"ombudsman"

I had a rather mind-blowing experience in one of classes last week, and I want to talk about it now cause I suspect that it is, at least potentially, of major nificance for the entire notion of education at this iversity.

The class was a section of Introductory Psyology, in which most of the students are nurses,

you have problems you want the "Ombudsman" to lp with, or if you're someone who wants to help solve hers' problems, contact Dirk Schaeffer at 439-6486 person at 1010 Newton Place, 8515-112 St.) or Kevin llese in *Gateway* 432-5178 (Room 282, SUB) or at me, 433-2136.

king the course as an "optional requirement," as I derstand it, of their Faculty. This may be significant.

At any rate, since it is an introductory course, and nce the Psychology Department has selected one of e best and most widely used introductory texts to be ed in it, I decided to base virtually 100 per cent of the udents' grades on that text. There 10 weekly tests, ken entirely from the text, worth six per cent each, d a 35 per cent final, also from the text. The other 5 r cent are given the students in exchange for thier rticipation in psychology experiments.

Last week, I explained again to the students that is system meant that I could have *no* influence over eir grades in the course: grading was entirely bjective" and based entirely on text materials. Since y own lectures would not be devoted merely to petition of the text materials, but would generally go beyond them, I suggested that the only reason udents should attend my lectures is if they wanted to arn more about psychology than the text offered. I en gave the exam, announced that there would be a ort coffee break after it, and that only those students ho wanted more out of the course than a grade should el a need to return after the break. Out of a class of 70 udents or so, none returned.

Unanimity is always striking, even if sometimes tentially complex. What, I asked myself, had I done ght in order to get such a unanimous response from e class?

What I seem to have done, very simply, is to disentangle two functions of our educational institutions which are, in fact, quite separate; but which have become, in fact heavily intertwined. These are the aspects of "education," in whatever sense one wishes to take that term, but involving, at the least, some kind of teacher input; and of "evaluation" in the sense of grading and degree-granting. Having disentangled these two variables, it turned out, in this class at least, that students were apparently motivated *only* by the latter, and not at all concerned about the former.

There's nothing wrong with this — indeed, this university is so heavily geared to the significance of the evaluation process, often to the disregard of educational benefits (e.g. there is virtually no provision for meaningful feedback of what is usually the most important single aspect of the evaluation process: the final exam) that students would be naive and idealistic indeed to behave differently in allocating their values and time.

But if this is true, surely the university can do better in this respect than it does now. Virtually all of us are faced, for example, throughout our junior year at least, with overlarge and overcrowded classes in which "education" is of necessity reduced to he-talk-me-listen. Students and faculty alike complain of this, and experience it as a serious impediment to meaningful education. (Twenty - I repeat, *twenty* used to be considered the largest number of students for a good class — would you believe it?) Administrators complain of tight money and short funds, making it impossible for them to hire sufficient staff to teach small classes.

Virtually all junior courses use texts; virtually all texts come with instructors' manuals which include many many multiple-chouce or similar items to use as exam questions. It would appear to cost the university or faculty no more time (probably less) than they now spend in evaluating students, to set up the following procedure:

Prepare a standardized exam for all sections of any class, based only on the text. Give it during exam week, and make it the sole basis of the students' grades. Allow students to attend lectures if they wish.

If this system were adopted, it is quite apparent that the actual attendance in most classes would drop down to manageable numbers, if not entirely vanish. Ultimately, it might even be possible to replace all introductory courses with exams, and simply do away with lectures and lecture time for these courses, which typically tie up more instructors than any other.

Proposals like this have been suggested before, and virtually the only arguments adduced against them are that it is somehow important for instructors to communicate *their* version of what is important in their disciplines, and that it is important that students get a firm foundation of the basic concepts in their area. The two arguments, of course, go in opposite directions. Specifically, the proposal I have offered would seem to do more to insure that this basic competence is attained than the present system does. In any case, the information explosion is now at such a point that there is no way that even the basic principles of any discipline can be "fairly" or "objectively" taught. Every instructor must *select* from the millions of facts and theories that he *could* be teaching, and each such act of selection introduces his personal bias. I am suggesting now that this bias be replaced by that of the authors of introductory texts, some of whom—and instructors will be free to select from the texts available—may indeed know more about the discipline and how to teach it, that a U of A instructor.

