

# Dr. Read comments on two-year old humanities program

**STAMPEDE:** Now that the Humanities program is in second year of operation, do you feel that it accomplishing what it was designed to do?

**Dr. Read:** Not yet. However, I do feel that in a number of areas we have made significant progress. We have, for example, eliminated some of our worst errors of last year; and I think we generally have a better sense of what we are trying to do.

**STAMPEDE:** Do you feel that the student reaction is better?

**Dr. Read:** That is somewhat difficult to determine. Last year, because we needed information rapidly we were probably more open and more willing to listen to criticism.

In fact, we asked for it. This year, this has not been a true. There has not been as much criticism, but then again we have not been as open to it.

**STAMPEDE:** It has been suggested by some that the program is stodgy and certainly not as innovative as a number of programs of a similar nature.

**Dr. Read:** Actually, it is a rather conservative program. I may as well confess at this point, despite the fact that it will endanger my image as campus radical, that on educational matters I tend more and more to side with old-line conservatives like Russel Kirk. It is a great temptation to institute a program that emphasized only

contemporary events and ideas. On the other hand, there is really only so much a person can say about despair and alienation.

The problems of race, war, environmental quality, and student unrest are vital questions in our generation and they will be treated in the fourth semester of the program, but there is only so much that can be said that has any real meaning. One can talk and read about ghettos for years, but the more you study the more you begin to get back to some of the basic questions that have puzzled men for centuries, such as the relation of man and nature, the nature of man, the nature of God, the ideal society, and all of the other great issues.

After all, the question of man's relationship to society, for example, is faced by Antigone, Socrates, Jesus Christ, Martin Luther, Sir Thomas More, and a host of others that are studied in the first two semesters.

**STAMPEDE:** Are grades really so low in Humanities as one hears?

**Dr. Read:** The average grade for a freshman at a quality school is about 1.6, ours was about the same. At the sophomore level, the average is about 2.3, ours is slightly higher.

**STAMPEDE:** Have the students really improved in the Humanities program and how would you compare this to improvement under the old program?

**Dr. Read:** The improvement has been great, collectively and individually. I cannot really make a comparison to the old program, since I am new to the school, but we have had assurances from some quarters that the present program seems to be doing a better job.

**STAMPEDE:** What changes do you think you will be making in the Humanities program?

**Dr. Read:** Theoretically, I only implement staff decisions, but my guess is that there will be no major changes for

next year. We will be changing some books, partly because the staff gets bored using the same books year after year, partly because we find better books, and partly because we make some mistakes. For example, because a stupid mistake on my part, we failed to emphasize sufficiently Dostoyevsky's, The Brothers Karamazov.

We are looking for something better to use for art and music, something better for anthropology, and especially some better introduction to the whole idea of a Christian liberal arts education. We will have to have some new personnel, at least on a temporary basis.

**STAMPEDE:** What about the following years. Is there any long range plan for the development of the program?

**Dr. Read:** Most of this is simply guess work, and much of it depends on future developments for the entire college. There are a number of things we would like to do in the Humanities, but there is after all a limited amount that can be done. I think, for example, that within five years we are going to be forced to give serious attention to the film. This could be done within the Humanities or it could be done elsewhere. What we do, in that particular case, depends on

what is done or not done elsewhere.

Or, if the school should go to twelve hundred students as projected, we would have to make radical changes because this would mean a freshman class of about four hundred fifty and there is no good place to put that many students.

**STAMPEDE:** What actually is the Humanities 100 program?

**Dr. Read:** I am extremely sorry that the nickname "dumb Humanities" got started for this program. Some of the students in Humanities 100 are simply late developers who did not get adequate high school preparations. Others simply went to high schools that are weak.

We would prefer that more students were in the program, even though it would mean going to summer school one summer if they were to graduate in four years.

A lot of people could profit from Humanities 100; the administration, the faculty, even the Stampedee staff.

**STAMPEDE:** You have gone to meddling.

**Dr. Read:** Sorry about that. Before you leave, would you like to hear my opinions on all the great issues that confront Milligan and mankind?

**STAMPEDE:** NO.



INTERVIEW PRESSURE -- Dr. Ira Read, chairman of the humanities program, proved to be no stool pigeon as a STAMPEDE reporter asked him a few inquiring questions about his department. His answers were incisive; neither is he a sitting duck.

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