political game."

It is a "question of dollars into the Heritage Trust Fund vs. dollars into education or health care," said Bachman. "The heritage for most people is their children."

Student reaction to quotas is diverse. Vern Loov, the principal of Wetaskiwin Composite, said his students are "disappointed" and are circulating a petition.

Robert Roseborough, a guidance counsellor at Harry Ainley, said that there has been "no reaction" from Ainley students and most of them don't even realize the University's intention.

Roseborough said that quotas won't make much difference to students - it will only increase their determination to achieve the necessary admission standard.

The entrance requirement for university admission was raised from 60 to 65 per cent in September. According to projections by the Institutional Research and planning department, with quotas, high school students will require a 72 per cent average to ensure admission.

Roseborough - who said Ainley places 35 per cent of its students in university - insists students will achieve the standard. Vern Loov questioned the validity of arbitrarily set standards - at 65 per cent or any level. "What is qualified?" he said.

The increased standards generally reduce student accessibility to post-secondary education.

Loov said that the government's inaction moves Alberta to a situation where education is "only for the elite."

Advanced Education Minister Dick Johnston was unavailable for comment.

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