

EDITORIAL

by Allan Carter

Last spring, UNB's University Planning Committee created a Task Force on the Quality of Student Life at the University of New Brunswick. The task force's mandate is:

to take a broad-ranging approach to the availability and quality of services and facilities for students bearing on social, cultural and athletic services, as well as health and wellness services, and the provisions of housing support services such as counseling and placement.

With this mandate in mind, the task force used the work of Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In his study, *Campus Life: In Search of Community*, Boyer devises six notions of community.

The task force is now inviting input from students and are using the six types of community as a guide to stimulate feedback. Each week, in *the Brunswickan's* news section, two of these communities are featured and students are asked for their input in the quality of life at UNB in light of each community description. The six communities are:

A purposeful community where all members are committed to the educational mission of the University and where a concern about learning pervades the classrooms and departments as well as residence life and extra-curricular activities.

An open community where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where everyone respects the rights and dignity of everyone else.

A just community where people learn to respect and value one another for their differences, while at the same time defining the values shared by all those who join the university as scholars and as citizens.

A disciplined community where there are clear standards governing academic conduct, where individuals accept their obligations to the group, where appropriate rules govern campus life and where all parts of college life are governed by high standards.

A caring community where the well-being of each member is sensitively supported and where

service to others is encouraged.

A celebrative community where people are encouraged to share rituals and traditions that connect them to the campus community. The academic mission and the integrity of the higher learning institution, as well as the diversity of people who make up the community, should perform all celebrations on campus, formal and informal, academic and athletic.

Indeed, the above descriptions of community are utopian. It is unlikely that any task force working for any number of years could pinpoint all the problems at UNB. What becomes even more difficult is an attempt to rectify such problems. Nevertheless, the student representation on the task force (Student Union, GSA, CAMPUS, and the residence community) ensures that the student voice should be heard. It does not, however, guarantee that the student voice will have an impact on the task force's findings. Certainly, student members of the task force will make an honest attempt to collect input from students, but as individuals it is impossible for each member to voice every concern of each student at UNB. Therefore, it is important that individual students, student clubs and organizations, and house committees take on the initiative to present to the Task Force their concerns about student life at UNB. At the same time, one would hope that each student representative on the task force will also make attempts to consult with various student organizations and committees.

With regard to the six communities, it is painfully obvious that UNB does not meet all of the community descriptions. A simple look at last week's and this week's *Brunswickan* illustrates some of the complaints and concerns which individuals have about the quality of student life at UNB.

A purposeful community - Melynda Jarratt, a former *Brunswickan* news editor and UNB alumni member makes it clear in her letter in Blood and Thunder (Zero Tolerance, page 6) that "drastic measures" must be taken to ensure that educators at UNB uphold and respect the standards set by our society. Perhaps "zero-tolerance" with some of the educators' conduct would ensure that a concern about learning pervades the classrooms and departments as well as residence life and extra-curricular activities.

A disciplined community - In the opinion article (page 5) Kwame Dawes, a former editor-in-chief and alumni member questions the *clear standards governing academic conduct* in light of the disturbing situation in the Business Administration Faculty concerning a group of international students and the questionable conduct of the faculty.

A caring community - Last week, news reporter Mark Minor wrote a story (page 3) concerning students who are dealing with learning disabilities. Students with such disabilities use to be able to get help at the Learning Centre after an assessment of the student was performed by counseling services. The cost of such a service was paid for by the university. This year a student is left to pay the expense him/herself which can reach up to \$700.00 per student.

A just community - Last week A. J. Carisse voiced a concern in Blood and Thunder (page 6) over the fact that smoking students do not have a smoking room in the Student Union Building, aside from the College Hill Social Club.

Of course, just as there were complaints and concerns in the last two issues of *the Brunswickan*, there was also proof that UNB is meeting some of the criteria of the six communities. For example, the successful Singapore experience and the 18th Annual Coaster Derby, which were reported in last week's issue, are perfect examples of what the goals at UNB should be in terms of striving to be a celebrative community.

Thus, while the descriptions of the communities are certainly ideal situations, they act as a practical guideline for both the task force and those in the university community who wish to provide input on the quality of student life at UNB. The task force's adaptation of these six communities is an indication that its goal is certainly ambitious and it wishes to make an attempt to cover all aspects of student life at UNB. The question remains whether or not students will be as ambitious to take this opportunity to analyze how student life at UNB has affected them and what changes they think should be made.



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The Brunswickan, in its 126th year of publication, is Canada's oldest official student publication. The Brunswickan is generally published every Friday during the school year by Brunswickan Publishing Inc with a circulation of 10,000. Membership is open to all University of New Brunswick Fredericton students, but all members of the university community are encouraged to contribute.

The opinions contained in this newspaper are those of the individual writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Brunswickan.

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The Brunswickan is printed with flair by Maritime Web in Moncton, and impeccably delivered by Tiny.

Subscription rates are \$25 per year. Second class mail is in effect #8120

National advertising rates are available from Campus Plus at (416) 362-6468.

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