

COMMENTS & LETTERS

eic@unb.ca • April 9, 2008

BRUNS GOODBYE



After 26 issues, this will be the Brunswickan's last for the year. Some of this year's Editorial Board are off to do bigger and better things, while others will remain to continue building on the amazing things happening here at the paper. I want to thank each of them for their outstanding contributions this year, and wish them luck with everything in the future.

I am excited to welcome in next year's editorial board:

Josh O'Kane- Editor in Chief, Tony von Richter- Managing Editor, Sarah Ratchford- News Editor, Doug Estey- Arts Editor, Mitchell Bernard- Sports Editor, Andrew Meade- Photo Editor, Christian Hapgood- Production Editor. Thank you for your readership. Jennifer McKenzie, Editor-in-Chief

An open letter to the Premier

Dear Mr. Premier,

I would like to express my concern regarding the recent cuts to New Brunswick's French Immersion Program.

What you have done, Mr. Premier, is lowered the bar. Instead of having proficiency targets of Advanced for Early Immersion Students, the target for students in the proposed Late Immersion Program will be Intermediate Plus. Once a lower standard is in place, programming doesn't have to be as good, does it, Mr. Premier?

Allow me to use an analogy to explain. Let's say my goal is to exercise every day, but I find myself exercising only once a week. So, I change my goal to exercise once every two weeks and suddenly I am surpassing my goal! However, I certainly will not be physically fit.

Rather than lowering standards, Mr. Premier, I would suggest that a better way to increase the percentage of Anglophone students reaching proficiency targets would be to identify areas in which the program fails and to improve in these areas.

My example of physical fitness brings me to my next point. The Department of

Education's news release of March 14, 2008, states that the gained instructional time from the elimination of Core French at the elementary grades will be used for art, music, physical education, and enrichment opportunities. I do not disagree that art, music, and physical education are important for a child's development. But, why can't we offer students French, art, music, and physical education? These subjects could be taught in French. Voila! A simple, effective solution to the problem, which

would likely not cause thousands of your constituents' blood to boil.

Have you considered the implications of the decision to eliminate Early Immersion to the future of New Brunswick? Not only will Canada's only bilingual province also be the only province without an Early French Immersion program, you have made a conscious decision that will lead to a population that is less able to communicate amongst itself. Let me remind you, Mr. Premier, that according to the changes, Anglophone students will no longer achieve Advanced proficiency; they will only achieve Intermediate Plus proficiency. Therefore, Anglophone New Brunswickers will be less able to communicate with their Francophone neighbours, further dividing linguistic communities in the province. Furthermore, because a large number of Francophones are bilingual, uni-lingual Anglophones will miss out on employment and advancement opportunities because they cannot speak a second language.

One criticism of the Early French Immersion program is that it is elitist. I would argue that the Department of Education and schools across the province have brought this stereotype upon themselves. What is the first thing that happens when a child in Early Immersion does poorly in school or has behavioural problems? Why, he or she is transferred out of the Early Immersion program, even if he or she was not having any problems with French! This very quickly leads to a situation where the well-behaved children who get good grades are primarily in the Immersion classes, while the poor non-Immersion teachers are asked to teach all those with

learning disabilities, behavioural problems, etc. This problem can be resolved very easily by eliminating transfers out of the program, precipitated either by the school or by the parents (recommendation 2b in the report) and by giving French Immersion teachers the tools and resources they need to teach children of all abilities.

I understand the desire to streamline the Immersion program based on considerations both financial and academic. However, why does the proposed program have children starting so late? It has been proven time and time again that the earlier a child is exposed to a language, the better he or she will learn it. If a child does not hear a word of French until he or she is 10 years old, it is simply too late. If they cannot start in Grade 1, why not start them in Grade 3 or 4? Furthermore, if children were exposed to French in the early years (K-2) (for example, during art or music class as I suggested above), they would develop an ear for the language, facilitating their transition to French Immersion in Grade 3 or 4.

Mr. Premier, there are many things that could be done to improve the system already in place, instead of scrapping it for a totally different program. Were these alternatives considered? If not, I strongly suggest they be considered. If so, I would like to know the rationale for disregarding these options in favour of the proposed program.

