

**Letters**

**Mr. Blum and the Windmill**

**TO THE EDITOR:** Mr. Stephen R. Blum, author of an article in this newspaper on June 29 entitled "No! Dr. Pepinsky," had twice done me the courtesy of mentioning that article to me before its publication. Once, some weeks after learning third-hand of what someone thought I had said in a talk to the Faculty Luncheon Club on May 1 of this year, he called to ask whether I had made the statement: "the function of a university is research, and students can go hang."

I replied "of course not!" I explained what I had said, and offered to provide him with the outline of my talk.

Mr. Blum then confessed that he had prepared an article based on rumor, but that after learning he was misinformed he would discard the writing.

I invited Mr. Blum and his mis-informant to talk over with me some of the problems which, from his conversation, appeared to interest both of us, and suggested that we do this in the comfort of my home rather than over the telephone.

I was somewhat surprised to have a second phone call from Mr. Blum on June 27, in which he informed me that he had changed his mind for a second time, and that his article was to appear in the next issue of the Collegian. I explained that I was just leaving for conferences, elsewhere, for a 10-day period, and that I would look forward to reading the Collegian article on my return.

Two points ought to be made, before I discuss Mr. Blum's published remarks. Firstly: nothing is more important to all members of a university community than to re-examine the purposes of the institution, and to do this continually. Mr. Blum is to be congratulated for his interest in doing so.

Secondly, however: the subject of university purposes is an ancient one—some eight or nine centuries old—and a tremendous amount of thought has been devoted to it. Independent thought is a trait to be prized; but why try to speak in the face of the wisdom of centuries without exposing oneself to at least some small portion of recorded thought on a problem?

In such examination lies much of the joy of scholarship. To avoid it places one at a tremendous disadvantage in any public utterance.

The Collegian's reporter, in an article on May 2, also reversed much of what I had said, incidentally. For example: "It is surprising how easily a university will give up the most heartfelt principles when the smell of money is in the air."

This I did say. But I did not add, as the Collegian stated, that "fortunately there is no evidence of this at Penn State." These is ample evidence that the tendency toward abandonment of university principles exists here as elsewhere.

Let us look at a paragraph from Bruce Truscot's "Red Brick University."

"But to the idea of a university only the 'Fellows', the researchers, are es-

sential. There could perfectly well be a university which, like All Souls' College, Oxford, had no undergraduates at all; and, instead of teaching, replenished its ranks by the choice of scholars who had taught elsewhere, devoting itself entirely and exclusively to the pursuit of knowledge. But there could never be a university which had no researchers at all and which engaged in nothing but teaching. A secondary school can never be a university, though in its highest forms, given scholarly teachers, there can be much of the university spirit. A university without research would be nothing but a super-secondary school."

Here is a more formidable opponent than myself for your knight-errantry, Mr. Blum. But don't take him out of context; read him through. Otherwise he can turn on you.

The Pennsylvania State University, if it is a university, exists as an institution encompassing a group of persons "dedicated to the quest and transmission of truth." These are Karl Jaspers' words, in quotes.

"Because truth is accessible to systematic searches, research is the foremost concern of the university. . . . The university's second concern is teaching, because truth must also be transmitted."

No university scholar owes instruction specifically to Mr. Blum, no matter what taxes the latter pays. He may be accorded the privilege of joining the community of scholars and students, as long as he is capable of learning and applies himself in study. Mr. Blum implies that scholars do "not want to teach."

I know of no scholar on this campus in that category, and none elsewhere. Quite to the contrary, scholars want good students. Not every one has time regularly to teach both undergraduates and graduates, nor did all of us join the University to do so. Mr. Blum has no concept of what a university is or does, so far, if one must judge him from his writing. He lays claim to territory whose borders he has not yet entered.

Whether Mr. Blum wants to learn is the question before us. Will he now start to read and think? Or will he hang himself on more windmills?

A university does not exist "of the benefit of its students"; it exists for the benefit of scholarship and the search for truth. That is the basic concept, Mr. Blum. Chew on it.

Truth and its communication: these are our aims. By serving these aims does the university serve its students and the State. The university is not a secondary school and it is not a service station.

My invitation to Mr. Blum stands: let us sit down, to think and talk about these matters. A group of students is welcomed every Sunday evening to our home on Whitehall Road, for discussions with other university men of university aims.

You are welcome to join us, Mr. Blum; but leave you steed and your lance at home. No horses are permitted in the Peripatus and no weapons other than reason.

Letter cut  
Ray Pepinsky  
Research Professor of Physics

**Snowed**

The consumer price index has actually dropped in the past several months, but the cost of attending Penn State has risen considerably for many students.

Much of this increased cost, which has been due to little-publicized changes in University policy, has burdened those students who can least afford strains on their already - stringent budgets.

A sharp revision in refund rates for students forced to withdraw from the University because of illness, financial or scholastic reasons, increased food prices at the HUB Terrace Room and a general deposit head the list of changes which amount to increased costs for many students.

The unannounced and surprising change in the schedule of tuition refunds will burden students who are already plagued by medical bills, financial trouble or scholastic problems. The revision of these rates does not even appear in the summer timetable, called the "bible of the summer term" by one Old Main official.

Previously, students could obtain a refund of 90 per cent of their tuition if they withdrew during the first week, 80 per cent of their tuition if they withdrew during the second week and so on through the ninth week.

Under the new policy, only 50 per cent of the tuition is refunded if a student withdraws during the first two weeks of the term, and nothing is returned if he withdraws in the third week or later.

An increase in food prices at the HUB Terrace Room, also unpublicized and unexpected, has strained the budgets of the University's most economy-minded group — the town independent men.

Many patrons and several employees of the Terrace Room believe this increase in prices was prompted by poor administration rather than increased costs of food and preparation.

A \$25 general fee, \$50 for entering freshmen, to be levied on all students this fall will replace the individual deposits for chemistry breakage, military equipment, residence hall deposits, and towel and locker deposits for men.

Although this money will be returned upon graduation, it will be out of the reach of students during their most economically-depressed period — their college days. Since few students require all of these deposits and most upperclassmen require none of them, it is felt this new general fee is unfair.

We realize that some of these price increases might be an at-

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MYERS

**Campus Beat**

**Prepare Now; 'Nutty Play'**

You're on the "back stretch now students—you have only 30 school days left." We professors are looking forward to seeing what kind of a reaction you are going to give us when we hit you with all your final exams on your last two days.

Heard the infirmary is already preparing for a bigger-than-ever epidemic of finals virus. All you students who make it a practice of becoming hospitalized during exam time it's easy to cram in bed—better start thinking up your excuses now.

Rumor has it that it will be harder than ever to get admitted during the last few days. Slashing your wrists might prove adequate.

Didn't happen to get around to the dedication of the new

"Kee" hall up in the West Halls area. Heard they held it at night.

The signs in front of Schwab have told me that Claude Frank is going to come to campus. He's due on a Wednesday the posters say, but I've been going to the auditorium every Wednesday night for almost a month and all I see are 4H clubbers, boy scouts and school administrator conferences.

The current Boal Barn play is supposed to be real "nutty." You get to throw peanuts at the players. This novice device ought to be incorporated into more dramatic endeavors. A peanut concession outside the State legislature could probably make some real good money.

—Prof Wayne

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