

## The old grading system

The Editor,

Radical and irresponsible students have always, and particularly of late, condemned the use of a rigid grading system in measuring academic disposition. I would like to point out how misguided these educational anarchists are in attacking such a fine and time-proven concept.

The first and paramount merit of the grading system is that it forces students to accept their proper place in the academic world and indeed in society in general. It is important to assign each child a position on the alphabet or on the percentage scale as soon as he arrives on the academic scene. It is just as important to keep reminding him that he is either inferior or superior in the only way that really matters and that is the ability to consume information at the most efficient rate possible. If a child is a 'C+' student he should be made to realize this at all costs. Then, by the time he finishes his secondary training, he should be ready to be a good 'C+' citizen and forget about his foolish personal aspirations and creative abilities. The grade system is very successful in giving people this basic training.

A second, and also very prominent merit of the rigid grading system is the pressure it places on students to achieve. The value of this aspect is obvious. Can you imagine the dilemma if it weren't for the grading system to keep students in line? Schools and universities would lose their noble, Spartan atmosphere. Imagine the state of chaos if students were allowed to be creative individuals pursuing knowledge and truth for

its own sake. Think of all the empty lecture halls and the informal gatherings in seminar rooms and coffee houses. One can even envisage the hideous situation of natural interest and spirit of inquiry taking priority over the organized discipline imposed by tests and grades.

Finally, the tremendous efficiency of the grading system must not be overlooked. It is essential that the student's understanding of his field and of related fields be evaluated. If it weren't for the grading system students would have to be constantly evaluated and assisted on an individual level. Senior students and graduate students would have to make the evaluations and point out the areas in which the student was lacking as a part of their own education. Then, at certain points in his education, when the student felt he was prepared, he would have to present himself to the competent educator in his field. Here, after subjective and objective evaluation, both oral and written, the student would be encouraged to advance or would be directed to return and complete his learning to this point. Thus the process would be a continuous one in which 'summer break' and 'winter session' as well as grades would become meaningless. It can be easily appreciated how inefficient such a system would be in comparison with the grading system.

I think there can be no argument that if people are to be easily controlled and to become efficient citizens, the strict discipline offered by the grading system is indispensable.

Tom Dolhanty  
sci 2

## The intentions of the . . .

The Editor,

The intentions of the Students' Union executive with regard to graduate students have acquired a most dubious character, especially during the past months.

During registration, graduate students were forced to become full members of the Students' Union contrary to decisions by the Council of Students Affairs (CO-SA) and the Board of Governors. The Students' Union president, Marilyn Pilkington, denied responsibility in this matter on the part of the Students' Union although the Students' Union is re-

sponsible for the issue of ID cards according to a letter from the Registrar's office to the Graduate Students Association.

When this was brought before the executive of the Council on Student Affairs, its chairman, Professor A. A. Ryan, explained that the mistake was due to an administrative lag and cleared the Students' Union from responsibility in the matter.

Recently it has come to my attention that the constitution of the Students' Union (revised May, 1968) very clearly states that all fulltime graduate students are full members of the Students' Union (article 9, section 1(c)). Miss Pilkington when questioned about this, answered that it was mistake (again?) for which the present administration was not responsible and which would be corrected.

Furthermore, she admitted that she had no knowledge of the above section in the constitution (sic!). Somehow, it seems strange to me that even the President of the Students' Union is ignorant of the nature of this constitution even if it had been amended before her term in office. I asked her whether I was to believe that the constitution was not worth the paper it was written on. The question was answered satisfactorily by a request to leave her office.

The whole matter should not be too surprising to some students who have voiced charges of manipulation and clique-rule by the Students' Union executive. It leaves me with a bad taste in my mouth.

F. G. Bodewig  
Vice-President  
Graduate Students  
Association

## Contributions required

The Editor,

I agree with John Miller that war is an extremely poor solution to international conflict. However, I loathe his suggestion that the laying down of a man's life in the defence of his country, or perhaps more accurately, his country's ideals, is disgusting.

Mr. Miller is obviously a man of character (certainly not a hypocrite) and knowing he ridicules the sacrifice involved in defending our democratic system, I can well imagine the conflict he lives with while residing in Canada, a democratic country.

Because of my great esteem for Mr. Miller, I would like to ease his burden—by suggesting as "Miller to East Berlin" campaign.

I'm fully confident of a few contributions.

Dick Reeson  
eng 4

## This is page FIVE

It may be tough to realize but Christmas exams are less than a month away. But it is even harder to figure that we have spent better than 10 weeks and, people, there should be lots of hair-pulling in the next few weeks. You might even ask yourself what you learned since Sept. 15 and we hope the answer is lengthy and positive.

Contributions for today's page FIVE come from many sources. There is an excellent piece of satire from a science student, a letter condemning the Students' Union, another letter proposing that John Miller take a little trip, and a reply from an arts student who didn't like what Brian Campbell wrote about the SDU.

