

EDITORIAL

Criminal convictions not a full solution

The criminal conviction of Terence Yick for personation at an examination would seem to be a strong deterrent to all future cheaters.

Yick paid someone \$750 to write a computer science exam last April. Now, he has a criminal record, and faces further sanctions from the University.

According to associate dean of arts, Shirley Katz, the University is appalled that such cheating is taking place at York. She is hoping — and is probably correct — that this conviction will serve as an effective deterrent against such academic dishonesty.

Academic offences covered under the criminal code include writing an exam for someone else or having one written for you, theft of exams, or buying an essay. But most forms of academic dishonesty do not have criminal repercussions. A substantial amount of the cheating that takes place involves the use of prohibited aides during exams, collaboration on assignments, fudging data, and most of all, plagiarism.

It is unlikely that Yick's conviction will discourage students from these forms of cheating.

The University has taken several steps to deal with the problem. Over the past few years individual departments have been increasingly trying to inform students of their academic responsibilities, and the consequences of any wrong-doing.

In addition, photo identification will be implemented this fall for additional exam security. (Ironically, if photo ID had been in place sooner, it likely would have deterred Yick's personation attempt).

Most significantly, university officials were authorized last spring to call in police where a suspected offence of academic dishonesty would also constitute a criminal offence.

But this is not enough. According to some teaching assistants, many proctors do not bother to involve themselves in the immense amount of work associated with following up on academic transgressions. Some students caught cheating are merely given a warning and allowed to finish the exam.

There are also professors who assign the same assignments and topics every year, making it extremely easy for students to obtain a completed copy.

Many departments keep essays on file, but how often do professors and TAs cross reference material within their own and other departments? By failing to perform these time-consuming but necessary checks, faculty and TAs in effect informally condone cheating.

Last January, in a precedent-setting case, five present and former Faculty of Arts students were found guilty in provincial court of criminal offenses relating to the theft of examination questions. The move, as Dean of Arts Tom Traves stated, helped to demonstrate to students across the country the applicability of Criminal Code to academic offenses. And the conviction of the Terence Yick certainly may be a further deterrent to these limited number of potential cheaters.

But if the Administration does not act as effectively to stem all forms of academic dishonesty, the integrity of the degree it grants, and ultimately the University's reputation will be in jeopardy. As Katz said, "A degree is worth nothing if there is any question as to how it was obtained."



Nailed in exam scam

We will publish, space permitting, letters under 250 words. They must be typed, triple-spaced, accompanied by writer's name and phone number. We may edit for length. Libellous material will be rejected. Deliver to 111 Central Square during business hours.

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LETTERS

A "partisan" Excal story

Dear Editor:

I have read with interest Mr. Claude Alexander's recent article on the funding of interuniversity athletics. Mr. Alexander is to be commended for his considerable effort he put into his study of this important question.

At the outset of the first two interviews I had with Mr. Alexander, I informed him that the question he was exploring was extraordinarily complex. For example, the manner in which the Department of Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics displays its budget may be very misleading to the casual observer. I told Mr. Alexander that it was important to develop a sophisticated understanding of the current situation and offered our reasonable assistance to that end.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Alexander was not in a position to take this advice. The resulting article is one that will not contribute productively to the important discussion now underway. Not only does Mr. Alexander let his partisan views

carry him away, he has — and this is the unfortunate aspect of his article — taken many of his alleged facts and actual quotations totally out of the context that they were given (at least by me). To correct Mr. Alexander's many misleading statements would require an article of almost equal length. Let me say only that I would be pleased to discuss the issues with any of *Excalibur's* readers.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
T.A. Meininger
Provost

York doesn't need racism

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Michael E. Kay's letter regarding York's vandalism problem ["Vandalism problems," January 19].

You are guilty of racism because of the contents of your letter. You assume that it is the Christians who are responsible for the slogans of "kill all Jews and niggers," and "Kill Jews before they take over the world." I

am a Christian, and the thought of writing such trash on bathroom walls has never even occurred to me. Your assumptions are unbecoming of a university student.

I would like to say that whoever is responsible for writing this garbage on the walls of the school, sit back in your chair for a couple of seconds and reflect heavily on the stupidity of your actions. The state of world affairs is in enough racial turmoil and we at York can easily avoid that problem through acceptance of each other as human beings.

Michael Kay, I hope that you respond to this letter to the editor with an apology, or at least an explanation. Thank you.

Jerry Jorritsma

Show review "egocentric"

Dear Arts Editors:

After having been involved in several interdisciplinary arts performances over the past two years at York University, the relief I felt reading

cont'd on p. 6