



## Student Congress Answers Open Letter

Be it hereby enacted by the Student Congress of Providence College sitting in session on Thursday, May 11, 1972 that: The Student Congress wishes to express its disgust over the decision not to rehire Dr. Robert Trudeau, a member of the Political Science Department, for the academic year 1973-74. In response to the plea for student unity voiced in the "Open Letter to Providence College," which appeared in the recent edition of the Cowl, this body feels obligated to speak out on the firing of Dr. Trudeau. We assume this right by virtue of Section 1 of the Providence College "Student Bill of Rights" which guarantees: "Students...should have the responsibility for helping to maintain a free academic community. They shall respect and defend not only their fellow students' freedom but also their professors' rights to the free expression of views based on their own pursuit of the truth." It is this body's right to speak out on the firing of Dr. Trudeau, but it is our duty to inform the college community of his professional accomplishments. Lastly, the Congress proposes constructive action on this subject.

It is the understanding of this body that at a meeting held on Tuesday, May 9, 1972 involving Dr. Trudeau, the senior faculty members of the Political Science Department, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the following was cited by Dr. Friedman as the reason for the dismissal of Dr. Trudeau. "The reasons for the above action is based upon my assessment, shared by my colleagues (Fr. Mahoney and Drs. Alfeld and Romans) that while Dr. Trudeau's overall professional competence might be regarded as adequate, the quality of the department could improve by engaging the services of a person even better equipped than Dr. Trudeau." While the Student Congress feels that Dr. Fried-

man's desire to improve the Political Science Department's quality must necessarily be regarded as an admirable and essential task, we feel that his stated reasons on the decision not to rehire Dr. Trudeau are rather arbitrary. We question whether or not the other faculty members of the Political Science Department, the entire faculty of Providence College, or at any other college in the United States would be able to establish himself as the "better equipped" or "best equipped" professor on a given subject. Consequently, Dr. Friedman's reasons for Dr. Trudeau's dismissal are rather meaningless. However, if Dr. Friedman's reasons are considered valid, the Student Congress expects the entire faculty to resign for the betterment of Providence College. By the same token, the entire student body of Providence College should "drop out," since the quality of the school could be improved considerably by enrolling "better equipped" students than the students currently enrolled at Providence College. While the body reviewing the dismissal of Dr. Trudeau considers his professional competence "adequate," this body feels that Dr. Trudeau's credentials and performance at Providence College are exemplary. The Student Congress questions whether any member of the body reviewing Dr. Trudeau's dismissal has ever witnessed Dr. Trudeau's presentation in class. Dr. Trudeau, we feel, may very well be the "best equipped" professor in Latin American studies in light of his many accomplishments during his relatively short career.

Outside of the classroom there is very little known about the professor and one of the purposes of this bill is to inform the college community of Dr. Trudeau's accomplishments. Mr. Trudeau received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in the area of Latin American studies.

In investigating the dismissal of Dr. Trudeau, the Student Congress sought to research the reputation

of his alma mater. The book *A Rating of Graduate Programs* presented by the American Council on Education provided some interesting statistics on the University of North Carolina. The University's graduate faculty of Political Science ranked fifteenth in the country in 1964, and in 1969 ranked tenth (p. 64). The University of North Carolina shared the seventh ranking with Princeton University in terms of the effectiveness of the Doctoral program in Political Science (p. 65). Latin American studies, Dr. Trudeau's field of specialization, is considered to be one of the best programs offered by the University of North Carolina, and the program itself is among the most prestigious in the country. While certification alone does not guarantee professional competence in any occupation, Dr. Trudeau's educational background seems to have provided him with a basis for his professional accomplishments in his role as a professor at Providence College.

Mr. Trudeau's professionalism seems unquestionable. In reviewing the 1971 edition of the Student Congress Faculty Evaluation, Dr. Trudeau's rating by students may be regarded as an indicator of this professionalism. Question twenty-seven concerned the students' overall assessment of the instructor. In Dr. Trudeau's Political Science 201 class, five students rated him as the best instructor they ever had at Providence College; five students rated him as above average; and three students considered Dr. Trudeau an average instructor. Dr. Trudeau's ratings by students enrolled in his Political Science 403 class were equally as good. Five students rated him as the best instructor, while four students rated Dr. Trudeau as above average. Only one student rated Dr. Trudeau as an average instructor. In Dr. Trudeau's Political Science 453 class, two students rated him as the best instructor, and one student rated him as above average. In the three classes that evaluated Dr.