I leave you with one more question, Mr. Premier. Are you prepared to lose the next election on this issue?

Yours sincerely,
Raissa Marks

the brunswickan.
packs its bags for summer ;)

thanks for reading, see you in 2008-09



Dear Board of Governors: Congratulations on a Mission Accomplished

Dear Editor:

A few years ago, my Dad gave me some advice: If you want to know why someone makes a decision, just take a look at who benefits from it. It sounds simple, but it's proven useful to me over the years as it's allowed me to gain perspective on decisions that astonish me. Take, for example, Ben Affleck's decision to star in Gigli. I don't think I need to explain this in detail, but I'm confident he didn't accept that role for the artistic value.

This year, I was President of Neill House; an amazing experience that I wouldn't have traded for the world. Of course, this isn't to say that the year didn't have its ups and downs. One down in particular, which you may have read about in the article "From the Top" published in the March 26 edition of The Brunswickan, was the banning of our annual couch burning ceremony. A celebration of a successful year and an opportunity to literally pass the torch to the incoming President and House Committee, the couch burning was an event that was highly anticipated all year long.

But it was also more than this - it was something that made Neill unique. Every house on campus prides themselves on the little things that make them different from the other houses. Aitken, for example, spends a good deal of money to fill their basement with sand so they can party on top of it, Harrison throws an overgrown vegetable off a roof while wearing cloaks, Bridges jumps into a pool of uncomfortably cold water in a frigidly cold month, and the list goes on. While all of these things seem to be foolish, they are incredibly important to the identity of the house. The members of that house get to experience something that is unique to them and no one else. This is a huge part of what makes residence life enjoyable, and what creates a sense of pride in the students that live in any given house. To eliminate these events, is to eliminate not only what establishes character, but also what makes for a desirable place to live.

When I was found out why this decision that was made by the Board of Governors, I was nothing short of amazed. I was told, more or less, that because of the couch burning incidents

on Graham Avenue at the start of the school year, and all the commotion they caused in the community and the city, the university didn't want to risk the PR headache they might incur if they allowed a residence to do such a thing. So now that I have the opportunity, I would like to say this: I can understand how the ramblings of an ignorant councillor have influenced your decisions to avoid negative press - really, I can. But if it were a minor headache you're trying to avoid, personally, I'd recommend taking some Tylenol.

Now, to bring this full circle, when I look at whom this decision really benefits, I can easily understand why it was made. So I offer my congratulations to you, the Board of Governors, on successfully avoiding a possible, however farfetched, PR headache. Mission accomplished. You can now sleep at night knowing that your asses are far from the fire on this one. And don't worry - it's only the students that are going to suffer.

Sincerely,
Dustin Eisenhour

Lady V-Reds snubbed again

Dear Editor:

Each year, the UNB Associated Alumni gives all graduating varsity athletes a Citizen watch to commemorate the conclusion of their UNB athletic careers. The watches are given at a small ceremony held before the annual UNB Athletic Banquet and afterwards, all the graduating players march into the banquet room, the Parade of Graduating Athletes, stand at the front for the national anthem, then join their teammates at their respective tables. This is how the Athletic Banquet begins every year and speaking from experience, it makes an impression on 'rookie' athletes.

The criteria for attending the ceremony and receiving one of these watches are the completion of a degree at UNB or the completion of all five years of CIS eligibility. But exceptions have always been made. For instance, two members of women's hockey team during the 2006-2007 were going to complete their degrees during summer session that year and graduate in the fall. They technically were not graduates and they both still had one year of eligibility left. However, both of these players were invited to the graduating athletes' ceremony, both received watches, and both were part of the parade of graduates with their fellow graduating teammates

from the 2006-2007 season.

The UNB women's hockey team recently lost their varsity status along with five other teams. This apparently includes the exceptions that the alumni association used to make for certain graduating athletes. This year, two players on the women's hockey team were invited to the graduation ceremony only to be uninvited the day before the Athletic Banquet. They were told they were not going to be receiving their watches because they are not graduating this May; they are graduating in September and December. Both players have years of eligibility remaining, but due to UNB's decision to cancel the women's hockey program, both players have opted to complete their degrees as soon as possible as there is no longer a reason for them to stay at UNB an extra year.

