Blood n' Thunder

Please Kelly, next time let's keep our facts straight, and let's try to keep our disagreements political, not personal.

—Shawn Corey, Joleen Eriksen, Sean Eriksen, Scott Jack, Stephen Johnson, Colin Maicher, Rodney Mowatt, and Neil Thomson.

Lamrock hypocritical?

Dear Editor,

In the January 13, 1995 issue of the Brunswickan there was a letter in the Blood n' Thunder section, written by Kelly Lamrock, that can best be described as absolute hypocrisy. Not only is he attempting to do what he accuses Shawn Corey and Scott Jack of doing, attempting to muzzle the voice of students, but he tries to justify this with a combination of exaggerated statements and outright lies.

About the only true statement in the whole letter is where he says ". . . the UNB student leaders are not representing students . . ." He then went on to talk about an alternative plan by the New Brunswick Student Alliance. An organisation that to the best that I can discover consists, for all intents and purposes, of Mr. Lamrock and his over inflated ego. Mr. Lamrock implies that he has a commitment from the federal government not to go with their original plan for reform of the student loan program. The facts are that there is no such commitment on the part of the government, just a statement saying it is an interesting idea. It must also be stated that the report Mr. Lamrock talks about was produced by him with little or no input from other students.

Mr. Lamrock then goes on to attack Messrs. Corey and Jack by referring to them as "Socialists Screaming For The Status Quo." and "Hot Tub Socialist." Considering he is a supporter of the New Democratic Party, I am sure that these are both concepts that he is intimately familiar with. Mr. Lamrock also accuses them of trying to convince students that they know what is best and that students should follow them. Before believing that statement I would suggest rereading Mr. Lamrock's letter and seeing for yourself, who is trying to convince whom of what.

The truth is that Shawn Corey, Scott Jack, myself and thousands of other people right across this country are not saying, as Mr. Lamrock would suggest, "don't think, shut up and let politicians do the thinking." In fact what we are doing is saying "the politicians have done too much thinking for us, and it is time we told them to shut up and listen to what we think." We believe that if we are united we can stop the government from doubling our tuition.

If you believe that by working together we can make a difference, then join us on the January 25 at 12:00 noon at the SUB,. by the rear door near the entrance to the Cellar. We will be meeting up there with people from Fredericton High as well as a number of workers for a march downtown to Andy Scott's office. Remember, we will not be alone in this. Estimates are that there will be at least 100,000 people from all across Canada holding demonstrations and walkouts on that day. Remember, only you know what is in your best interest, don't let Kelly Lamrock tell you otherwise.

Sincerely,
Chris Rogers

WHO ARE WE??????

The Canadian society is one of the most diverse in the world. Within our boundaries, one can find a large variety of cultures and beliefs. One of the main reasons that makes Canada great is the people. As a student, it is important for me to be aware of this diversity and be proud that I am a part of it.

The University of New Brunswick, like many other post-secondary institutions across the country, opens it's doors to many international students each year. With these students come samples of the large variety of cultures that exist in the world. It is because of this fact that UNB is one of the most accurate pictures of the diversity in which we live. Within the student population at UNB, there are over 50 countries represented. With each new country being represented, comes a whole new set of beliefs, values and, in essence, a new culture. These new aspects of student life must become integrated into an already complex structure at UNB.

With each new culture comes something very special, uniqueness. It is this uniqueness that allows for a new sense of friendship and tolerance for all people and their individual beliefs. It will take understanding for this complex structure to work effectively. In order to accomplish this goal, we must, as a group, celebrate all these aspects that are being brought together. It is through this kind of celebration that we can actually begin to understand the very complex and diverse society that we live in.

Celebrating is also a way of combating racism that will eventually effect all of our lives at one point or another. No matter what we do in our lives there always seems to be someone out there who has prejudice towards another. This is a factor when a person is faced with having to immerse themselves in a new culture or society, like many of the International Students that come to UNB each year.

Racial Harassment is one of the worst things you can inflict on another person. Harassment can be found in many forms including:

Comments
Racist pictures or graffiti
Jokes or slurs
Physical assault
Mistreatment in certain services.

