

University teaching

by E. Nijenhuis

The third in a series of faculty seminars entitled "New Approaches to University Teaching" was held in the Great Hall of the Faculty Club on Friday, January 23. Course Outlines and Student Evaluation were the topics of the informal discussion chaired by Professor John Pooley, the Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies.

Course outlines, are they a limitation or a learning aid? Professor J. Lord (Physical Education) brought out that they should be geared to the needs of the students as well as their stage of development. If used correctly, they are an important aid in outlining the direction and objectives of the course. It was emphasized that some time be left open for subjects of special interest to the students.

Grading is an important (some might say unfortunate) part of university life. According to Professor J. Manos (Education), grades, as a measure against an independent standard, both reinforce excellence and offer incentives to improvement. Grades also rank students in terms of worth and serve as part of the criteria for entrance into graduate schools and professional employment. Pass/Fail, letter and number systems of grading were all discussed. It was decided that no one system fitted the needs of every course. Many of those present consider grades only one criterium for professional school admittance. An ability to use the knowledge acquired and in some cases manual dexterity or other talents are also important.

That students, are clients, purchasers of an expensive educational commodity, was brought out by Professor M. Ellis (Physical Education), as such students should have an opportunity to evaluate the quality of the teaching they are receiving.

Course evaluations serve the short run function of influencing a professor's style and performance. Over a long term they improve the quality of the teaching staff, as those unsuited to the profession might decide to leave it. It is unfortunate that course evaluation has been the victim of a budget cut by the Student Union.

Emphasized as well was the need for the training of university teachers. A five year probationary period was suggested, during which student and colleague evaluation, as well as the professor's own feeling about his/her success in the profession, would be important in the final decision.

The next seminar in this series will be on March 5. A panel of students will be invited to analyze the quality of their university experience. A second topic will be "Effecting Good Study Habits".

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such unbiased and humane application must not only stretch laterally across the land, but vertically and dauntlessly along the economic and corporate ladder.

In the end, Canadians must discover a new allegiance to the conformity of reasoned progress and constructive cooperation for the greater good of all, while forever preserving a society marked by the infinite variety of its detail.

Sincerely
William Dwight Roberts
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St Bruno Quebec

Mr. Roberts, a Montrealer and freelance writer, is presently completing studies towards a Masters degree in Business Administration (industrial relations) at St. Mary's University in Halifax.

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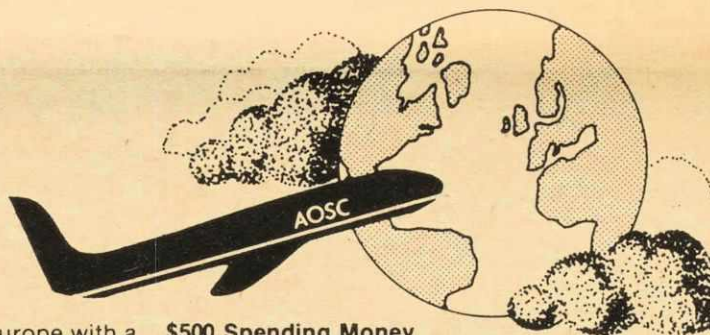
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