

NEWS DIGEST

Faculty criticize Atkinson Dean

By SANJU VASWANI

A number of serious developments appear to be threatening the stability and future growth prospects for Atkinson College.

In a letter dated March 14, 1988, the Chairs and Programme Coordinators of Atkinson College expressed their lack of confidence in the leadership of Dean Stephen Griew. The three problem areas were the lack of a clear academic plan, the lack of sound budget management, and widespread staff demoralization as a result of administrative restructuring.

The Chairs and Programme Coordinators met with Dean Griew on Wednesday, April 6 in an attempt to alleviate this crisis situation, however, no further information was released before press time.

Aggravating this situation are the interdepartmental tensions caused by the rapid growth of the Administrative Studies programme. Presently 40% of all Atkinson students are in Administrative Studies. Other departments feel that this ratio gives Administrative Studies substantial clout in its efforts to procure more funding.

One of the more familiar proposals to alleviate these interdepartmental tensions is the disassociation of Administrative studies from the main body of Atkinson College. According to Ray Ellenwood, Chair of English Studies at Atkinson, the questions facing Administrative studies are symptoms of the broader problems facing the entire College. He said that they need to assess what exactly Atkinson has become and what they would like the college to develop into.

Students protest Bethune vote

By AMY MENON

Students of Bethune College have

been protesting what they feel is an "unfair election." College council elections on March 15 opened at 10 a.m. and closed at 4 p.m. but according to council regulations, polling booths should have remained open until 5 p.m.

Toni Nonez, the Bethune electoral officer, officially apologised for the occurrence but Geraldine Donlin, a Bethune resident has initiated a petition protesting the election. However, the petition requires that the students obtain 190 signatures before council members acknowledge it. Considering that there were only 250 voters, students feel that this is "unreasonable."

According to Donlin, students are "upset because the commuter students were not supposed to vote for the residence chairperson, and on the ballots, commuters were allowed to do so." According to college regulations, the residence chairperson is a position that only Bethune residents should be involved in electing.

According to Donlin, the students were also told "not to bother with the petition by some members of the council because they assumed that we would not get the signatures."

Nonez said that "a meeting was called because I left the petition booth 45 minutes early. The input of the candidates was obtained by a secret ballot to decide if they wanted to accept the election as it was or to redo the whole thing. They voted unanimously that they would accept it. Before voting, we discussed that if there was one negative vote, we would redo the election. Because the vote was unanimous, we decided to accept the election as it was. After that, it was out of my hands."

Nonez also added that "students were told that if there was a problem, they could contact Bethune Master Dave Lumsden."

College council elections which were held during March include the following results. The President of Bethune College is now Peter Donato. In Winters College, Darren Laval was elected president, replacing Wendy Dingam. And in Vanier, Phil Downes was elected president.

The proper etiquette of dealing with the blind

By DAVE WEISSMAN

You find yourself waiting at a crowded bus stop outside the Fine Arts Building and a blind person heads to the front of the line. Should you tell him or her to stand behind you? Or should you let them on first because they will probably need a seat? The mixed reactions to this scenario offered from both blind and sighted people demonstrates a communication gap between the two groups.

Lawrence Euteneir is a legally blind York student whose undergraduate thesis focuses on this problem. "Sighted people get embarrassed sometimes when dealing with the blind in a social situation," he explains. "They tend to overcompensate, as though blindness were a crippling disability." He also points out that most people will avoid a situation like the above if they have had a previous embarrassing experience.

His thesis, then, will act as a communications guide between blind and sighted people; a book of social etiquette to demonstrate when one encounters a blind person in a social situation.

In order to determine where the communication gaps existed, Euteneir, along with his professor, Dave Wiesenthal, designed a questionnaire consisting of 30 different scenarios. The common thread of the scenarios includes an everyday situation where the blind person encountered is a complete stranger. Then,

one chooses the most appropriate reaction to the given situation.

Of course there are no absolute right or wrong reactions when handling social etiquette, but Euteneir says that verbal communication is often the best solution. When leading a blind person to a table in a restaurant, for example, a simple question like "would you like me to explain the layout to you?" can often avoid a potentially embarrassing situation.

Raised in Georgetown, Ontario, and blind since eight, Euteneir's high school teachers were reluctant to provide any special teaching methods for him. "I grew up in an environment where the disabled were forced to adapt to the ways of able-bodied people."

He notes that some reforms have taken place; the legislation of Bill C-82 states that secondary schools must provide any special tools needed for a disabled person to receive an education in a non-segregated environment.

However, Euteneir says that most institutes do not publish any information about etiquette for the blind. Lawrence hopes he can translate his thesis into a pamphlet of social etiquette, which will improve communication between the blind and sighted people.

If you would like more information about etiquette for the blind or the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, you can contact Lawrence at 6 Assiniboine Road, #1103, Downsview M3J 1L3.

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