

The lecture system

'We have only scratched the surface'

casserole

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of the gateway

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Where is the university?

Where are the grey-bearded professors, the inquiring students, the fountain of truth, the moulded and hallowed halls?

Good question. The demonstrations are clearly marked. There are student guides who may, or may not, be students. There are bubblegum dances if that's what you want. And there are some over-loaded, research-ridden men talking at designated times.

But the university? No help here.

That's what this supplement is about—the missing campus. Somewhere the ideas were warped into a contradictory reality.

On C-2, Wayne Burns interviews Grant Davy, R. E. Baird and Christian Bay, all political science professors, on the lecture system. Burns, a 19-year-old arts student, draws out some interesting observations on a key campus problem.

The photos are by Jack Segal.

On C-3 is an article which speaks for itself. It is a broken dream seen through the eyes of students. The quotes are courtesy of Moderator magazine, a U.S. publication whose circulation is limited to leading students.

On C-4 and 5 is an editorial comment by Casserole's Campbell, who is up to his usual slanted form.

C-6 and 7 feature an interview with poetess Gwendolyn MacEwen with arts page staffer John Thompson.



—Jack Segal photos

POLITICAL SCIENTISTS CHRISTIAN BAY, GRANT DAVY AND R. E. BAIRD

Casserole: What do you think of the lecture system story in Casserole several weeks ago?

Baird: I think it was a fair portrayal of the situation.

Davy: Yes, I think there is obviously a gulf between the professor and a large class in a large lecture hall. Sure it's a shame to see a kid sleeping, but that's our fault. Classroom performance is only part of teaching. Enthusiasm, concern of the professor, and the time he spends after class are also important—a lot of them don't spend the time.

Baird: Some see teaching as cost you bear to do research. And some think it is a joke to have the whole class flunking. Indeed, some would rather not even have students at university.

Davy: No, they don't want students; they want grads to help them do research.

Baird: Look, here is the problem—actually it is two problems. First, the majority of the staff are not interested in teaching the first-year class. They want the senior classes where the interested students are. They do not know what a joy it can be to teach a first-year class.

The other part of the problem lies in that they do not all have great teaching ability, and this is compounded by the number of students. There are good teachers, those who are not concerned at all, and then our great concern—the great gulf in between.

I think there should be greater emphasis on teaching and less on research. I think a good teacher has to be almost half evangelist.

A lot of us become definitive and students do not see the steps between what is concrete and what is being said.

There is a lot of talk about what a prof means in a lecture, and this shouldn't be.

Davy: When first-year students get this treatment what can we expect the results to be? The key to the lecture system is to talk to one student and make it natural. You gear what you have to say to the language of the group and the hell you can't tell if he is getting it. All you have to do is look at his face and you can tell.

I've heard many times what it is like to be a teacher. Too many of us pay lip service to this around here.

Baird: A lot of us haven't the least idea of what good teaching is. To start changing

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things from the faculty side we have to see the problem of teaching as more important than it is now. As far as this is concerned I welcome the student's view.

We are interested in the development of a

course in teaching at this university. In our department we have had an increased enrollment, and we are coming to some kind of decision about the best way to teach a course.

Casserole: What caused the increase?

Baird: Well, I think more departments are starting to recommend the course and I think a large part of it is just an increased interest in the subject.

Casserole: Do you think the communication situation here resembles a pre-Berkeley?

Baird: I think if we don't watch it the situation could grow into an alienation.

Davy: I think it is happening now. The students' union is being bought off to worry

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Bay: I think we would really accomplish something if we could achieve a Berkeley.

Davy: The Gateway is getting better. I just wish students' council was doing as good a job. But we aren't doing enough. I think it's time we started looking up our own armpits.

Casserole: Can I quote you on that?

Davy: Damn right. I can give you something more direct if . . .

Baird: Yes, and I've got plans for model parliament. What I would like to see done would be to make model parliament and student government into something more political.

You have to have something more ideological—something more than a popularity contest. What you have to do is this—form some kind of mediating group to inform students.

Davy: I hate this concept, but what we need is some kind of big brother organization around here to give out information and talk over students' problems.

Somebody needs to tell the first-year student little things like where the can is, and in general what is going on.

I want to abolish freshman introduction week. I'd rather buttonhole all the faculty to come down here the first week to just meet freshmen and talk to them.

About five years ago we dropped the pattern system. I think this has done more harm than good. Every student ought to have a department—a place he can call his own.

(The pattern system meant that students not in honors were attached to the department they majored in and not to the general office of their faculty.)

Baird: What I want to see in the lecture buildings is a room where a professor can take his students for coffee or whatever he wants with them. This common room isn't enough.

Another thing, I can't set why the faculty can't use the same toilets as students. What do they think we do in there?

Davy: We have taken a survey in our department. The results indicate a preference for small classes as opposed to lecture-hall classes.

Baird: Here is what we're doing. We are going to try to keep the small classes and reduce them in size. Some of them have up to 50 students. This is too many.

Also we are going to modify the large lecture with tutorials or seminars. Davy will run it and I will help him. He has had experience in team teaching.

Davy: We haven't worked it all out yet, but I think we will vary our approach. There will be 200-300 students, but we are committed to make the lecture system work for the students—to make it useful to a lot of students. If we can't make it work we'll chuck it.

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Baird: I am interested in faculties, as well as departments, requiring more than they do now. We need more staff and more graduates. Then we will be able to keep the classes small.

Davy: Teaching will be split—graduates and

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professors. I have confidence in the graduates, but I want students to meet the faculty.

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Casserole: What about the government?

Baird: By and large the government has done a fair job. If the faculty knows what it wants, it can get it. I've seen worse situations in the States.

Davy: This interdenominational university isn't going to grow too much, and neither is Lethbridge. I think the next major university will grow up somewhere around Red Deer.

Casserole: I've exhausted my questions and it's lunch time. It seems too difficult to really consider the problem in depth.

Davy: We have only scratched the surface.