

Exclusive dub runs University

Dear Editor,

This letter is in reference to the October 16 Excalibur editorial "Who's on Top: the Caste System on Campus and Why We Should Break It." I am in absolute agreement with the "spirit" of this editorial and with a great part of its literal meaning. I would just like to add a few remarks.

What does it mean to have control in the University? It means that only those "directly" involved in the university "should" be able to decide over the university's life. Who are those "directly" involved in the university? Well, three main sectors can be distinguished: the administration, the students, and university staff. Of these three sectors, who can dispute that students constitute the main reason why the university exists? Here's where the problem in the university begins. Students have no say in how the university is run: appointees (largely) do the job for us; student bodies (elected) have no serious input in what happens in the university; unelected administrators also do the job for us. No wonder the "supposedly liberal institution" is really run by a "junta": an exclusive club of CEO's, unelected bureaucrats, insensitive, patriarchal and paternalist appointees, all of whom find it comfortable to "work" in this great "feudal village" of ours.

So what's needed? In my opinion what we need are a few things: we need to elect the administration (at least a few layers of it); we need to collectively decide how the university's main decisions are made (direct and equal student representation in every administrative body of the university); we (elected administration, unionized staff, and students) need to be free from "outside" electoral demagogery in particular regard to university funds. Perhaps now that we are again "discussing" the Constitution it's time to enshrine in the constitution not only something like the Ontario NDP's Bill of Social Rights (the welfare state), but we need to make education (university education included) a constitutionally secured (financially and otherwise) activity (something like an adjustable percentage of the GNP devoted to education, as opposed to party budget decisions).

Do we want to build a community able to govern itself? The above outlined proposals are just some suggestions to reach that goal, more urgent now than ever.

Sincerely,
Marco Fonseca

Allergy a problem for student

Dear Editor,

Have you noticed that many store signs and product packages now bear the warning "contains peanuts" or "cooked in peanut oil?" These caveats are a direct response to the growing number of incidents of peanut allergies. My interest in all this is that I am one of many included in this group who can suffer an extremely painful allergic reaction if I eat or even just taste peanuts of any kind.

Why am I bringing this up (no pun intended)? Because a small coffee shop on the York campus sold me a muffin but neglected to replace the sign "chocolate chip" with "peanut butter chocolate chip." Fortunately, I was immediately sensitive to the taste and I only swallowed a tiny morsel. But so extreme is my allergy, that from this small bite, I was in unbearable pain for three hours that morning. I had to lie down in the Vanier junior common room and miss all my lectures until the pain subsided.

I came out of that experience unscathed, but some people in the past have not been so lucky. Take for instance the recent incident involving a McGill medical student who died within minutes of eating peanuts. He stored an adrenaline pen in his locker. The pen gives the allergic victim a shot of adrenaline which prevents the reaction from being fatal. Unfortunately, the student from McGill, upon realizing that he had eaten peanuts, ran to his locker to get a life-saving

dose of adrenaline, only to die a tragic death before he reached his pen.

Therefore, since the consequences of allergic reactions can be so devastating, it is essential that restaurants and coffee shops inform the buyer that what they are buying contains peanuts, or any other common reaction-inducing substance, like MSG, for example. If possible, these establishments should provide a complete list of ingredients upon request so we can reduce the total number of incidents of allergic reactions. It is also in the best interest of the restaurant to do this, to prevent any undue legal recourse.

If you have a serious allergy to food, get an adrenaline pen from your doctor. In addition, if you are not sure about the ingredients of something—ask! Don't be afraid to find out: it's your life at stake.

The coffee shop I went to is located right by the main entrance to York Lanes. Their muffins are delicious, but friends have told me that sometimes they too weren't eating what the sign above the muffin basket said they were eating.

Because errors like this can happen, it's your responsibility to make sure that what you are eating is safe, particularly with muffins and pastries, because a chocolate chip muffin looks exactly the same as a peanut butter chocolate chip muffin.

Dave Black

A call for informed criticism

Dear Editor,

A comment if I may, on your review of *Existere* (October 16). If you want to comment on a figure or print it in a university newspaper, I suggest that you should at least know what it is and who made it.

The figure you label as "the agony of creation" or a "nineteenth-century anatomy text" is in fact a Renaissance wonder. The figure, carved in hardwood is Andreas Vesalius who many consider the father of modern medicine and is contained in his epic cre-

ation *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, published in Basel in 1543.

The almost universal view of this work was well expressed in 1950 by J.B. Saunders and C.D. O'Malley who wrote, "The work of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels constitutes one of the greatest treasures of Western civilization and culture."—hardly agony. Criticism is always appropriate. At a university we might hope for informed criticism.

Yours truly,
David Logan
Department of Biology

letters continued

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