

Honesty policy ineffectual

The start of the winter term means those all-too-familiar introductory classes for each course you attend. However, one part of the whole 'first class of the year' spiel is really starting to annoy me. Specifically, I am talking about the very common or handout or mention of Dalhousie's intellectual honesty regulations, which occurs in just about every class.

Many professors make the point that if, in their view, dishonesty has occurred, then they MUST report it to the Senate Disciplinary

Committee. Profs are quite vocal about this, telling us that they are sorry, but they have NO CHOICE in this matter.

Well, here's my problem with that. In two different departments last term, I know of two instances of students being accused of academic dishonesty.

In one case, two students were accused, by an instructor, of passing in identical lab assignments. I know for a fact that this situation was not taken to the Senate, and although I did not hear what the final

punishment was, I'd assume it was very minor.

Two other students, in a different department, were accused of copying off of each other during a test. After a lengthy tirade, the prof told the students that if they admitted to their wrong-doing, they could have their test marks cut in half in exchange for not being reported to the Senate. The intimidated first-year students agreed.

My point is not that these students may have been wrongly accused — I don't know if they were dishonest and I don't care. The real issue is that in both of these situations — and I'd imagine these occurrences are more frequent than I would ever have suspected —

Dalhousie's academic honesty policy was not followed. From what I have read on the plethora of sheets handed out in my classes this term, a professor's only discretion is to "...decide whether the infraction and the evidence are sufficient to merit a charge." And if the "...infraction is minor, the faculty member may treat it as sloppiness, and grade accordingly." However, this exclusion seems to refer to things like term papers, because sloppiness cannot be the cause of identical assignments or tests.

Come to think of it, identical work is the result of extreme sloppiness! So both of these matters should have been brought to the Senate. In both of these situations,

the students were robbed of the opportunity to properly defend themselves in the manner that is supposed to be provided by the university, with two of them having to take a plea bargain-like agreement. If a prof doesn't have sufficient evidence against a student to take the matter to the Senate, or if they are just too lazy to interrogate the student by way of the Senate, then they should never mention the suspected plagiarism in the first place.

If Dalhousie's academic honesty policy is not being followed, then it is not worth the paper it is printed on, and everyone might as well stop wasting their collective breaths by mentioning it at the start of each term.

David Ripley

Music and the Backstreet Boys

Some people like vegetables, some people like meat. There are those who prefer a tall, cool glass of Colt 45, while others insist on a glass of fine wine. Computers are somewhat easier to understand to some than others, but that's life. That is the way that things work. Diversity is the crownjewel of humanity, and that's not likely to change any time soon.

One thing that is equally as common and diverse in the world is the love of music. Not every person in every region in the world is as liberated and rejuvenated by music, but there is a common bond despite a wide variety in the taste of music lovers.

Firstly, lets clarify 'music.' I consider anything that a person can relate to, something that they can plug their head and bodies into and exude the atmosphere — that's music. I honestly don't consider anything as heinous as Will Smith/Britany Spears/Backstreet Boys to really be music, and I feel comfortable saying that because I'm pretty sure that no Backstreet Boys fans have the cranial capacity or the physical means to communicate their displeasure. These marketing tools do little more than smudge the name of music and drive me to violence.

Music has a phenomenal history. Since communication was possible, the need for musical expression has been there. From primitive string instruments to vocal expression to the complex arrangements of Bach, Beethoven and the likes, to present-day musical architects like Trent Reznor or Paul Oakenfold, music has been a part of the creative human mind.

Music is a representation of mood. I listen to a CD based on where I am, what I'm doing and what kind of mood I am in. People have such a wide variety of moods, but the music is out there for any mood.

