

THE GEM "jewel of the isle"



Vol. 7, No. 4 University of prince edward island September 25, 1986

Reply To Nonsmokers' Criticism

UPEI Faculty Association Proposal For A Smoking Policy

By David Gallant

I believe that Mr. Linkletter and Mr. McLusky have misunderstood the intent of my recent article on the proposed smoking ban at UPEI. I do not consider the present policy on smoking at UPEI to be unjust; on the contrary, I strongly support it. However, I strongly protest the draconian absolute smoking ban recently proposed by the UPEI Faculty Association.

Their proposal, if passed, will entirely ban smoking at UPEI. Tobacco smoking will not be allowed in any place on campus, including residences and private offices. This will effectively ban smokers from smoking on the campus, whether they be students, employees, or visitors.

The Faculty Association has made this proposal in a high-handed manner, without any consultation with the general student body. This runs against the very spirit of democracy. When American television journalists ask citizens of the Soviet Union or China what they think of their government they invariably praise their respective governments and high officials. If they did not, they know they would be persecuted. With regard to this proposed smoking ban policy, the situation is similar, only more subtle. Most students would not dare to voice an opinion against this proposal by the so-called Faculty Association, for fear of being blacklisted by professors. I believe this kind of practice is completely contrary to the spirit of the democratic principle.

Just because the majority of people at UPEI are non-smokers, it does not give them the right to prevent all stubborn smokers from being students at UPEI. Suppose the majority of the population decided that they wanted slavery and passed a law that made 20% of the population

slaves; that majority would be in violation of basic human rights. A majority does not have the right to oppress the minority solely by sheer numbers. It should be obvious to UPEI students that certain important matters, such as basic human rights, cannot be decided upon the basis of majority. The problem at issue should be resolved through our justice system. We should still keep in mind that tobacco smoking is still legal in Canada.

It is possible that the Faculty Association may hurt the University by proposing this sort of action. If what they propose is passed, many future students who prefer to smoke may go elsewhere, causing enrollment to decline. This would cut the university's income and might even force the layoff of some professors. The university should do everything possible to encourage students to enroll and not drive them away.

A further extension of the university's present policy of setting up non-smoking areas would be more reasonable and far less drastic than an absolute ban on tobacco smoking on campus. Instead, the Faculty Association is proposing to take away a legitimate right from all smokers, including those who respect the rights of nonsmokers. If such a regulation is not enforced, it will be a farce. If, however, the university strictly enforces such a regulation, how many more security guards will the university have to hire? Will security guards search dormitory rooms in the future? Without a respect for basic human rights and a regard for the democratic principle, our society will eventually degenerate into a society without morality.

I wish to add that I am a nonsmoker, but I still find the absolute smoking ban proposed by the Faculty Association to be morally offensive.

Given that:

- sidestream smoke contains over 3500 known toxic chemicals, some of which are in concentrations up to 50 times as high as that in the mainstream smoke inhaled by smokers; and that
- those toxic substances are absorbed by non-smokers; and that
- non-smokers exposed to these compounds suffer adverse health effects ranging from eye nose and throat irritation and headaches to respiratory distress, reduced respiratory function, angina increased risk of lung cancer and a general reduction in life expectancy; and that
- in order to remove these compounds from the indoor environment requires up to 100 air changes per hour; and that
- the majority of people on the University campus are non-smokers; and that
- it is appropriate for the Faculty Association to be concerned about the health and welfare of its members as well that of all other members of the University community; and that
- it is appropriate for the University to take a leadership role in matters of social importance;

the Faculty Association adopts the following policy on smoking and recommends it to the University Administration for implementation in order to protect the health and welfare of all members of the University community.

This policy is as follows:

- the onus is on smokers to have smoking areas identified instead of on non-smokers to identify smoke free areas;
- all areas of University buildings that are not identified as smoking areas are to be smoke free;
- the occupants and users of each building shall be permitted to formulate a policy (i.e. where smoking is to be permitted) for the building;
- if a policy for a given building can not be devised that is satisfactory to all, the University Safety Committee (or other appropriate body) shall be given the responsibility of resolving the issue in a manner which protects the health of all involved;
- the policy for each building must be reviewed every two years;
- smoking shall be prohibited in all general use areas such as cafeterias, the library, all meeting rooms, public reception areas, the physical education building and the hockey rink, with the exception of designated areas from which air is vented directly to the outdoors and not into the general air circulation of the buildings; and
- the University commit itself to the elimination of all smoking in University Buildings by 1990.

STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBERS 1986-87

President	Rob Kelley	Business Reps	Ben Compton
VP Academic	Paul Ledwell		Darryll McCarvill
VP Operations	Karen Bishop	Senate Reps	Julia Hammon
Treasurer	Doug Clow		Carla Dumaresq
Arts Reps	Kim Blanchard	Senate Reps	Sheila Lund
	Heather Hickey		Paula MacKinnon
	Chris Maddocks	MAPUS Senate Rep	Hill Manderson
	Paula McGuirk	Board Rep	Parker Grimmer
		MAPUS Council Rep	Vivian Huizenga

Student Union Office 566-0530

I would like to see the University...

- support the entire policy _____
- reject the entire policy _____
- support only sections and reject only sections _____

Other Comment: _____