Trudeau's performance as an instructor, not one student rated him in the two remaining categories: below average or poorest. It is the Student Congress' contention that these results represent the "Priority of Good Teaching" as outlined in the Faculty Manual of Providence College. One of the primary responsibilities of the faculty, state the Faculty Evaluation, is that "members of the faculty will engage in scholarly research and publication with a view to improving their teaching as well as their professional competence as scholars" (p. 54). Dr. Trudeau and his colleague, Dr. Hyde, have written an article entitled "Beyond the Traditional Term Paper" which has been accepted for publication in the new journal *Teaching Political Science*. This article seems to be an adequate indicator of Dr. Trudeau's flexibility in teaching since the article is based on his teaching of Political Science courses outside his area of specialization. At this time, Dr. Trudeau also has commitments for four chapters to be published in various books on Latin America. Dr. Trudeau has also spent a number of years in Latin America where he was a member of the Peace Corps. His travel connected with his field of study was demonstrated only last week when Dr. Trudeau attended a conference on population policy in Latin America which was held at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Trudeau's scholarly research seems unending, but by virtue of a large research grant Dr. Trudeau spent the summer in Puerto Rico studying population policy. Dr. Trudeau's language competency includes a fluency in Spanish and French and a reading knowledge of Portuguese. Lastly, Dr. Trudeau must be considered an attribute to the Providence College community and the community of Providence. Dr. Trudeau is one of the initiators of the Latin America Studies Program, an inter-departmental program at P.C., and he also serves as the co-director of the Providence Free School.

The decision not to rehire Dr. Trudeau represents a gross injustice to those who benefit the most by his occupation — THE STUDENTS. At the same time, the loss of Dr. Trudeau would mean a loss of prestige for the name of Providence College.

Lastly, the Student Congress proposes constructive action on the matter of Dr. Trudeau's firing. Although the meeting at which Dr. Trudeau's firing has already taken place, the Student Congress calls for a new hearing to be held with students serving a participatory function. The Faculty Manual states that "All proposals not to reappoint shall first be discussed informally by the Academic Vice President with the faculty member and all other concerned parties." (p. 44). At the meeting held on May 9, 1972 not one student was in attendance, although Dr. Trudeau requested the presence of at least one student he had taught in class. It is our contention that since students are the prime beneficiaries of a professor's teaching, students must necessarily be categorized as a "concerned party." This body requests that the President of the College grant Dr. Trudeau a new hearing with representation by the "most concerned party" — THE STUDENTS. If this request is denied, the stated objectives of the college cannot be met. "Just as the college is committed to the intellectual development of its students, so it is also concerned with equipping them to become intelligent, productive and responsible citizens of a democratic society." The Student Congress asserts that such development cannot take place if there is no democracy in the community known as Providence College.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas J. Turski  
Class of '72

Ed Kelly  
President of the  
Student Congress  
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## From The Editor

In the 26 April issue of *The Cowl*, this editor called for unity among all organizations of the Providence College Community. This unity includes not only the impersonal "organizations" of the College, but also, and even more importantly,

the persons, the "Christians", who make up, and give those organizations life.

Without unity among the people who comprise the corporate body of the College, the "backbone of this College", the students,

faculty, administrators, trustees and alumni, Providence College ceases to be an institution of higher learning, indeed, ceases to be a Christian Community.

Last week, in the 10 May issue of *The Cowl*, Providence College

began to come of age; it began to show that the shell of apathy could be broken; it showed that the decision to go coed was a wise one; it showed that hard work could produce; and it showed the success that could be wrought through the self-less cooperation of the above mentioned people of Providence College.

Last week's issue, in particular, saw students, faculty and administrators joining together over issues that effect the community; it showed that those factions are aware of one another, and willing to trust one another.

Feedback from the "Open Letter To Providence College" has necessitated this one-page issue of *The Cowl*. Members of the Student Congress approached this editor, asking that their resolution over the firing of Dr. Trudeau be published in *The Cowl*, so that it could be the public concern of the entire community, of the people who would be affected by this action.

Since this was an unforeseen issue, contemplated after *The Cowl's* monetary allocation had been budgeted to be used up by the time of the 10 May issue, *The Cowl* had to ask for additional funds to print this important issue. As another indication of the emerging unity of Providence College, and in light of the importance of this issue, each class has pledged the money needed to print. Instead of using the money only for social events, these class officers have put aside selfish motives in face of this most serious action.

In conclusion, this editor can only feel a sense of cautioned hope over this latest course of events. Summer always presents time to forget. It is the hope of this editor, and *The Cowl*, that Providence College does not return to its shell in September, but rather continues to realize that potential that could make it an institution of higher learning and a Christian Community.

Sincerely,  
Denis Kelly

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