Well, it's just a notion. It appears to me, however, that the course I described in the opening paragraphs is the only one that I know of which has attempted entirely to separate education and evaluation. I'd like to hear from other faculty who may have attempted similar separations in the past, which I may not be aware of, about what their experience has been. I'd also like to hear from students about what they think of this notion: some preliminary feedback suggests that many of them may feel that there is something *wrong* about my proposal. They seem to be saying that they think they *should* come to lectures, etc., but know they won't (because of pressure from other courses, etc) unless the threat of "some of this material may show up on your exams" is held over their heads. This would be unfortuate, of course, but what else is new? **-dls**

Hikes rejected

TORONTO (CUP)— Seven Ontario's 15 publicly-funded iversities refused to implement tripled tuition fee for visa udents effective this month, spite the withdrawal of a ovincial government subsidy of out $1000 per student.

The governing boards of urentian University in Sudbury d Carleton University in Otwa both rejected fees which st new visa students $1500 for wo-term university year, while senates of the universities of ock, McMaster, and York have commended their governing ards not implement the hike.

A subcommittee of the Unsity of Toronto's governing uncil recommended the coun- reject the fee hike "as a matter principle."

The senate of the University Western Ontario in London s not yet come to a decision to commend to the university's rd of governors meeting Jan.

Other Ontario universities e agreed to implement the e, but the senate of the Univer- of Waterloo may reconsider question. Wilfred Laurier versity, also in Waterloo, lemented the hike after the ate refused a student bid to onsider its decision, but will k within the Council of Ono Universities (COU) to effect difications to the government- ated fee increase.

There is no guarantee that se universities not implemen- the hike now will refuse to do when the new academic year ins in September. Since few students enroll in Ontario versities in January, most of ch are based on two-term demic year beginning in tember and ending in April, financial burden borne by the versities with the withdrawal government subsidies for new students is not as substantial t will be in the new academic r.

Carleton student president Scott Mullin noted, "While a delay until September would have little effect on Carleton's economic base, it is recongized that the loss of $175,000 might seriously affect certain sectors of the university community."

University of Toronto provost Donald Chant argued that deferring the tuition hike until September would cost U of T $520,000.

Questionnaire

Results from a December questionnaire distributed by the chairmen's committee will be available by the beginning of next week, committee chairman Tom Nelson said Monday.

Dr. Nelson, chairman of the department of psychology, said returns had been good, with over one-third of academic staff responding to the questionnaire concerning a proposal to reorganize the university's power structure.

Nelson said results of the survey would be released following a meeting of the executive committee of the chairmen's committee this week.

Juice cut explained

The question of why electricity is cut off from parking plug-ins posed by Paul Rapoport in the Jan. 6 edition of *The Gateway* has been answered by campus parking officials.

It's to save money.

Ron Burns, director of the energy management office, has referred to a Board of Governors report in December stressing a need to save energy on campus.

Burns said there are two types of control practised in car-parking plug-ins.

At six of sixteen parking lots on campus having plug-ins, and at the two campus parkades, electricity flow to the plug-ins is interrupted whenever the outside temperature rises above -10'.

The second method of control involves cycling electricity on a half-hour basis from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Power is provided to the Stadium Car Park plug-ins for half an hour, then to the Windsor Car Park plug-ins for half an hour.

Burns said the temperature-related control is achieved by use of "slave thermometers" at parking areas and by a time clock. However, he said, plans call for eventual hookup to a central monitoring system.

He hoped temperature control at the surface lots will save $400 per month in winter and cycling and temperature control in the parkades save $1,485 per month. (A total of $1,885 and 157,000 killowatt-hours per winter month.)

He stressed this would be without any reduction in effectiveness.

Oil that glitters is not vinyl

NEW YORK (ZNS/CUP)— The recent decision by oil-producing nations to raise oil prices by 10 per cent will hit the pocket-books of, among others, record buyers.

According to the trade publication *Variety*, the rising cost of oil in recent years has hiked the price of petroleum-based vinyl in a single album by almost 10 cents. This translates into millions of dollars in added production costs and, as a result, another price jump is expected shortly.

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