

"a democracy is a society in which honorable men may honorably disagree"

—adlai stevenson

"around here there are always two sides to every question; my side and the wrong one"

—harvey thomgirt

letters

huh?

I wish to take exception to the quotation attributed to me in yesterday's edition of the Gateway i.e. 'We have nothing in common'. I consider it a dereliction of duty on the part of your reporter to edit my statement in such a fashion. In fact what I did say was 'We in the GSA have nothing in common with the Student's Council, I also consider it a most irresponsible act on your part to use this misquotation in an editorial condemning the stand of the GSA. The validity of my statement has been borne out by the actions of the students' council representatives at the COSA meeting.

Brendan Woods
grad studies

exams, again

Year after year the director of student counselling services works against the practice of professors who administer difficult tests early in the year for their mere shock value. The rationale holds that students who have been idling around are in need of a catalytic learning experience which adds nothing to their cognitive make-up, but instead leaves behind an immeasurable shock effect supposedly designed to stir the poor souls into action. The repeated warnings against these practices as well as the fact that over 100 students a year have to be committed to mental institutes appear to indicate that professors at U of A remain oblivious to the warning signs.

Deviations in marking behavior within certain limits may be expected in a large population of full and part-time teachers as ours. But frequent observations, like my own, where three out of five serious graduate students failed in a Jan. exam, seem to call for specific constraints in marking those tests that are to be treated as constituents of the final grade.

Until recently it was practically impossible to require of any teaching member any skill at all pertaining to the art of teaching. Given the growing staff shortage across the continent, professors have to be lured to the university with the promise to feel free to "teach" whatever they happen to believe in.

Yet academic freedom must end short of where a professor is intuitively pleased to make his class responsible for his gross teaching inadequacies by flunking almost the lot. I propose that the students have recourse to an objective review of their marks in the light of the class mean, their distance from same, and the standard deviation of all scores. In addition I propose that a ceiling be set on the failure rate of all compulsory courses. I submit that time-shared computer installations accessible via type-in terminals have put the necessary statistical instruments at the disposal of every staff member with unbelievable simplicity.

My suggestions are not new. They have been explored for many years by progressive teachers and

by no means do I wish to create the impression that such a segment is entirely absent of U of A. But the progressive trend is being opposed by fearful teachers who feel that such data, in conjunction with some sort of test standardization, might lend itself to teaching evaluation. Their personal fears usually take the form of a protest against infractions of the academic freedom.

I can only ask these individuals with what justification they oblige students to take a particular course if they cry 'unfair' when the same students attempt to expose their performance record for public inspection.

E. W. Kottke
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grad problems

I have just read The Gateway account of the Council on Student Affairs meeting last Tuesday and the flim-flam practices demonstrated by some of the participants of that meeting really stick in my craw. In the first place, it requires no little gall to attach a fee of any kind for "services" which are neither utilized nor desired by the attendee. I was one of the 95 who voted against the raise in fees because I came to the U of A for the express purpose of working under my major professor, not to sit around the SUB lounge area.

Second, is it really in the best interests of the COSA and the students it represents to be so receptive to directives handed down by the Administration? I speak here of the premature vote on the issue of a fee raise. Moreover, while I've never been in favor of "Student Power" in toto, it sounds as if there are altogether too many professorial hands in student affairs at the U of A, certainly constituting a "pressure group".

In any case, it is not difficult to ascertain where the responsibility for Tuesday's fiasco rests. It rests with the student officers who think in the same specious mode as our student union president Al Anderson. One of Mr. Anderson's pearls of wisdom: "The fact that 87 per cent of the graduate students didn't bother to vote in the referendum implies, to me, implicit approval of students' union membership". It is far more probable that this turnout of voting graduate students indicates that they don't give a finker's damn about your Union, Mr. Anderson.

P. V. Fankboner
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a lesson learned

The February 16 Casserole taught me what I should have learnt long ago: never to give interviews over the phone, or indeed any interviews unless I get a chance to see and approve the text before it appears in print. I stress that I am to blame, not the interviewer, who may be excused for being more interested in journalistic effect than in complete accuracy in reporting complex attitudes.

Let me try to straighten out the main twists:

- (1) I do believe education is "possible" at a university this size.
- (2) My point that most U of A students remain uneducated at the point of their graduation makes sense only if my narrow definition of "education" is indicated: the freeing of the intellect; becoming intellectuals.
- (3) U of A undergraduates strike me as deplorably apolitical and intellectually backward, by and large, not compared to their counterparts in "most American universities", but compared to the undergraduate student bodies at the two American universities that I know well, namely Stanford and the University of California in Berkeley (not "Berkeley university"). They are not very good universities but possibly two of the best ones anywhere at this time.
- (4) I don't desire Berkeley-type confrontations with police clubings and all the rest at U of A; I do desire the type of students who will insist on being treated as citizens and participants rather than as

objects, or as raw materials for whatever products a multiversity may find it to its shortrun advantage to turn out.

The published interview was by no means way off from what I said; it had enough of a superficial resemblance to exonerate the reporter. Yet nuances can be quite important for some of us who are trying to be agents of change, and have to worry about making sense, not sensations. I have learnt my lesson.

