

UPEI stomps Holland College with words

BY DEE BADER

On Monday, March 9, Holland College and the University of Prince Edward Island engaged in a titanic struggle for debating supremacy on Prince Edward Island. With the prestigious MacDonald-Reid Trophy at stake, the two teams engaged in a wild verbal battle on the topic "The Young Offenders Act [should] be amended to allow for the public release of the names of the offenders."

Representing UPEI were Michelle Filion and Randy McDonald. Stephanie Douglas, last year's champion, and newcomer Kelly MacDonald sought to defend the title and the trophy on behalf of Holland College. On the basis of a coin toss, UPEI was required to defend the resolution while Holland College sought to oppose UPEI's case. The moderator of the event was Mayor George MacDonald. Notwithstanding the intensity of the intellectual struggle, Mr. MacDonald ensured that the highest level of dignity and civility was sustained as the combatants furiously and orally battled it out.

To this unbiased observer, it was really no contest. Ms. Filion was absolutely fabulous in her opening address and her rebuttal, scoring point after verbal point in defense of her argument while, at the same time, demolishing the arguments of the opposition one by one. Mr. MacDonald brought further critical evidence to bear upon the opposition and, mixed with some subtle and devastating humour, placed Holland College in a defensive position from which they were powerless to recover. Ms. Douglas, unable to respond effectively to the crushing constructive arguments of the UPEI debaters, was reduced to weak semantic arguments regarding the real meaning of the resolution. Ms. MacDonald, a rookie, made a valiant effort to regain the high ground in her presentation, but by then it was all too late.

That, in a nutshell, is how this correspondent saw the matchup. Clearly, the decision of the judges mirrors my assessment that Holland College was verbally whipped. The judges, Susan Willis, the principal of Charlottetown Rural, Paul Connolly, Liberal MLA, and Erin Casey, Coordinator of the Women's Network, awarded a unanimous decision to the University of Prince Edward Island.

And so, what more needs to be said. Congratulations to Michelle and Randy for their valiant effort. As a consequence of your skill and ability, the MacDonald-Reid Trophy, dedicated to the St. Dunstan's University team of Allen MacDonald and Walter Reid, who brought great recognition and reputation to PEI by winning the 1954 Canadian Dominion Debating Championship, has been returned to its rightful home in Robertson Library on the campus of the University of Prince Edward Island. The trophy will be on display in the library during exam week. **WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS.** See you next year, Holland College, when once again we will invoke the classic mantra of great debaters everywhere: **LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE.**

Honours: An Elitist Program?

BY COLLEEN BELANGER

For three years I was a proud panther. As sociology rep. for the society in my third year, I was involved with the department, trying to help students with any problems they had. Lo and behold, at the beginning of second semester I ran across a problem. I was informed that if I wanted to go to graduate school, I should do my honours. No problem, I had the marks. The only thing standing in my way was the fact that UPEI did not offer an honours degree. In protest, a fellow student of mine passed around a petition, which we presented ceremoniously to the department at the end of the year. I also informed them that I would be transferring to ST Francis Xavier to complete my degree so that I could do my honours.

Through a comedy of errors, I decided to post-pone doing my honours. When an informant of mine at UPEI told me that they were getting an honours program in sociology, I was beside myself with joy. I figured that once I completed my degree at STFX, I could upgrade it at UPEI to an honours.

Wrong. I was informed by the administration (evil people that they are) that I could not do this because the BA honours is a single, 132 semester hour degree, not just additional work tagged on to a BA. At first this sounded reasonable. Then I read the e-mail further. If you have graduated from UPEI in the past with a BA in sociology, then you can come back and upgrade to an honours.

Huh? Was I not told that you could not upgrade your degree? Why can a former UPEI student do this, when I can't. In explanation I was told that UPEI does not offer conversion certificates in honours to students who graduate from another university. Isn't this university discrimination? Is my STFX degree not as good as a UPEI degree? This seems odd to me, especially since I did three years and obtained all my core courses at UPEI.

After reading the academic regulations in the UPEI calendar (which were vague at best), I found no mention of this 'clause'. Maybe I missed it. Or maybe you can only find it if you read the regulations backwards. I also checked out the requirements for some of the other honours programs that UPEI offers. You have to be enrolled in, or have completed a BA degree. It fails to say that this had to be done at UPEI. Has the registrar's office resorted to assuming that we know that they expect the degree to be done at UPEI? Don't they know that when you assume, you make an ass out of u and me?

I was then informed by John Crossely (who I have been in contact with and who has really been a great help) that Philip Smith, Dean of Arts, had several options that I should explore. Dean Smith has been in contact with and who has really been a great help) that Philip Smith, Dean of Arts, had several options that I should explore. Dean Smithally be an honours program, but the university would write me a letter stating that I had completed the requirements. Kind of like in elementary school when your parents had to sign your homework to make sure that it was done.

I figured, what they heck, I'll find out a little more about this option. It appears that the courses will show on my UPEI transcript, but that graduate schools didn't necessarily have to accept them, because I would not have "officially" acquired an honours qualification.

So, UPEI is more than willing to take my money, even though they know that the courses wouldn't guarantee me anything and taking them may benefit me in no way, shape or form. Now, if I am intelligent enough to get into an honours program, am I not intelligent enough not to give the university my money so that I could do an unofficial honours?

UPEI really needs to review its academic regulations to see who they benefit. As far as I can see, they benefit no one. But maybe I'm missing something — besides the opportunity to get my honours at UPEI.

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