

Even washrooms are segregated

When I was a freshman, and heard my first welcoming speech from a university president, I was impressed. I accepted his challenge to become involved in extra-curricular activities so that I would become well-rounded; I solemnly listened to his caveat that I should not, however, neglect my studies for this was the "real purpose" of my coming to university—"to learn to love knowledge"; and I decided on hearing his warning, that I should not become a conformist and lose my individuality.

When I was a second-year student reading the President's advice, I was nauseated. Like most freshman, I had found that the real individuals on my campus were rebuked for being ir-

responsible; that "learning to love knowledge" meant sitting in a lecture hall, with hundreds of others, copying down (and later spewing back) the truth the professor had decided I should love; and that extra-curricular activities were fine provided that they kept up the University's image as a good wholesome, fun-loving place.

Ever since, I have dreamed of the opportunity to write my own "Welcome to Freshmen" speech.

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Well, you made it. For this you deserve some credit. Seventy-five per cent of your fellow high school students didn't. It doesn't prove you are really any smarter of course, but it does prove you have some stamina, (or else that you're so gutless you took all the crap

from the schools which your fellows with more integrity refused to take.) It proves you know how to write intelligence tests so teachers think you're "innately" smart and therefore give you good marks. It also proves you realize a person can't get a secure, creative or even a moderately well-paying job in this society without either a trade or a university education. And since statistically you're probably from a status-conscious middle class home, you chose university.

LEARN AT UNIVERSITY?

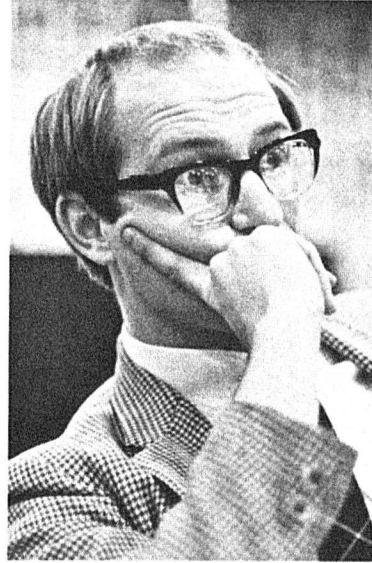
On the other hand, you may have decided to come to university because you thought you would be able to really learn here. Possibly you even gained some strength in high school from the idea that things would be different in university. If so, you should be told now (ask any second-year student, if you don't believe me) it just isn't so. You're going to have to memorize the same kind of meaningless stuff as you did in high school. You're going to find your fellow students and your teachers are still concerned with marks more than knowledge, and the same inane multiple-choice tests are also prevalent in the university. Since you have already confronted the registration process, there is no need to tell you the university is rife with as many bureaucratic "thou shalt nots" as high school.

The only real difference will be that at the university you probably won't talk to any professors. As a matter of fact, if you've been in the Tory Building, you'll have noticed the main floor washrooms are segregated between staff and students, just as they are in high schools. Since we all pee the same way (sex held constant) one must conclude, as you probably have, that the administration wants to make sure students don't get any more opportunity than possible to recognize that staff are actual physical human beings.

SEGREGATION

As another example, most of you will soon try squeezing into the coffee room of the Tory Building between classes. Assuming you get what you expected and paid for from your friendly automat machine (which is owned and operated by all-the-students'-friend, the Hudsons' Bay Company, instead of by the students' union as it should be), try finding a relaxing spot to sit down in that interior decorator's nightmare. You'll notice that despite the press of students and garbage there are no faculty in the room. Why? Because they're in the relatively spacious lounge on the 14th floor where you're not allowed. If you begin to wonder how messes like

this happen, try this for an answer: students aren't consulted in the planning or operation of academic buildings. Students are expected to pass through academic buildings and to stop long enough to copy lecture notes, but they are not expected to live in buildings in the same way faculty, and to some extent graduate students, are. There are very few places for faculty and students to casually talk to each other over a cup of coffee, because there is a widespread belief here that this kind of intercourse is either unimportant or beneath the dignity of faculty. The result is



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you yourself as a student will likely come to think you should not impose on your professors' time. You will come to believe your role in the university is to "be seen but not heard"; that you should do what you're told, that it is somehow indecent to make waves. At least you will, if you're like most students at the University of Alberta, from the swinger in the students' union hierarchy to the kid from the boondocks who takes notes on campus from 8 to 5 then studies all evening in some crummy room which is cheaper than residence. It is not apathy which is the problem as student leaders often cry; it's a problem of a system which fundamentally works to alienate you from your professors, and even worse—from education itself. What is needed is not more welfare committees or communications channels; there's a plethora of these now. What is needed is direct student involvement in all the decisions of the university, so we don't have to futilely complain after a decision is made.

