

Student claims corruption in Faculty of Science

An open letter to the UNB President

by Anonymous

Dr. McLaughlin,
To begin with, I'm not a science student. I have never taken a class taught by the persons about whom I am complaining, and I have no personal vendetta against said persons. I am simply a concerned student who has become completely outraged by what I am hearing from my friends about certain profs. I am writing to you in the hopes that, as the President of UNB, you may be able to give some time and thought to a few of my concerns and perhaps even respond to this letter if time permits.

All persons with whom I have spoken about these profs do greatly value their UNB experience and education. Many of these friends and acquaintances are soon to be graduates of UNB's science program. However, most of these individuals have increasingly complained over the years about the practices of certain of their professors. Now, it is natural to encounter profs with whom one does not gel and it is even natural for a prof to acquire a reputation for being difficult or, perhaps, ornery. In my experience, these traits are usually tempered by a particular prof's equally great reputation for fairness and/or knowledge and enthusiasm. However, it is not right for a single prof or even a few specific profs in a specific department of the Faculty of Science to acquire a reputation for demonstrations of sexism, unmasked arrogance, and blatantly haphazard methods of marking.

It has been explained to me numerous times by my undergraduate and postgraduate friends that specific profs in this department make no bones about telling students that they are too stupid to take their courses, that these profs are unwilling to offer any out-of-class

explanations of grades and/or expectations, they often obviously favour attractive female students, and they make it clear that they may mark papers based on their mood, where a paper happens to be in a pile, or even where the papers happen to land when they are tossed down a flight of stairs. I have asked my friends why they do not step forward and try to reason with these particular profs, appeal their grades, or even file complaints. They are all too terrified to step forward and make a peep since it apparently is quite common for certain profs to retaliate by simply flunking complaining students without [what the students see as] proper justification, by changing marks on transcripts up to five years after graduation, and by easing through appeals processes that are facilitated by their friends and colleagues.

Today I have been informed yet again that, short of committing some kind of felony, a prof's tenure can never ever be considered for termination. Really? But, I ask naively, what if a prof is just really bad at being a prof? What if we all think that they are probably breaking some pretty big rules? Still no? If not, then do students have any power at all to ensure the quality of their educators other than by filling out those dubiously effective student opinion bubble sheets once per semester or the apparently bad-for-your-grades method of filing complaints. Even anonymity seems to prevent your grades from suffering if one chooses to go this route. This causes me some personal worry.

I cannot believe that UNB can risk the liability of employing such persons. Shockingly, it has been explained to me that even fellow profs are completely aware of the problems in this department but are adamant that nothing can be done. I guess this is understandable since I too would be hesitant to turn on my peers if they had no qualms about screwing over their students. For [mild] example, is it really not against any kind

of UNB policy that a prof cannot structure a course without any tests or assignments and simply base the final mark on how they feel about each student? I am guessing this may fall under the loophole of "class mark" or "participation," but how can a prof who clearly is not recording participation in a written manner possibly be able to pass final judgement on each person in an entire class in this way? In the pursuit of postgraduate schools and positions, we students are often depending on our hard work to produce fair marks. How can UNB allow even the hint of a reputation of arrogance and corruption to fester and taint any department?

I feel strongly that our professors ought and deserve to be well supported financially in their research, publication, and conference pursuits. This is both respectful of their very valuable place as hardworking educators and this creates a vitality and an academic strength within any university. It also ensures student exposure to the most recent and innovative progresses made in their fields of interest. However, where is any Canadian university without students and students' money? Nowhere. We pay, as you did, for our education. A university education has been turned into a commodity that is to be purchased at a ridiculous and insulting price. Arrogance, condescension, and corruption come with all human hierarchies, but we are not buying membership into just any hierarchy, we are paying for a product that is described in glowing detail in UNB's glossy calendar. These flaws are not advertised as parts of this package. We can't get our money back can we? So, just like any business, UNB ought to provide the product as advertised.

Please, can you suggest what can be done to rectify this or similar situations? Other than the hour of free legal advice that we are each entitled to, what are our options?

Thank you.

Raging against the war

A peek into the George W. Bush song book

Forward by Sheila Andrew

The following satirical song comes from the Raging Grannies, a group of older women dedicated to a better world for everyone and everyone's children and grandchildren.

We do not see violence as the solution to problems and we are appalled by George Bush's apparent enthusiasm for killing Iraqis, Americans, and anyone else he can drag into the maelstrom he seems to be creating.

The "Grannies" write their own material, hoping to get serious messages across with satire and humour that sometimes has to be bitter. This is one of the bitter times.

Another song we think might be found in the George Bush Song Book goes to the tune of "America the Beautiful." The words are simple: "It's oil, it's oil, it's oil, it's oil..."

To the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know it Clap Your Hands"

If we cannot find Osama, bomb Iraq
If the markets hurt your Mama, bomb Iraq
If the terrorists are Saudi
And the bank takes back your Audi

And the TV shows are bawdy,
Bomb Iraq

If the corporate scandals growin', bomb Iraq
And your ties to them are showin', bomb Iraq
If the smoking gun ain't smokin'
We don't care, and we're not jokin'
That Saddam will soon be croakin'
Bomb Iraq

Even if we have no allies, bomb Iraq
From the sand dunes to the valleys, bomb Iraq
So to hell with the inspections
Let's look tough for the elections
Close your mind and take directions,
Bomb Iraq

While the globe is slowly warming, bomb Iraq
Yay! The clouds of war are storming, bomb Iraq
If the ozone hole is growing
Some things we prefer not knowing
(Though our ignorance is showing)
Bomb Iraq

So here's one for dear old daddy, bomb Iraq
From his favorite little laddie, bomb Iraq
Saying "no" would look like treason
It's the Hussein hunting season
Even if we have no reason
Bomb Iraq

Just a thought...

When snow begins to fall...

by Joanne Barr
Campus Ministry

Winter has definitely arrived in New Brunswick. A blanket of snow covers everything. The temperature has dropped significantly... "Baby, it's cold outside"... Those who relish the out of doors and all of the activities which take place out of doors, are ecstatic, I'm sure. If you have just come to Canada this

past year, then you are discovering what Canadians mean when they speak of the "cold weather". You may be wondering what you can do for amusement during the winter months.

There are a number of activities which you want to try. Skating is one of them. In the downtown area of Fredericton, at Officers' Square, there is an outdoor rink which has been created. Anyone is welcome to skate there, day and evening. There are two ski hills...Crabbe Mountain and Poley Mountain. Each has a number of runs which are designed to meet the needs of the novice, the expert skier and the snowboarder as well. Throughout the countryside, surrounding the city, are numerous cross country ski trails which have been groomed for public use. There is snowshoeing and ice fishing as well. If you would like a ride in the out-of-doors, there are a number of establishments which offer sleigh-rides.

In addition to the above, there is snowmobiling, winter camping, sledding and tobogganing. The list is endless. Just bundle up and head out....

'Course I prefer curling up in front of a warm fire with a good book, when the snow begins to fall and the winds begin to blow....



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