

Orientation : Involvement for Everyone

by Rick Teersteeeg

Orientation - what does it mean? Well, one of the several definitions found in the dictionary states as follows:

An introduction to an unfamiliar situation: guidance in experience or activity of a new kind.

With this particular meaning in mind the Orientation Committee for 1979 has set out to develop a program for next September. The aim of this project is twofold: to introduce the new students to all the available facilities here at UPEI and also to make them aware of the "social" aspects of university life. It is with the latter of these objectives that this article is primarily concerned.

In previous years, as most of you know, Orientation Week for freshman students had been scheduled to take place the week immediately preceding the commencement of classes. For Orientation '79 this idea has been dropped in favour of re-scheduling the program for the first week of classes, from Tuesday, September 11 through Sunday, September 16. It is hoped that this change will greatly increase

participation in the orientation program of three main groups of people:

- 1) incoming freshmen (only about 50% of last year's Freshman Class registered for Orientation Week),
- 2) returning students, and
- 3) professors.

The need for Freshman participation is a logical and self-explanatory aspect of any orientation event, therefore no time shall be spent on that particular item. It would, however, appear that most upperclassmen and professors are of the opinion that they have no role to play in Orientation. The fact that only a handful of returning students (usually just those on the Orientation Committee) and maybe five or six professors get involved in Orientation would seem to prove this thought. It is the intent of this year's committee to dispel that belief and to, with your help, increase the participation of both these groups of people.


This article is not trying to suggest that the students and professors of UPEI are unfeeling with no concern for each new year's Freshman Class. Rather, it is felt, involve-

ment of these people in Orientation has been lacking due to the scheduling of the event. It is naturally inconvenient for returning students, most of whom preregister by mail, to return to UPEI a week early simply to participate in the orientation of a new crop of students. Professors are usually involved in course planning and last minute meetings with various committees which makes it difficult for them to get involved. It is for these reasons that Orientation '79 has been moved to the first week of classes. Most returning students are back by this time and most professors have, hopefully at least, completed their course outlines and curricula. Thus, any viable reason other than death or emergency has been removed for the lack of participation of students and staff in Orientation '79.

Why, you may ask, should anybody other than the members of the Orientation Committee get involved in the activities? Well, the number one answer to this question is "Initiation". How many of you can remember what your initiation consisted of? Chances are you can't if you are a student here today, mainly because there have been no Initiation Nights at UPEI during the last three (and possibly more) years. The one main factor that has been lacking in order to have a successful initiation is upperclassmen (people?) who must see that the initiation task assigned each new student is carried out. For in-

stance, if a freshman forgets his/her cap or T-shirt, he/she might be assigned the task of cleaning President Meincke's hubcaps with a toothbrush or some other like task. Well, with only about ten people on the Orientation Committee and a suspected 400-odd freshmen, it is just a little too difficult to see that each freshman carries out his task! However, if even one half the upperclassmen would spend ten or fifteen minutes a day supervising these activities and signing a "Task Completed" card, no freshman could shirk his assigned duties. With cooperation in this area it would be possible to have a "Punishment Night" during which the freshmen who didn't in a signed "Task Completed" card would be subjected to punishment slightly more severe than his previously assigned task.

This particular segment of Orientation, Initiation, has been almost completely lacking here at UPEI over the last few years. What makes this so bad is 1) the expectations of the Frosh as to what their initiation will consist of and 2) the stories of fantastic initiations at Dal., St. Mary's, St. F.X. etc., which find their way to UPEI. So, let's get everyone involved in Orientation '79 and make it a time every new Freshman will remember. There will be in future SUNs, a tentative schedule for Orientation '79 so that those of you who are interested will be able to choose the area(s) you would like to get involved in.



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