

letters to the editor...

Artistic freedom

Editor:

Two friends of mine were recently kicked out of their Creative Writing class because they were disruptive and over-opinionated. I am writing this letter to defend their "improper" behavior and to also discuss something which I think is important for some UPEI students to hear.

Due to lack of allotted space, I can't go in-depth into the many details of this situation. Here are some things that are worthy to note though: Along with the course professor, there was outside involvement from another prof who, admittedly, had the right to get involved in the matter. What this prof didn't have the right to do was send e-mail messages to the two students commenting not only on their behavior in the course, but also on other, unrelated personal issues (like the writing method of one of the students and the academic careers of both). These additional comments were totally out of place and revealed an appalling vengeful streak and an equally appalling ignorance on the part of the professor: a Creative Writing course is no place for a student to discuss his/her writing methods??

It should be added that the messy way in which these professors handled this whole ordeal has considerably damaged the academic spirit of the aforementioned students. They are doubtful they will return to UPEI next school year.

I am really writing this letter to lament about a trend I have noticed in certain areas of the UPEI English program/dept. While I am not defending the perhaps disrespectful way in which the two students behaved, I feel it necessary to defend their outspokenness and passion. It has become evident to me that certain professors here are not sympathetic to those who want to retain their individuality and originality...at least not in their classroom. If there is no room in a Creative Writing course for someone who has high ideals and a sometimes "over-passionate" opinion of literature then is there room anywhere in UPEI for the person? And if not then how dare we teach students the lives and works of Shakespeare, D.H. Lawrence, Walt Whitman, William Blake, or Jack Kerouac. Maybe we're more comfortable with a dead Whitman than a living one? The truth is the average UPEI student enrolled in the English program can neither sympathize with nor truly understand much of the art and artists they study in class. Some of these people are the moral and intellectual descendants of those who exiled Lawrence from England, who put Burroughs and Ginsberg on trial for their works. It's a shame that some professors have to come down to this level, that they feel the need to protect these handicapped sensitivities. As a student of a university and as an artist I am completely disappointed and saddened by this trend.

Maybe I've said too much, maybe I've let my emotions get the best of me...obviously, that can be a dangerous thing to let happen in this university. S.O.S,

- G.D.

In support of CFS

To the Editor, Panther Prints:

I understand that there is currently a referendum being held at the University of Prince Edward Island, asking students if they wish to become members of the Canadian Federation of Students. As VP-External Affairs of a member local of the Canadian Federation of Students (McGill Post-Graduate Students' Society, local 79), I would like to comment on how vital membership in the Canadian Federation of Students has been for the work of external affairs and government relations, and for university affairs work.

As VP-External, I count on the Canadian Federation of Students to keep me up to date on issues of governmental policy that affect students' lives. Each year at the annual general meeting, all the members of the Canadian Federation of Students work to develop national campaigns into which member locals can plug. Then the national office prepares high quality materials to help in implementing the campaigns, and membership advisories, to constantly keep members informed of the decisions that are being made in the House of Commons, and the effect these decisions could have on students. Furthermore, throughout the year, we have a strong voice in Ottawa as elected executive members and staff continually make our positions known in the House of Commons. That we are heard is attested by the fact that many of our recommendations to the Standing committee on Finance were accepted this year.

In addition, the issues that student leaders have to deal with, such as tuition hikes and inequitable university policy can be overwhelming at times. Membership in a large national student organization is useful when it comes to collecting data and resources to help in the fight s that have often been fought elsewhere first. Many times I have been able to call either the national office, or the Ontario component for research documents that the staff have compiled.

Finally, on a personal note, I would encourage students to join the Canadian Federation of Students if for no other reason than the Federation offers many services for students such as the Student Saver Card and the free International Student Identity Card (regularly \$15.00 for no members). Membership in the Canadian Federation of Students is quite possibly one of the best decisions you could make when it comes to looking out for the wellbeing of students.

Sincerely,
Erin Runions
VP-External Affairs
Post Graduate Students' Society, McGill University

Dear University of Prince Edward Island,

We are sending this letter to encourage you to continue membership in the Canadian Federation of Students. As the war against national standards in social programs, health care and education continues and escalates it is increasingly important to stand strong and remain united.

As you are aware, CFS has been successful in the past and continues to be successful in our fight for the concerns of students. The accomplishments of CFS are a testament to the efforts and commitment of students across the country, including those at UPEI. All members of CFS are starting mobilize to ensure that post-secondary education is on the agenda for the up-coming federal election and the students at Guelph want to see UPEI part of that movement. Education needs to be discussed at the national level and to ensure this happens we need to stand together from coast to coast with a common agenda for accessible education.

We want you to continue with the students at University of Prince Edward Island and hope that you will choose to continue membership in the Canadian Federation of Students.

In Solidarity,
Lancefield Morgan,
CSA Spokesperson on behalf of the Central Student Association
Local 54 Canadian Federation of Students

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