

## This is page FIVE

Authors aren't mad at us—they are mad at the students who write letters to us. Peter Boothroyd, in his weekly column, explains the situation to one of his critics. And Jeffrey Dvorkin has something to say to the same David Norwood.

Then Sandra Young, secretary of the students' union, replies to Robin Walker's charges that the students' union is 'irrelevant'. The students' union is allegedly having personnel problems and can't get enough students to work on their many committees. Sandra straightens everyone out in this regard.

There is a very pertinent letter from R. Lynn Ogden which should bring some of the lofty ideals of students and their governments down to earth. The writer says there are some real problems here. We agree.

Keep the letters coming. Keep the length within 300 words. Bring all material to room 282 SUB. —The Editor

### Some reasons for revolt

The Editor,

Well, I'm back for another year in spite of your IBM-oriented, five-part registration, or is it because of it? And amidst all the confusion, there's talk of revolt. Dr. John's says 'no'; the SDU say 'maybe, if it's necessary'; and, the students' union says 'we're working on the problems, as a matter of fact there's a committee meeting to discuss . . .'. Why?

Have you pondered the plight of the 'ordinary' student?

(A) The rapidly decreasing amount of parking space is a good example. First, it was 'A' lot that went for the biological sciences complex and now another lot is reserved for staff east of the main gym. To anyone who says there's the Jubilee lot or the two blocks over by Tuck, I suggest they try to find a place some morning about 8:30. By the way, who is acting on the recommendations of the parking study?

Oh well, the student is encouraged to take the bus; in spite of the fact that it runs hourly, is overcrowded, takes a half hour to make a 15 minute trip, and drops you off six or seven blocks from home.

(B) Or, pay a visit to the second floor of Cameron Library and watch former study space disappear before your own eyes; sorry, gone for administrative space. Ask for a conference room and discover that many of these too have been appropriated for office space.

### His attitude is non sequitor

The Editor,

Re: Mr. Norwood's letter of September 27.

It seems obvious that Mr. Norwood's attainment of the lofty position of graduate student has severely affected his ability to understand the nature of the process that placed him there. Rather than requiring "guts" (a quaint euphemism) to gain admission in to university, a certain amount of captulation to blackmail is involved. The public school system stresses conformity rather than individual expression while diligence to a prescribed course of study is more often encouraged than is intellectual curiosity. This process of brutalization produces much better automatons, well suited to the exigencies of university existence—thus do the high school graduates enter university, prepared and enobled for the academic pursuits. It could be extremely easy to fill this page with the lurid personal experiences that would quantify the attempt to create the required attitude of contribution in high school.

(C) Perhaps a *quick lunch* is in order. Just slip over to SUB about 12 o'clock and see how quick your lunch is! I actually saw a grown man on the verge of tears, who having waited about 15 minutes, when asked what he would like just pleaded for 'something to eat—anything'.

(D) Walk into a class, as I have, and discover you needn't have bought the text—that's what the professor uses to lecture from. Moral: don't buy the text even after the first lecture; go to the lecture instead. That's where your attendance is taken.

(E) And on and on.

So, there's talk of revolt and you wonder why. Personally, if the administration can take positive steps to alleviate pressing problems such as overcrowding, lack of study space, and half-hearted instruction (particularly in junior courses). And if communication means adding a little humaneness to the system; then lets communicate!

I'm for listening to the administration all the way.

BUT, if someone such as the SDU promises changes — even drastic ones—can you blame me for listening and sympathizing with them? Particularly, if *no* action is taken by the administration singly or collectively to alleviate student problems.

Alas, the poor 'ordinary' student is left without a group to gravitate to; or is he?

R. Lynn Ogden  
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The process of real education has constantly been in the form of a dialogue, not as Mr. Norwood would seem to believe, the simple ingestion of a monologue. His attitude towards the nature of a university education is logically a non sequitor insofar as he regards accessibility to academia as a privilege. Rather, the dividing line placed between Grade 12 and first year university is obviously arbitrary with the result that it makes as much sense at that level, than if it were to be placed between Grades 5 and 6. Certainly without loss of incentive or motivation, the necessity of maximizing provincial education standards can only serve the best societal interests.

It is hoped that Mr. Norwood's denegrating student's posture will not be transformed into a condescending professorialism at the time of his acceptance on the academic staff of some large institution. His students will certainly suffer, while as for himself . . . tant pis.

Jeffrey Dvorkin  
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### A challenge from the union

The Editor,

You know, there comes a time when a group is no longer willing to merely sit back and take the garbage handed out by one or two individuals or individual organizations. I refer to the letter written by Robin Walker and Susan Boddington in Friday, Sept. 28 Gateway concerning the frantic pleas of the personnel board in attempting to recruit individuals for student union positions. Further stating that the SU is irrelevant to students. Perhaps your criticisms are valid, Mr. Walker. Perhaps most students do consider the students' union irrelevant to the students. Perhaps the concerns voiced by the Gateway ads are irrelevant.

But where are your workable alternate proposals? It's easy to knock the way things are being done. It's difficult to attempt to determine alternate solutions. It's much easier to work outside a framework—to be radical or revolutionary—because, man—IT'S IN TO BE RADICAL. IT'S IN TO KNOCK THE ADMINISTRATION. IT'S IN TO FORGET THAT ONCE PEOPLE ARE THIRTY THEIR BRAINS DON'T NECESSARILY DIE: THAT their ideas change too as information is brought forward.

