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# WHAT'S WRONG?

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BY H. A. KEN SHIPMAN, O.L.S.

For some months now I have been pondering the difficult and somewhat confusing position in which our Erindale Graduates find themselves upon completing their degree. They are launched on a two year term of articles which usually turns out to be three or more years without any substantive, in-depth understanding of the practical application of what they have been taught. We will argue of course, that is why we insist on a lengthy term of articles, monitored by an appointee of our Association.

A review of the Student Handbook containing the rules, regulations and guidelines for Students makes it very clear that this graduate must be employed in a Party Chief or Senior Party Chief position in order for his time to qualify as article time. This exerts undue pressure on the Student and a considerable hardship on his OLS employer.

My observation has been that these graduates are not ready or capable of the responsibilities that come with the position of a Cadastral Party Chief. Certainly we can train them in a short period of time to monument Subdivision layouts or to collect topographic data. What I am referring to is "Grass Roots" Cadastral Surveying. I find it is taking two years just to bring them to an acceptable level of Party Chief. This requires a considerable effort by his OLS employer and results in an inefficient and costly disruption of the normal work flow and procedures. We must train him in all aspects of Surveying which include dealing with clients, preparing job specifications, planning projects, searching in registry offices, indexing completed projects, carrying out or supervising final computations, the drafting of plans of survey and the delivery of final returns.

I do not want to be critical of the Erindale Course as I personally feel and take pride in the fact that it is one of the very best, if not the best, available anywhere. That does not say, however, that improvements should not be made.

There must be a better way to ensure that upon Graduation the student has a grasp of the practical application

of what he has been taught. There must also be set in place an improved method of ensuring that new members of our Association are not unleashed on the general public until they are fully capable.

To the first problem I would suggest that all Erindale Students entering second year be assigned an "Advisor". This advisor would be a senior OLS who would be available to assist the student by providing advice and guidance on a demand basis. I do not suggest that this "Advisor" be in competition with the Erindale professors but that he be simply the "Big Brother" with years of practical knowledge and experience to impart to the student, when and if requested. I am convinced that this suggestion would greatly improve the student's understanding of the practical application of his studies.

The second problem is much more onerous. I cannot, in all fairness to the Erindale Graduate, suggest a longer period of articles. What I do suggest, and this is not a new suggestion, is that new Ontario Land Surveyors be restricted from operating their own practice for a specific period of years after receiving their OLS Certificate. In other words, they would remain employed surveyors for a further period of years before being allowed to operate on their own. This period of time could be two or three years.

I realize that this second suggestion will not sit well with many people. I am concerned, however, that the present system is inadequate and may be, in some cases, downright dangerous to our Association and to the public in general. ●

## IS SOMETHING WRONG?

BY PETER G. MORETON, O.L.S.

Is something wrong? Mr. Shipman has raised some very interesting points, some of which you may have thought of in the past but never put in print.

All future surveyors are advised within the first year at Erindale College of the procedures in becoming an On-

tario Land Surveyor and would hopefully at that stage be well aware of the time involved from then until commissioning. I recently had discussions with a student lawyer concerning their articling period and the time involved which, by the way, is similar to ours along with architects and accountants. He was prepared, he said, to do what was necessary to meet his goal realizing the commitment he had to make from day one.

This is not to say that we should place all of the responsibility onto the student's shoulders. We should periodically review the current system to ensure that it is doing what we, the Association, want it to do.

Before we go any further, it is important to clarify the point that was made concerning the Student Handbook. The Student Handbook states that within the minimum 24 months of experience to be approved by the Board, a minimum of 12 months of field experience must be gained at Party Chief level or higher. This does not mean that the student has to be a Party Chief for the entire term of his or her articles, not that it wouldn't be a bad idea.

There are conflicting theories with respect to the handling of our students. We are very concerned about the time it takes in becoming an Ontario Land Surveyor and that it is not a lengthy and burdensome time. On the other hand, comments have been made not just by Mr. Shipman but by others, that the time is maybe not enough, given the fact that you may have a student graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Surveying from Erindale College who has received little or no surveying experience before, during or after his formal schooling.

