

# Opinion

Opinion Editor

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Opinion meetings Wednesdays at 5 p.m. in 3-04 SUB. C'mon by!

EDITORIAL COMMENT

## Secret SU spending justified without substantive reasons

"DUE DILIGENCE," "GOOD GOVERNANCE" AND— MY PERSONAL favourite — "accountability" are noble-sounding concepts recklessly tossed around Students' Council debates under the pretence that any semblance of respect for what they truly mean wasn't locked outside the first time they went *in camera* and left to rot all year.

Students' Council approved a \$10,000 increase to the Students' Union's legal fees budget line last week. Predictably, all debate happened *in camera*, meaning they're not allowed to talk about why they wanted the increase.

Leaks happen — which is a good thing when a body representing the members of the Students' Union consistently silences itself publicly for less than necessary reasons. This time, files obtained by *The Gateway* show Students' Union executives expressly begging Council to approve this increase to essentially help LHSA President Eric Martin with Code of Student Behaviour charges against the group.

While they made certain to specify that an increase to the legal line would allow them to use it for whatever they might need it for, Martin, under "tremendous pressure" was the primary justification.

According to the executive, Martin was told he could not talk about this with anyone but his lawyer. Doing so would trigger an investigation into him personally. Hence the secrecy — just like anything else involving Lister this year.

If true, then the university is surely overstepping its bounds on what a person facing charges can and cannot do. You can't simply charge a group with something, inform a single person from that group that the charges are being placed, and then prohibit him from telling anyone anything — even, as the Students' Union executive claimed, his own executive.

As far as disciplinary cases go at this university, somebody facing charges, even on behalf of a group, is not going to be prohibited from mentioning at least the fact that they are facing charges. At best, this is perhaps a misunderstanding. Given that the charges against the group likely include specific charges against individuals, Martin could well have been told, or asked, not to divulge information about those specific individuals, which is quite reasonable. Until proven guilty of the charges, those students have a certain right to privacy.

Whatever happened, somewhere along the line the story changed, resulting in the story Council was sold: Martin was bearing the burden of this whole situation entirely alone, a poor lonely student being bullied by a malicious administration set on taking down the LHSA, and we have to support him by increasing our legal fee line right now, and we can't give you any real information but expect you to make a snap decision completely in secret because if he goes public with his story he'll be investigated personally.

It's worth discussing the merits of supporting a student group facing Code of Student Behaviour charges, but that group should have to justify why it needs that help. The group should have to explain why the charges are bogus and why money from fee-paying students both current, former and never Lister residents are best used to defend them. And above all, this needs to be public every time. Because it's only under public scrutiny that anything Council coughs up actually has a hope of getting fairly evaluated.

Council was told little to nothing regarding the actual charges. It seems that if the justification for doing yet one more thing with your money in secret ends with the claim that Martin was prohibited from discussing even that the LHSA was facing charges and that he as their representative bore all the burden.

If those facts are true, they need to be public immediately. There is nothing \$10,000 for legal fees can do that overwhelming public pressure can't do faster. Call that bluff of a personal investigation, Martin. They can't successfully charge you with something they have no evidence of you doing. And when they fail, you'll be up there along with Students' Union President Colten Yamagishi — the heroes of Lister Hall who brought down the tyrannical administration.

But having investigated the investigation process, it seems unlikely that the situation is as it was portrayed *in camera*. It could be anything from a misunderstanding to an outright lie, but Council made a decision based upon incomplete or misleading information. Had they had the time to investigate for themselves the process of Code of Student Behaviour charges before having to make this decision, perhaps they could have talked to the Office of Judicial Affairs and then talked to Martin.

They could have returned to the debate two weeks later and endeavoured to do so publicly, rather than agreed to the demands of the Students' Union executive in secret, under tremendous pressure and forbidden to talk about it publicly.

Instead, due diligence, good governance and accountability failed to make a comeback again.

Ryan Bromsgrove  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

### STEPHEN HARPER DOCUMENTED HIS FIRST DAY BACK AT WORK VIA TWITTER:



ANTHONY GOERTZ

## letters to the editor

### RATT ruins an evening

Last Saturday night, prior to attending Dance Motif, friends and I decided to stop by RATT to have a bite and a beer. Little did we know the adventure we were about to embark on.

Two of our friends arrived early and ordered their food. My spouse and I, showing up a half hour later, placed our orders noting that our friends had yet to receive their twenty minutes after we had placed our order. Wondering what was going on, I went to a staff member who informed us, at the table a few minutes later, that the kitchen was backed up and the food would be out shortly.

First shock: there was only about ten people in the whole place when we ordered and most were eating. One of our party is a short-order cook and wondered aloud what was going on!

Second shock: a few minutes later, our server came to our table to inform us that our friends' order had never been registered! Our server again took their order and off she went.

Third shock: the food arrived. I had ordered sweet potato fries, vegetable spring rolls and salt and pepper wings. Save for the wings, which were all right even though they were sans salt and pepper, the sweet potato fries were at the same time uncooked and burnt, and the vegetable spring rolls were so imbued with oil that once bitten, they gushed hot oil. My partner's club was limp and flavourless. The other party's food

was okay however really not conducive to a return visit.

Thirty three dollars of a mostly uneaten meal later, including the occasional beer which took its time to make it over to the table, and complaints which only elicited blank stares, we left. I would like to point out something that made me smile though: I asked for a side of mayo. The bartender brought it over stating they usually charge for it but she slipped it out of the kitchen. Really? With the rather poor service and questionable food, the mayo would have us forgive it all?

As we made our way to the theatre, wanting something to read as we waited to be let in, I picked up *The Gateway* and by pure luck, opened it to An Open Letter to Room at the Top.

I would like to point out I wholeheartedly agree with every single point they made in regards to the quality of the food and service. It is terribly unfortunate that such a incredible setting is spoiled by such incredibly mediocre service.

As a past kitchen staff, I can tell you that it is not that difficult to prepare good, satisfying pub grub.

We will never eat there again... and drinking may be out also as witnessed by the minty tasting martini with three olives another of our party had. A straight vodka martini should not have a mojito aftertaste.

We are profoundly disappointed and wanted to make sure you were aware of it.

Gilbert Draper  
VIA EMAIL

### FROM THE WEB

#### It's not wrong to point out male discrimination

(Re: "MRAs misunderstand feminism," by Paige Gorsak, Jan 23.)

Paige, when there is discrimination against women, you point it out, don't you?

So how it is wrong of MRAs to point out discrimination against men? Male circumcision is the gynecological equivalent to removing the clitoral hood of a female, one of several forms of female circumcision all of which are illegal.

Even the slightest "cultural nick" on a baby girl is illegal, and it's much less intrusive than removing the entire foreskin on a baby boy. That is total sexism and hypocrisy. But you criticize MRAs for pointing that out? Don't you see your own sexism here? Or is it just ignorance? Maybe so.

Try reading the reports from the pediatric and medical associations in the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, South Africa, the Nordic nations, England, etc. about what circumcision does by removing a functioning sexual organ from a baby boy. It too MRAs in Germany and England to get the human rights courts of the EU and UN to stop countries from discriminating against fathers. Do you criticize that too? Why is it wrong to point out sex discrimination?

Marc Angelucci  
VIA WEB