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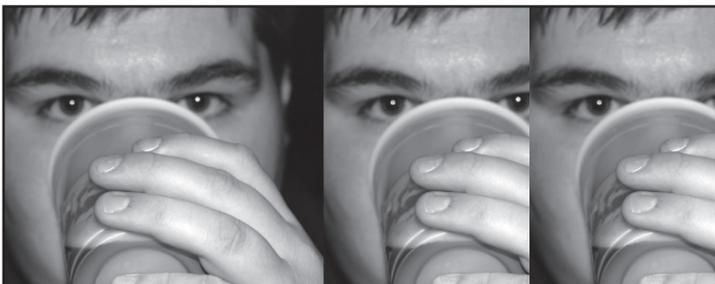
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Syllabus change prompts protest over student rights violation

DREW NELLES
The McGill Daily

MONTRÉAL (CUP)—Students in a McGill University economics class are furious over what they say is a violation of the University's Charter of Students' Rights.

Professor Myron Frankman was supposed to teach both sections of Economic Development 2, a required course for international development studies (IDS) students. However, after he fell ill to an infected broken arm, the economics department changed the course outline after the add-drop deadline had passed—an apparent violation of the Charter of Students' Rights.

The course has changed substantially, with the grade determined by marks on the final exam and two assignments, rather than on seminar participation, and a series of projects and assignments. Reading assignments have also been limited to a single textbook, and students will no longer study a specific developing country of their choice.

The Charter of Students' Rights states that students have the right to a syllabus detailing the readings and marking scheme for a course during the first week of the course.

Students began circulating a petition last week, requesting that the changes be reversed. At press time about 50 of the 292 affected students had signed.

Student Daniel Gelfer said that the course was originally intended

to critically examine economic development, but that it's now being taught as a "neo-classical economics course."

"It's a cornerstone of the IDS program, and I think that most IDS students feel the same way ... that we should be learning in a critical way," Gelfer said. "I think it's really important to not just regurgitate one person's point of view."

"Most people are too disillusioned with the McGill Administration to protest. I don't even know why I'm wasting my time."

DANIEL GELFER,
MCGILL ECONOMICS STUDENT

When Frankman became too ill to teach, a teaching assistant taught the second week of classes, and at the beginning of last week economics chairman William Watson, who declined to comment, told the classes that they would have new professors and different courses. The course's two new instructors are a professor from Concordia and Vanier College, and a Université de Montréal PhD student.

Although Enrica Quaroni, Faculty of Arts Associate Dean of Student Affairs, admitted in an e-mail to the *McGill Daily* that the Charter of Students'

Rights states that course outlines can't be changed after the add/drop period, she maintained that this situation is unique.

"The charter ... speaks to normal situations that are within the control of an instructor or a chair of a unit, and states that within this controlled situation, an instructor cannot arbitrarily make changes," she wrote.

"The situation for [this class] is by no means normal; it is beyond anyone's control. Alternative solutions had to be found quickly and with severe constraints," she continued.

Quaroni also said that she's allowing students upset with the changes to drop the course without being penalized on their transcript, and will allow students who drop the class to pick up another course with the permission of the instructor.

But Gelfer pointed out that for students graduating at the end of the semester, dropping the course isn't an option, and that many other classes are now full.

According to Kay Turner, an Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS) Vice-President who is also in the class, AUS is trying to set up a meeting with Christopher Manfredi, the Dean of Arts, and Quaroni to discuss the issue.

However, Gelfer doubted that any of the students' requests would be implemented.

"Most people are too disillusioned with the McGill Administration to protest. I don't even know why I'm wasting my time," he said.

Show aging faculty the door: Foot

Demographer predicts too many university staff for too few future students

PRECIOUS YUTANGCO
Excalibur

TORONTO (CUP)—In a few years, it may be necessary to pay postsecondary faculty members to leave.

Demographic expert David Foot argued this point during a 19 January conference organized by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations.

After the Ontario government decided to phase out Grade 13, there was an influx of students going into postsecondary institutions in 2002 and 2003 in what came to be known as the "double cohort." In addition, the children of the baby boomers—the "echo generation"—were also adding to the growing college and university population.

Foot predicts that in a few years, both the double cohort and the echo generation will have graduated, leaving universities with many empty seats and an overflow of teaching staff—especially since mandatory retirement in Ontario was abolished in December 2006, meaning faculty members can choose to work beyond the age of 65.

"We may be then buying out the faculty to get them to leave," Foot told those who were present at the meeting, according to reports from the Canadian Press.

But James Turk, the executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, disagrees with Foot.

"I think that there are some serious problems with Dr Foot's positions or his predictions. A decade ago, he had

dire predictions about how there was going to be a desperate shortage of faculty between about 2005 to 2015," said Turk. "Now he's talking about foreseeing a situation where universities are going to be overburdened with excess faculty."

"It's important to retire when you still have enough energy and youth left in you to develop other interests."

ARTHUR HILLIKER,
FACULTY ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT
YORK UNIVERSITY

Foot focuses his studies on demographics. Turk, however, believes that there are additional factors beyond what the demographer recognizes. Turk suggested that Foot ignored the fact that the number of students attending postsecondary institutions continued to increase even after the double cohort and the echo generation arrived.

"It certainly isn't true at York University," said Arthur Hilliker, president of the York University Faculty Association, about faculty staying on past 65. "The experience in other jurisdictions where they've gotten rid of mandatory retirement is that university professors by in large retire before the age of 65 anyway."

Additionally, even when retirement was still mandatory in Ontario, faculty

members continued to teach on a per session basis.

"[Universities had] no objection to people over 65 teaching. They just don't want to pay them. So if I'm a full professor earning \$100 000 a year, if there's mandatory retirement, they can force me to retire and then hire me back as a sessional [paying \$5000 to \$6000 a session], Turk said. "It has nothing to do with age or competence."

Both Turk and Hilliker agreed that even before mandatory retirement was abolished, there were still "retirees" who continued to teach.

"If someone has a low pension and they're getting older, they can top it up a little bit with the university. Most universities will entertain severance agreements with older faculty members," Hilliker added.

But, according to Hilliker, retirement is important and is desired by the average faculty member.

"It's important to retire when you still have enough energy and youth left in you to develop other interests," he said. "The worst you can do will be to go on until ... you're just tired out and you wouldn't have enough energy to start another life. It would just be ridiculous."

At the University of Alberta where mandatory retirement still exists, a task force put together a report studying both the implications of its use at the age of 65 and the potential outcomes of eliminating it. While the report was released in July 2006, a decision on whether or not to continue with mandatory retirement has yet to be made.