



Kampus Koncern

by joel hansen

The "Compulsory Exams" Issue

I learned, a few weeks ago, that our university Senate is deliberating on an issue that touches every one of us - compulsory examinations for determining grades in courses. It appears that prof. D. Morrison, of the Religious Studies Dept., has written a letter to the Senate, asking for open debate on the "examination" issue, Morrison did not write a letter to the Cadre asking for public response from the community at large; however, since the Cadre is the official medium of student journalism (?) on campus and attempts to bring the students, and all others, to an awareness of issues that pertain to them I feel justified in embarking on a discussion of the totality that is involved.

Firstly let us look at the situation as it now exists. In the Arts faculty most chairmen of the various dept's. leave the grading apparatus up to the professor and students taking a particular course. This may include examinations; but it does not mean only examinations for determining grades; other means such as projects, seminar presentations, term papers and oral (aural) encounters are accepted as legitimate modes of determining an individual's grade. In the Science faculty, most professors require examination at Christmas and April, excepting only a few courses, (such as Ian MacQuarrie's). However, one's grade is not only determined by exams; term papers etc. are also employed. Again, as in the Arts faculty, examinations are not compulsory. The Business Faculty seems to favor the compulsory exam method. After doing some investigation, I could not find one course in its entire roster that does not require an examination of some type. Term Papers are also used for gaining a moderate percentage of ones final mark.

After all of this some fundamental questions: why make exams compulsory? What is wrong with the present

mode of leaving it up to the student and professor to determine a term grade? Is it that someone is trying to enforce some sort of re-actionary standardisation on the professors and students at large? (How violent!) Why does a "dead Horse" issue all of a sudden come to life as an issue for debate in the Senate?

At this point I implore Davie Morrison to come out immediately and answer the aforesaid questions.

I would also extend the call for response to President Baker, the various Deans, professors, and students.

My view of the compulsory exam issue is summed up in one of the questions in the "call for response" article aforesaid: "Is the exam issue really an attempt to enforce, for some reason or other, standardisation of marking methods at this university?"

If this be the case than refuting the need for compulsory examinations is easily done! How can a standard method of grading exist among faculties that are radically different? Not only are they different in content but also in the method of instructing the students in the grasping of this content. It is totally unreasonable to ex-

pect a student, say in the Arts faculty, to write an exam when the material he or she is encountering can not be properly learned under the "eye" of a compulsory examination. If a student is conducting the course in a "reading" style i.e. as a tutorial, or bimonthly meeting with the professor, then a compulsory exam is ridiculous. Obviously the mark will be determined in a "unique" way; say by special projects or term papers.

If one seriously engages the issue one finds that the only proper mode for determining grades is to leave various alternatives open to students and pro-

fessors. Any attempt at standardisation will break down, because not only are the various faculties different, but each course, professor, and student with in these faculties are different. We should not become subservient to someone's nightmare of a "cloning" environment; the person who supports standardisation is naive in my opinion!

We must attempt to maintain a humanist perspective we must accomodate each student on his or her own terms. We should not be slack in our approach to education; we should be rigorous in absorbing knowledge, but this does not mean "COMPULSORY EXAMS"

A Byline on Jesse Winchester

Re: Conditions at Winchester's Concert:

Just a note to comment on the organization of the Jesse Winchester concert held last Saturday night. To those who were in attendance, I hope you're recovering from the pneumonia you probably contracted whilst sitting in the near freezing temperatures!

As Jesse himself noted: "I sure am getting first hand experience of the heat absorbing abilities of the damn ice making machine."

The Union blew it! I

talked to the union president, Dianne Mac Donald, and tried to warn her of the coming disaster of putting people in a rink to listen to a music concert in the middle of the fall. Well, she refused to listen and the people froze.

In retrospect there really was no need of this. The gym was not being used and could have easily accomodated the three hundred people in attendance. Jesse and his band deserved better than they got. I just hope the bad taste they have had of U.P.E.I. will not "freeze" in their memories.