Yes, MAN! It's in . . . to be out.

The personnel board wants people involved in the students' union. Why? To increase the number of acceptance letters we send out? No fella—the students' union may be irrelevant to students because they don't know what the students' union is doing. They only hear — through mediums like The Gateway—what it is not doing or what it is doing merely because of 'so called' outside pressure.

We attempt to increase the impersonality of the structure by talking with people—by explaining 'what's happening'.

The personnel board attempts to get students involved so that individual ideas and criticisms and ideas can be heard and improvements can take place in the university community in the interests of all individuals concerned.

And, Mr. Walker, it seems to me that if people took their responsibility in the students' union seriously, we could get things accomplished.

Responsibility does not include opting out of leading a committee with a telegram saying 'Deeply regret to inform you I must resign as chairman of the academic relations committee . . .'. Sincerely yours—Robin Walker.

And may I add that academic relations is probably the MOST relevant to the quality of education at this university.

The reasons for the "barrage at verbal diarrhoea" is to educate students as to the relevancy of the students' union to student concerns so that the students' union is seen as an organization of people working toward the attainment of student rights and interests as students rather than as an impersonal structure or a specific group working toward their own or the administration's personal ends.

I challenge students to 'go active' if they are sincerely concerned with the attainment of goals and improvement of conditions rather than *specifically* with radical methods of revolution and dissent.

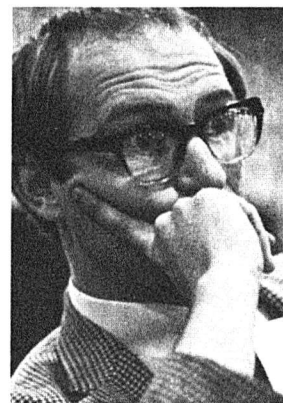
Sandra E. Young  
Chairman  
Personnel Board

By Peter Boothroyd

## A reply to a reply

David Norwood's letter in last Friday's Gateway raises some important points about my "Welcome to Freshmen" column. Since I obviously didn't express myself well enough for Mr. Norwood to read what I intended, and since he cannot be unique in this regard, I think I should reply to his letter point by point.

1. Mr. Norwood asserts that I am "most cynical" in describing the university system. He is quite correct. As a *system*, the university exhibits all the worst features of bureaucracy. It is inefficient, impersonal, conservative, and tends to destroy creativity. But my cynicism about the university system does not include, as Mr. Norwood suggests, "condemning the academic faculty as a group."



PETER BOOTHROYD

I have learned and benefitted a great deal from talking to many professors, and it would be ungrateful and stupid for me to pretend otherwise. I'm sure that many other students, besides Mr. Norwood, have also. But surely Mr. Norwood is being naive to suppose that it is possible for a professor responsible for hundreds of students to give anything like individual attention to these students. If every student in a large class arrived at a professor's office for a casual talk even once a year the professor would get little other work done. In most cases it is not the professor who rules out personal contact with the students. It is an absurd system

which pointlessly swells most course enrollments. It is a system which requires all students to take at least fifteen courses for a BA; which requires engineers to take English courses they don't care about and therefore do not really learn from anyway; which requires arts students to take loathsome science courses that only serve to alienate them further from the scientific culture. Let me say it one more time' it is the university system which stands to be condemned; there are many fine faculty despite that system.

2. When Mr. Norwood says "it takes guts and self-confidence to overcome the methods of teaching you experienced" (in high school) he could be agreeing with my assertion that it takes stamina to get through the education system. However, it is a servile stamina which, for instance, Albert Einstein refused to tolerate. Such stamina should not be confused with integrity which is a willingness, for the sake of one's dignity, to forego rewards such as a diploma. Mr. Norwood seems to agree that high school is a bunch of crap. I cannot understand how he sees people who accept such crap as having "more integrity" than the people who reject it and drop out.

3. Mr. Norwood says I am "like so many of the present student activists; (I) complain loudly . . . but suggest absolutely *nothing* to remedy the situation." If it wasn't clear in the column what my suggestions for change are, let me state them now.

The authoritarian structure of the university should be abolished. Elected student and faculty representatives must make all policy decisions with the role of the administration being that of civil service. Power must be decentralized among departments, institutes, etc., to the greatest extent possible. At each level students and faculty must cooperate in getting policy.

The joint student-faculty bodies, being responsible to the campus (or department) as a whole, would abolish such rituals as compulsory English courses for engineers, would balance the budget according to the needs of all members of the university, and would plan facilities (such as coffee nooks) so as to facilitate learning. They would encourage new programs of study to be established on the basis of the students' needs, they would open all meetings to the public so as to encourage everybody to get involved in the university community, and they would be constantly aware of the university's proper role as social critic rather than technician supply depot for the big corporations.

Within this context, I would suggest, as would many other students and professors, specific ways the university could be improved on a day-to-day basis. (As a matter of fact, I have worked intensively within the present administrative system on two different projects: a cooperative graduate student residence, and an experimental curriculum committee. Both times the projects have been effectively scuppered because, it seem, they threatened in a minute way to remove power from those who presently hold it.)

4. In a variety of ways, Mr. Norwood suggests profit and prestige incentives are properly the basis of our university and society systems. I would agree that such incentives work very well to keep people in line, if that's what he means. But I can't see much value in this encouraging people to follow the paths which perpetuate the present exploitative and fearful society.