

editorial

Fate of things to come

The financial solvency of the Students' Union for the year 1977 is in serious jeopardy. This fact was made abundantly clear with the approval of the 1974-75 final budget by Council Monday night. The biggest problem is this: unless the Executive is able to present a break-even cash flow preliminary budget for 1975-76, the current projections show our Students' Union will be defunct by 1977. And even if they do, this only means we will be solvent for one more year.

Had the previous Council Executives had the foresight to realize that HUB was an impossible dream, we would be living in relative luxury as far as students' unions are concerned. Unfortunately, HUB was constructed, and in a period of six years the SU went from a period of one million plus in reserve fund to the present \$178,000 deficit budget.

It really doesn't matter who the present Council is, or who the next one will be. We are now in a crucial period that will determine the immediate future of the Union. The choices that do exist are not political, but rather the only existing alternatives for the future.

Council can decide to proceed against all odds and become insolvent within one year. This would mean the University would have to pick up the tab for all our expenses, including HUB. This would accomplish two things: the end of our financial woes and the end of the Students' Union.

Another alternative is to request the University to cancel the Student Union's outstanding debt in the amount of \$450,000. This would remove a serious debt but would not necessarily save the Union simply because the final budget does not include means with which to repay this debt anyway. The cancellation of this debt, plus an equal amount again would prove extremely beneficial, but this could be rather costly in terms of concessions at a later date.

The remaining alternative is to put all faith in the Students' Union submission to Jim Foster in the Department of Advanced Education. The submission requests government assistance in the amount of \$950,000 to insure the survival of the operation. If the government responds favorably, and quickly, things in general will be considerably brighter in the future. The fact that the government has never before officially recognized a students' union may be the cause of their cautious approach to our situation.

Regardless of the direction taken, a precedent will be set either way: the government will recognize the Students' Union, or the University will have more growing space for their administration. In our present position, we have little choice in fate of things to come.

Bernie Fritze

Compulsory english classes a failure

COMMENT

by Michael MacNeil

Most first year students in the faculties of Arts, Education and Business Administration are required to take a full term junior English course as part of

to analyse, criticize and opinionate on this material verbally and in essay form.

Unhappily, many of these students have never been taught how to analyze, criticize or opinionate on this or any other subject. Furthermore, a significant number cannot write good essays either as an assignment or under pressure at exam time.

The problem is that English teachers, who quite naturally

because of it, or would it be a contribution to English to enable them to have the tools for analysis and appreciation for use at a later date. In other words, is teaching communications a waste of intellectual ability or an investment?

In the same vein, is one junior course, taught effectively and appreciated by capable students better than two taught poorly to mediocre, disinterested classes. I assume here that English professors at the most may have to sacrifice one of their two first-year courses to the first end. The balance of personnel could well come from fourth-year or graduate students who are probably well capable of assuming most of the burden of a less intellectual but equally essential program.

As to who would take the course, I expect that many students who ideally would be well-informed by the Department handbook before registration, about the expectations they will face, would volunteer for the program. Alternatively, they could be referred by the instructor early in the first term.

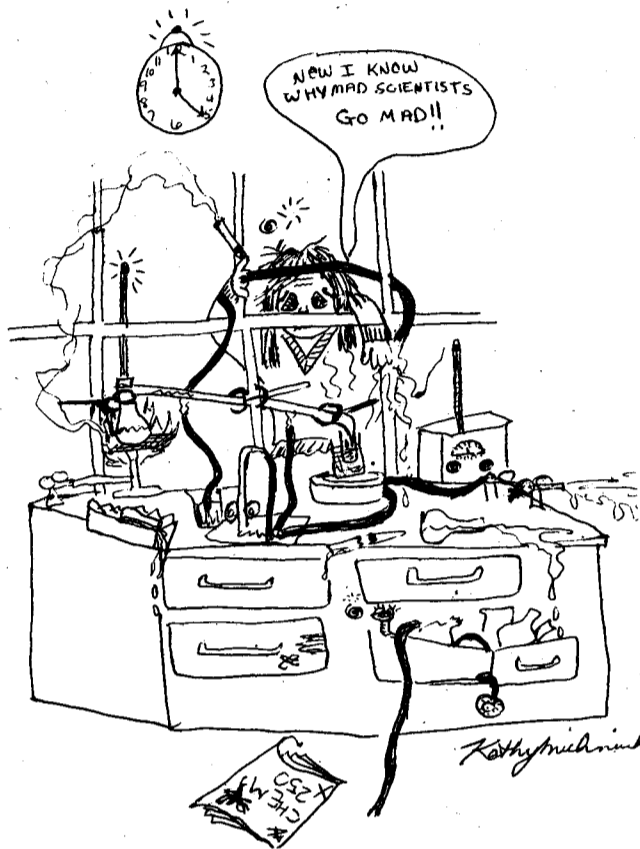
These are merely speculative suggestions as far as machinery goes but the necessity is a grim reality. Many students in my first year English class this year obviously misunderstood to some degree the nature and purpose of the material presented. They were generally marked on their writing far below what their verbal performance would have indicated and they were confused, dismayed and dispirited by poor academic marks they were in no way equipped to improve upon.

I spoke to my English instructor, two students in my class and two students who had taken English previously and still could not produce even in their third or fourth year in other programs. All agreed they needed to learn how to read and write effectively for an understanding of any course material.

Something has to be done for these and future students. I suggest that the English Department set up a full-term, full-credit communications course next year or as soon as possible. Every Department will benefit that requires written production and the English Department especially may actually see a significant improvement in their reputation and enrolment. Students who can handle English will enjoy and contribute more and the general impression that English is boring, argumentative and full of anachronistic material will be changed with the realization that it is in fact interesting, challenging, and contemporary.

Finally, so that this unfortunate program will be as short lived as possible, the Department and the Faculties should notify the Minister of Education and every high school English and Guidance Department that they are guilty of academic negligence and that improvement is demanded. If enough pressure, public and otherwise is applied, the Department of English may be stuck with this admittedly distasteful task for a relatively short period of time.

And the student, the guy who is caught in the middle, will benefit.



their degree program. The purpose, ostensibly, is to acquaint these students with English literature so they may develop an appreciation of the culture and language with which they will be working for the balance of their career.

The result has been a failure. It's a failure for a number of reasons most of which are known and most of which could be corrected.

First, these obligatory courses consist entirely of prose, and poetry analysis (with the exception of English 290). Students are presented with selected works and are expected

assume that after at least three years in high school, students are familiar with these skills, mark a student's performance according to his output (good clear presentation, good essay form and good grammar and composition). At present, students do not have the basic tools to communicate in their own language and never have had an opportunity to learn them.

The high schools are unquestionably at fault in that they neglect to teach students basic communication. Given this piece of what is common knowledge, the faculties involved and particularly the Department of English are also at fault for not providing facilities to give this essential instruction once the students get here.

The arguments the Department of English presents for this situation are valid ones in an intellectual sense. English instructors contend they have been hired and trained to teach literature, not communication skills. It has been suggested that instruction time would deprive them of literature class hours. Finally, a grading system to decide who would take literature and who would take communication would be difficult to establish. If English were not mandatory, it would be impossible to refute the first two claims and the third would naturally fall.

However, English is mandatory, and that's what is important to the student. The first objection from the Department can perhaps then be countered with an intellectual argument. Is it better to teach English to students who are incapable of fully understanding and appreciating the material and who suffer academically

