

CSJ COUNCIL ABOLISHED

College Universitaire Saint Jean students have decided to abolish their student council.

At a general meeting Monday morning (Jan. 31), the students also decided to withdraw the mandate of their representatives to the Academic Council. Elections will be held Monday, February 6, to replace the deposed representatives.

At the meeting, the students decided that the new student council would be composed of a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer and four councillors who would also be the representatives of the students before the Academic Council. Consequently, there couldn't be any divergence of opinion between the members of the student council and the student representatives to the Academic Council.

The Academic Council of College Universitaire Saint Jean has the same powers as a faculty council at the U of A. Administration, academic staff and students are represented.

The divergence of opinion between the council representatives and the Academic Council delegates has existed since the beginning of the year. According to Paul Pelchat, one of the students actively involved in changing the council, "Before there was no union among the students, so there was no strength in the demands of the students." The students are hoping to centralization of these responsibilities will help promote a united front for their demands.

The principal demand to the administration is to have the

contract amalgamating College Saint Jean and the University of Alberta renegotiated. The Corporation du College Saint Jean is the legal body of the College and is in charge of the maintenance of the buildings and financing the institution. Oblate priests are the legal owners of the Corporation du College Saint Jean.

Presently the Corporation du College Saint Jean is legally responsible to the University of Alberta for maintaining a bilingual atmosphere on the College campus. The students want this to be one of the responsibilities of the Academic Council. By the nature of its activities, it has the most effect on the French or bilingual atmosphere. The Academic Council determines the curriculum, hires and fires professors, decides the orientation of courses, and consequently, the whole orientation of College Saint Jean.

The students also passed a motion asking the Academic Council to abolish tenure and to rescind the tenure of those professors already holding it.

The new representatives are bound by the students to bring these demands before the faculty council. If the new representatives do not bring these resolutions before the Academic Council, they could be recalled by the students. In the interim, Andre Neault has been delegated by the students to be their spokesman to the faculty and the administration.

The new representatives will hold office only till September, when new elections will be held. The students want to guarantee

that the new students at College this fall will have a say in determining their representatives.

Dissident psychology professor, Paul McGaffey, views the dissolution of the students council as a first step in the students taking control of their own lives. "They come here to be educated. They don't come here to have dances or hayrides."

Some students felt that the council had become too service oriented and was not really looking after the needs of the students. It was more preoccupied with mundane things rather than issues, the students said.

They did not view their action as being directly related to McGaffey's boycott of the Corporation du College Saint Jean, although his actions may have served as a catalyst. Some saw his action as the spark for student action, and that what he did is now having a snowball effect.

"It was a really clumsy inefficient union," one student said. "The students realized that if there was something they didn't like, they could get rid of it (the council), and that they have power within their union. The students at the U of A should realize that they have the power to kick out their executive."

Attendance at the general student meetings varied from a high of approximately 90 of 180 students to a low of 40. Some students did not attend or left the morning meeting because they didn't think they should be missing classes.



Paul Poirier, Rector, College Saint Jean

College Saint Jean Decentralizes Power

At a meeting Monday afternoon (Jan. 31), the administration, academic staff and students of College Saint Jean moved a step closer to setting up some structures for the participation of all three bodies in the decision making process.

The students presented the resolutions from their morning meeting and the administration presented some of their views on the propositions of the students. After the meeting, some of the administration expressed some fear that it "could have degenerated into a session with a lot of abusive language."

Paul Poirier, the rector and representative of the Corporation du College Saint Jean (the administration), said he was very willing to discuss with the students their demand to have the contract with the university renegotiated. He did not foresee any problems as long as the students wanted to work within the letter of the law.

The aims and policies of College Universitaire Saint Jean are the same as the University of Alberta since it is a faculty of the U of A. However, it also has an added responsibility and service to provide that is not available from the U of A.

According to the rector, it offers courses in French and English and gives the students the opportunity to live in a predominantly French environment. The French climate is an especially important responsibility of the College because of the all pervading English atmosphere. Students at College are primarily French Canadians.

Poirier feels very strongly about the aspect of legality in the whole process of change and of the renegotiation of the contract. The College has to be careful how it works for change, he says. It can either do it in the framework of legality respecting its commitments and contracts or they can become little revolutionaries. He was afraid at one time, the

revolutionary approach might be adopted at the meeting by the students.

