

# judgement is in ....

By Carolyn Ryan

Why should he worry about some bird course when he's got Policy to do?" This question, overheard last week at the UPEI Bookstore, may seem incomprehensible to those of us who aren't Business majors. To those who are, it makes sense. Policy, or more formally, Business Administration 492: Management Policy, is the spectre hanging over the heads of 103 fourth-year business majors at UPEI this

week. It's a required course — there's no avoiding it — marked entirely on the basis of a research project conducted by groups of our students. Formal presentations take place on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of this week, so the air in Kelley Building is tense.

It didn't start out that way. When UPEI was established in 1969, the project was no more than a term paper in a traditional business policy course.

Gradually, however, the

level of competition grew. In 1973, the graduating class presented a plaque to the best Policy project of the year. Then, in 1975 the Department of Industry, which has been and is still using completed projects, instigated prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200 for the top three presentations. It now provides for expenses of \$185 per four-person group as well.

Doing a Policy project involves selecting an idea for starting up a business enterprise (which requires creati-

vity and imagination) and then developing the idea using skills taught in the first three years of a Business Administration program. Group members have to do marketing, financial, and feasibility studies, using information gathered inside and outside the university community, and operate their business on paper for three or four years.

J. Joseph Revell, Director of the School of Business Administration, calls the research project a "mini-thesis", an "exercise in group dynamics". He says the course is valuable in that it gives students experience in working with others under deadlines and pressure, a common situation in the world of business, and in entrepreneurial creativity, as groups are encouraged to select their own topic and to develop a completely novel line of thought or approach to their topic.

It takes a lot of ingenuity and a grasp of basic business principles, but students manage to live through it. Competition helps, as does the hope of having one's project used in the business world. This does happen: the Charlottetown Spa is living proof of a policy project that survived Presentation Week.

This takes time and effort. According to Revell, projects are now reaching lengths of 200 pages or more. Students have told him that they are doing the work of three regular courses in Business Administration 492. Many take reduced course loads in order to deal with the workload. Some let their non-Business electives slide. "But they manage to scramble through it," says Revell. He points to a virtually 100% pass rate in the course.

The course is only offered in the fall semester, so the

rare ones who don't make it have to wait a year and do it over again. That alone is an incentive to succeed.

Still, year after year, students go through the experience and seem to benefit from it.

"Most people who've gone through it feel that it should stay as it is," says Business Society President Kenny Mutter. "They say it's the only course they really remember once they've graduated."

Recently, there has been doubt in the School of Business Administration as to whether the course should stay as it is. The amount of time it takes from other courses has the administration concerned.

Last week, at a meeting between the Business Society and Business Faculty, three different courses of action were proposed.

One was to preserve the present system, but with some fine-tuning, such as the introduction of a marketing research course in the semester preceding Policy. Mutter believes the addition of seminars and guidelines would help students greatly.

Another idea discussed was

to make 492 a full year course, with the project worth only one-third of the course evaluation.

Finally, administration proposed varying the type of project required so that individuals could work on them, with professors' help, during the summer months. This proposal would cause difficulties with the present system of competitive rating. Because of the different quality of projects criteria might have to be altered.

Mutter says the changes, which would begin in September of 1984, would first affect this year's sophomore class. In order to help administration decide the issue, he and the Business Society are trying to discover how students in the program react to the ideas.

For this year at least, Policy remains mainly as it has been for the last eight years. Participants will be working far into the night, typing frantically, assimilating information, and praying.

When the presentations end on Friday, one has the feeling that celebrations will be by no standards be small-scaled or lukewarm.

# The Netted Gem

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A taste of things to come? Winter is a-coming in .....

## SU explains soft drink position

By John Dougan

The question was raised recently concerning the Student Union's support for a non-Island soft drink firm, when it could be dealing with one that operates right in the heart of Charlottetown.

Heather Love, General Manager of the UPEI Student Union said, "The University has been dealing with Island Beverage Coke (the present supplier) for quite a number of years, and it was originally owned by an Island company." Ownership was then transferred to a firm off the Island which eventually led to the purchase of off-Island products.

"We have always been happy with the supplier," Love said, "and it's a very good supporter of the Student Union, providing the proper equipment and spending a lot of time advertising through the University. With all the purchases made, it would be very hard to consider whether each and every one provides income to the Island economy."

The idea to change or to look for something else did

not surface until about a month ago, when an Island firm came to check the pop machines on campus. It was then that the issue surrounding support for Island businesses first appeared. The fact remains, however, that the Student Union was never approached by an Island firm with a proposal concerning soft drinks, said Love.

The Student Union should not be expected to drop present dealings and the good services of a supplier in the middle of the academic year, just because it's not an Island-owned business. Love said, "If a company wishes to approach the Student Union with a proposal, then it should do so in the spring, when we have the summer to consider it. If a proposal is made by an Island firm and it's reasonable and does not cost more, I can see no reason why it wouldn't be accepted."

In light of this, how can anyone say that the Student Union is not eager to support Island business, when in fact its eagerness has never been tested?

## Professors overloading students?

By Johnathan Orlowski

For how many hours do you, the student, attend classes and study? Did you ever gauge yourself? Have you ever wondered how many hours your professors put in beside their required forty hours a week? Did you ever feel that your professor thinks he or she is the only one on campus assigning work?

One professor at least thinks his colleagues are this narrow-minded. "I'm not taking a bleeding-heart position for students; much growth will require much effort," says Professor James R. Kelly.

But is this effort reasonable or disproportionate? "I suspect that if all course requirements were documented we would find the total required effort and time excessive and unreasonable ... if indeed this turned out to be so, it would be hard to deny that this was an abuse."

It is the student who is taking five or six credited courses who is being affected during the course of the semester. Isn't the student aware of what is going on? "Such abuse can survive and thrive for a long period of time (in any system) through exploiting reasonable and

legitimate claims of other courses and professors. What may be most regrettable would be the state of mind already demonstrated by professors involved in such abuse and then offered to students for imitation."

Students are being conditioned, as in Pavlov's famous dog stimulus response experiment, by professors, with the result of a loss of credibility for students. What can be done about it? "A full presentation of this matter together with a demand for appropriate action, would require a high level of documentation by students ... the

Student Union might render an excellent non-political service by doing a thorough study aimed at two goals: 1) to determine whether overloading of students with work exists. If there is evidence of an abuse here, then 2) to work with Senate to insist that this abuse be completely and permanently eliminated in the future."

A final word from Professor Kelly, "In short, is the apparatus of education expanding so vastly as to encroach upon and threaten the very existence of the process?"

You, the student, must decide for yourself.