



Al Kaplan

The Vanier Story: Al Kaplan Tells It Like It Is

Al Kaplan, (Vanier IV) has studied at the University of Toronto, Glendon College, and is beginning his second year at the York Campus. As former Chairman of Vanier College Council, Mr. Kaplan gives Excalibur his views on the Vanier scene as it was, is, and will be.

Excalibur: Vanier has a very successful form of college government. What's it all about?

Mr. Kaplan: When Vanier students got together for the first time last year, the major problem was how to form a college government. There was a unanimous feeling among those of us involved that the government should try to plan activities for the students, but leave the creation of a community to them.

The Vanier council is now made up of 12 members. In October we'll elect two members from the incoming group of freshmen. By then we'll really need some fresh ideas!

Excalibur: But the really unique feature is that you have faculty members on council, isn't it?

Mr. Kaplan: Yes. We decided, again unanimously, that having some members of the faculty on council would be extremely advantageous for us. We felt that they would have the kind of experience in university government and other activities that would be very helpful to a college like Vanier that was just getting started. So we invited the College fellows--there were only two at the time--to join, and they were very enthusiastic. They agreed with the concept and turned out for meetings. As of our last general election in January we have four professors on the council.

Excalibur: When is the next election?

Mr. Kaplan: January. As I said, we elect two frosh members in October, which brings the council up from 12 to 14. Then in January we hold General Elections for 12 people. The slate of nominees can be fairly large but only eight students and four faculty will be elected. Then, the following Fall, we elect the two freshmen again. Everyone runs as a Council Rep, and the Chairman and Treasurer--the only two official offices--are later elected internally.

Excalibur: Does the Council have anything to do with appointing committee chairmen?

Mr. Kaplan: No. The committees, eg. the Cultural Affairs Committee elects its own chairman. The Council sends its own representative to meetings to act as liaison between the group and Vanier Council.

Excalibur: Do you think autonomous college governments are enough or is a stronger organization needed to link up the colleges?

Mr. Kaplan: I believe we need a Students' Representative Council (SRC). There are too many activities at the

university-wide level that can't be dealt with at the college level. This doesn't mean failure for the college system. It just hasn't had a chance to show what it can do.

Excalibur: Are you finding that activities at the college level in Vanier are preventing the kind of apathy that seems to be prevalent among students in a large university?

Mr. Kaplan: First of all, it's ridiculous to criticize apathy. It's like criticizing sadness--it's always there.

I have a theory about it. When you're a freshman, you don't really participate much--mostly it's because of shyness. So everyone yells 'apathy'. In your second year, you get interested in the school itself and very involved and 'rah-rah'. Then you get busy, so in third year you don't have as much time as you'd like for all the things you did in second year. And by fourth year, your interests have grown outside the college community and your main problem is writing a thesis, not running for Council!

Excalibur: Then what is it that makes the success or failure of college activities?

Mr. Kaplan: It's the students. It depends on whether or not they take advantage of the opportunities that a small college unit offers them. After all, how many students get to play on the varsity teams at a large university?

They can complain that the dances we put on bomb. Well, we learn from these experiences too, but a lot of times it's their own fault for not bothering to take an interest. Like last year, right after Orientation we held a big dance and there was a storm. Only 16 of us showed up and instead of terrible it turned out to be a fantastic evening.

Now that I'm in fourth year, I think of myself as a York student, but socially I'm Vanier. We've been pretty successful in our first year of going it alone, mainly because a lot of the senior students switched over from Glendon and they had experience in student government. We also learned from Founders. Winters, I hope, will never have to suffer the growing pains that Founders did.

Excalibur: Does Vanier present a particular image to the rest of the University? Does it have an individual spirit?

Mr. Kaplan: I can't say for sure. I'm far too close to it. But you can't build an image in advance. Vanier is still changing as more freshmen come in, kids from Glendon switch over, and the various student styles interact. We do have a different atmosphere from Founders--the fact that they are a year older and had more second year students last year means a great deal in the way of established forms and traditions. But we're getting there.



Unsuspecting freshman frolics on first day at Vanier. Yok.

Former Freshman Tells All: IMPRESSIONS & CONFESSIONS

by Doris Dayhop

When girls are at the teenybopper stage, they read those books that are all about college--how wonderful and free and wild it is and what a great time you have. You must have seen those books--they're the ones that you have to wait for weeks to get at the Bookmobile, with names like 'First Love, Farewell', 'Marcy Grows Up', and other nauseous titles.

So when I walked into Vanier College, I was feeling pretty lonely. Especially those first few days of classes, when you find out the horrible truth that NO ONE CARES. That was bad enough but when the guys didn't come flocking around like they did in those stupid books, it was disillusionment plus for me.

But to be serious--I didn't expect anything out of a collegiate fairly tale, but I did take that stuff to heart about identifying with your college. I ate in the Vanier dining hall, fooled around in the Vanier common room--in fact the only time I ever went through Founders was after the Vanier vending machines were

wise you miss everything. And do you have any idea how MANY bulletin boards there are in this place???

Something else that made me feel kind of weird was eating in the same room--often even at the same table--with the profs. I never thought I'd ever get used to that.

And did you ever notice how chummy resident students are with the faculty? I would feel the urge sometimes to run up to a professor after the lecture and ask him a question, yet there was always something holding me back. But the word is that in second year, once you have chosen your major department, friendships with the faculty become easier.

What I really enjoyed were the college publications. Whenever the Vandoo came out and I dug the jokes, I felt like part of the In-Group--a feeling that was quite rare for me last year.

The residence news section was always a laugh--being a day-hop I didn't have a clue to what they were talking about.

Nothing really impressed me about Vanier except the Dining Hall. It has really sexy, intimate lighting and is consequently jammed during lunch hours. If you like to eat, plan to bring your lunch and eat it on the plush floor of Vanier Common Room.

Student Government is a total loss as far as I am concerned. Again, I take most of the blame myself--I can't see me running things. I expect to be there and see things running already. But there's always some strange campaign going on. Once I got really patriotic and decided to vote but finally gave up because I couldn't find the polls.

If Vanier social events have not been succeeding, the reason is not student apathy. It's the planners. They don't appeal to the students properly.

I remember when the Ski Club was looking for members--they carried a guy through the dining halls on a stretcher. And when the Biz Boys raffled off those glass (yok) turkeys. At least that got the students' attention!

By now you've figured out that the griping, miserable tone of this dirge means that I am totally disillusioned with Vanier and university life in general, and am resigned to being a social failure.

But you're wrong, wrong, WRONG! I'm no longer a frightened frosh, remember. I have that secure, second year feeling and this is my year to get INVOLVED in things. So au revoir, freshies, I have to seek out the social chairman of Vanier and get to work drawing some posters.



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removed for vandalism and I got hungry. I got lost, too.

University holds a lot of problems for shy people. I really didn't get involved in too many activities last year, and although I could blame it on a lack of advertising, it's probably my timidity problem. I used to see a bunch of kids working on dance decorations in this little room at Vanier and I'd wonder how they got to do it in the first place. But I was just too shy to go find out for myself.

One thing is sure; you have to read the bulletin boards, other-