

McKenzie Says

Dear Student,

In the light of many of the allegations contained in Tuesday's Gateway, I think that it is important that I clarify some of the reasons why Council chose Terri Jackson as Editor-in-chief over the Gateway's choice.

1) Terri was the *only* candidate for Editor who acknowledged a *responsibility to the readers* of the paper for what goes in the Gateway. Other indicated a responsibility to their staff, to their consciences, but not to the people who pay for the paper — the students.

2) It was the *unanimous opinion of the Personnel Board* that Terri Jackson should be chosen as Editor. This opinion emerged as the result of a three-hour interview with her, the same interview in which The Gateway staff participated.

3) Mrs. Jackson was the *best qualified* of all the applicants. She has had experience in high school, university, and professional newspapers and has received several awards for journalistic excellence — something which would probably make her anathema to most of the Gateway staff.

4) Council felt that appointing The Gateway's choice would perpetuate for another year the small clique who have been running The Gateway. *Students are obviously dissatisfied with the paper and want a change.* Just last week, Students' Council was presented with a petition signed by over 1300 students demanding that we fire the Editor of The Gateway and all the staff. A survey conducted last year by The Gateway itself revealed that 56% of the student body felt that it was a bad paper.

Was it an undemocratic decision? The claim that Council overturned the "democratic" decision of The Gateway ignores the very nature of democracy. The Gateway is a *student* newspaper and is responsible to student's for its actions. The only present mechanism for exercising that control is through Students' Council. Even the Canadian University Press recognizes the right of a Students' Council to choose the Editor of the campus paper. If Gateway can get together to choose an Editor without any responsibility to the students at large, perhaps this year's Students' Council should be able to choose next year's President without having to go to the electorate for an accounting. The Gateway receives \$19,000 in student money every year. The staff must be accountable to more than just themselves for the way in which they perform.

"Anyone who wants can work for The Gateway" - If that is the case, why do people like Gary Draper who volunteer for the Gateway suddenly find the conclusion to their articles deleted because they run contrary to established Gateway bias? Why do people work on other papers like Campus Lyfe rather than work on The Gateway? Because anyone who does not agree with the narrow views of the present staff will find that their articles are not printed, or that important parts are deleted. Also, many people justifiably do not want to associate with the present group.

"Terri Jackson is a Puppet Editor because she owes her job to Council." If that is true, then every Gateway editor is a puppet because they were appointed by Council. The truth of the matter is that every Gateway editor, once appointed, is substantially free from *any* control by Council. Besides, the Editor will hold office *next* year. This year's Council won't even be around to exercise control. Some puppet!

In conclusion, if you people want Students' Council to merely rubber-stamp Gateway's decision, if you want to perpetuate the small inbred clique who control the paper, then you deserve the kind of Gateway you have been getting this year. Council's decision to appoint Terri Jackson was not an easy one, and we knew at the time that we would be in for a lot of criticism. But we made the decision in the honest hope that next year's Gateway would be a better paper. We know what kind of job the present staff have done on The Gateway. Perhaps it's time we gave someone new a chance.

Yours sincerely,

Don McKenzie
President

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VICE-PRESIDENT (SERVICES)

Beth Kuhnke—Many of Kuhnke's ideas seem to be ill-formed but she seems to have the best interest of the student at heart.

She served on Students' Council this year but did not accomplish very much.

She does seem, as her posters suggest, to be "ingenious".

Barry McLaren—Before he resigned in frustration, McLaren was the most outspoken Student Councillor this year. He seems not to be afraid of strongly stating his views even if they will have adverse political effect on him.

In the past, he strongly supported many student organizations in their pleas for money from council and in their right to remain independent of council.

He resigned from Council because of his view that it was not debating issues to their fullest extent and carefully examining the effects of their decisions on students.

Larry Panych—Panych is the chief organizer for the U of A Vietnam Action Committee and, in that position, has organized much support around anti-war issues.

He has the ability to constructively organize students to provide interesting forums and shows which is essentially the job of a person in this position.

He is running as a Young Socialist.

Kirk Mitchell—We don't know Mitchell very well but he seems to us to have presented a very superficial and unworkable platform.

He says he would "encourage 'big name' entertainment but he doesn't tell us how. He says "I endorse greater emphasis on a frequency of forums". But he doesn't tell us what kind of forums these will be.

Beal Replies

In reply to the statement by Students' Union President, Don McKenzie, which circulated and which appears opposite, I would like to make the following observations, his statement paragraph by paragraph.

1. This is an outright lie. Ron Yakimchuk stated this paper's major responsibility is readers and its conscience. Jim Carter stated strongly that the paper's responsibility was students. Ross Harvey stated it less strongly. McKenzie was not at the screening session the Personnel Board and Gateway interviewed the candidates (Gateway, Personnel Board Council have not interviewed them before or since). His statements about what any candidates said when they were interviewed is based on second-hand knowledge.

2. It was the democratic decision of the Gateway staff that Yakimchuk be selected. In past, Council has affirmed this staff's right to select an editor based on their knowledge of the paper and the work they put into it. There was no reason to refuse the staff request.

The Students' Council dismissed the Gateway's opinion in ten minutes of closed session. No Gateway staff members were present nor were any of the candidates.

3. I do not know how qualified Jackson is. I have never seen the list of qualifications submitted to Personnel Board nor will they let me see that list. During the screening session read us a list of qualifications which mentioned newspapers I've never heard of. I have seen anything she has written (other than a letter to Gateway) and I don't think Council either.

