



Kampus Koncern

by joel hansen

Now that most students on this campus are in the process of gathering information for the Christmas evaluation, it is fitting that we take a review of this semester with a view towards forming a synthesis of the progress or regress of the drive to have evaluation procedures humanized.

UPEI is going into entrenchment. Since 1969 this university has been grasping at straws to determine its direction and purpose. Now, in 1973, we are witnessing a reaction towards the pre-1960's style of evaluation and course requirements.

For example, proposals A and B of the curriculum proposals, printed in the last issue of the Cadre, remind one of the situation at most universities before the revolutionary period of 1967-69 in education. In those days a person entering university with the intention of gaining a bachelor of arts degree was required to take courses predelineated by the various departments, and made mandatory by the body governing the academic functioning of the Arts faculty. That meant that students in an arts program had no choice for their first two years of study.

After a virtual educational revolution on the major campuses throughout North America in the late 60's most universities attempted to reform their programs, especially in the Arts and Education faculties. This university, since it was formed at the

climax of the "break - through" period, attempted to liberalize the Arts program with such programs as the "Pilot Project". For everyone though, there were no required courses as such. Although a student had to have a major, i.e. 14 courses in one area of study, all choices of courses were, and still are, left up to the student.

Now, however, we are witnessing the return of the pendulum. The Pilot Project is dead. Free choice at all levels in the Arts faculty is on thin, very thin ice. We are not far from the day when a student entering UPEI will ha-

ve his/her program outlined and computerised for the sake of up-lifting the standards at this university. But one can ask if the assumption of necessary courses for a degree is a valid one? It is based on another assumption, namely the supposed inability of the student, coming out of high school, to correctly make judgements in picking courses towards a useful degree in Arts. One can argue to the contrary!

Instead of making courses mandatory one should take a long hard look at the structure of course style education. Maybe this is not the best method? Maybe a new method of interdisciplinary non-courses, i.e. a program in total immersion would be better. Instead of taking five or six courses of various disciplines maybe a total immersion in one field per year or semester would be more beneficial to the students. The program would look something like this.

If a student wished to gain a B.A. degree he would choose one field per semester. If he were interested in say, philosophy at any particular time, then a total immersion, with no other courses of other disciplines, in philosophy for a period of one or two semesters would be to his benefit. This would allow the student to concentrate his grasp on one area in order that he "break-through" the surface and delve into the depths of philosophy, etc., gaining a better and more complete knowledge of the method of philosophical inquiry, the history of philosophy and the other various modes that is philosophy.

Once a person has been immersed in one method, of which he/she now has adequate understanding, he/she can enter other disciplines with some sort of "attack" to work from. Since the method has been developed through immersion the student has a sense of "solidness" that the present system and style seem not to develop.

Graphically the system looks like this:
First Year - total immersion in one field.

Second Year - Interdisciplinary study. This is the year the student branches out to different disciplines for new comprehension of his/her totality.

Third Year - Second immersion. This year the student does a recast or a rethink of his/her first immersion in a verification mode. The third year is a verification of the first, as a result of the second.

Fourth Year - This year the student must present a thesis, original in nature, which is to be evaluated by his/her professor who has administered the immersion program of the student's choice.

(In all years, any structure or method of teaching is to be left up to the professor and student, with the exception of the second year which, due to its cross-disciplinary nature, would be quite like the present system.)

In all years the method of evaluation should be left under departmental control.

The benefit of this system, which lifts it over the present system, is its immersion feature. Linguists have known for a long time that the immersion method ensures a more adequate understanding of the material to be grasped.

The only argument against this idea is the problem of financial structuring

of the purchase of the degree, i.e. tuition costs. The present system leads toward a functional marketing technique, i.e. a course is offered in a package at a price.

I claim that this system, (the present one) can leave the student "high and dry" after four years of university. A student can attend university for four years and still not adequately understand any one discipline because of the surfaceness of the present system.

Basically I am saying this. Instead of reaction, let's have revolution; let us push onward toward a better, more humane educational system. I offer this idea of a program to support that quest.