

letters cont'd.

Unclear letter

Editor:

The letter from Keith C. Boulter (*Excalibur*, 9 February) regarding his friend who could not gain admission to York, was unclear on a number of points. I would like to put those points and issues into perspective.

As I understood it, Boulter believes his friend who had earned a grade 13 average of 59% should be admitted because St. Andrew's College (where his friend had attended) is a prestigious institution. Granted, some high schools (both private and public) are more academically inclined, and consequently grades cannot always be weighted equally. This would lead us to a weighted system which is difficult to establish and maintain, as it is very judgemental, or alternatively, province-wide final exams and province-wide centrally established curricula. However, the latter option would not allow for regional variations and individual variations among teachers. This standardization of teaching, would remove the *raison d'être* for teachers.

The third alternative is a standardized university acceptance exam—although this favors those who are intellectually gifted over those who are prepared to work hard. Success—academic, or otherwise—is a combination of both factors (inspiration and perspiration). Are any of these systems better?

Boulter reiterates his point by stating that "46 percent of all high power executives in Canada come through the private school system" and not from some "\$4.00 Public High School." A principle of democracy is to foster success—anyone can be successful through their own merits; it is merely a matter of trying. Everyone, in theory, has an equal chance. Boulter is arguing that those who attend private school should be given preferential treatment, as this minority of students will ultimately achieve greater success than those from the public school system. This would create a two-tiered system, which would be most undemocratic.

Those select individuals who were lucky enough to attend private schools should be given priority in admission over the majority who did not. A private school education is

usually superior to one from a "\$4.00 Public High School" (which may become their annual operating budget is Boulter had his way), but why does this discrepancy exist? Because private schools feature smaller classes, hence more demands may be placed on the student.

We should strive to eliminate this disparity by transforming the high school curricula to one more academically rigorous. However, this necessitates that we provide more funds to education, to reduce class size and allow for an individualized approach. This would result in not only a better public school system, but its product would have a better understanding of the world in which they live. This intellectual arousal has been relegated from the high schools to the universities. The students who do not attend universities generally do not receive any instruction in the classics, philosophy, political science, or social sciences. This will, therefore, lead to not only a better educated populous, but one which would take increasing interest in the world around them.

Boulter, in the short run your friend might try to take some courses at Atkinson College at night, and if he receives exemplary grades the "admittance elite" (as you put it) may reconsider their decision. In the meantime, please reconsider your harsh judgement of an educational and social system that can remain politically stable only if all members are (theoretically) given an equal chance, based solely on skills and not on parental ability to afford a private education.

—Tony Kerekes

Appreciation

Editor:

I would like to express my appreciation and sincere thanks to both the York Security Service and to Terry Conlin, President of the GSA, for extending themselves beyond the call of duty during my recent pre- and post-surgery emergencies.

It is difficult to translate into words the supportive and reassuring tone behind Terry's words: "don't worry, I am here, call if you need anything." Thank you Terry. Not only Terry the President of the GSA but Terry the person, a fellow graduate student.

Bapai Batiwalli

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