

Cricket prank puts a hold on residence hockey tournament

NIKKI JOHNSTON
ASHLEY FLETCHER
The Xaverian Weekly (St Francis Xavier)

ANTIGONISH (CUP)—A residence rivalry at Nova Scotia's St Francis Xavier University was drowned out by the sounds of chirping insects after approximately 1000 live crickets were emptied into the hallways of a student dormitory as a pre-hockey-game prank.

The 16 March incident resulted in two students being fired as residence executives.

Thompson and Tompkins, one residence, was targeted by its rival Chisholm and Gillis in advance of the University's residence hockey tournament, the Xavier Cup.

Adam Harris, President of the Students' Union, confirmed that one resident of Thompson and Tompkins had to be moved from the residence because of their fear of crickets.

The University's facilities management placed small sticky-pads in each room to try and kill the crickets without moving students out of the building. According to roommates Sarah MacLellan and Heather Johnston, it can take a couple of days for them to die once they become trapped.

At a meeting with University officials the following day, Sheryl MacAulay, President of Chisholm and Gillis, denied having had any advance knowledge of the prank.

The two residences were scheduled to play against each other in a hockey tournament on 18 March as part of the Xavier Cup.

According to the University, the joke may have been taken too far. Until the perpetrators of the prank came forward, they said, there would be no hockey game.



STEVE WALLS / THE XAVERIAN WEEKLY

NOT SO CHIRPY A hockey team released 1000 crickets into their rivals' dorm.

But the Student's Union wasn't convinced the game should be stopped.

"We said, 'Woah, woah, woah, hold on here,'" Harris said. "We treated the issue as very serious but hoped this was an isolated event by a small number of students. We wanted them to step forward."

Late on 17 March, four individuals came forward. But Harris and University officials later learned that the residence's President and Vice-President knew about the prank before it happened, contradicting their earlier statements.

"The house leaders had just told us 24 hours before that they weren't involved; this is why we asked them to resign," Harris explained.

MacAulay and Aylward said they were told that if they didn't resign, they would be brought before Students' Union Council and impeached.

"Many people in the residence knew [about] and were involved with purchasing the crickets," Harris said. "It wasn't just these four girls that organized it; there were reports that they collected money from the rest of the

house and had been planning this."

Aylward said that because house elections for next year are so soon, there'll be no house president for the remainder of the year. Funds amounting to approximately \$1800 in the house bank account have been frozen.

Both residences have also been removed from the Xavier Cup.

The University also imposed undisclosed sanctions on several students, according to Dean of Students Joe MacDonald.

MacDonald added, however, that pranks occur regularly on the campus and, when in good taste, can help promote a healthy campus community.

"Through inter-house cups [and] intramurals, there have been many healthy rivalries between houses, and we support the leadership of students who support these—for the most part they are very healthy," he said.

Andrea Forbes, the Students' Union Vice-President (Student Relations), said that bonding activities are being planned for the two residences.

Contract-staff strike leaves Laurier students wondering about graduation

LAURA CARLSON
The Cord Weekly (Wilfrid Laurier)

WATERLOO (CUP)—Contract academic staff (CAS) at Wilfrid Laurier University, representing 365 part-time professors, have walked off the job. And with the end of the semester so near, many students are now concerned about graduating.

"Mostly, we've been concerned about the students and the contingency plans and the students who have urgent issues about graduating," said Sue Horton, the University's Vice-President (Academics).

"So we've been trying to figure out some more policies."

Horton said that updates on the University's website will soon alert students to the university's policies regarding their academic credits.

Negotiations between the university and the union broke down in the early morning of March 19, and it's unclear when they will resume.

"I think we're taking a bit of a rest because they were up all night," said Kevin Crowley, a university spokesperson.

"The university is still willing to meet at any time, and we've told the CAS team, but we haven't heard back. So at the moment, there are no new talks scheduled," he said.

Horton added that the University's offers were the best possible.

"We put an offer on the table. [...] I think they are very fair offers," Horton said.

"Frankly, we do not have more money we can put into this, given the economy and the University's budget deficit," she said.

The University's offer was for a 3.5 per cent wage increase in the first year of the new contract and three per cent in the second and third years.

The only other issue on the table is seniority.

"The outstanding other issues are issues of principal where we feel our position is what is upholding the quality of students' instruction, and we would not want to compromise that," Horton said.

"Whatever the seniority package looks like, [the University] definitely wants to make sure that we have the best professors in the classrooms," Crowley added.

Full-time faculty are continuing to teach their classes whether they support CAS or not, Crowley said.

"They are legally required to continue teaching because they are under a separate contract, and I haven't heard anything to the contrary," Crowley said.

In the meantime, the University is encouraging students to continue with their coursework, even if a CAS professor teaches the class.

"The large majority of courses are operating," Horton said.

"Exams are coming up, and even if you have an instructor in the CAS course who isn't currently teaching, if you plan on graduating and completing the course, it makes sense to complete the work for the course now," she said.

"We're working to resolve it and to make arrangements such that exams will occur and grades will get in as soon as possible."

Some students said, however, that classes have been cancelled and students have been told that they don't need to cross the picket line if they feel uncomfortable doing so.

Other classes are being taught by alternate professors.

"I think that spirits are pretty high, and we're very enthusiastic," said Nick Ray, a part-time professor in the communications department at Laurier.

"Students have shown lots of support [and] the non-contract academic staff and full-time faculty have also come out to support us," he added.

Most of the contract academic staff are hopeful that the dispute will be resolved quickly.

"I hope that we can get a good settlement soon and we can get back to the classes and teaching the students and doing what we're here to do," said Annette Abma, a part-time professor in the English department.

"It's disappointing," she added. "I've been hoping, for students especially, that we wouldn't have to strike."

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