

Some "thoughts" about the Ombudsman

During the campaign preceding the SRC elections a fortnight ago, the SP's Chief flag bearer (now SRC president) John Bosnitch pledged to serve the interest of the students of this university. Consequently, the SP has been spending a lot of time since President Bosnitch came into office trying to work out ways of how best to fulfill that promise. The SP therefore has "thoughts" on two related areas of Student Services. The first of these is the office of the Ombudsman.

It seems to us here at the SP that the office of the Dean of Students, currently charged with the duties of the Ombudsman, has become not a little unwieldy as a result of tak-

ing on more than it can effectively handle. At present, the office of the Dean of Students is administratively responsible for overseeing and coordinating the work of four units. Three of these (health, counselling and undergraduate awards) are responsible for providing specific duties to all students and the fourth (The International Student Advisor's Office) has a responsibility to a clearly identifiable group of students with special concerns.

We feel that these four administrative duties brought together under one office are enough to keep its incumbent busy. The addition of the duties of the Ombudsman will only make that office burst at the seams. In order to prevent

such an occurrence, we feel that the office of the Ombudsman should be independent of the Office of the Dean of Students. There are several reasons why this should be so.

Firstly, since the office of the Ombudsman is administratively regarded as liaison between the Students and the university administration, its incumbent should be someone unrelated to the university. The role of Ombudsman for students is a delicate one and must be filled with great care if the incumbent is to prove effective. Some students, no doubt feel that the position should be filled by a person who will always unconditionally be sympathetic with their views. The university administration will of course want to appoint a person it can control. But we feel that only a neutral incumbent will command the trust of the administration and the faith of all students. We also feel that the Ombudsman should possess great rhetorical power, the ability to persuade and a willingness to show a matured insight into complicated human situations.

The SP also feels that the Ombudsman should possess legal expertise. This will enable the incumbent to act in

a legal capacity to the student who requires legal services. It does seem then, that the Ombudsman has a lot to handle. This may require a full-time appointment. And the pay? Supposing we relieve the present lawyer who come to the SUB weekly of the job, and pass it on to the Ombudsman? That should also release the money the lawyer earns. With the University and the SRC picking up the rest of the tab, we should be in a healthy financial position to afford it. So much for this "thought."

The other area we wish to express "thoughts" on, again, is related to the office of the Dean of Students. Specifically, the duties of the International Student Advisor. We read last week that Doreen Kissick has resigned. But we also had heard that foreign students were unhappy with her performance on the job. We sincerely hope that her resignation is not related to the displeasure of foreign students with her performance on the job. If it does then, we have a grave case of administrative contradiction. The SP has learned that the office of the Dean of Students had always been under the impression that Doreen Kissick was doing a good job. And that

when the foreign students started questioning this premise, the incumbent, bristling with righteous indignation, had challenged them to prove their allegations. We do not know whether they succeeded in doing so, but Doreen Kissick's resignation without explanation from the administration has raised some grave doubts in the mind of many students. The point to wonder about is whether there has been a proven case of administrative incompetence which of course could have created a sense of mortification that forced the resignation. The Dean of Students should therefore worry about the good recommendations. We hear he has been giving to Doreen Kissick. We begin to envisage the erosion of confidence coming apace.

The office of the Dean of Students should put its act together, then and find a replacement. We however wish to recommend that in finding a replacement for the positions, the administration should seek the opinions of those students whose interests are tied up with that office.

Furay Oduaran
Information Secretary
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Back in politics?

Dear Editor,

I see that Gerard Finnan made an appearance at a recent SRC meeting. It would be of some interest to the students to know if Gerard is going to get back into politics. It would seem that Finnan is vying for the Assistant Comptroller's position, arm in arm with Evans.

Could you imagine, seeing our ex-leader getting involved with the finances of the council again? How much can one man do to "misplace" money. Please give us a break, stay out of student politics, for the benefit of the student body and the student council.

Stephen McAlinden



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