I know nothing about the "awards" McKenzie mentions. I have worked with Yakimchuk and I know he's extremely qualified and competent.

Anyway, the issue at stake is not one of personalities or qualifications, it is whether Gateway staff has the right to have the major say in the selection of their editor.

4. When the petition McKenzie mentions (which took the organizers several months to acquire) was brought before Council, a councillor asked the person who presented it to talk to the Gateway staff and see if something less drastic than what he proposed, could be worked out. Discussion was left at that point and this person has yet to talk to us.

By the way, Don, how do you "fire" a volunteer staff.

The survey McKenzie speaks of was done by some commerce students as a class project marketing analysis (it was based primarily on the effect of our advertising). We agreed to finance the survey.

The 56% was not of the student body but of the survey sample which was apparently statistically representative. The 56% did not say that Gateway was "a bad paper". They said it was "unduly biased", an opinion with which we often agree and a situation we are constantly struggling against.

If "students are obviously dissatisfied with the paper" all they have to do to change it is come in and work on it. Each staff member has as much say in determining policy as any other. We have a relatively small staff (for a paper of this size) and many of our problems and mistakes are directly related to this problem.

Why, if there are so many students dissatisfied, do we see so few of them? Why have any of the present Executive or Council (who are so vocal in their criticism) never worked on the paper?

It was an undemocratic decision. The Council is by no means the only mechanism for student control of this paper. The most effective means of student control is the open democratic staff control of the paper's policy.

The Statement of Principles of Canadian University Press state: "That the editor of a student newspaper should be selected by the staff of the newspaper."

Not everyone can just attend a couple of meetings of Students' Council and get away with it. Anyone who works with us at any minimal task is entitled to a vote on editorial decisions, on the selection of an editor.

This is the first year the Gateway has received \$19,000 in student money. Is McKenzie implying we are financially irresponsible? Last year the total budget was \$84,510 (including costs and advertising revenue), the grant from Council was \$38,110. This year our total budget is \$60,838, \$19,938 is your money. We will probably spend less than we've been budgeted for this year.

We saved you over \$18,000. Saving that money was not easy for us. We did it by instituting a "cold type" production process with which all the Gateway staff except my wife were unfamiliar. This process demands that we do much of the work the printer used to do. We put in longer hours than we ever used to. We make more typographical errors than used to appear, and the time we can spend on our news coverage has suffered. However, it also saved us, as well as the financial saving, more flexibility for imaginative layout. But we've had to work damned hard for these benefits.

Anyone can work on the Gateway. The conclusion to Gary Draper's analysis of Council performance this year was omitted not because it ran "contrary to established Gateway bias". It was cut because it made it much easier for me (I, personally made up that page and I cut the conclusion) to make up the page and because I thought what had been said in his article was much more specific and didn't add much to it. Unfortunately, I could not contact Gary at the time it was cut.

Gary accepted my own apology and is still on the Gateway staff. As well, the Gateway published an apology to Gary in a prominent place in the paper quoting the main point in my conclusion. I would not, myself, have written the conclusion Gary did because I thought, still think, it is irrelevant. However, in a case such as this, Gary's views take precedence over my own since he was the writer of the piece.

Few people work on Campus Lyfe. Most of the people whose by-lines appear in Lyfe are employed by the university as Public Relations people. In other words, most of Lyfe's "news" is verbatim university press releases.

We have refused to publish few articles this year. We have refused some which have been submitted by non-staff members which were poorly written. We have refused to publish submissions by staff members too (including myself on occasion), but in every case the staff member concerned has agreed, after discussion, that it should not be printed. We do not delete parts of any article except when we have space problems and this is, as far as possible, done in conjunction with the writer.

Who is the "present group," Don? It is my experience that the Gateway staff does not come from, nor form, one homogeneous group either politically or otherwise.

Any editor who is chosen solely by Council without any support from the Gateway staff is a puppet editor. I was not only appointed, I was elected by the Gateway staff. I owe my job to last year's staff, not to Council. Council simply ratified the staff's decision.

This year's council may "be around to exercise control." That is, if we elect the one-tenth of the present Executive who are running again.

In conclusion. What "small inbred clique", Don? I have worked for the Gateway now for one and half years. Am I already inbred? I started to work on this paper (after several years working on other student and established media) because I was dissatisfied with the news writing in it. I was elected editor last year by the staff who had worked with me and knew what my capabilities were.

If Don McKenzie is so adamant in his criticism of us why did he not make this known to Council? Why did he wait until now?

If he is upset by my performance as editor this year, why didn't he suggest to council that I be fired? He could have done it with a simple majority of council, the same majority required to appoint Jackson.

Why didn't he even write us a letter? We print all letters received except those which are undeniably inane or those which our lawyers advise are libellous. In the case of long letters, we do not print them intact unless we feel they are very good. We never cut letters except with the permission of the writers.

Why does McKenzie raise all these objections to The Gateway now? Even during the "Gazette debate" he did not criticize us so strongly but concentrated on legal technicalities.

The Gateway staff feels this is an important issue because we feel we should have a major say in the policy and direction of this paper because we work on it and know it.

We are interested in re-affirming the principle that the Gateway staff should democratically elect their editor. We do not like being dismissed by Council in ten minutes of closed debate.

Bob Beal
Editor-in-Chief

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