

NATIONAL

Mount Alison University

Was intimidation a factor in Editor's apology?

STEVEN HERON, *The Argosy*
MOUNT ALISON UNIVERSITY

Recent editorials of Argosy Editor Don Gorman have raised accusations of defamation from VP Administration David Stewart. Gorman's January 16 editorial, "Ah...Another Hot Year of Slander," commented on former VP Finance Sharon MacFarlane's scruples and on Stewart's approach to student security. It resulted in a phone call to Dr. Deborah Wills, the Chair of the Argosy Board of Publishers. Stewart, angered by "defamation of character," wanted to meet with Gorman to discuss the editorial.

Gorman printed an apology for his editorial in the following issue. This apology was the result of the meeting between Stewart and Gorman. In this meeting, Stewart told Gorman his editorial was defamatory and that he planned to take him to the University Judicial Committee. According to Gorman, the meeting then went along these lines: Stewart told him to write

an apology to MacFarlane for having defamed her. Stewart then suggested Gorman seek advice from a mentor, parent, or lawyer if he was unsure of what action to take. It is known that Gorman's apology was edited by Stewart before going to press. In fact, Stewart told Gorman that his first editorial was unacceptable and "proceeded to hand [Gorman] what he said he wanted to see printed." Gorman explains "I knew that what was happening was

morally questionable, from his words and actions. I feared that by disagreeing with Mr. Stewart, I would jeopardise both the members of the Argosy board of publishers, as well as my career as a student." This statement begs the question, did this fear force Gorman into apologising against his will?

Stewart recalls the meeting by stating "I raised some concerns about the editorial...Don was very cooperative and he indicated from the beginning that he had made a mistake and wanted to correct it." In response to being asked about editing the apology Stewart explains "In a case like this it is important that a correction doesn't make the situation worse...I didn't write the words, I made suggestions in certain areas." Stewart's anger stems from *The Argosy* publishing defamatory statements and reporting inaccurate information. Stewart explains that his main reason for wanting to bring Gorman in front of the University Judicial Committee "was so the faculty and students who sit on the committee could make a statement of what is appropriate to be published in the newspaper. I wanted to make sure the community is aware of what the standards are." Gorman explained to Stewart the Argosy understood what their responsibilities were and that defamation would not happen again in the future. After this assurance, the judicial charges were dropped.

Is Stewart influencing the Argosy? "I am trying to influence the Argosy

not to defame people. I am not trying to influence editorial positions." Stewart believes that the Argosy must be responsible for the statements that they make, including ones that violate the laws of the land. Stewart explains his actions by stating, "It's my responsibility as well as everyone else's in the university community to make sure the student newspaper exercises its freedoms [of speech] responsibly."

Gorman has stated that he was humiliated by having to write the apology. For the record he handed a letter of apology to Sharon MacFarlane on January 28.

"I felt sincerely that some of my statements may have been injurious to her personally, and I let her know that I was actually sorry. On January 30, Gorman's editorial consisted of a blank section titled *Stamus Pro Veritate - We Stand for Truth*." It was a protest against having words forced from myself and the Argosy under my name," explained Gorman.

Stewart states "People's reputations are very important to them. Just because someone works for a university, it does not mean that they have to give up the right to be treated fairly with the accordance of the law."

With Don Gorman breaking his silence this issue has come into the public eye. It remains to be seen how far the issue will take David Stewart and Don Gorman.

<http://argosy.mta.ca/argosy>

Carleton faces program cuts

ALLISON HANES, *The Charlantan*
CARLETON UNIVERSITY

Carleton has decided to stop cleaning house in favor of knocking down a few walls in order to make the plan outlined in the Steps Towards Renewal blueprint a reality by next year.

Carleton's senate decided Jan. 24 on criteria for the Senate Academic Planning Committee to judge which university programs will be slashed or spared by a Feb. 20 deadline.

"Our situation is driven by two numbers — our \$12.9-million accumulated deficit and our \$3.9-million operating deficit for this year," explained Carleton President Richard Van Loon during the meeting. "That leads to a process that is faster than anyone in this room would like, but that's life."

All of Carleton's programs will be put under the microscope by the academic planning committee over the next month.

"For staff and faculty it's going to be tense," says Jeff Jakobsen, the Carleton University Students' Association's vice-president academic and a member of the committee. "Their jobs are on the line. This is people's livelihood and future in question here."

The planning committee will report their findings to senate Feb. 20 and senate will make final decisions on what stays and what goes by March 21.

This means some professors could be handed their walking papers and some programs could be killed by the end of the current school year.

Each program will be given points based on quality, cost, program demand and how well it fits in with the renewal plan. Programs will then be categorized based on their academic merit and financial viability. Strong, cost-efficient programs will stay, and the rest will be in danger of elimination.

The committee will also look at whether programs duplicate those offered at the University of Ottawa, and whether students would be better served by attending courses across town.

Jakobsen says he dislikes the idea of cutting programs, but that the aggressive timeline for program review is necessary.

"To make it a fair process for students, it has to happen quickly," he says.

"The faster the better because it won't leave students hanging."

Van Loon says to get Carleton out of the hole, there needs to be a 10 per cent increase in first-year enrolment, which would bring the university about \$1.2-million, and 28 faculty members must be cut in each of the next two years.

The mood among the faculty representatives who gathered in the senate chamber that Friday seemed to be one of acceptance and resignation.

Approval of the criteria for evaluation was met with little opposition and passed by a wide margin, even though many voting could lose their departments — and their jobs — once the evaluations start rolling in.

Former Ottawa-Carleton regional chair Andy Haydon, who sits on

Carleton's Board of Governors, summed up the mood of the meeting as it slipped into its third hour.

"They're skating on thin ice, but they're arguing about whether the ice is half-an-inch thick or three-quarters of an inch thick."

Robert Lovejoy, chair of the English department, seemed resigned to the process. "I think that under the time constraints it's as fair as can be," he said with a shrug.

But some faculty and students fear cost will take precedence over academic merit during the evaluation process.

"I am concerned that academic merit will be hobbled by other areas that don't have a lot to do with academic validity," says Shawn Vardon, a student senator.

John ApSimon, Carleton's vice-president academic and academic planning committee chair, responded by saying: "In an ideal world we would look at academic merit and that's it. But we have to keep the university going and we have to do it by March."

Some worry the atmosphere at Carleton could be stormy over the next few months as faculties battle each other for survival.

"I think it may be very contentious," says Lovejoy.

But Van Loon says he thinks the feeling at Carleton will be "pretty good."

"What I read around this room and what I read around the university is clear recognition of the need to make changes and actually a fair amount of enthusiasm."

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