

Is the Gateway Editor-in-chief representative of his position ?

Bernie Fritze's concern for the student representation in the faculties of Arts and Science is certainly not without foundation. But I would like to suggest his concern must extend to a much greater portion of our student government.

He has confined his comments concerning student apathy to the recent by-elections through which Brian Mason and I gained the Arts and Science seats respectively, on Students' Council. He feels we are not representative of our faculties because of minimal voter turn-out or appointment through acclamation. However, the apathy of which Mr. Fritze complains extends much further, as a little research into the matter will show.

Just off the top of my head I can name no fewer than thirteen positions within the Students' Union affiliated committees and posts, including Council, by our criteria, that are not representative.

The following positions were all filled by acclamation: the five members of DIE Board, the three students at large members on Administration Board, the Board of Governor's Student Rep, the last three Science representatives to Council and the current vice-president Finance, Jack Redekop. Can you accept these people as being representative?

All situations of poor faculty turn out in elections, as in the recent Art's by-election, are not included in the list.

As a proxy for a Science rep who was appointed by acclamation this summer, I sat on Administration Board during which time the Board interviewed applicants for various summer and term positions. By your own criteria, how valid were the decisions made by the Administration Board, made up of more than half by students in their positions by acclamation? Remember we chose an editor for Portrait newspaper. Similarly, how could you accept DIE Board decisions?

I think you are confusing representation with quantity of student input, and by doing so even raising questions which might apply to your own position. How many people tried for the position of Gateway Editor? Are you representative?

In terms of the conditions you stipulate, you are not representative. I feel you are not an average student; you are not average because you have an interest in editing the Gateway. For this reason alone you are not representative, even if you were the only applicant for the position. But rather than appointing someone as Editor whose interest is solely for prestige or money, I support you.

People accept you in your position even if you were the only applicant because you have the qualifications, interest and capability to do the job. Also we want a newspaper, which without an editor, might be difficult to achieve.

As for the positions referred to earlier, I'm sure you will agree, are also held by people who are interested, qualified and probably capable, otherwise they would not have submitted or been allowed to submit their applications. Their interest and qualifications qualify them as representatives of the students; they, like you Bernie, are not average students, but only because they, unlike the average student, have an interest in Students' Council.

I cannot blame the students for their lack of input: university to most is a place to learn. Devoting hours to unprofitable causes which are often frustrating and fruitless will rarely improve their marks. Those who do find the time are, I suggest, unrepresentative: they have the time the others do not. Otherwise those interested are like those they represent: human - with similar problems, wants and interests. By these and certainly by most people's criteria, those students elected by only a small proportion of eligible voters or by acclamation are indeed representative. Remember, everyone had the opportunity to run in the election. Surely having these positions filled by interested and qualified students is better than leaving them vacant, or better than having them appointed by the Executive.

Apathy is a problem. As I have indicated, it is widespread and I suggest that with the resources at your disposal, the Gateway delve deeper into the problem. I'm sure you will find many more people who, by your standards are not acceptable.

Your crusade to end the apathy problem on campus will not conclude simply by rewriting and revising the Election By-Laws. Incentives must be added to get the desired competition for positions. Allowing a monetary or an academic incentive for any position will violate a basic principle of democracy. The competitors will be vying for positions, not on the merits of the student's interests, but rather for the incentives.

The system as it now stands is a system beset with problems, some possible unsolvable; but it is a system proven practical and moreover - it works.

Bert Witt
Science Rep
Students' Council



YOU GUYS SURE IT'S SAFE?

Professors not responsible as critics of society

by Michael MacNeil

The Tenure Conference at Queen's University in Oct. 1971 produced a report by Dr. C.E. S. Franks, part of which is reproduced as what may be a valid comment on the effect of tenure on teaching and the university function.

"In my view the most serious criticism that can be made of tenure practices is that university professors are not fulfilling their responsibility as independent critics of society, but rather they have become part of the power structure.

"... To express it differently: faculties evaluate themselves by the standards of society - income, size and number of research grants, publications, positions in professional and corporate organizations. Quite truthfully, I cannot imagine any of my colleagues making the kind of perceptive and insightful criticism which would bring the wrath of organized society down upon them, and in doing so make tenure operative and necessary."

Professor Franks added: "The university has a purpose to serve in society which is more than to train people, however adequately, for the professional niches in the economic structure. Canadian universities do not recognize their broad responsibility to the intellectual health of the nation and to the extent that they do not, they cannot educate well (for they are training and not educating) and tenure is a frill for which the need is not apparent."

It may be that tenure in itself is merely a symptom of a far-reaching problem in Canadian universities. If professor Franks' criticisms are valid, and I believe they are, then at present it is far more likely for the wrath of the academic community or of a department to fall upon a professor than the wrath of outside society. It may well be

that tenure can operate to exclude those who most need it.

Teaching, which should be the main function of universities, is more likely to suffer in this case. A great deal of debate has arisen whether teaching insofar as effective delivering of material suffers when incompetent or indifferent instructors are protected by the tenure system. The Pan-Alberta Management study (referred to in the last article) has indicated that this appears to be the case at the U of A.

Evidence from other universities supports this conclusion.

What is more important though, is that teaching as a criticism of society and government has dwindled to almost nothing. To echo Professor Franks remarks, the intellectual health of the nation is suffering from an emphasis on training and a de-emphasis on educating in Canadian universities.

No students are directly represented on Faculty Tenure committees. A resolution presented to GFC in 1973, that would have made undergraduate and graduate student representation on Tenure Committees mandatory, was defeated, and no further suggestions have been submitted to that body providing for student representation in this area.

The arguments against the proposal included doubt that student views were relevant in considering professional criteria beyond the scope of student awareness, especially in professional faculties.

Another important objection was that the preamble, emphasizing increasing acrimony between staff and students, was not a valid reason for including students on tenure committees.

Indeed it was not. What is important is that students, who will have to face the challenges

of a complex technological society when they graduate, must be encouraged to assume some responsibility for the performance of social institutions. Student apathy, widespread on all campuses and not solely a local problem at this university has been used as an excuse on too many occasions to preclude student participation in all areas of university government.

Students have 40% representation on GFC, they have representation on Faculty Committees, and have demonstrated some capacity for articulate and constructive participation in this and other universities. Student apathy is perhaps a reflection, at least in part, of the apathy of universities in general and if the situation is to be corrected, a concerted effort must be made by the universities to become involved (as they once were) in an attempt to correct social and political problems. By extension, students would become more involved and the argument that students don't know and couldn't care less would likely evaporate.

If this effort is to be successful, students and faculties must decide together what rights and responsibilities they must have to the public they are supposed to serve and to themselves. Student participation in university government was a step in this direction and student participation in the teaching process and thereby on tenure committees must be implemented to try and improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching.

Professional isolation can no longer be considered a valid argument against student participation, student dissatisfaction on pure principle can no longer be considered as an argument in favour of it.