It has always been my opinion that our student training would be best suited as a Co-operative Programme similar to that offered by the University of Waterloo Engineering faculty. Our students could gain the necessary hands on experience allowing their university education and practical training to complement each other. The student lawyer that I spoke of earlier couldn't say enough about the valuable experience that he was able to obtain during the summers working for a legal firm and during the period of time that he was now in prior to attending the Bar Admission course. It is suggested that students obtain practical experience within the profession during the summer months. A few years ago this was almost impossible, since the market was depressed, but now the situ-



ation has changed. The other problem that we had and may still have is the hourly remuneration. Students who are concerned about their financial obligations for the upcoming year often find it necessary to be employed in construction or something else that offers salaries better than we do. It's a bit of a "Catch 22" situation, isn't it? Both the Federal and Provincial Governments offer incentive programmes to the employer. The only problem is that they are often short-lived and commitments have to be made well in advance of one's normal hiring period.

We know that we cannot operate our business out of a textbook nor can we run on straight technical input. We must take all of those aspects of Surveying that Mr. Shipman speaks of and sometimes cram them into a two year period or more. I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Shipman's comments in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6, particularly his suggestion of an "Advisor". Many of the points raised have been discussed by the Board and have been addressed by others before.

The matter of a New Surveyor being able to hang out his or her shingle on the date of commissioning has been discussed for many years and occasionally gets discussed at the Board level. It has been suggested by some that a New Surveyor not be allowed to enter into direct practice with the public for 3 to 5 years following commissioning. It was also suggested in the article, "Our Future Surveyors" by Martin Vorsteveld, O.L.S. in the Summer 1981 issue of The Ontario Land Surveyor, that "there should be a time of grace before a newly commissioned OLS can hang out his shingle. Perhaps it should be mandatory before opening an office to provide proof that such a man has followed and passed certain courses in business administration." Might I suggest that you read Martin's article together with his Report to the 1981 Annual meeting on Education and Standards, page 124. May I also refer you to another article entitled "Expectations" by John Barber, O.L.S., as printed in the 1984 Winter issue of The Ontario Land Surveyor.

Maybe our present system does need to be looked at but I do not agree that it is inadequate and that it may be dangerous to our Association and the Public. I would hope that between the parties concerned, there are enough safety valves built into the system. Unfortunately as in any other profession there will always be the occasional "leak". ●

## RE: "WHAT'S WRONG?"

**COMMENT BY GORDON GRACIE**  
**Chairman of Survey Science**  
**University of Toronto**

In his letter "What's Wrong?", Ken Shipman identifies two problems related to the professional development of Erindale graduates. While the second problem seems to be based on conjecture, the first problem is real and needs immediate attention.

As responsible members of a professional body, we are committed to giving our students (university undergraduates and articled graduates) the best preparation that is within our power to provide. This must include professional training as well as basic education. The professional activities listed in Mr. Shipman's letter (i.e. dealing with clients, preparing job specifications, planning projects, etc.) must be covered every bit as much as the subject areas that constitute the surveyor's academic preparation. But just how should it be done, and by whom? That's the issue.

I'm not convinced that the "advisor" approach suggested by Mr. Shipman is best. My initial reaction is to view it with skepticism if only because it may be difficult to implement. But perhaps I'm not seeing clearly what is suggested.

What I do see, however, is a need to review the entire matter of handling surveying education and professional training in a co-ordinated way and as a shared function of the Association and University. The Association and University are, indeed, equal partners in the overall education/training process, not only in responsibility but also in duration of contact with the students. Let me explain.

Our present education/training format calls for four years of academic study followed by two years of articleship. At first glance, this format would seem to be two-to-one in favour of university attendance over service under articleship. Closer scrutiny reveals, however, that there are no more than 130 weeks (i.e. 2.5 years) of actual instruction and examination in the four-year academic program, while, as Mr. Shipman points out, the period of articleship often extends well beyond the two years minimum. In other words, the Association, through its articleship program, has essentially as much contact with the students as the University has.

May I therefore suggest that the Association and University undertake the review right away, as equal partners. We now have the mechanism to do it; I refer to the newly recreated University Liaison Committee. The co-ordination of surveying education and professional training would be an excellent agenda topic for the first meeting of this committee. ●

**DO YOU HAVE  
A COMMENT  
YOU WOULD  
LIKE TO MAKE  
ON THIS OR  
OTHER TOPICS?**

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**IF SO, PLEASE  
SEND IT IN.**

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the Editor  
are  
encouraged.**

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**Let's hear  
from you.**