

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Dave Mazerolle

A question of accountability?

In this week's editorial an idea of paramount importance to the future of quality education will be discussed. Students have always been curious about course evaluation forms and their value, yet, until now the results of these evaluations have not been made available at registration time nor in the student handbook. Students as a body must exert a stronger influence on the quality and accountability of each faculty's members if we are to ensure a high level of respect for university education.

On April 12, 1984, the Students Representative Council approved a motion which read: "Be it resolved that the university provide a descriptive publication of all courses each year, course descriptions, student evaluation of that course, and evaluation of all instructors who teach the course and that this is to be started not later than the 1985-86 Academic year." at the present time Micheal Bennett, VP Academic is actively pursuing a change to our presently entrenched evaluation process.

Many University Student Unions publish separate course guides outside of the Administrations which better reflect student evaluations of course and lecturer. Such a guideline would be extremely helpful, especially to Freshmen just entering University, since their knowledge of professors and courses is nil. I believe that a separate student handbook would be a positive resource if made available at registration time. Students would be able to use the course guide in conjunction with university course announcements, faculty interviews, syllabi, and the "grapevine". In courses whose formats, teachers, etc. are changing, I feel the evaluations can be used to show trends in a teacher's performance as well as a subject's general appeal. In organizing such a course guide, an apolitical stance concerning the use of the information acquired by survey should be used. Since the student body's knowledge of departmental tenure process has been, and still is, extremely limited, it would be best to avoid this area of concentration. While individual professors have access to information on their own courses, the course guide should be envisioned primarily to provide the students of UNB with a supplement to existing course information, and thus, promote enlightened planning of curricula. While the effectiveness of a student published curriculum will most surely fire debate, it cannot be denied that students of UNB would enjoy more liberty in choosing courses, not merely by title but by content and the professor's abilities.

In designing a questionnaire, similar efforts at other universities should be analyzed. A general form should be sought that is short enough to allow for fast completion and open-ended response yet long enough to provide basic statistical information. Such an attempt should provide both objective and subjective information which represents the general sentiments of the class and which will be of use to the student body. It must be emphasized that not all students will show interest and that the results may represent the thinking of a smaller proportion of the class. Great care must be exercised in assuring fair and reasonable results.

Many students feel that the current faculty evaluation forms are not enough to enforce two-way accountability. Students are faced with a pass-fail situation, so to, should the professors be. I believe that such a student handbook will aid both students and faculty in the appraisal of course material and presentation.

I believe this is an issue that the members of our student union are addressing. Individual students can help the cause by lobbying their Student Council Representatives and supplying their views and suggestions on the issue.

At present, student evaluation forms are not taken seriously enough by faculties and students alike. A new formula would most certainly be welcome. William Butler Yeats once said, "Education is not the filling of the pail but the lighting of the fire." If we are going to increase the quality of our education we must spark the flame and tend the fire.



mugwump journal

DAVID MAZEROLLE
Editor-in-Chief



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Let me begin this week's Mugwump by clarifying a statement in last week's editorial. I contended that the Grad Class was giving away mugs and T-shirts to all graduating students. My mistake. T-shirts **are** being sold, for \$14.00 (available at the Orientation/Winter Carnival/AIESEC/Grad Class office in the lobby of the SUB. Get yours soon.) However the Grad Class did budget for mugs to be given away, at a Cost of \$1050.00. I say this because I've seen a copy of their budget. There is no listing for revenue from the mugs, just the expense. I think the best way to avoid a future controversy (but aren't they **all** controversies?) is to formalize procedures, guidelines, or whatever. Enough of crying "tradition" and "this is what we've always done." There's always a danger in going with tradition--the traditional way to do things, could be the wrong way.

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Last weekend, I attended a conference in Halifax of member papers of the Atlantic Region University Press (ARCUP). Our hosts were the Dalhousie **Gazette**, the St. Mary's **Journal**, and Mount St. Vincent's **Picaro**. The conference was held at St. Mary's and included papers from St. John's, Nfld. (**The Muse**) to Saint John, New Brunswick (**The Tucker**). CUP conferences are a real experience. The delegates are a unique band of individuals, each with their own rampant eccentricities, but with a keen commitment to student journalism.

The conference featured seminars on budget preparation, breaking in a new reporter, sexism in advertising, and a talk by acclaimed journalist Walter Stewart on the "Myths of Journalism." CUP members also elected a new executive, and I'm happy to report Lois Corbett, former Editor-in-Chief of our neighbours, the **Aquinian**, is ARCUP's new Bureau Chief. Lois will be working out of Halifax next fall, writing articles and coordinating news exchanges. I heartily congratulate Lois on making this step into professional writing. I'd also like to congratulate Liz Donovan, late of the Dal **Gazette**, who will begin her new job as ARCUP fieldworker. Liz will be visiting various student papers in the Atlantic region to give seminars to staff and share her expertise in student journalism. Liz, our door is always open....

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I urge everyone to take heed of this week's editorial. Administration and students alike should look at our old system of evaluating professors. We can make evaluations both more meaningful and useful.