Dr. Christian Bay
political science dept.

a rebuttal

I take it from Jon Malinowski's recent letter that a vital step in the organization of an "ideal" society would be to remove all impositions on individual morals and make every man a law unto himself. Perhaps I have misunderstood his definition of the word "ideal." If so, I freely admit his right to attach a different meaning to this word than I do. By the same token, however, hope that he will concede to me the right to hold a different view on what the word "intelligent" means. It is too bad that what he calls "the few intelligent who refute such impositions (as Mr. Manning's) on their morality" have so many non-intelligent people to work with. I guess that if these "few intelligent" are ever going to form the government of Alberta, they will have to get there by some means other than democracy since they are so few!

Mr. Manning does have a mind open to progress, and what Mr. Malinowski suggests is old fashioned and obsolete. His ideas have always been held by at least "a few intelligent" throughout all of recorded history. Yet there seems to be no record or evidence that they have ever been successful in producing an "ideal" society. Indeed, no nation with low moral standards has long remained great.

If Mr. Malinowski feels that Mr. Manning has no responsibility as an elected representative of the people to uphold decent moral standards in our society, I would refer him to the official handbook on sex education published by the Royal Board

of Education in Sweden. It concludes by saying, "Love between a man and a woman . . . is not only their private affair, even though it may at a superficial glance appear so. For it is a concern of the whole community that the children they produce should be given good care and upbringing."

If my good friend does not believe in authoritative moral standards, his opinions on morality are not authoritative either if he will be consistent with his belief. So for goodness sake, Mr. Malinowski, don't go around calling people who hold other views as "ignorant." If you so continue, you might have to be considered almost as narrow-minded as you would make the people who elected the present Alberta government.

Roger Armbruster
ed 1

in context

You will not doubt agree that an isolated quotation can sometimes give an entirely wrong impression.

In your issue of February 23 your reporter quoted me as saying that "Democracy is what is good for the well-educated and the well-cultured western Caucasian. Totalitarianism is said to be the only good thing for the under-developed and under-privileged societies." What your reporter omitted was what I went on to say very emphatically, i.e. that EVERY WEST INDIAN WORTHY OF HIS HARD-EARNED SALT SHOULD REPUDIATE THIS IDEA.

Further, I tried to convey as clearly as I could that, in my opinion the widespread but mistaken belief that some sort of Strong Man totalitarianism is best for uneducated, under-developed people is what, over the years, has been responsible for the gross inequities that exist in South America today and for the conditions that existed in Cuba in days of Batista. Furthermore, such misguided thinking may well be responsible for Cuba reverting to Batista-like conditions when the current benevolent Strong Man Castro is replaced by some other Strong Man.

I trust that this letter will be given suitable publicity in your next issue.

associate professor of sociology
Charles Hynam

in defence of michener park

The Feb. 20 letters concerning rent increases provoke me. I am opposed to "unreasonable" rents, but how do you determine when rent is "unreasonable"?

Contrary to the method used by all writers, you do not do it by comparing non-comparable accommodation in different geographic areas.

G. W. Sinclair compared facilities in Oregon with those in Edmonton, but omits any reference to the difference in the value of the U.S. and Canadian dollar, omits any reference to possible climate difference which would affect both the quality of the building necessary and also the amount required for maintenance (e.g. heat), and omits any reference to possible food-cost difference due to the different geographical locations.

R. Lynn Ogden compared a two-bedroom apartment in Edmonton which presently rents at "almost identically the same rate as the Michener Park suites" (What will it rent at this September?), but admits that unlike Michener Park, the electricity is not included, admits that washers and dryers are available only at appointed times (What times, how often?), and then says that this is an example of private enterprise providing the same facilities

for \$20 less than the university. Is my arithmetic wrong?

In any case, are the facilities comparable? Is a two-bedroom apartment the same as a two-floor five-and-a-half room (plus a large walk-in storage room) row house—a separate unit with no one and no noise above or below you, with its own heating and humidifying unit, with its own washer and dryer available at any time convenient to the tenant?

Linda Paul was of course under the impression that rents were being raised to \$130, and compares Michener Park to an apartment which cost \$120. But what will it rent for this September? Since Michener Park rents are going to \$120, the comparison loses its force. Or does it? She admits that she is comparing one-bedroom accommodation (How many rooms in total?) in a smaller city with the two-bedroom Michener Park units. Thus Michener Park provides more spacious accommodation in a presumably more expensive city for the same amount. The facts in her letter would now support Michener Park rents.

Furthermore, she says that they could do without the carpet on the stairs—but if she tried to study

amidst the noise created by people going up and down bare stairs, I think she would change her mind. She says they could shovel their own walks. How many married students would contract to shovel a walk for \$1.39 a month? She says they could do without their own washer and dryer, but it seems to me that those students whose wives are not home all day, ready to leap immediately when it's time for their hour at the common washers and dryers, appreciate being able to do housework whenever it is convenient for them—and not according to a community schedule.

If you must make comparisons, why not make them with comparable accommodation at other Canadian universities? Why not? Because Alberta is one of the very first to provide such accommodation for married students. For that they should be commended.

If rents are unreasonable, then prove it by showing that the university makes money on the units or that their expenses are out of line with similar expenses in Edmonton. But don't try to prove it by trying to compare different types of accommodation in different geographical areas.

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