

## ACPC report: UNB priorities are off base

There has been much discussion recently about the "quality" of education in New Brunswick and the effects on this "quality of education" of cutbacks. On the one hand there are numerous government officials and university administrators calling for higher levels of achievement or proficiency in students as well as the introduction of greater restrictions to insure that only a 'quality' student may enter or leave the institution. On the other hand there are groups such as the New Brunswick Coalition of Students who protest governmental cutbacks on the premise that this seriously affects educational quality.

What is this "quality" and how is it measured? A Senate meeting last November disclosed that even those who assert the need for improved quality are sometimes unsure as to what it actually means.

To discuss quality and proficiency we must first consider how they are measured. However, analysis of the various methods of examination and student evaluation reveals in most cases where the standards of achievement are quite ephemeral, whimsical and obscure.

Really deleterious effects of educational cutbacks can be discreetly hidden behind a veil of complicated grading and testing schemes and even more effectively behind bureaucratic babble. The latter form is admirably illustrated in the recently released Draft Study on the Future of the University compiled by the Academic and Campus Planning Committee.

Having discussed the report in detail in previous issues it is unnecessary to consider individually the various parts of it, but we feel it is crucial to reiterate some of our findings and the implications therein.

The crux of the report lies in the recommendations which deal with the cut in teachers and courses. Nowhere is there any indication that the administration itself should either be cut back or should be required to account for its own costs. The very lack of allusion to this possibility speaks volumes as to where the priorities of the University lie. One is once again brought back to consider quality and must question what the Committee members really feel about the issue. When addressing themselves to the

media, government officials and administrators emphasize their concern with the quality of education, agreeing in context and form with all the various reports which appear concerning the illiteracy of the average student.

It is indeed questionable whether these august persons are in truth concerned with the aforementioned quality when a report such as that released by the

ACPC is delivered to the unsuspecting university community on the premise that "we know what is best for this university and here it is". It appears rather, that the priority in this institution lies with the administration despite the fact that academic concerns suffer as a consequence.

Numerous instances come to mind when one considers the past behaviour of the administration with regards to academic vs

are not arguing the legality of the situation here nor are we questioning the right of the president or anyone else in the administration to make the decision as they see fit, what we are doing is exercising our right to an opinion. The 'moral' implications of the issue are painfully clear and epitomize the lacklustre

and even careless manner in which the administration all too often views academic concerns.

We do not think it unreasonable to assume that the function of a University is to provide education and enlightenment to its members and fail to understand how this can be accomplished by cutting administrative interests. That which comes most readily to mind is the recent Mervyn Franklyn issue where consent (legal consent, we must add) was given to the removal of some \$72,000 worth of equipment. We

back on academics before

administrative details. Students and we believe, faculty, are a remarkably hardy race and could survive quite well without some of the "frills" which adorn so much of the administrative positions. Professors, books, reasonable costs and a comprehensive curriculum cannot and should not be dispensed with, for without them then the whole point of University as we see it is lost. Priorities therefore should lie with academics and as professors and courses are perhaps the most integral part of this sector then they should receive top priority. We would like to suggest that the Draft Study be recycled and a more relevant and realistic study be conducted. The work which was applied to the Study could be put to a better use than has been done. The time and efforts of those involved could produce a viable and realistic course of action which could be taken by the University rather than the misleading, vague and obviously biased study which we now have.

## A typical Rugby pub?

