

Opinion

Dragos Ruiu

Lectures lacking



Recently, a study of undergraduate teaching effectiveness at the U of A was conducted. While the University should be lauded for supporting such an effort, this study brought to light several serious problems with teaching here.

There are not enough rewards for good teachers, and the Graduate Teaching Assistants who handle a great deal of the instruction have very little training in teaching. There is not enough attention paid to teaching ability in the current reward/promotion systems for faculty.

"At a time of rapidly increasing knowledge, covering course content can often be a futile task," the study states. As the workload for instructors and students escalates, learning and instructing cognitive thought processes often take a back seat to absorbing the sheer volume of facts presented.

Faculties must examine the material they are teaching. There are many programs at this university that must identify and remove non-essential material from their curriculum. What may have been pertinent during the learning days of some professors has long since been obsolete. There is no time to teach this material.

The study goes on to criticize reliance on traditional formal teaching methods, stating that "empirical evidence suggests that lectures are generally a poor means of fostering critical thinking." While this statement is sure to draw a lot of flack from instructors, it points out a great deficiency in the instruction process: teachers here need to learn how to teach.

They need instruction in what we have learned about teaching. If it was good enough for our fathers, it isn't necessarily good enough for us!

The Gateway

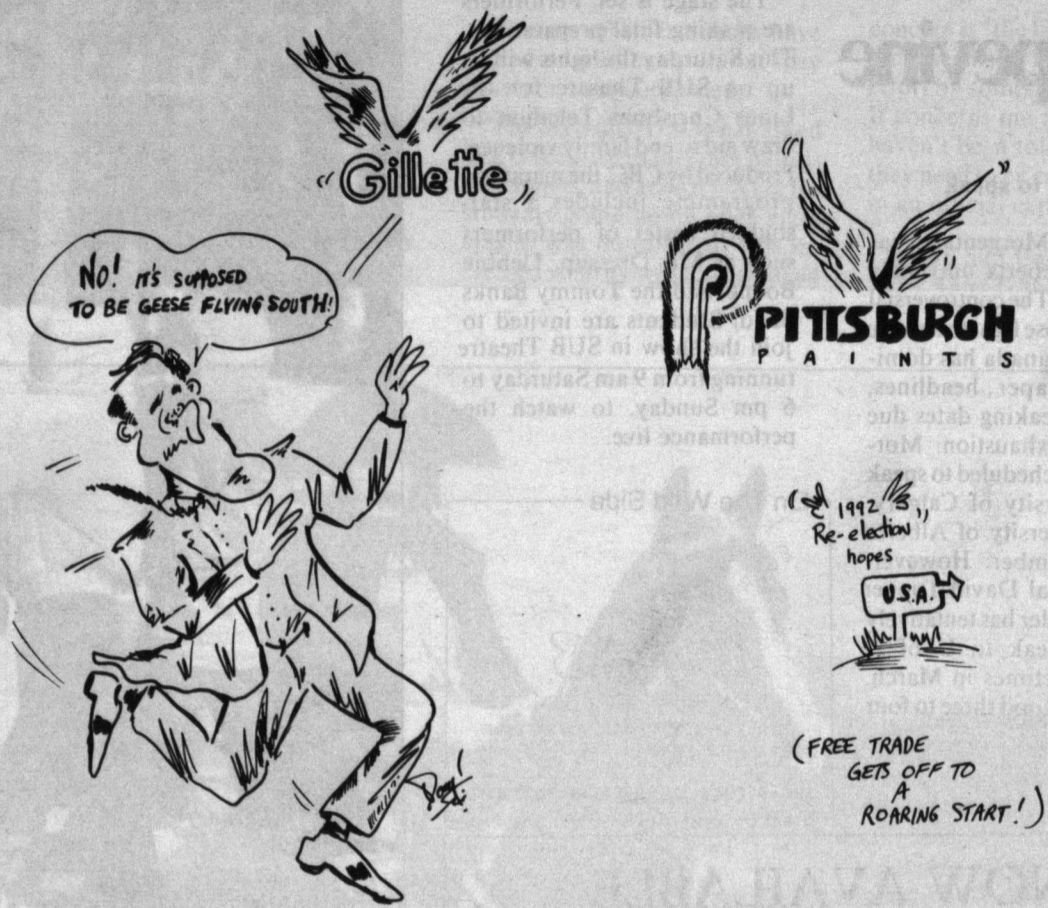
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Letters

The Gateway welcomes letters to the editor.

