

"ombudsman"

Item: A request from a student in Arts that we try to clarify that Faculty's "Language other than English" (LOE) requirement. His specific problem was that he had transferred from BAC because *their* requirements were more than he, as a fully-employed student, could handle. Arts had accepted most of his courses, and then warned him that he would have to make up his language deficiency, but he sort of let that slip his mind until now, when he'd completed all courses for the

If you have problems you want the "Ombudsman" to help with, or if you're someone who wants to help solve others' problems, contact Dirk Schaeffer at 439-6486 (in person at 1010 Newton Place, 8515-112 St.) or Kevin Giliese in Gateway 432-5178 (Room 282, SUB) or at home, 433-2136.

degree, but couldn't get it because he didn't have a foreign language. The degree was all that stood between him and a juicy Federal job, so it bothered him. He had been advised that Arts was somewhat ambivalent about the LOE requirement and had apparently dropped it three years ago and then reinstated it a year later; this bothered him too although he realized he didn't have anything that resembled a formal grievance.

Clarification: The notion that Arts students should get a "broad" education, and that part of that broadness encompasses things like foreign languages, science courses, even Phys. Ed. requirements, has been around at least as long as the Arts Faculty has. It represents a philosophical commitment by that Faculty to certain ideals of education, which may be, and often are, debated (every three years or so, in fact). Aside from the issue of broadness vs. specialization on the philosophical level, there is also the question of extra-Faculty vs. within-Faculty requirements on the practical level.

Within living history, competence in a foreign language has been a *Matriculation* requirement in Arts: meaning, you're not supposed to be there at all without Grade XII competence, or its equivalent. Arts has recognized that some good students may want to enter the Faculty even without this competence, and has allowed that they could make up the deficiency while pursuing their studies, rather than being barred from all studies in Arts until they'd demonstrated LOE com-

petence.

Until three years or so ago, LOE was considered an "absolute" requirements, meaning that a student not only had to demonstrate linguistic competence, but also would not get credit for it (in, say, a 100-level language course). Three years ago, that policy was changed to make LOE a "relative" deficiency, meaning that you still had to demonstrate competence (remember, it is still technically a matriculation, rather than graduation, requirement) but *could* get credit for doing so. This seems nothing more than slightly generous, given the existing regulations.

However, the change in terminology from "absolute" to "relative" led some people to believe that Arts had "dropped" the language requirement, and some students got misleading advice from people in other faculties, and even in Arts, as a result. When the question was clarified a year later, there were still some people, like this week's inquirer and his advisors, who thought that Arts had just changed its mind twice. Tain't so.

Right now, there are at least three ways to meet the LOE requirement:

- 1) Pass or otherwise show competence in a Grade XII language course.
- 2) Pass or otherwise show competence in a 100-level course, and get graduation credit for it.
- 3) Take a language proficiency exam from whatever department you think you can show proficiency in. This is, apparently, the equivalent of a 30-level high school exam, and should not be a very heavy burden.

Item: A request that we examine the status of the Registrar's practice of withholding grades and transcripts until all University fines and dues are paid.

Comment: More clearly than most questions, this one can be attacked on three grounds: is it *legal*, is it *ethical*, is it *desirable*? The first one of these is throny, and we'll report on it again when the facts and opinions are in. The other two are easier to discuss off the top of our heads.

There seems to be some consensus that allowing the University to police its own small problems — parking, pilferage, breakage, etc. — is more desirable than turning these questions over to the public courts. This may be as mythical as tenure is. University parking

tariffs seem to run higher, for violations, than the city's do, and their estimates of what materials, furniture, and the like cost seem gross inflated — for example, I was charged once with responsibility in the loss of a camera, valued at "more than \$600.,"; my local photography supplier listed it for \$240, before discounting.

Obviously, taking hundreds of students to small-claims court each year would impose a terrible burden on the Administration, and this might ultimately be reflected in higher costs to everybody. But the argument that even those students directly charged with these offenses are better off in University hands than those of the local law enforcement agencies seems increasingly farcical.

Even if this were true, however, the ethics of using withholding of grades as an enforcement device seems highly questionable. What this does, essentially, is make the obtaining of grades, and certificates, degrees, etc., an at least partially financial and power-mongering issue. It thus contributes markedly to the students feeling that a degree is something you *buy* — by paying money (tuition) and by going through the motions required in your classes. That is, education becomes not an educational issue any more, but one of financial and other convenience.

It seems to me that, ethically, the step from the present situation to that of, say, buying term papers, or blackmailing grades by threatening to expose your prof's kinkier predilections is a lot smaller than the step from the Administration's *not* using the convenient pressure of withholding grades to that of using it, was.

It's convenient; but it creates a misleading and dishonest climate — one in which it is difficult for honest and meaningful ideals of education to flourish.

Finally, even granting that this is a *convenient* method of enforcement, one can ask if there are other, better ones. For example, instead of withholding transcripts in the case of unrequited offenders, the University might continue to issue them, with a line at the bottom noting that "This student still owes the University \$xxx." This would seem an equally, if not more, forceful lever for the University; while at the same time being perfectly fair in that the University is neither withholding what it has promised (grades for achievement) nor confounding education with financial compliance.

— dls

Governments may penalize part-time working students

OTTAWA (CUP) - Students working part-time next academic year may face reduced financial aid as a result of recent proposed changes in federal student loans.

The decision that financial aid be reduced for students whose earnings from part-time jobs exceeds a monthly ceiling was one of several changes to the administrative criteria for the Canada Student Loans Plan (CSLP) at a meeting of federal and provincial representatives here.

But the changes proposed by the Canada Student Loans Plan Group must receive the unanimous consent of the nine provinces participating in CSLP, and will not be officially announced until the release of the CSLP criteria booklet next spring, according to a federal official.

The results of the plenary group's meeting came to light in an interview by the University of Manitoba student newspaper with the provincial student aid director Rick Kleiman, one of the nine student aid directors represented on the CSLP administrative body.

The changes include:
- the imposition of a ceiling on part-time earnings of \$75 monthly for single students and \$150 for couples, along with an increase in living allowances based on a projected 12-month cash flow period. Anything earned in excess of these amounts would be applied against the student's loan award.

- a 10 per cent reduction in expected parental contributions, but only for those cases where students' parents live away from

home due to a prohibitive physical distance to their institution.

- a decreased minimum course load requirement to qualify for loan assistance, to 30 per cent from the current 40 per cent of a normal yearly term.

The plenary group also considered "encouraging" banks to reduce monthly repayments for students with low incomes following graduation.

The National Union of Students (NUS), representing 185,000 students across Canada, has tried in recent years to seat student representatives on the plenary group but has been

rebuffed.

NUS executive-secretary Dan O'Connor said the imposition of the ceiling on student earnings will only increase the inequalities in the student aid system, by giving some students more than they need while others who require extra earnings will suffer.

He attacked the rationale of the CSLP planners that allowance increases based on projected earnings will decrease the need for part-time employment.

Instead of projected averages, student aid should be based on "the actual situation of students," he said.

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