

How do they judge us?

"It's just not fair."

That's a common refrain on campus as semester's end approaches and students become anxious over their final grades.

"It's not fair! Twenty per cent for a presentation and I'm not good at giving presentations." This is a common, and in some ways a just, complaint. Unless the course is something like Education or Drama, which undertake to teach you how to communicate before an audience, why should your ability to do so affect your grade? If the course is Biology or Philosophy or Fine Arts, is the student's public speaking ability pertinent to his final grade? Many students do well on presentations, but more are handicapped by shyness, nervousness, or an inability to think on their feet. Is it really fair to penalize them?

"It's not fair! Only twelve out of twenty for class participation, and I really tried! I don't even know what I should have been doing. What does he want?" Many students question the justice of being evaluated on class participation, on the grounds that the term is too vague. Are you expected to ask a lot of questions or to keep quiet and listen? Should you take part in every discussion or only speak when you have something worth saying? Will your grade be higher if you attend every class and say little or if you miss a few classes but talk a lot when you're there? It is rare if students know these things, which differ from class to class. If, some December, a professor were to say to his class, "Everyone who did not stand at attention and sing 'The Marseillaise' whenever I entered the room will lose ten points," no one would be surprised. We are used to losing grades for things we did not know we were expected to do.

"It's not fair! A 'C'! How much is a 'C' worth anyway?" A few professors still use the cumbersome letter system to grade papers. No one is certain what these letters mean, but the usual interpretation allots 5 points per symbol: 95-100 equals A plus, 90-95 equals A, and so on. The person who received a "C", therefore, earned a grade of between 70 and 75. Why is he not permitted to know his exact grade? There is a considerable difference between 70 and 75.

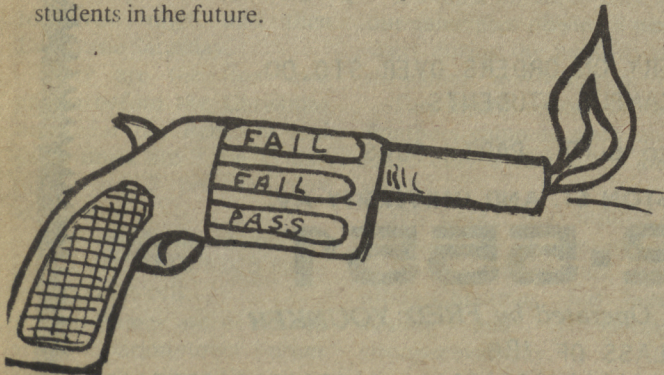
"It's not fair! He told us the test would be on chapter five, and there were three questions from chapter six!" This is the most unjust of all the common misuses of student evaluation. A professor may think that the student should know everything that has been covered in class; if so, he should not mislead students by telling them that a test will cover only a certain section. Any student who is struggling with five or six courses, a few extracurricular activities, and the demands of his personal life, is surely justified if, before a test, he studies only the material the professor told him would be on the test.

What can we do about these unfair practices? Speak up.

If a professor treats you unfairly, tell him so. He may make an adjustment on your grade. He may explain his point of view to you, so that, although your grade remains unchanged, you no longer feel unjustly treated.

If you tell your professor and he does nothing to correct the situation, speak more loudly. Write to The Netted Gem. Make a noise.

Remember that oppression feeds on submission. Even if it is impossible to correct the injustice of which you have been victim, speak up. You may help win a fair deal for all students in the future.



WHO IS THIS MAN?



- 1) AN AMERICAN STUDENT WHO'S JUST PULLED AN ALL-NIGHTER
- 2) A U.S. MARINE OFFICER WHO'S ON LEAVE FROM LEBANON
- 3) A SACRED MLA

The Netted Gem

Staff

Coming to you semi-live from our cozy little office way up on fourth floor Main, this week's gem of a staff! We are Editorial Page Editor Dave Doiron, Sports Editor Phil Stanyer, Copy Editor Sharon Leighton, News Editor Ruth Edgett, Production Editor Carolyn Ryan, Advertising Editor Gus Hillstrom, CUP Editor John Dougan, Arts Editor Johnathan Orlowski, Editor-in-Chief Denise Richardson, and the dedicated and vital Howard Beattie, John Pendergast, and photographer Parker Grimmer.

The Netted Gem is the weekly student newspaper of the University of Prince Edward Island. Views expressed in the Netted Gem are not necessarily those of the UPEI Student Union. We reserve the right to edit copy for space, style, or legal reasons. Letters to the Editor must be typed double spaced and be submitted before noon on Monday. Letters exceeding 500 words in length are prone to cutting and much abuse by the collective staff. All letters must be signed by their author(s). Our office is located on the fourth floor of the Main building. Our telephone is 892-4121 Extension 387. The Netted Gem is a member usually in good standing with Canadian University Press.

LETTERS

Pat on the back

I would like to express my appreciation for the way you handled our advertising via the Calendar Column this week — it's an excellent place to publish this information, good thinking, thank you!

Also, your article on theft in the Cafeteria by Sharon Leighton, accurately quoted and well composed, is appreciated.

Keep up the Good Work.

Sincerely,
Andy Dean

P.S. "Netted Gem" — A Good Title!

