

University NEWSBEAT

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Secondary school marks studied

Standards vary, but achievement is still high

Ontario's secondary schools do not have uniform standards, according to a research study entitled *The Nature of Students* prepared by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

The study, one part of a report on the Secondary Post-Secondary Interface commissioned jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, found that "schools vary in the marks they assign and the variations are great enough to affect a student's standing in the overall mark distribution across the province."

The study found the variance to be slight enough that a student at a "tough" school would be better advised to work a little harder than to transfer to another school.

However, the variations are "great enough to affect a student's post-secondary career so long as universities and other post-secondary institutions select applicants on the basis of marks earned in secondary school."

"In such competitions, students from schools which award higher marks have a distinct advantage over students from schools which award lower marks."

J.A.S. McNeil, Director of Admissions at York University,

said the recognition that there is "quite a difference" in secondary school marking standards has prompted a great deal of discussion, but "we're not in a position to do anything about it formally." McNeil said no university could individually assess the standards of most schools because "you have to have 35 to 40 students per year coming from each secondary school to do an honest profile."

"Except for the North York schools, we wouldn't be able to accurately judge the standards."

McNeil said the standard of the school, if known, is sometimes taken into account in individual cases.

"If a student fails to qualify for admission by a slight margin, and there are extenuating circumstances, and we know he's coming from a school with tougher than average standards, we take that into consideration."

In a further test of secondary school standards, the study compared the results of 1976 students with those of 1968 students on a standardized mathematics achievement test.

The 1976 students performed "slightly better" than the 1968 students.

A similar comparison using the Ontario Physics Aptitude Test, however, showed "a serious decline in student achievement in physics between 1970 and the present."

This was attributed to the reduction of class hours allotted to physics in recent years.

In a third part of the study, secondary school marks were examined to determine their validity as predictors of post-secondary performance. (Roles and Responsibilities of the Secondary and Post-Secondary Institutions, another part of the Interface report, found that 80 per cent of community college and university faculty felt there should be some form of standardized, external evaluation, similar to the "department exams" formerly used in Ontario secondary schools.)

The Nature of Students study found that despite the variations in secondary school marking standards, "predictions regarding the applicants' performances in university which are made on the basis of raw school marks are just as accurate as predictions made in the past on the basis of departmental examinations results."

McNeil is in the minority regarding external evaluations.

"You can really see the pendulum swinging back toward departmentals," he said. "I would hate to see that because I think it's very bad educationally."

On the other hand, McNeil is like the majority of the educators

surveyed in advocating a standardized core curriculum for grades 9 to 12.

The complete report of the interface study is available in the Scott Library.

Footnotes

Synch or swim (finally)

The Ontario Women's Intercollegiate Athletic Association synchronized swimming championships will be held on Friday, February 11 and Saturday, February 12 in the pool of the Tait McKenzie Building.

Nine university teams will compete in the finals: Guelph, McGill (which has playing privileges in the O.W.I.A.A.), McMaster, Queen's, University of Toronto, Waterloo, University of Western Ontario, Windsor, and York.

The solo routines will be held on Friday, February 11 at 7 p.m. followed by the team competition at 8:30 p.m. On Saturday, February 12, the duet competition will commence at 11:15 a.m.

Provincial finals in synchronized swimming, such as the O.W.I.A.A. championships, are the highest level of university competition in Canada. In 1976, the McMaster team took first place in the Ontario collegiate standings.

The 1977 O.W.I.A.A. meet at York University will feature such national competitors as Betty Anne Brénnand of York University, Laurie Morrison of the University of Toronto, and Wendy Whyte of Queen's University.

The 1977 O.W.I.A.A. championships are open to the public. There is no admission charge. Further information may be obtained by calling 667-2289.

Macdonald to advise cabinet

York University president H. Ian Macdonald will head an advisory group to a special cabinet committee developing Ontario policy on the future of Canadian confederation, Premier William Davis recently announced.

"The Premier felt the issue was sufficiently important that the cabinet committee should have a broader base of advice on Ontario's relations with the rest of the country", Macdonald said.

"We are beginning from the premise that Canada is worth retaining. We are going to look at what effective contribution Ontario can make - what form of behaviour will ensure our goal of keeping Canada together."

From 1965 to 1971, while Chief Economist for the province, and later Deputy Minister of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs, Macdonald chaired the Ontario Advisory Committee on Confederation.

"I think of myself as a veteran drafted back into action," he said. "Although I am not trying to re-invent that wheel, I shall draw on the experience in this new situation of change and turbulence."

He expects the government work to have direct bearing on his academic life: "In addition to performing a public service, I expect this assignment to benefit my students," he said.

President Macdonald, along with Vice President George Bell, teaches a course on Government Organization and Inter-governmental Relations in the Faculty of Administrative Studies.

Vagabonds in decline

Two related Footnotes from Bethune College: first, the Heroes and Beer series is now the Vagabonds and Beer series. It's this age of moral decay.

Second the next Vagabonds and Beer evening will be this Monday, February 7, at 6 p.m. in Norman's (201 Bethune). The topic is Poetical Musical Documentation of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire, and the vagabonds include Maurice Elliott, Desmond Maxwell, Roger Kuin, and Ioan Davies.

Taking a ride on the CTRF

The Canadian Transportation Research Forum is soliciting undergraduate and graduate papers for its annual student paper competition. Prizes will be awarded for the best papers submitted on transportation topics in each of the following categories: \$100 for the best undergraduate term paper; \$150 for the best thesis or research paper at the Masters level; \$300 for the best doctoral thesis.

Four copies of the term paper or thesis should be submitted to: Mr. John H. Morgan, Transportation Development Agency, 1000 Sherbrooke Street West, P.O. Box 549, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 2R3.

A Midwinter night's play

The theatre department of York University will present William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* during the week of February 7 to 12 in Burton Auditorium. Performances will be given each evening Monday through Friday, at 7:30 p.m., with matinees on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 2 p.m. The production is directed by well known Canadian actor and York faculty member Neil Dainard. Free tickets are available from the Burton box office from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. For reservations phone 667-2370.



AGO photo

AGYU exhibits Canadian Art Deco, paintings show "stylistic tendencies"

An exhibition of the works of 25 well known Canadian painters is currently on display in the Art Gallery of York University.

The 45 paintings on display, selected by York's Curator of Art, Michael Greenwood, are representative of the stylistic tendency known as Art Deco.

"During the 20s and 30s of this century," explains Greenwood, "the visual arts in the western world showed a marked tendency to adopt stylized forms derived from a wide variety of sources including modern art — Cubism, Futurism, Geometric Abstraction — but also from other epochs and from exotic cultures such as Egyptian, African, Pre-Columbian, and Russian folk art, for instance, often ingeniously blending the old with the new."

"The design of buildings, furniture, decorations, clothing, ceramics, glass and tableware, jewelry, and light fixtures — and indeed, of a great many objects in daily use — was affected by this tendency. Many Canadian painters of the period 1925 to 1940 were likewise responsive to this worldwide stylistic tendency."

Among the artists included in the show are André Biéler, (who painted Election Day, above), Bertram Brooker, Emily Carr, A.J. Casson, Paraskeva Clark, F. Carmichael, LeMoine FitzGerald, Lawren Harris, Prudence Heward, Edwin Holgate, A.Y. Jackson, Jock Macdonald, Will Ogilvie, Carl Schaefer, and R. York Wilson.

The exhibition continues until February 18. An illustrated catalogue is available.