

POLICIES NOT DEFINED AT UPEI

As the events on campus of the past two weeks have unfolded it has become increasingly clear that most of the people in charge of this campus really have no clear idea of the rules and regulations governing it. As many of these regulations are unwritten, and those that are written have not recently been submitted to a review process, it would seem that properly following the rules at UPEI is based on who you talk to. For example:

1) The UPEI Security Department was instituted by an Act of the provincial legislature, for St. Dunstan's University in 1968. Gerry Birt, UPEI's Public Relations Officer, believes that this is probably the act that governs the activities of the Security Department, but the Justice Department of the PEI Government would probably know for sure. A.J. MacLeod, Chief of Security, guesses that Mr. Birt may well be right, but he's not sure. Chief MacLeod feels that the mandate of the Security Department includes such principles as ensuring the security, protection and safety of the buildings, grounds and people of UPEI, but there is nothing written that he could provide to me that says exactly what the UPEI Security Department is expected and required to do, generally or in specific situations. The point of this is that if nothing is specifically written down, in some form where everyone has access to it, then the Security Department's procedures are based on tradition and habit and leave room for the involvement of the personal prejudices of the officer involved.

2) Petitions. The campus is papered with them right now. At the Student Council meeting of October 4, a petition to debate an impeachment hearing was ruled inadmissible because the question was not written at the top of every page. However, the petition that was circulated the previous week in support of the woman who lodged the complaint, and demanding the acknowledgment of bad judgement on the part of President Eliot, also did not have the question written at the top of every page. This latter petition was accepted, read out publicly and publicly responded to, and while it may not have the same legal ramifications as the petition of October 4, procedure is procedure, and it should be adhered to. Procedures and regulations that are passed on by word of mouth, dependent upon the memory of the person in charge of them, are not democratic, nor are they even sensible.

3) So how are students informed of these procedures? How do students know to call Security to the scene of a crime on campus, rather than the City Police? How do students know to include the half-dozen or more regulations on the petitions they circulate? It should be noted here that the only reason Security became involved with this most recent case, was that a neighbour down the hall heard the victim screaming, assumed it was rowdyism, and called Security to ask the girl to quiet down. This was a long while after, and on the other side of the campus from where the alleged rape took

place. If policies are not written down in a detailed fashion, available to every student, and with everyone at least vaguely aware that these policies exist, then, (A) policies can only be followed by those already in power, (B) policies can be ignored by those in power, without any fear of being challenged.

This is not to say that policy has been abused by the Student Union, the Public Relations Office or the Security Department. There is no evidence to support any such claim at this time. It is, however, to say that it is in the best interests of all of these departments, and of the students, to ensure that policies are designed, committed to paper, and made available to all.

