

EXCALIBUR

Everything secret degenerates; nothing
is safe that does not show it can bear
discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

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Nat. Sci. - a perennial problem

For the third year in a row, student rumblings have erupted from the compulsory general education courses and most notably, from Natural Science.

Two years ago an entire class walked out of Nat. Sci. 176A - Science, Technology and Society and presented a statement to dean of arts John Saywell that a) the course failed to be of value as a learning situation and b) the course had failed primarily because of 1) careless selection, 2) incoherent organization, 3) insipid presentation of subject material. That was in March of that year. Do those complaints sound familiar?

And last February, Soc. Sci. 176 students began their battle over evaluation procedures. When every legal channel had been exhausted, 25 students held a sit-in at president David Slater's office. Later it was agreed that any student that felt the examination was unfair could apply individually under "a case of hardship". (Students had been originally told there was no exam and it was six weeks before the course ended.)

And already in December, Natural Science is having its problems.

Students complain that the courses lack relevance. Well, that's nothing really new for a great number of York's courses. With such a high number of non-Canadian faculty, the student's lucky if the material deals with problems related to his own environment (i.e. Canada).

But then the problems in Nat. Sci. 177A

Last today..

Some of you have filled out that questionnaire by now.

A great many haven't.

It is our opinion that you should.

It is the only way your politicians know what you want.

Fill it out any way you like.

But fill it out.

Today is the last day.

this year centre around the complete lack of cohesion between the lectures and tutorials. Two years ago, it was the same under course director James A. Burt. This year, it is William Frisken's problem.

There have already been several ways tried to bring about a change in general education requirements and the content in its courses. They have succeeded time and time again to point out the obvious faults that face any student.

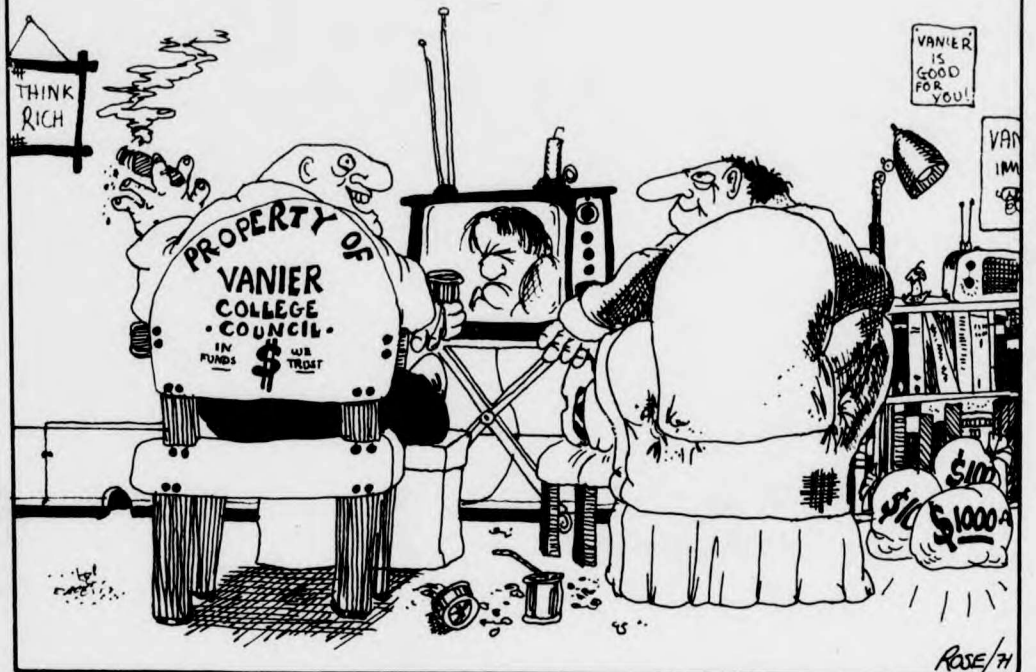
If it's anything, this crisis has shown, it is that despite consistent objections from righteously indignant students, faculty persist in ignoring the same criticisms that face them every year. If this crisis has revealed anything, it is the liberal bullshit York's successful public relations (e.g. calendars) have fed prospective students. And yet despite the same problems every year, the faculty continues to operate on the theory that compulsory courses are needed to fill classes with eager guinea pigs hell-bent on York's conception of "the whole man".

The fallacy in this theory is simple: people don't learn when any material is shoved down their throats in the name of betterment while on the road to the B.A. ticket. They merely endure and suffer through it, hoping that when the year is over, they've gotten a reasonable grade to show for their efforts.

This year things are happening earlier. There's a chance to organize course unions to go through collective bargaining. It's the only counter to faculty indifference to the student they ostensibly teach.

If York is to deserve more than "third-rate cow college treatment", then we suggest it start looking at its own course structures that create a "third-rate cow college". And if leadership doesn't know how to, then we suggest they follow one leader — like U of T — and drop compulsory, first year courses.

Any change, no matter how small, would be an improvement.



Even if CYSF gets its budget, we still come out a thousand bucks ahead, eh Chuck!

A neat but stupid trick

Vanier's just played a neat but stupid trick.

When they voted themselves a \$1,000 each for just being on the council, they did serve one useful function: It certainly awakened a great number of people as to their responsibilities after election. And those huge salaries certainly did shock enough people.

It showed quite exactly the calibre of politicians their political system had managed to attract. It showed just what sort of Mickey Mouse politics they enjoy playing. And finally, after pressure from Vanier's poppa, (let's discuss this again, boys), C.D. MacNiven, it showed just who really controls student funds. Just how many of Ontario's ivory towers allow faculty or administration to ap-

prove student expenditures? Not too many, I'm sure.

But then, a Mickey Mouse system produces Mickey Mouse politicians and that's exactly what's happened.

Instead of sticking to their point and arousing enough student interest to impeach them, they fell as quickly as they had risen and proceeded to draft a statement.

Chuck Brand's philosophies on York student government fit pleasant fiefdoms and continual bickering. Large budgets and fief ruling don't mix very well — which is something Brand refuses to recognize when he assails full-time CYSF presidents.

It got the council some publicity which is what it wanted. Do we hear an encore anywhere?

Letters to the Editor

All letters should be addressed to the Editor and sent to Excalibur, Central Square, Ross Building, York University, Downsview, Ontario. Excalibur reserves the right to edit all letters more than 500 words long. Unsigned letters are the responsibility of the editors. All letters will be published however due to space limitations letters may not be published the week they are received.

Science unhappy over Nat. Sci. too

Upon reading "Many Nat. Sci. Students Dissatisfied", I felt that the authors had not realized that the feeling was mutual from the science students' point of view. Approximately two weeks ago, my physics tutorial group discussed exactly the same problem with a slant against the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science. We would rather discuss or study topics relevant to our programme, just the same as those in the faculty of arts. We also feel that our schedules are large enough without the extra burden of irrelevance thrust upon us.

I propose that the time slot left by the riddance of the extra course be either left as a spare, or another course within the faculty be substituted.

We, as science majors, must allocate a large percentage of our time to these unnecessary courses because they are harder to learn. This type of feeling must exist on the other side of the fence, as well.

The answer that has been shoved in my direction is that we become too specialized by not taking these courses. This is an obvious fallacy, because if we were taking supplementary course in this time slot, our knowledge would be vastly broadened.

One thing that I have learned in the past is

that learning can't be rammed down a person's throat. We may go to the classes and spew out the information at exam time, but we still will not have learned anything about that subject. I am sure the feeling is mutual.

Tom Moreau

Phd. necessary for Nat. Sci. criticizing

I am writing in regard to the so-called Nat. Sci. controversy. Since when have a group of "frosh" had any business telling science faculty how to run a course, especially when the former are just arts students. I have every confidence that course director Bill Frisken and his staff know what they are doing and know what's right for the course.

The problem with too many young people today is that they feel they need no formal scientific background before jumping into controversies like pollution. Well, it's just not like that — wake up kids and see the light. When you've got your doctorates in bio-chemistry then you can tell science profs how to run science courses. Until then you should stick to whatever passes for work in first-year arts courses.

Jim Brown is probably a radical because he's failing. Because like too many other arts students he doesn't know what work is all about and is unwilling to find out.

It's time we put a stop to this kind of nonsense. I for one feel that York has enough problems without this one.

Chuck Fisher

CYSF ex-officio clarifies college fight

I would like to bring to the attention of the Excalibur-reading York students, an article from the college paper Walrus, by John Theobald which may clarify matters in the CYSF vs College Councils battle.

It seems that there is concern that the new proposed constitution — by asking for greater control of the student budget — might limit or compromise the democratic college system of government as it stands.

"If one takes the time to examine the situation closely, a number of safeguards are extremely obvious:

1. An audit of the past council's books must be presented to the university before any student fees are released.

2. The very nature of the constitution protects the college system in that three representatives are elected from the student body of each college.

3. There is nothing in the proposed constitution to prevent any members of any college council from running for any position on CYSF.

4. There are very liberal clauses in the proposed constitution dealing with impeachment and constitutional amendments."

I have witnessed the ridiculous amount of time wasted in seeming petty politics; the colleges (withholding the budget) being a major stumbling block in responsible attempts to get the budget working for the students.

Heather Morgan

Ex-Officio

Council of York Student Federation

Spiers should get off his high horse

In reply to a letter printed in the Dec. 6 issue of Excalibur written by David Spiers, I would like to suggest that he get off his high horse. The college systems as they stand do not work. There is no sense of community at York.

For instance, the only connection I have with my college, Winters, is the fact I live in its residence. Otherwise, I would have never entered its ivory tower (and I did not while I commuted for the first two weeks of school). Excalibur is the only paper which is available to all students at York.

Carla Sandburg