

## LETTERS

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Here's why we — Stong and Bethune food service users — are so angry:

- We had to find out through the *Toronto Star* the details of the mini-epidemic. University administration did not address the students of either Stong or Bethune Colleges. Wild speculation resulted.
- On the days following the scare, the cafeteria stayed open and commuter students were not warned of the possibility of food poisoning.
- There were stool sample kits available, for testing. But they were not delivered to the students until Friday, by which time the tests — due to delay — proved inconclusive.
- A number of family physicians contacted afterwards laughed at York chief medical officer Dr. James Wheeler's declaration that the illness was "a very sudden and acute gastrointestinal infection."

Here's the bottom line: 70 or more students became violently ill over a six-hour period. All shared symptoms of nausea, fever, vomiting and diarrhea. All, reportedly, had eaten that day at the cafeteria.

The incident has not been fully investigated. One moment York administration tells us that the epidemic was "definitely" not the result of food poisoning. Then, a moment later, we are informed that testing has not yet been completed. That "definitely" doesn't pack much of a punch anymore, does it?

Perhaps administration imagined that the afflicted students would recover, return to the hectic world of academia, and gradually forget the whole thing ever happened.

Not so. This is too serious. York Health Services must not brush off this incident.

S. Mitchell

## Dismissal "outrageous"

Dear A.D. Stauffer, Chair, York University Senate:  
On behalf of the Council of the York Student Federation, I would like to convey some concerns we have with regard to the case of Professor Christopher Holmes.

It has come to our attention through various letters, newspaper articles and personal accounts, that although it has been stated that student opinion was taken into account when Prof. Holmes' course were evaluated, I feel I must question how much weight was given to student opinion. Although I understand that there are many other considerations in accepting or rejecting a particular

course, I would argue that student opinion should be a high priority.

A fundamental concern we have with regards to Prof. Holmes' case is that of academic freedom. It seems that in a university dedicated to the search for truth and to spiritual values in education, it is outrageous to dismiss the one professor who would bring such a perspective to York's psychology department and into the larger university. It would seem that at York of all places, a professor and a scientist should have the right, individually and professionally, to explore the areas of psychical, mystical and spiritual studies. Instead, it appears that Dr. Holmes — had faced varied forms of irresponsible academic assessments. Not only is this suggested by student commentary, but also by other evidences.

To the vast majority of students, especially those who have studied with Dr. Holmes, the importance of researching and learning in these areas of psychic, mystical and spiritual ideas and teaching as highly obvious! Many students further describe Dr. Holmes teaching as highly valuable in a personal way, and as providing an important perspective in education.

The dismissal of Dr. Holmes and his perspective from York is in complete disregard of student opinion, and of our rights to be exposed to progressive education in an atmosphere of academic freedom and tolerance.

There seems to be many details to this case. The most obvious problem with this entire situation is the "investigation" by the Special Committee established to review Prof. Holmes' courses. This committee completed a far-from-satisfactory investigation with one member attending only half a class, and another attending to hear a guest speaker and to hand out class evaluations. I find this absolutely incredible. A special committee, charged with the responsibility of investigating Prof. Holmes' two courses, and only one member attends half a class; this is nothing more than a patronizing stab at the process. Obviously, since Prof. Holmes himself asked for an investigation into his courses by a special committee (an agreement resulting from a previous situation), he wanted the Department of Psychology to have a complete understanding of the content of his courses and the relevance they have to his students; the actions of the committee are simply a slap in the face.

I would request that the Senate Subcommittee on Curriculum Review strike another committee to review Prof. Holmes' courses. I know that this will be difficult as Prof. Holmes is no longer teaching,

but perhaps his courses might be mounted again on a trial basis for another year, which would allow a more thorough review.

We feel that the issue of academic freedom is a very important one of the student body, and students have a right to be exposed to diverse perspectives and issues within a discipline. The actions of the Psychology Department appear to violate this ideal, and deny the value of a mystical and spiritual perspective in psychology, a perspective that has been strongly supported by those students who have studied Prof. Holmes' work. Furthermore, the promotion of a spiritual and humanistic approach to education not only serves the ideals of York University, but appears to be highly relevant to the student body.

Sincerely,  
Tammy Hasselfeldt

## Foetus "not part of body"

Dear Editor,

In the January 12, 1988 issue of *Excalibur*, both Jeff Noonan and Jean Ghomeshi wrote a bitter and unwarrantable letter attacking the Pro-Life (anti-abortion) movement. I have a few points to mention to the authors of the article "Fighting the Pro-Lifers."

I want to mention first, that we North Americans live in a materialistic society where the attainment of wealth, social status, and sexual pleasure are the icons that represent the primary goals of a considerable proportion of today's 'Me Generation.' In relation to the topic of abortion, one must realize that there is a difference in the meaning of freedom wherein the freedom of one individual stops (mother) where the freedom of another begins (foetus). The above-mentioned letter says "... a woman's freedom to control her own body, to choose when and if she wants children, is still unwon." The point the authors' are saying here is quite distorted because they do not realize a modern and well accepted fact in medical science. Any medical textbook will verify without doubt that the foetus is not part of the body.

The assertion of the authors that a woman has the right to control her own body is true but when a foetus (which is a separate life from that of the mother) is present in the mother's womb then the woman must totally respect the life of the unborn child. To have a child is a privilege, not a right — contrary to what many people think. A problem arises in the selfish and narrow-minded thought

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