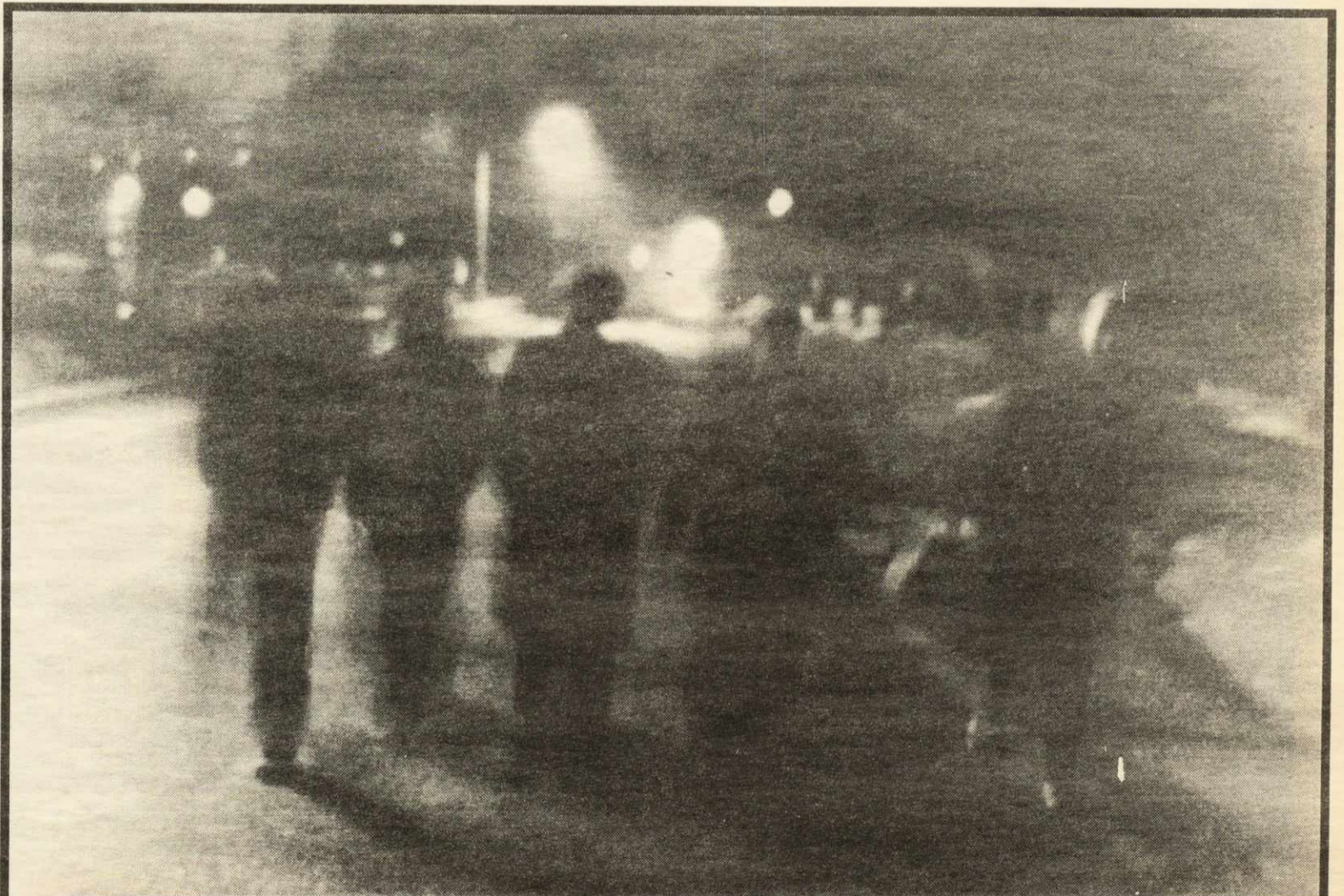
The thing that I don't get, despite my virtually unbreakable patience, is all the stupid people who don't listen to music. The only reason I can think of for someone not to like some kind of music is that there is no brain to process the sound (ie: Will Smith fans). Not finding music is a sad thing, because it deprives people of a wonderful experience. It's like consequence-free crack — you can smoke the shit all day, on the streets, at work, in elevators, and still retain your mental and physical integrity.

"Turn that shit off," my roommate exclaims every time he hears

a bit of punk or hip hop pouring out of my speakers, totally intolerant to certain types of music, while at the same time, a large music connoisseur himself. He doesn't like it, but it's not "shit." I don't skateboard, but I like the straightforward fuck-the-yuppies approach of punk. I often can't really relate to the content of some hip hop, but I enjoy the beats and the lyrical skill of some hip hoppers. I was born in 1980, but I like classic rock and old country because of the splendid use of guitar and improvisation. I am without body piercings and face paint but I like a lot of heavy industrial bands, and the list goes on. Music is there for everyone — you don't need to be part of any social clique.

Music is a vast sea of unexplored ideas and thought put in the form of sound. There is no excuse for abusing this, or even ignoring this. Music is a common bond that all people should take part in, and it's unfortunate that so many people are oblivious to the reality of music — it's got something for everyone.

Patrick Blackie



Close Encounters of the Blurred Kind

Photo by Patrick Blackie