The name, faculty and year of study of the writer must be included for publication. The writer's phone number and University of Alberta I.D. number must also be provided, but will remain confidential.

Letters should be double-spaced, and typed if possible. They must not exceed 300 words.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit for length or clarity. Material of a racist, sexist, homophobic, or libellous nature will not be published.

Please submit letters to Room 282, SUB.

Ag week uneventful

Re: Get Bitchin' (Nov. 28)

As members of the general campus population, we would like to ask a simple question of the Aggies. Was there an Ag week this year? We noticed some straw lying around, but we just thought it was due to a particularly nasty wind storm.

You say that there were water balloons and interrupted classes. We conducted an informal poll of Engineering students and could not find anyone who had even heard rumors to substantiate the above claims. We did, however, find three people who knew when Ag week was (due almost solely to Bar None ads).

A good way to trace the history and possible future of Ag week is to look at a typical event: the water-bombing of the first year Engg. 200 class. In 1984-85, the Ags attacked the class and were repelled by 600 better-equipped and more enthusiastic engineers. They Ags tried again in 1985-86, but hit the microbiology class across the hall instead of Engg. 200. The engineers subsequently kept the tradition alive by marching over to the Ag building and giving the Ags a good soaking. The next three years, including this year, have been completely Ag-free.

This, and other semi-to-non-existent Ag week "traditions", have caused many engineers to wonder if Ag week is still celebrated.

In the future, if the Agriculture students ever do something worth complaining about, we would see some sort of reaction from the campus population. We concede that it is tough to live up to the memory of past Engineering weeks and Engineering functions in general, but you can't get anything without effort. Engineers seem to have a knack for drawing attention (People sure noticed Godiva — the Ags had a cow!). The Agriculture students should not feel ashamed that they don't know how to hold a good function. (Bar None was really BORING this year.) Perhaps next year their faculty will be less apathetic and accomplish something of note.

M. Kruse, Engineering IV
 G. Wong, Engineering IV
 M. Gaudet, Engineering V

Faith blind

Re: Cure "proven" (Nov. 15)

I would like to start out by saying that I am a Christian, I do believe in God, and I do believe that Christ may well have performed miracles.

Mr. Girgis claimed proof because of the testimonies of people "who asked Christ to control their lives", and because Christ himself claimed "to be the only way to the father." Lots of people before us, and for a long time after us, have claimed and will claim to having been saved by a multitude of things and persons. As to being the only way to heaven or a better after life, what about people like Rev. Sun Yung Moon, the Hare Krishnas, or L. Ron Hubbard to name but a few of the many living people who claim to be the way to heaven.

Also, you say that only God accepts worship, and that the Bible is flawless. I don't know about you sir, but I can't think of many people off hand, whose ego wouldn't accept a little worshipping once in a while. And

as to whether or not the Bible is flawless, take a good look at who wrote the book. Man. God may have been the author, but mankind physically wrote it, and how many other things have we managed to do without screwing up?

I hope that, by writing this letter, I am not insulting anybody's religious beliefs, or preconceived ideas, as it may be that Christ is the only way to God, but I don't feel this to be true. If anyone can come up with proof that doesn't require blind faith in the idea to prove it true, maybe I will change my mind. Maybe.

David Robinson
 Political Science I

Beer out of place

I believe that the University of Alberta has rules on liquor consumption on campus. That is, a license must be obtained from the university in order to have open liquor in the public areas of the university. But the cover of the Students Directory 1988-89 seems to suggest otherwise. Here in a V-Wing classroom, maybe in the middle of a lecture, are students caught in the act of drinking and possessing beer.

It is by no accident that three bottles of beer should appear in such a manner in "A Students' Union Publication." It is one thing to have beer ads in the publication, and totally another to use such a picture as the cover. Especially since this picture can prove more powerful than the ad on the back cover, because it involves peers and real student-life experiences.

Is the Students' Union trying to tell us something? Have we not had enough problems with alcohol? I feel that the SU is endorsing alcohol consumption with that picture. I personally am not against people who drink if they don't cause others harm, but I don't think that picture should have been used as a cover. And then, there is the matter of free advertisement for Labatt's Blue (or was it a paid ad?).

Anna Kwan
 Science III