

Dear Editor:

I have just read "The Backlash" in the U.P.E.I. X-Press. (January 23, 1992 edition) Do these people not know that proposed affirmative action at this university only intends to give preference in job competitions and promotions to a member of a minority group when two candidates possess equal qualifications?

The norm at U.P.E.I. does not fall within the meaning they attribute to affirmative action, namely that:

"usually members of the minority group only have to meet a minimum set of qualifications to get the job or promotion ..."

but quite contradictory to this the minority candidate must possess the necessary qualifications. (This may be relative at any given time depending on qualifications possessed by the pool of applicants.)

If and only if they do are they then given preferential consideration. I would look forward to reading any formal evidence to the contrary in regards to this university's policy. Indeed, Hanus & Murphy

CONTRADICT themselves (the largest logical fallacy one can make) by admitting U.P.E.I.'s selection criteria for affirmative action based programs is built on the selection of the best qualified candidates:

"This proposal (U.P.E.I.'s suggested affirmative action program) states that the three best qualified candidates will be considered for a faculty position from the job applicant pool, but two out of the three best qualified HAVE TO BE WOMEN."

(X-Press, p:20, Jan 23, 1992)

and then stating:

"usually the members of the minority group only have to meet a minimum set of qualifications to get the job or promotion ..."

(X-Press, p:20, Jan 23, 1992)

Obviously this university then, does not fall within the definition they prefer to give affirmative action. Nonetheless, they strive to apply it to this institution. I draw my opinion from their allegation that their definition re affirmative action has supposedly occurred within a particular department at U.P.E.I. I consider this to be in poor taste and entirely unfounded. If I were in their shoes (which thankfully I am not) I would make sure I had some proof to back up such a claim before I declared it in a public forum. Therefore, I again invite them if they have any formal evidence in this regard to please produce it. In any case, if this is a proposed program, how can they justify applying it to a situation which allegedly occurred before it has been implemented? Perhaps they could enlighten us with some formal evidence

which I would consider to come from a qualified source, namely any person who may be directly involved with the proposed affirmative action program, and therefore in a genuine position to comment on such a matter. I presume such information would be revealed to X-Press readers through an interview with such a person by an objective party, through the release of some documentation or by a direct, personal statement from such a source. I do not consider formal evidence to be subjectively based opinions influenced by anger and emotions be they justified or unjustified. It is about time if Hanus and Murphy are going to comment on such an issue that they go to the heart of the matter and talk to those who are involved with it at this university instead of pulling out documentation which supports their thesis from similar projects which have taken place at other locations. (I.e. your Statistics Canada charts. Perhaps they would be more relevant to the issue at hand if you asked for specific statistics which reflected the situation at this university and not Canada as a whole? I'm sure you are aware that a cumulative presentation of such information can differ drastically from an individualized account.)

Before you used the term "ethnocentrism," I now ask you to consider the term "egocentrism." Furthermore, your definition of affirmative action applied to this university would mean that since such candidates have below average qualifications the students here would receive a below average education. I know this place is not perfect, but I would not go as far to insinuate that it would endorse an affirmative action program which would jeopardize the education of its students. Call me naive if you like but simple business principles dictate that this would not be in U.P.E.I.'s best interests. Eventually its students would take their money and go elsewhere. You have also seemed to miss an important criteria any logical discussion or critique of affirmative action or any issue for that matter should include -- the legal perspective. Section 15 (1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states:

"Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

This appears to exist in direct opposition to affirmative action programs. However, subsection (2) of that same section states:

"Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration