

Treating misbehaving students badly

Letter to the editor
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Once again, Saint Mary's University is reacting badly to student misbehaviour. I have in mind the university's decision to require "orientation week leaders and the executive of the student association to attend sensitivity training on campus, and the executive to go to a conference about sexual consent next week at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish" (*Chronicle Herald*, 5 September 2013).

I hope that those sentenced to re-education camp tell the university to go pound sand. But I expect that, sheeplike, all will follow orders meekly.

What should happen is simply discussion and criticism. The university or the students' association might want to sponsor fora in which the incident can be discussed, for instance.

If the university has to make any public statement, that statement should be about sexual assault and violence, not about celebrating sexual assault and violence in a chant.

The university should state simply that it will report allegations of assault to police and co-operate with the police in their investigations. The statement should in no way put up barriers to the free expression of opinion and emotion on campus.

It is not a university's business to have a position on such matters as whether such chants encourage violence or whether ours is a rape culture. These are substantive positions that those on campus should be left free to address for themselves.