"While changing the contract, which will take a long time, we have to be careful that there is not a generation of students who go through College Universitaire Saint Jean and who really do not get anything because C.U.S.J. is contemplating change," said Poirier.

Poirier says that he cannot be responsible for creating a French atmosphere himself. The professors' contracts bind them more to the faculty than the corporation, and it is the faculty that decides such things as hiring and firing, course offerings and content, and the maintenance of the French atmosphere.

He views the Monday meeting of the staff and students as primarily a commitment on the part of the students to get organized and realize the aims of the College. There are two groups, the teachers and the students who, previously, were highly disorganized and who have now decided to organize.

Poirier is willing to decentralize the power. But he wants to make sure that whoever takes the power will be organized and can be held accountable. He thinks the process of decentralization will entail granting more power to the students and the professors in the decision making process. The reorganization is an internal matter, he says, and is not involved in the relationship between College and the U of A.

The general consensus among staff, administration and students is that they have become more efficient in attaining their goals. It was regarded by Frank MacMahon, the dean of the faculty of College Saint Jean, as "a real move-ahead."

Others felt that this was just one meeting of a whole series of meetings that have been going on for quite some time and that nothing of great importance had been accomplished.

Comment:

College Saint Jean is more than fifty years old, but has only recently become the bilingual faculty of the University of Alberta. However, since 1954, it has offered courses in education in conjunction with the U of A faculty of education in the hope of training more qualified French teachers.

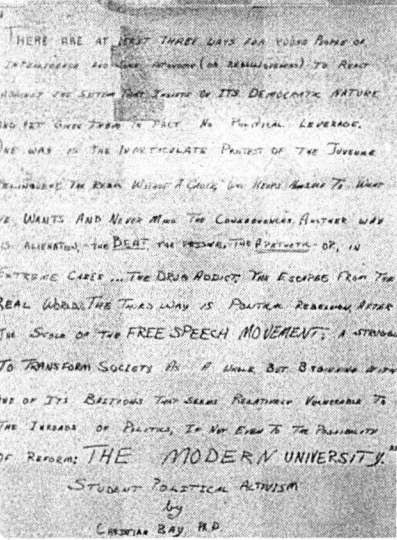
College Universitaire Saint Jean is situated on 91 street, between 84 and 86 avenue. Approximately 180 students are enrolled there in university level courses.

The present situation at College Saint Jean is not a recent development. Rather it is the manifestation of problems which have long existed.

Last year, the student body impeached their president for some supposedly irresponsible statements that he had made about the War Measures Act crisis. This year they have gone one better and thrown out the whole student council and their faculty representatives. Everybody seems to regard this as a good thing.

The first thing that you see upon walking into the College building through the Administration Door, is a huge 6x8 foot garish pink and yellow checkered poster hanging on the wall quoting Christian Bay (U of A political scientist) on student activism. On the adjoining wall is another poster. This one is mercifully only one or two feet square. It is a call for involvement in the college, and is signed by the social animators.

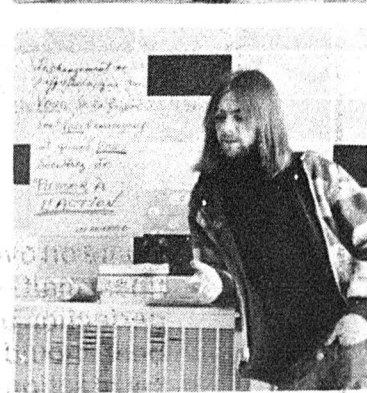
Up a short flight of stairs and there is yet another one asking you to kindly get off your ass



and do something (in French). There are posters everywhere; there is even the standard poster quoting Mao Tse Tung. There is even an organized graffiti wall (they have succeeded in taking away the spontaneity from man's last refuge). You can't help but wonder about an institution that needs a whole bunch of posters and a social animator to get people involved in the institution.

The old paternalism dies hard and at College Saint Jean, the old man is alive and well in the person of the dean. The students seem to be beginning to react against this.

College Saint Jean is searching for an identity, for a role. It has some extremely capable people. Some of the staff have very good ideas of where College Saint Jean should be going, what College Saint Jean should be attempting to do. The College administration does not seem to be listening to them.



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