

Education Is A Life-long Process-Not Just Four Years



Jo's
kampus concern

The following excerpts are from an information bulletin "At Guelph" published by the University of Guelph Information Office. Considering all the discussions with our Committee on Aims and Objectives about the university and the community, I thought it might be interesting for those of us interested in this area.

The 1972 "Aims and Objectives of the University of Guelph" report expressed this commitment to non-credit programs as follows: "... education in the future will be a pursuit for a lifetime. The University of Guelph will explore how it can accommodate its program to include the educational needs and aspirations of all age groups."

Provincially we see a similar diversion of resources to the non-credit sector. The Report of the Commission on Post Secondary Education in Ontario (1972) stresses the concept of education throughout life and recommends greater accessibility to all institutions of higher learning. Further, it recommends refresher courses in all professional areas and opportunities for training programs and part-time study.

That the non-credit programs have been meeting community needs is evidenced in the enthusiastic response to each semester's schedule. It's no happy coincidence that Continuing Education offers courses people want. Professor Waldron and his staff keep alert to changing political, cultural and economic trends. They field courses to complement Guelph Spring Festival offerings, to explain current political trends and to keep consumers abreast of the plethora of shiny new developments which crowd the shelves. Suggestions for course topics can come from almost anywhere: faculty, advisory committees within the University, Guelph citizens, and community groups. The Office goes so far as to solicit suggestions from everyone who enrolls

in a course, and through advertisements in the local press.

In order to keep non-credit courses accessible to as many people as possible, tuition fees are held to a minimum. The fees, however, must cover all the direct costs of non-credit programs including advertising, honoraria, classroom materials and audio visual services. The provincial government supports non-credit education in principle, but does not provide funding. Because some programs at Guelph are directly related to activities of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, a portion of the operating



Practicum course on Dr. Stott's method of teaching children with learning disabilities.

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costs are recoverable from OMAF through a contract arrangement.

Non-credit courses present educational opportunities to Guelph and area residents and in another perspective provide stimulating teaching experiences for the faculty involved. They can adopt a more relaxed format, straying from course material as class makeup or interests indicate. Many are able to pursue side interests which don't as yet have a niche in the standard university curriculum. In general, non-credit courses call for a less theoretical approach and tend to focus on specific problems.

Semester courses are only

a part of the University's non-credit offerings. Correspondence courses, short courses and conferences also fall within the jurisdiction of the Office of Continuing Education.

Continuing education plays an important role in professional development in a society characterized by galloping technological change. Professional development sessions are usually organized in a concentrated format, of a day to a month duration. Annually about 50 of these short courses are held on campus, usually during spring semester when smaller undergraduate enrolment frees campus residence accommodation for use by the participants. Specific programs have been offered off campus and in other cities. The majority of short courses have become regular annual affairs and invariably

a fee for the service.

Sometime between five and seven each evening the University of Guelph campus undergoes a subtle transformation. Jeans-clad undergrads disappear into library carrels, residences, or the pub and Guelphites of every description settle into lecture halls for non-credit courses on subjects from film to finance. From the 16-year-old discussing human sexuality to the 75-year-old studying China, these people share a common goal - to expand their awareness through continuing study.

Non-credit education is a thriving expanding, exciting facet of the university. It is an area that shows promise for expansion and change in the coming decade particularly in the sphere of professional development programs.

Professor Waldron asserts "I feel very strongly that the university should continue to make available to the people in the community its facilities and personnel in areas where we have a special contribution to make."

As a member of the university community I would like to request to the Senate Committee that this area of education be seriously looked into and possibly a pilot project be set-up for a period of 2-4 years to test this form of education. The system at Guelph could be used as an example because it does prove that education is a life-long learning process and not just something acquired through a few years of university training. A definite setting-up of this form of education could only end up benefitting not only the university, but all of Prince Edward Island. After all, it was the people of PEI who enabled this university to be, through legislation, so we owe them something in return for this privilege.

Rumour Has it that certain facets of the university will be investigated by a U.S. Congressional Committee because there are an awful lot of things going on here that are similar to things that went on in Washington before Nixon was impeached.

attract more than capacity enrolment. Predictably, the University offers courses in areas of special expertise, such as cheese manufacture, turf management, and agribusiness marketing management.

The short course concept has caught on. Government agencies, industries and professional associations have approached the University to develop and teach courses tailored to the specific needs of their employees or members. In order to accommodate this kind of request, contract courses evolved. Under this arrangement, the University offers the requested course and the contracting agency pays