Why were similar exceptions made at the end of the 2006-2007 season for women's hockey players and not this year? Why did the UNB Associated Alumni, the alumni association that represents not just graduated UNB athletes, but all UNB graduates, not allow these two players to celebrate the completion of their UNB athletic careers with their teammates? The Alumni Association has told the players that

they will receive their watches next year in what was described as a one-on-one presentation. This sounds like a quiet push out the back door. What else is left to take away? We have been stripped of our Varsity status and now are denied recognition as a graduate of the athletic and academic programs that we have poured our hearts into. This may not seem like a huge travesty to most people, but it means something to the athletes and is yet another slap in the face to members of the women's hockey team. Thanks UNB.

The ceremony for graduating athletes is the last opportunity for the Associated Alumni to make a lasting impression on graduating athletes who are entering the workforce in hopes that those grads will look back on UNB fondly and generously donate in the future. As rare and very fortunate debt free graduates, we were looking forward to the opportunity to give back to the Varsity Reds program that, until this year, had given us so much. The UNB Associated Alumni has made the decision not to donate to the Varsity Reds Program and UNB an easy one.

Sylvia Bryson, BSE (GE) '08
UNB Women's Hockey Team
Elizabeth Arbeau, EIT
UNB Women's Hockey Alumni

Good Neighbours/Good Neighbourhoods

Dear Editor:

Last fall, the Mayor's Working Committee on Community/University Relations established the Good Neighbours/Good Neighbourhoods Sub Committee. The mandate of this committee is to identify and facilitate initiatives that will contribute - in a sustainable way - to a positive living experience for both long- and short-term residents of the College Hill area.

Through participation on this sub committee, College Hill residents, the City of Fredericton, the University of New Brunswick, St. Thomas University, and the UNB and STU Student Unions, have joined forces to address neighbourhood issues and effect positive change. They were joined on the sub committee by representatives of the Fredericton Landlord's Association, the Fredericton Police Force and the Fredericton Fire Department.

After conducting research on the on-

going issues and reviewing best-practices in other municipalities, the subcommittee has identified a number of initiatives to modify unacceptable behaviour and promote a safe and attractive neighbourhood for all.

These initiatives, ranging in nature from education to enforcement, will be implemented starting this spring and fall and will be ongoing. They will include efforts to prevent arson; information brochures for students, landlords and long-term residents; neighbourhood meet and greets; and programs to recycle student furniture and other household items.

Neighbourhood surveys will be conducted in the fall of 2008 and 2009 to measure results and set benchmarks against which the effectiveness of various initiatives can be measured. The sub committee believes that by working together all parties can address the concerns of the College Hill area.

For more information, please contact any of the following:

Joanne Thomson
Community Liaison Coordinator,
City of Fredericton, 460-2188, joanne.thomson@fredericton.ca
Shirley Cleave
Associate Vice-President Academic
(Learning Environment),
UNB, 458-7749, scleave@unb.ca
Jane McGinn-Giberson
Director of Student Services - Student Life and Retention,
STU, 452-0578, jmcginn@stu.ca
Jordan Graham
VP External, UNB Student Union,
458-7164, external@unb.ca
Andrew Handraban
VP Education, STU Student Union,
460-0301, su_vpsl@stu.ca

Sincerely,
Sandra Howard

WHAT DO YOU DREAM ABOUT?

"My dream and my passion has always been to create 3D designs and to be my own boss. But I was fresh out of university, had student loans to pay off and could not get financing through traditional sources.

So how did I start my own business? With CYBF's start-up financing and Alex Read my CYBF business mentor. That's how.

Sure we all need money to start a business and I am grateful to CYBF for helping me out. But what is really making the difference between my

success and failure is their mentoring program. Alex is my sounding board and my inspiration on those days when you just can't take it anymore.

My company, DreamLife Design is expanding beyond my wildest dreams. We have over 25 employees and service many top real estate developers, working with them to bring their blue prints to life.

I encourage you to make your dream a reality."
- Robert Kenfield

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