

MUGWUMP

by Aime Phillips

I ran into Kevin Bourque last Friday night. For all those unaware, Mr. Bourque was our Student Union President in 1991-92. He is currently going to law school in Quebec.

Kevin and I go way back. We met each other when I was on the Debating Team. Him, and Derek Dunnett, and Jason Burns-remember him?- and I think I even remember Tammy Yates being there for a while. Anyway, Kevin is the person who first got me interested in the student union. Whether or not I thank him for that, well, I can't go back and retrieve all these hours I've already spent here, so I guess I have no one to blame but myself.

This is how it all began....

I was just finishing my freshman year, Spring, 1990. I remember it vividly. I was pulling off an A in English 1000, Arts was okay, and I still felt guilty whenever I missed one of my classes. Kevin decides he's going to run for the position of Student Union President. Naively, I ask him what that is. He briefly outlines the wonderful things that council does for students, and by the end of the conversation I've decided to help him and Derek, who is also running for Senate and the Board of Governor's. I remember the campaign as a grand flourish of activity. Residence tours followed by meet the candidates in the SUB cafeteria-would the fun ever stop? Finally, the day of the election. I recall watching proudly as my ID card is mutilated by the snap of the hole puncher, and my ballots are slipped into the sealed ballot box.

Then, Kevin is elected! Our new Student Union President! At the next Debating Union meeting, he regrettably announces that he will be resigning as Debating Union President. He later pulls me aside, and excitedly starts explaining all the various ways I will be able to involve myself with the student government next year. I tell him we'll see, and I finish my first year with a sense of accomplishment.

Next fall, and Kevin has been working hard. Not much time for debating. As for myself, I've taken on the position of Executive Secretary of the Debating Union. Kevin asks what I would like to help him with, but I tell him, hesitantly, that I would prefer to work on the newspaper. That way, I can insure my debating union news will get in. No problem, says Kevin. Would I like to be responsible for the student union page? That would involve the newspaper. He tells me to go talk to Greg Lutes, then SU V.P. Finance, who sends me directly to the Brunswickan office.

I make my way downstairs, (Room 35 of the SUB) and the first person I meet is Allan Carter, who gets up from behind his news desk to greet this new potential. I tell him I'd like to involve myself with the paper. Ah, he says, why don't I write news? I remember answering that would be much too difficult, I really only want to lay out the student union page so I can put debating union stuff in. Anyone can write a news story, Allan suggests. And Debating Union articles are news stories. I agreed to give it a try, and he quickly asks when-for this week? And so began my years with the Brunswickan.

My first story made it in for the first issue. I did a write up on frosh week and I even interviewed some people. Now here I am, two years later, working the equivalent of a full time job for approximately .44 ¢ an hour in honoraria. I've met a lot of people, though, and made a lot of new friends. I guess I will thank Kevin.

Have a happy Halloween. For all you going down to Halifax, have one for me. Well, actually, why don't you NOT have one for me, and you'll thank yourself the next morning. ☺

OPINION

The opinions found in this column are not necessarily the views of the Brunswickan

University must set up broad based committee to investigate discrimination case

by Sentsetsa Buthelezi

The revelations of the issues surrounding the case of discrimination in the Faculty of Administration are shocking and disturbing in a multicultural community such as our university community. These revelations send cold chills down one's spine and forces one to contemplate seriously whether the academic life of some international students may not be in jeopardy in the near future.

This is not to conclude that UNB has not got any good professors. On the contrary, there are many good professors who act not only in professional terms but are humane and fair in dealing with students from all over the world placed in this multicultural environment. My presence at UNB has exposed me to many professors who I will never forget with respect to their teaching styles, fairness and a convincing attitude on their part to promote a just and productive academic environment, while recognizing the sensitivity of issues bordering on sexism, racism and other minority issues.

It appalls my sense of self and intellectual judgement seeing the way the Faculty of Administration has dealt with this case. It appears that the Faculty of Administration, judging the powerless voice of defenseless minority students decided to silence them, with the weapon of plagiarism and other methods likened to guerrilla warfare and nearly succeeded. These methods in themselves cannot be excluded from the sophisticated and subtle methods of discrimination used today against minorities. Minority discrimination has become so sly in view of the system's outcry against it. In this regard, it takes a high level of sober reflection and sometimes intuition to conclude on matters of minority discrimination.

Having personally reviewed some of the many documents relating to this case of discrimination, the series of opinions expressed so far and coming to terms with the high level of intimidation and harassment that has generated a traumatic fear in the minority students, I feel seriously convinced that the University Administration must take an independent step to investigate this case by establishing a broad based committee.

What may not be obvious to all and sundry is that a precedent of vindictive retaliation, harassment, flagrant abuse of university procedure and disregard for professional ethic is being set. Of particular importance is the abuse of university procedure. The procedures are the foundation upon which each and every student can be sure that his or her rights are not going to be trampled upon.

Based on the above, this precedent if not discouraged will come back to haunt UNB in many ways.

Without an attempt to review the basic tenets of this case, and having suggested that the University administration should establish immediately a broad based committee, it is important that the committee is totally outside the influence of the Faculty of Administration.

The purpose of this committee will be to broadly look at the issues of discrimination, the irregularity of procedures followed, and to evaluate whether the question of plagiarism in this case is in itself not an extension of discrimination.

As part of the process, documented evidence which is available should be studied to analyse the question of discrimination, the practices of some of the administrators in the Faculty of Administration in handling this issue should be assessed against the background of the UNB regulations. Finally all essays marked by the professor in question should be submitted to the committee to ascertain

- (i) any pattern of referencing that is common to all the papers
- (ii) any questionable instances of discriminatory privileges in excluding majority students and charging only the minority students for plagiarism.

In addition the part of the course outline of the professor which stated that papers not referenced would not be accepted as well as the pattern of referencing in the model report put on the library reserve by the professor should be elements of proper scrutiny.

The committee upon its findings shall report its recommendations to the University administration and to the Senate or to any of the Senate bodies (eg. the Students Standing and Promotions Committee).

On the basis of this, the position of both the students and the professor can be re-evaluated and appropriate steps taken for due recourse to proper settlement.

It is my humble understanding that this process should not be beyond the administrative capability of UNB administration. This process should ensure the fairness that is being cried out for and for true justice that the conscience of our diverse community yearns for.

In the absence of any formalized UNB Racial harassment policy, this process should serve as a means of reducing this escalating problem on our campus.