The column comes from Kevin Peterson, president of Canadian University Press. He attended the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada conference and his views of the proceedings are recorded here.

In the future we will print a series on marijuana as recorded by the Journal of the American Medical Association. However, we are awaiting permission from the organization before reprinting.

Also, we have a column on the university and democracy and the jest of it is that the university does not lend itself to democracy. We hope to print it this week.

Send contributions to The Gateway, Students' Union Building etc. Or bring them to room 282 of SUB.

We have page FIVE for your opinions. Use it.

—The Editor

## Criticize ideas - not appearances

The Editor,

The article "What we need is a responsible approach" concentrated on insults and name-calling directed towards only two people. Criticism surely must be about the ideas of people not their appearance. Moreover, one cannot judge, as you did, the SDU by the behavior of a few of its so-called members. The SDU people at that meeting who were calm far outnumbered those who were not. It is understandable for people to get angry in the heat of discussion, but to sit down and think about what was said and then write something as irrational and vicious as Mr. Campbell's article is hard to understand. The impression he gives of the meeting and SDU is misleading and irresponsible.

Lana Stewart  
arts 3

EDITOR'S NOTE—Lana Stewart is the "mouse-blond girl" referred in Brian Campbell's column last week. Of her, Campbell wrote "the spokesman for the left was a mouse-blond girl . . . (who) decided Laing (law rep on Students' Council) was dishonest and by shrieking insults and innuendo managed to stop Mr. Laing from giving the audience the least understanding of what went on in council".

## The AUCC conference Will the public pay for 'laboratories of protest'

By KEVIN PETERSON  
Canadian University Press

OTTAWA (CUP)—It could be that university administrators have been under attack for so long from so many quarters that all they can do now is react and be afraid.

Or it could be that some of them have never really thought about what the "purpose of the university" is and undergo culture and shock when they do.

Or it could be they are "very much concerned", as Kenneth Strand, acting administration president from Simon Fraser University, puts it.

Any one of these alternatives could be drawn out of the Nov. 4-7 meeting of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. More than 600 people came to it and, in the open sessions anyway, they spent their time discussing "pressures" acting on the university.

It was all done in a very relaxed atmosphere. Strand, attending his first AUCC meeting, said, "I expected more hysteria than I found." His reaction was typical.

The administrators were very much aware of their relaxed approach—they said it showed "concern" for ideas they were "talking through".

The greatest concern centred around a new definition of the purpose of the university. Administrators know student leaders want to make the university a force for social action—that the activists see the university

only as a stage in a larger struggle to change society.

They reacted to that spectre ever before it took shape. On Wednesday morning (Nov. 6) D. Carleton Williams, administration president at the University of Western Ontario, spoke of student activists "whose diagnosis of the university's ills is dire and whose prescription is fatal".

Williams outlined the "liberal" university which did not get involved in "political" causes. He said that if the direction of the university did lead to involvement in political causes, society would kill the university.

That afternoon, and Thursday morning, some student and faculty delegates to the conference delineated the role they saw for the university.

Gilles Duceppe from l'Union Générale des Etudiants du Québec spoke of changing the university so it served all of society, not just "privileged classes".

Peter Warrian from the Canadian Union of Students said the university should create "critical learning". To do that, Warrian said, the values now shaped at the university must be made clear—and everyone must understand whose interests these values serve. Then, the university community must set the values it felt were important and stop serving the interests it does not.

## Conservatives reacted to change

The administrators reacted. They talked of probable public outcry. The university needed money, they said, and no one would support "laboratories of protest".

C. B. Macpherson of the University of Toronto faculty, and president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, summed it up when he said society thought the primary purpose of the university was to produce "a steady supply of trained people". The community of scholars, he said, existed only because university teachers demanded it.

The administrators know they can, and have, defused the student revolt at least temporarily. If a threat were to come to the university from the governments or directly from groups of people, they feel much less confident of their chances of success.

While admitting administrators were concerned about this possible public reaction, Robin Ross, vice-president and registrar at U of T, had a different explanation for the reaction.

"The problem is people are hearing new ideas for the first time," Ross said. "They feel a real need for people to discuss and think about the purposes of the university."

Ross said the notion that uni-

versities should produce people who regard society in a "critical and analytical" manner was new to administrators. They needed time to reflect on it and think about it.

Many of the presidents of major universities left the conference to go to Kingston and see J. J. Deutsch installed as administration president at Queen's University on Wednesday. A lot never made it back from Queen's.

And many who did stay around for all the conference didn't change very much. At a final plenary session, attended by fewer than 100 people, a motion was presented that asked all university information be made public unless specific reasons were given to keep it secret. The motion was referred to an association of information officers when it became apparent there was no chance of passage.

In fact, all the conference may have accomplished is the awareness of conflict among university administrations. Warrian and Duceppe turned out to be rational critics—not building burners—and brought many liberal administrators to their side. The conservatives reacted to this switch.

That may or may not be significant.