

## biased reporting unfairly condemns York

Ron Kelly, a York music student who has tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), pleaded with the world on June 6 to end AIDS discrimination.

In an unscheduled speech at the Fifth International Conference on AIDS held in Montreal he said that "discrimination against people with AIDS is no longer acceptable and it never should have been. It's inhumane."

Kelly's speech received international media attention. It was reported that television news in 22 countries broadcast his story. He also received prominent attention in the Canadian English and French press.

Not only has Kelly skilfully brought the world's attention to a serious issue that is often lost in the concern over finding a cure for AIDS, but he has also focused this attention on himself.

Kelly publicized that he has filed a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission alleging that York University discriminated against him because of his illness.

During the last academic session, Kelly — a voice major — was enrolled in a third year music performance course. The music department's attendance policy for courses such as this clearly states that more than three unexcused absences will result in an automatic failure.

Kelly admits that he missed three classes due to his illness and two more in order to attend an AIDS conference. He claims that his course director, Patricia Wait, excused him from these classes, and "retroactively unexcused" him after students in his class complained he was getting special treatment.

The university's position, however, is that he was never actually excused as he never provided documentation of his illness.

Kelly says that he sent a letter to the music department on July 29, 1987 to document his illness. A university press release, however, states that he sent the letter "for the purpose of a special petition concerning two dropped courses. He asked the recipient to keep the letter strictly confidential, which she did, destroying it when the petition was granted."

Despite the university's repeated requests that he submit a letter stating that he missed classes due to his illness, Kelly never sent them any further documentation.

When he was advised that he would fail because of his absences, he filed a complaint with Student Affairs, alleging AIDS discrimination. In exchange for dropping the complaint, the music department agreed that Kelly could perform a recital for his mark, which he did. Although further problems ensued, Kelly completed and passed the course.

Kelly's crusade to fight AIDS discrimination has tarnished the reputation of York internationally. Although the administration is by no means faultless in this case, neither is Kelly.

However, the media — such as *The Globe and Mail* — is guilty of not investigating the veracity of Kelly's claims. News reporting is supposed to attempt to provide all sides of a story, but the university's side was not represented.

York has been convicted in the eyes of the world without a fair trial.

Chairman Mao Tse-Tung:

**OUR PRINCIPLE IS  
THAT THE PARTY  
COMMANDS THE GUN  
AND THE GUN MUST  
NEVER BE ALLOWED  
TO COMMAND THE ARMY**

"Problems of War and Strategy"  
(November 6, 1938), Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 224.

## Essay service "intellectual theft"

Dear Excal:

As one among tens who read Mark Rudd's letter in *Excalibur* (which set a new standard of journalistic excellence by printing utter nonsense), I feel compelled to refute Rudd's arguments for legitimizing essay-writing services. Mr. Rudd attempts to equate poor typing, or genuinely missed quotation marks, with intellectual theft. He focuses on an admittedly flawed administrative process, neatly skirting the real issue. Mind you, hiding behind skirts is a good position from which to spew such enervating drivel. Allow me instead to pose some questions for the illustrious Mr. Rudd.

Is it legitimate to have someone, say a friend, brother, or hireling, write a final exam for you, signing your name, and attempt to improve your grade (assuming he/she studies and passes)? Is it alright to have an unnamed other sort out the data, complete the literature search, and write a thesis so that I can get my PhD? Rudd would have us believe so.

The simple matter of proportion separates this from the surgeon who sends in his brother (a botanist) to remove your spleen. (To use Rudd's own analogy, you can be damn sure that in such a case an investigation would gain access to private medical records, and any physician with ethics would be eager to carry them). In the same vein, would anyone want to be treated by this doctor, who cheated in order to pass the exam about whether the spleen is on the left or right side, above or below the neck?

Can you honestly believe that any of the above are fundamentally (ethically, academically) different from handing in an essay signed by a student for course credit, written by Rudd? As certainly as they differ in scale, they are alike in kind.

I have a suggestion for anyone having so little respect for "Education" (flawed though it may be), their fellow students, or themselves. You may be able to find ads for certain foreign insti-

tutions which will, for a modest fee (about the cost of a cheated essay), and a waiting period of weeks rather than years, provide a very nice looking diploma (specify degree desired), worth slightly less than the paper it's printed on. For a slight additional fee, one may obtain an equally valuable, complementary set of transcripts of the candidate's glowing scholastic career. This set of documentation will be as personally edifying as any degree obtained by plagiarized work. Just simpler, quicker, and, with apologies to essay writing services, substantially cheaper.

Perhaps, with sufficient interest expressed by a gullible student populace, Rudd and his ilk could be convinced to establish such a facility locally, in, say, East York. I submit to you that if we as students believe that plagiarism is a trivial administrative invention, or that academic honesty and excellence are irrelevant, such a facility will exist in North York in the foreseeable future. Indeed, it seems the foundations of the edifice are already in place.

*Apologetically,*  
B. Ford  
*Grad Studies I*

## Map maker explains challenging project

Dear Editors:

I am writing in response to last week's story regarding the tactile maps mounted in various buildings to assist York's blind and visually impaired students. I am a student who travels around York's campus on an electric scooter as I have a form of muscular dystrophy (CMT). I am also in the final stages of completing Atkinson's B.S.W. program (social work). As the sole designer of the tactile maps, I wish to clarify some inaccuracies in last week's story as well as enlighten you to some interesting points regarding the completion of this project.

This project was attempted in previous years but was unable to be developed. Initially, I contacted the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) for assistance and guidance. However, they did not feel this project warranted an allotment of their time. I was told maps are helpful for the sighted. This is the first map of this nature in Canadian Universities, one other is used in Ottawa to outline a tunnel system but not the entire campus. However, there are many in place in U.S. universities.

In order to simplify the present numbering system of York's

buildings, I renumbered them in geographic sequence to enhance memory association cognition. I teamed up with Glen Babcock of Betacom Systems for the Disabled and we spent many hours combining a graphic computer program and a braille printing program. Once completed (dot by dot), it was then brought to the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Maps can be run off through the OSD braille printer and changes can be input in the program.

This was a challenging project that I hope will prove to be functional for students with sighted difficulties. I feel it warrants clarification concerning its development as well as accurate recognition to its creators. When I viewed my work, now mounted in various buildings, I experienced a feeling of great pride only to be followed by disappointment, as nowhere does it acknowledge me as the designer and co-producer along with Glen Babcock. Perhaps this was an oversight, regardless, it will not deter my commitment to actively enhance York's accessibility for students with disabilities.

*Thank you for your attention,*  
Susan D. Wheeler, B.A.

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