

Plan for a college with no grades, no failures

by David Bakan, Professor of psychology

This plan arises out of a sense that educational reform is acutely needed, combined with no less a sense that the direction of reform must be toward increased freedom, where that term means, as it has meant in history, both the **freedom to teach** and the **freedom to learn**.

The Plan

1. Each professor shall offer his course in complete freedom as to its content and the method of instruction.
2. The professor shall make available a description of the course reasonably ahead of the time that the course will be offered.
3. If possible, the course description should identify the course as belonging among the humanities, biological sciences, physical sciences or social sciences.
4. If possible, the course description should identify it as suitable for first year, second year, etc. students.
5. The sixteen categories formed by the four areas of knowledge and the four year levels (e.g. Social Sciences, 3rd year) are to be understood as rough guides to the student, and not binding with respect to his choice of courses.
6. The course description should clearly indicate such proficiencies as may be required for taking the course;
7. The student may take any course that he can qualify for as in 6, above. Normally, one would expect that a student in his first or second year would take four courses, distributed among the four categories in recognition of the need for breadth; and in his third or fourth year, to make selections more narrowly, seeking greater depth, and courses more integrat-

ed with each other. (Half-year or one-third-year courses are completely feasible under this plan.) Nonetheless, it would be contrary to the idea of the plan to make any specific distribution compulsory.

8. Upon attestation of satisfactory completion of fourteen courses a Bachelor of Arts degree will be awarded.
9. The actual conduct of a course may be quite conventional; or as unconventional as may appear appropriate. Thus, a professor may hold classes in a conventional two to five scheduled hours a week, or otherwise as indicated by the subject matter and characteristics of the students involved.
10. The professor shall hold at least **three individual tutorial hours** with the student in which the following functions will be served:
 - a. In the first prescribed tutorial hour, the professor and the student shall agree to the student's assignment for the course. This assignment shall deal with attendance at lectures (which may include lectures by other professors), readings, writings, such other things as they may **mutually agree** upon, and a schedule for completing the assignment. One would think, for example, that in basic language and mathematics courses the nature of the assignment would be largely determined by the professor. In courses in literature or philosophy one might expect greater exercise of the student's prerogative in designing the assignment. Similar assignments for several individuals in a course may be worked out, to form subgroups in the course. What is often called a "reading course" can readily be worked in under the proposed structure simply by designing the assignment appropriately. The assignment thus agreed upon shall be in writing.
 - b. In the second prescribed tutorial hour, a review of the student's progress shall be made. At this time the assignment will be reviewed and modified if desirable.
 - c. In the third prescribed tutorial hour, the professor shall determine whether the

assignment has been satisfactorily completed. If he judges that the student has satisfactorily completed the assignment, he shall make an attestation to that effect for the student's permanent record. Should he judge that the assignment has not been satisfactorily completed there shall be no entry in the student's permanent record.

11. For each course (or part-course) thus satisfactorily completed there shall be a permanent record for the student containing the following:
 - a. The title and description of the course.
 - b. A vita on the professor.
 - c. The agreed-upon assignment.
 - d. A statement of attestation of satisfactory completion of that assignment by that professor. This need be nothing more than a formal statement such as: "In my opinion John Doe has satisfactorily completed the assignment described above."
- The plan does not preclude the use of examinations as a teaching aid. However, this permanent record shall contain no letter or numerical grades, or any form of evaluation or assessment of level of performance as in a conventional permanent record. If the student has not satisfactorily completed the assignment there would simply be no entry in the permanent record.

What's Happening

For the past two months interested students and faculty have met to discuss the plan with the intention of implementing it at York as soon as possible. Now an ad hoc committee on academia affairs headed by Lionel Rubinoff, Professor of Philosophy has been set up to report directly to President Murray G. Ross. What happens to the Bakan proposal then it seems is up to the President.

Modes mutt more fun than prof

by J. Lecander

On Tuesday, March 11, I visited a modes lecture. I do this regularly to find out if the format of the lectures has changed at all, or if the quality of the teaching has gone up, and whether it is worth returning to class. It hasn't, and it wasn't.

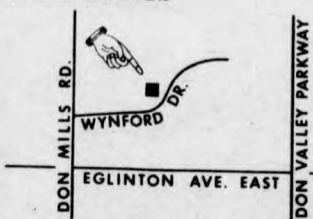
If they were satisfied with mediocrity before, many students still accept what is thrown at them but few of the more intelligent students remain — or all those people who are not worried about a piece of paper at the end of four years "education".

A dog wandered through in the middle of the lecture and it created more of an attraction than the prof.

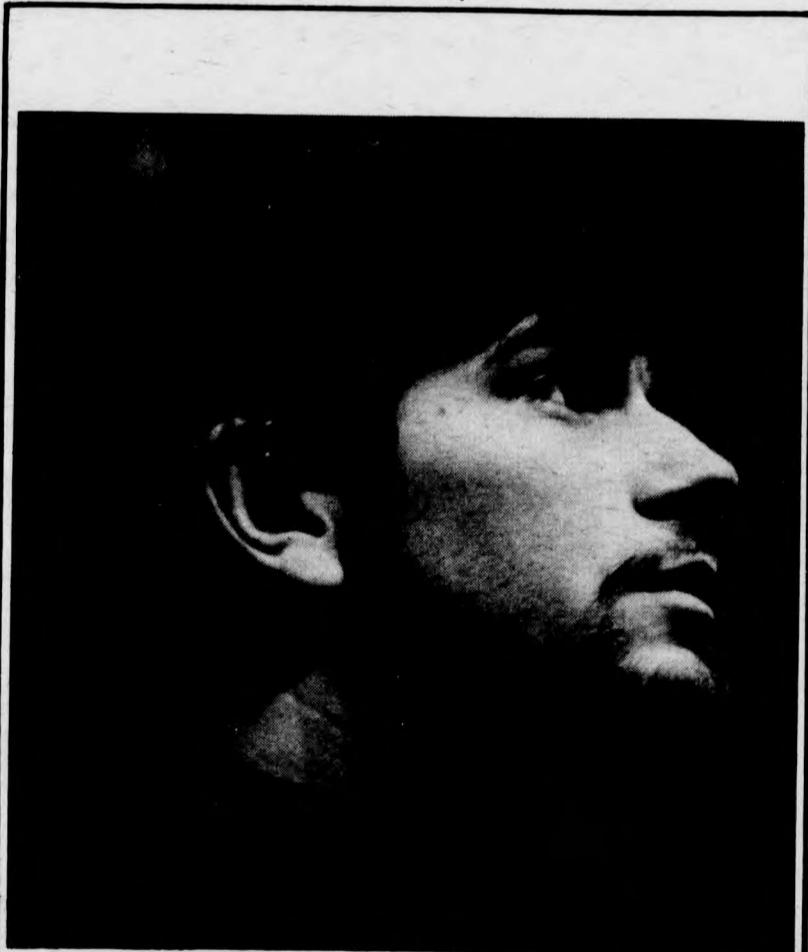
There was a problem in the lecture, namely one student started arguing with the professor. This disrupted the schedule in the classroom. The student constantly agreed with the professor since, as he put it, "You are bound to be more informed; and so more intelligent than I." The professor persuaded him that he shouldn't be talking about the course in the lectures. A touch of sarcasm and a bit of pathos.

I remember that wonderful time back in November when Jack lost his temper and when the unthinkers stood up and cheered and when we listened to what was said and when we thought that we had won — oh, for the good old days.

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