NOT WANTED

Given the lack of facilities for students, the lack of human contact between student and profes-

sor, and the generally uninspiring methods of teaching, you would almost think that as a student you're not wanted at the university. The recent hike in tuition and residence fees would seem to be enough to dispel any doubts about this. But nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. The university really does want you here. The more of us that come, the better it's case for government grants and the more research laboratories it can build—facilities which for the most part do not help the student, but which enhance the institution's prestige as a knowledge factory. However, while your presence as a number is welcomed, and perhaps your graduation as a skilled worker is desired, your existence as a human being is not of import to the bureaucracy. At best, it is tolerated.

REDEEMING FEATURES

This is rather a negative welcome to a modern university. Happily, there are some redeeming features about the place. There is a library full of good books, there are knowledgeable and interesting people at all levels, (if you can talk to them), and there are even some staff who care about students here. With their help, you can learn and grow despite the institutionalized system. Unfortunately, you can't ignore the system. You can try believing in it, but everybody I know who has tried this approach either gave up, or cracked up, or became an administrator. You can try, like most, to get through by manipulating the system to your ends and by out-guessing the faculty. (In fact, some amount of conning is necessary for anybody to survive in the system—from the university president and his welcome-to-freshmen speeches, through the professor and his research contract, to you and your partly plagiarized term papers).

CHANGE THE SYSTEM

But while it is true some conning seems necessary to survive, you would think one also should be concerned with more than mere animalistic survival while at the university.

This brings us to the third way of dealing with the system: you can try, like Students for a Democratic University and some others, to change the system which makes manipulation necessary. It isn't as easy a way to get through university because there's always a constant tension between surviving in the environment and reshaping it, and one isn't always sure which to do when. But the approach does have the advantage of at least confirming to yourself that you're a human being. And you might just start refusing to act like a cog in the great knowledge processing machine.

His honors degree didn't mean a thing

"I feel cheated", said Ken Stone as he tore his honors poli--sci and economics degree at the University of Toronto convocation.

The Ontario Union of Students vice-president had returned to the stage with his diploma after the arts degrees had been conferred.

The ushers struggled to remove him but John Sword, acting president, gave in to cries of "Let him speak" and allowed Stone to use the microphones.

He then told the graduating students he thought his four university years had been meaningless. Many reacted with booing but were stopped by Sword who told them to allow Stone the two minutes necessary to finish.

When noise quickly subsided, Stone shouted, "Fellow niggers, see what Mr. Charlie's done to your minds?"

The remark was made in refer-

rence to an article by Jerry Farber titled 'The student as nigger' in which Farber compares the student to slaves of an authoritarian university structure.

He then tore his diploma in half and left the hall.

Stone later explained his distaste for the education system. "It is directed toward the socialization of the student and not toward human development." He said there should be less emphasis on memorization of facts and more emphasis on interpersonal relationships.

He was disappointed with audience reaction. He said they were rather naive. "The action affected the grads most because it hit them the hardest".

Many criticized Stone for speaking out in the wrong place and at the wrong time. Stone said he was looking for this impact. "If no one ever stood up, nothing would ever be heard."

Most people like to see these items in a newspaper

A newspaper editor in Montana placed his tongue firmly in his cheek the other day, and composed a list of answers to a questionnaire on what a newspaper subscriber would like to read.

Here are the responses to what the average reader desires to see:

1. My Name.
2. A front page article showing how crooked the city government is most of the time.
3. My wife's name.
4. A feature article showing 25 ways on how to cheat on income tax forms.
5. My kids' names.
6. A local news item about the affair my neighbor is having.
7. A classified ad offering a new home for sale for \$4,000.
8. More news about lawbreakers.
9. Less news about lawbreakers. I was picked up last night and I should not have to pay a fine.

10. An editorial condemning high school teachers for being too liberal with "F's."

11. A wedding picture of the groom instead of the bride when he is more handsome than she is pretty.

12. A sports picture of me when I bowled 183.

13. More advertisements on things that merchants are giving away.

14. A front page picture of my neighbor being hauled out of the bar by his wife.

15. A front page spread about the deadbeat who lives across the street from me who just had his car repossessed.

16. Forget the last one. I just got word from the finance company that they're coming after my car.

17. More letters to the editor naming the crooks we have in town.

This is page FIVE

The Gateway reserves this page for student opinion. Twice each week, letters, columns and articles written primarily by students with something intelligent to say will be printed. That is, if they bring them to room 282 of the student union building. If mailing contributions, address them to The Editor, The Gateway, University of Alberta.

Letters should not be more than 300 words in length. Short, concise letters are likely to be printed promptly—and read. We will not print letters which have not been signed by the writer. Also, it should bear the writer's faculty and year.

Today, there is a message to each and every freshman from Peter Boothroyd, a graduate student in sociology. His column will appear each week in The Gateway.

First year students may not appreciate what he says, but any senior student will tell you it is only too true.

There are also two articles, one amusing and the other very serious. What Ken Stone has to say about his degree is not uncommon.

Until Tuesday, we await your contributions.

—The Editor