

Inquest into alcohol related death leads to recommendations

by Randy Dearlove

The inquiry into the sudden death of Richard J. Sloan was held in Guelph, Ontario on September 18 to 21.

Guelph University received unwanted attention last January when Sloan who was not a student at the university, died on campus from heavy-drinking. It was about 2:00 a.m. on January 28, 1988 that Sloan's body was discovered in a pizza parlour staircase on the university campus. The 19 year old from Oakville, Ontario, along with four other males, came to Guelph to celebrate a friend's 21st birthday. Sloan drank 16 beers in four hours. He then suffered cardiac arrest after choking on his vomit.

John Mason, the director of administrative services at Guelph, said the chief coroner of Toronto

ordered the inquest into the death. John Strathearn, the regional coroner, oversaw the inquiry. He, along with a jury, listened to the submissions made by Sloan's parents and the university. Strathearn and the jury came up with many recommendations to improve alcohol policies at Guelph and other institutions.

The coroner's jury suggested the Canadian government raise the legal drinking age from 19 to 21. They recommended that universities educate parents on the alcohol policies and penalties of the institution. They also urged universities to provide unlicensed entertainment facilities for students as well as recommending that post-secondary institutions work along with the Ministry and Boards of Education to develop an alcohol awareness programme for

both elementary and secondary schools.

Over the last six or seven months the university has put a public task force into effect to evaluate the recommendations, said Mason. He said that some of the recommendations would be put into place at the institution although he felt these suggestions were needed before the accident occurred.

York Provost Elizabeth Hopkins said York has tightened up its alcohol policy over the year in order to ensure a safer environment. She said the problems associated with alcohol could be reduced with the use of education through seminars and the media. However, she added, universities could only do so much and the problem also "depends on others intelligence."

Self-control: think before you drink

by Mike Gringorten

In September of 1988, Richard Sloan and four of his companions arrived at Guelph University to visit a friend in residence. As is the custom of the younger generation, they came armed with beer in order to "properly" celebrate a friend's birthday. Sixteen drinks later Richard Sloan's life was cut short at the age of 19. He was found drowned in his own vomit in the bathroom of a pizza parlour with a blood alcohol level of 2.3 per cent.

Sloan's senseless death led

university officials to ponder over how this tragedy could have been averted, and how further tragedies could be prevented.

Measures such as eliminating shooters and having pitchers of beer served only to groups of four or more people, as well as restricting people to only one drink per serving, are all just band-aid solutions. Kids like Sloan will always find ways to get perilously drunk, expecting no more than perhaps a bit of a wozy feeling in the morning.

The best anyone can hope for is that people will exercise a little judgement and self-control to

monitor their own intake levels. Alcohol education should begin well below the legal drinking age since alcohol is one of the most abused drugs on university campuses.

Owing to the steady escalation of alcohol related infractions and injuries on Ontario campuses, pubs are obliged to put a limit on the amount of alcohol they can serve to one person. An obviously drunk patron must be refused service.

But for Richard Sloan, any attempts at alcohol education or control on campuses will come too late.

Western has problems too

by Daniel Wolgelerenter

Orientation week was just a little bit dryer this year at the University of Western Ontario.

The Spoke, Western's largest on-campus pub, had its liquor license suspended between September 5-12. The suspension covered orientation and the first two days of classes.

Western's director of student services Tom Siess said that the suspension stemmed from an incident last December when some students and pub staff were involved in drinking after hours at the student council-owned pub. Pub manager Mel Pitman was fired as a result of the incident.

Siess said that the suspension

was originally supposed to last two weeks and include all licensed establishments on campus but Western's student council argued for a reduction in the penalty in an LLBO hearing on April 27. The decision to close only the Spoke came down August 4.

Student council president Kimball Sutherland thought the revised one week suspension for the pub was fair.

"We were quite surprised at the two weeks on campus because it was only one bar," Sutherland said, "And it was a bit severe considering that we reported [the incident] to the LLBO."

Sutherland said he understands that the LLBO is trying to send a strong message to students and universities about alcohol abuses on Ontario campuses. He said he

was pleased that the appeal process worked and that the council's position was heard.

The closing of the pub did not have that much of an adverse affect on student council spending, said Sutherland, even though a week's profit during a peak period like orientation was lost.

Last year during Orientation, Sutherland estimated, the Spoke generated \$35,000 in gross revenues and gave the student council about \$10,000 in profits to be used for council-sponsored activities.

"Our budget was done back in May and we budgeted that we would be closed for two weeks," Sutherland said, "So it won't put a cramp in our activities because we had figured [the closure] in our budgeting process."

GREEKS: CYSF votes to support sororities and fraternities

by Mark Wright

The CYSF has voted to "give its support to fraternities and sororities to associate as students on the York main campus."

At the October 11 meeting, the council passed the motion which also included a promise to put a proposal to the Board of Referendum Commission to call for a referendum on the issue if increased support was required.

Out of 12 councillors in attendance, nine supported the motion while three abstained.

Fraternities and sororities are not officially recognized by the university and are not allowed to use campus facilities for free.

A presidential draft regulation cites exclusivity, undermining of the college system and inappropriate conduct as reasons against fraternities and sororities.

The meeting was attended by a number of members of the three fraternities and two sororities that exist on campus.

Although the motion was put forward by CYSF president Peter Donato he abstained from voting on it. He said that not enough council members had been given a chance to speak on the issue before it was moved for a vote by Vice-president (external) Peter Merrick.

Merrick is a pledge for the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity and fully supports the resolution.

"The resolution is very open ended. The actual interpretation of the motion doesn't give them anything. It might have had we debated the wording of the motion," Donato said.

"All we've really done is moved them one more step forward," he added.

Donato said he feels they should be recognized and should

have the same rights to exist as any other organization. However, he has some reservations about them.

"I do have some problems with the things that have happened in other universities and we want to be careful that there is no chance that they could happen here," he said.

"The issue still has a long way to go," he said.

President of the Vanier College student council Kate Collins spoke out against fraternities and sororities at the meeting.

"We (the council) discussed it and thought that they were unacceptable because dues are so high and saw this as an elitism of affluence," she said.

Collins said she has no problems with them presenting themselves to the public by having tables in central square or putting up posters. However, she objects to the stamp of acceptance the CYSF has given them and the possibility that they could receive funding. Collins said there has been a lot of fear that acceptance of fraternities and sororities would undermine the college system.

"We're really just waiting to see what will happen. I'm hopeful though that if they are ever officially recognized that we could have an amicable relationship and work together," Collins said.

Sigma Alpha Mu president Derek Reingold felt that the CYSF's acceptance was a positive move. He also said that the fraternities do not want to be in opposition to the colleges and that they just want the same rights as any other campus group.

"I would like to see a referendum on the issue just to get it over with," he said.

Reingold also said he did not think any single fraternity should have any official association with any particular college.



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