

# SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.455

## MEMORANDUM

To..... SENATE

From..... R. McANINCH

..... STUDENT SENATOR

Subject..... PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF  
DEPARTMENT ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE  
COMMITTEES

Date..... NOVEMBER 23, 1970

Moved "that Senate instruct each department in the University to establish an Academic Grievance Committee, the composition, purpose, and powers of which, would be as follows:

### Composition of the Committee

Two students and two faculty from the department. The students to be chosen by the students in the department and the faculty by the departmental faculty.

### Purpose of the Committee

To hear grievances from:

- 1) Students in relation to the actions of a particular faculty member.
- 2) Students in relation to the actions of a particular T.A.
- 3) T.A.'s in relation to the actions of a particular faculty member.

The category 'students' refers to both undergraduate and graduate students.

### Nature of Grievances

The grievances must relate to the actions of a Professor or T.A. which occur while that Professor or T.A. is conducting a particular course and which relate to his or her conduct of that course (including grading of the students in the course).

### Powers of the Committee

The Committee is empowered to recommend remedial action if it deems the grievance a legitimate one, action which would be binding on the particular faculty member or T.A. involved."

The intent of this proposal is to provide a mechanism of grievance evaluation for students who believe that they have been unjustly dealt with by a faculty member or T.A. At the present time it must be conceded that students are essentially at the mercy of faculty members as regards to what occurs in a given course situation.

For instance, what can a student do if he finds himself in one of the following situations:

- 1) Enrolled in a course which deviates dramatically and unsatisfactorily in the student's assessment from the outline presented at the beginning of the semester.
- 2) Enrolled in a course, which in the student's assessment is an entirely excessive and unreasonable work load.
- 3) Enrolled in a course in which he feels the grade that he has received is not one which justly reflects the quality of his work.

A belief which underlies this proposal is that students in relation to faculty should have what could be termed certain rights. A faculty member should not, in effect, have unlimited power over a student and automatically have the last say in a situation where there is a disagreement between himself and a student. It does not follow from the expertise which a faculty member possesses that this entitles him to a position of omnipotence over the students who are studying under him. There is no educational argument which can justify this.

It is hoped that faculty Senators will not view this proposal as a personal affront or insult. It is not intended as an indictment of the faculty of Simon Fraser, but rather as a means of improving the current relationship which exists between the students and faculty of this University. Faculty members voting for this proposal are not engaging in an act of self-criticism but are declaring their respect for the students of Simon Fraser by providing them with redress of grievance procedures which one would expect to normally be accorded a respected group of people.