

What I Learned at U.P.E.I. LETTERS

Well, the time has finally come for me to say goodbye to UPEI. Yes, that's right. I won't be back next semester -- to the relief of a great many people, I'm sure!

In the five years that I have been a student at this university I have witnessed and encouraged change. At the risk of sounding "aggressive and confrontational" I would like to add that change is often opposed by those who have the most to lose.

Of course, I couldn't leave without making a final controversial statement and this one is directed to those students who were accurately described in the November 21 editorial page of the Guardian as having been "Puffed up with an incredible sense of self-importance, [these] students billed themselves as Students for Free Speech and Academic Rights".

Over the past week, there have been several articles and editorials written about the showing of "The Cannibal Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death". The first article which appeared in the Guardian on Thursday, November 19 stated:

"... a group of 10 women from a Women's Studies course who had come to protest the showing left [the room where the film was being shown] after one student threatened to call security to have them removed." (Hmmmmm, calling security seems rather confrontational.)

I understand that the group felt threatened by Julie Coulton's presence and remarks. Granted, she may have very well interrupted your "peaceful" showing but does she not have the exact same rights to freedom of expression/speech/or academic freedom (depending on which argument you are using this week) as every member of your group? This presentation was not a private showing -- am I correct? Therefore, all people who had interest in the film were encouraged to attend. So you see, Julie Coulton had a right -- which incidently was given to her by you -- to voice her concern with the showing of the film. (I rest my case. I guess the jury will be out on that one for a while).

Enough of that topic. This was supposed to be a nice letter saying goodbye to good-old-UPEI. I should note that I wrote this list after reflecting on the fact that I have spent five years of my life and \$20,000 at UPEI. Here is what I learned in return:

(1) To respect other people's right to disagree with me. I also learned that they might earn that respect by convincing me through well organized and concrete arguments.

(2) Soul Searching 101 is the best (and toughest) course one will ever take. Fortunately, it is offered each semester, has no prerequisite, no limit on enrolment and is totally inclusive.

(3) Having "friends in low places" is often more rewarding and self-affirming than having a few in places of (supposed) power.

(4) People appreciate being talked with -- not at.

(5) The parking problem may be a concern to some but we must also remember that there are people in our university community who can't afford food let alone a car. The \$700 for each new parking space, presently being discussed by our Board of Governors, would be better spent on toys and Christmas turkeys for single parent families (just a suggestion).

(6) Strength lies not in numbers but in the conviction of one's beliefs and the ability to live with one's self.

(7) The Barn (ie. Panther Lounge) is the place to go when one feels like being an animal -- a place to cut loose and relax.

(8) People really do care about other people. This was never more evident to me than the huge turnout at the rally to show support for the survivor of the (alleged) Sexual Assault in September of this year.

So there. I guess I got my money's worth, learned something and may even be able to get a job some day. (Ha -- I am such a dreamer!)

Here's to Faith, Knowledge, and Service,

Heather J. Morrison

To Certain Elements on Campus,

In Canada we enjoy certain rights and freedoms. So, if I bother myself enough to watch a movie, oh, let's say, Cannibal Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death, I can and I will. I don't need somebody to TELL ME not to watch it. No, I can make up my own mind. I can decide for myself.

I did see it. Quite willingly as a matter of fact. I decided that the film makes fun of everyone equally. And that's what we're supposed to be talking about anyway, isn't it?

I'm sick of certain people claiming that the road to equality is paved with censorship and blacklists. Stop cloaking fascism with equality or feminism. You can protest anything you like including the previously mentioned PG 13 film, but don't tell anybody they can't see it. They might be able to make their own decisions. And why weren't any of you protesting Basic Instinct when it was shown at the Barn? Surely that is more pornographic.

It's also time for you "select" few to make a real difference. How about sharing your heads and burning a few books you don't like? Nothing like a good book burning to let the people know you mean business. I suggest you start with the Robertson Library. It has a rare selection of "pornography" written by "dead old white guys" like Aristophanes, Melville, Orton. How dare you decide for me. If I don't want to read or see something, I won't. Turn the channel, leave the room, don't tread that book. But the beauty is that I have the choice to do that.

Do you really think we're all too stupid to see what's right and what's wrong? We're university students. Think. If you had put your energy into getting better lighting on campus, or a walk home program, or God forbid a rape crisis or awareness center on campus instead of fainting protesting this insignificant film, perhaps some violence might have been avoided.

But above all: Stop limiting my choices.

Roddy Weatherbe