As students, faculty and staff, we have the right to be in a racist free environment. If there is a case of blatant racism within the university, we are all effected and should do something to correct the situation. The only real way to prevent and fight racism is to speak out against it. Don't be afraid to stand up to your friends whenever they make a statement that you feel is racist. Don't get angry with them, just point out the fact that you are uncomfortable with what has been said.

As with many issues that confront our society, they only way to educate others is to educate yourself. Be personally aware of the diversity that exists on our campus; you might even find a part of yourself.

Doug Saunders
UNB Student Union
Social Issues Commissioner

Note: The policy of this paper is that letters to the editor are NOT to exceed 300 words.
As it is also policy not to edit letters, those exceeding the 300 word limit may not be printed due to space restrictions.

OPINION

The Lack of a Policy Against Racial Discrimination: A Case of Willful Blindness?

By Nicholas Baggaley

There appeared in the December 7, 1994 issue of the Aquinian a small article, "Banned From Campus", which informed us that, "An African male... has been banned from the university grounds... The male could receive as much as a $1000 fine if seen on campus." There are many problems with this announcement. Apart from the fact that the male is not African but American, what action does the article suggest we take if we see an "African male" on campus? Does it suggest that we call security every time we see a man on university grounds who we suspect is African? A second and greater problem is its insensitivity to visible minority persons. Reverse the situation. Imagine that a white student visiting a Nigerian university reads in the student paper, "A white male has been banned from university grounds..." How would you feel if you were a "white male" on that campus? Would you not feel uncomfortable in that situation?

The intolerant racial undertones of the article are striking and symptomatic of a very serious problem at STU, UNB and in our society. We are quick to label and categorize visible minority persons based on our own preconceptions. A male is black, ipso facto he's African (or vise versa) and he is banned. Such a statement implicitly segregates people by colour and reinforces the racist attitude that black means trouble. Racism is a problem and, as Kwame Dawes pointed out in his letter last week (Brunswickan 128, 13, p. 6), it does not have to be "rife" for it to be a problem, as VP Academic Tom Traves seems to believe. Is racism a problem at UNB? Ask any visible minority person. It is.

The conference *When Rights Collide* (Sept. 28-29, 1994), was organized to discuss "issues surrounding the difficulties that arise when different rights and freedoms conflict" (UNB Perspectives 21, 1 in article "Rights-or wrong?" by VP Traves). Laudable. However, the conference did not include on its panel of speakers one or more visible minority persons. That is disturbing especially since organizer Peter Kepros (professor of psychology) and his committee were informed of their oversight eight days in advance, and since they were given suggestions of willing and available participants. Why did the organizers not correct this mistake? Did they even try? Dr. Kepros commented on this matter, and his reaction reflects the simple-mindedness and the "pass-the-buck" attitude demonstrated by the Administration. Excerpts from his statement include, "It is outside of the responsibility of the committee to respond..." (i.e. don't ask me); "All decisions were made by consensus" (i.e. it's not my fault). "The process of selecting speakers and panelists conformed to the non-discrimination clause of the UNB-AUNBT Collective Agreement" (i.e. don't blame me, blame the system). The defensive character of these remarks is striking. Is Dr. Kepros just now becoming aware of the problems visible minority persons face, or does he still lack this awareness?

VP Traves, who initially conceived the idea of the conference, was also aware of the committee's oversight in advance, and he too failed to take any positive action whatsoever. Was VP Traves really interested in increasing the awareness of matters involving the rights and freedoms of all individuals (including persons of different genders, races, nationalities, religions, etc.) or was he not more interested in saving face from the Administration's poor handling of the Yaqzan fiasco?

The administration has been aware of the problems created by the lack of policy against racial discrimination for a long time now, yet it has done nothing to implement one in spite of an appeal and proposal made by the Board of International Students in 1993. What it has done, in July 1993, is distribute a 1-page brochure, "Say NO to Racism on Campus", prepared by VP Traves and the Dean of Students. It defines racism, identifies its effects, and explains the procedure for filing a complaint. Substantively, however, the brochure is worthless because it is not based upon a firm policy which guides the manner in which complaints may be resolved fairly and consistently. For example, it states that "Offensive or discriminating behavior by employees is subject to action by the university." What action is that? What committee or person decides that action? How is (are) the decision maker (s) selected? What rules must be followed? In addition, the section "How do I make a complaint?" does not indicate the effect of filing a complaint. What guarantee is there that it will not be held against the complainant, or will be taken seriously at all? Finally, the brochure states that "A student may seek the advice of the Dean of Students with respect to the filing of a complaint or an informal resolution." Not surprisingly, there is no explanation of how an "informal resolution" translates into a fair one. If the Administration is so committed to fighting racial discrimination on campus, what is needed is a formal mechanism for resolving complaints which is guided by the clear rules of an unwavering policy.

In light of the lack of such a policy, President Armstrong was recently invited to comment on the following two questions: 1. Does the UNB Administration adhere to a policy of and strive to achieve greater inclusiveness within the UNB community? and 2. Does the UNB Administration recognize the contributions to be made by members of visible minorities in the advancement of human rights.

On the first question, Dr. Armstrong listed a number of programs which recognize diversity within the UNB student body, including "our policies against racial and other forms of discrimination and harassment." But UNB does not have a policy against racial discrimination and harassment! It is an astonishing oversight (to give the benefit of the doubt) for the President to assert that it does. Indeed, it is precisely such a policy that many students, including Keli Tamaklo, Kwame Dawes, Fazilah Mohamed Ismail, Aurelius Gordon, George Eguakun and Pat Fitzpatrick were and are fighting for.

On the second question, Dr. Armstrong asserted that "it is not phrased with sufficient clarity for me to understand the precise issue you wish addressed." Maybe so. However, this response does not inspire confidence that this is an issue which the Administration considers important or is willing to deal with. Such ambivalence, if that be it, is unacceptable. Racial discrimination is an issue that is real, ongoing, and is one that should be of concern to all of us. Visible minority persons have made enormous contributions in the advancement of human rights and their continued participation in this endeavour is absolutely critical. Placed within the context of When Rights Collide, of what value is a conference that purports to discuss "rights" (itself an elusive concept) when the perspectives of different peoples are not heard? Who speaks for whom? Without these contributions, what could otherwise be a constructive and educational discussion degenerates into little more than Eurocentric tongue-wagging.

Until a comprehensive policy against racial discrimination is adopted, there will continue to be friction between the Administration and the student body. There will continue to be insensitivity and ignorance of which the article "Banned from Campus" is but one example. Next week is Cultural Diversity Week, organized by the Student Union's Tareq Islam. It is a time to celebrate diversity and expand our awareness. It is also a timely opportunity for the Administration to renew its commitment to implementing a policy against racial discrimination and show that it cares for all of its students equally. Failure to take positive action in this regard is all too easily interpreted as either ambivalence or ineptitude, or perhaps both. No doubt the Administration is neither ambivalent nor inept. but as an institute of higher learning, UNB must take, and be seen to take, a leadership role in the field of human rights. So far, it is doing a miserable job. A remedial first step would be to implement a policy which heightens our awareness of different peoples and sensitizes us to the problems that racism and ignorance breed. How much longer must we wait before the Administration takes this first step? Indeed, why must we wait at all?

ATTENTION STUDENTS

Apply now for provincially-funded summer jobs.

Camille H. Thériault
Minister

If you are a university, community college or Grade 12 student you should register now with the Department of Advanced Education and Labour for provincially funded summer jobs.

In order to register you must be attending a post-secondary institution next fall.

Visit any Department of Advanced Education and Labour office, Access Centre, Canada Employment Centre or your student council and ask for an ***Application for Summer Employment Form.***

The earlier you apply the better your chances!

In addition, the STUDENT VENTURE CAPITAL PROGRAM offers interest-free loans of up to $3,000 to students who wish to start their own summer business.

Ask for a STUDENT VENTURE CAPITAL APPLICATION at the above locations or at your Regional Economic Development Commission.

New Nouveau
Brunswick
Advanced Education and Labour