

Counsellors there to solve various student problems

by Cathy McLaughlin
Maxine Crooks and Rosemary Liburd like their jobs.

"We provide a very good service. That's why I enjoy working here," says Ms. Crooks.

She and Dr. Liburd are counsellors with the University's Student Counselling Services. From Monday to Friday, they and five other full-time staffers talk with students about career choices, social roles, emotional and psychological problems.

They also run a number of group programs. These aim largely at helping students cope in the university world, but some, such as the personal growth seminar, deal with essential life skills.

"Quite often the concerns in this group are developmental. Achieving independence from parents, both emotional and financial, lack of self-esteem, and loneliness are common topics."

Often, these problems overlap other groups, like the assertion training seminar. Here, limited number of students learn to beat anxieties and communicate more effectively with their fellows. Most sessions are flexible. "We wait till we get the group and then work according to what they want."

New seminars may spring from needs found in regular groups. Women's issues workshops, for example, and self-esteem seminars have been held in the past.

Regular groups include study skills sessions and test anxiety reduction seminars. A public speaking group deals with conversational skills as well as speech-making; a weight control workshop stresses the psychological and emotional barriers to weight loss.

"We do some outreach groups too." The counsellors have worked with student residences, teaching study skills to students and giving assertion training to floor supervisors. Various fraternities, and

groups like the Moslem Students Society and Native Affairs have contacted them for study skills workshops.

"What kind of students seek help?" "All kinds. We get prospective students, mature students, and anybody in between. People of all ages come."

Mature students, those who have returned to school after several years' absence, discuss their concerns each week over a brown bag lunch. General information sessions, pre-law and pre-med orientation seminars help prospective students make choices. A career resource library is open to all on a drop-in basis in the Student Counselling Center.

"The biggest part of our work, though, is individual counselling."

Personal development, adjustment to university and fitting into social roles are common problems. Students from small towns often have adaptation problems when thrust a campus map and an ID number; mature students or single parents may have trouble juggling school, career and family roles.

"We help people with social relationship problems, both with same sex peers and members of the opposite sex." The counsellors also do some marital counselling and sexual dysfunction therapy, "although not a great deal."

"It's really important that students find a counsellor that they're comfortable with." Clients don't have to stay with the first person seen, but can switch until they find someone who meets their needs. All staff are highly qualified.

"We are all either Masters or Ph.D. level psychologists." Graduate trainees from educational psychology also help with the workload. And it's a big one.

"We're running at full capacity right now, and a bit more." Normally, demands are "cynical," jumping before and after exams, but with enrollment up this year, staff are

copied with a steady flow of students.

At most, however, the waiting list for individual counselling is "a week to a week and a half." In emergency cases, students can talk briefly with a counsellor immediately, and make arrangements for further help. The decision to get help "is not easy," and when it's made, some students need aid "right away."

At sixty dollars an hour for

outside psychological help, many turn to Student Counselling Services. It's all free, and "very tightly confidential." Funded by the University's Student Affairs department, staffers hope they will not be victims of cutbacks. Due to increased demand, the service could "very definitely" use more staff.

"With more people, more programs can be run. And the need is

there."

To enroll in any of the group programs or get individual counselling, students can phone the Student Counselling Service at 432-5205 or drop in to the center at the north end of Athabasca Hall. They're open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Wednesday evenings to 8:00 p.m.

People protest definition of family

by Ken Lenz

A coalition of 16 organizations recently organized to protest the limited definition of a contemporary family.

The coalition, which does not yet have a name, disagrees with the policy of a recently formed organization called The Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family (AFWUF).

AFWUF recently invited the chairperson of the Stop ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) movement Phyllis Schlafly to speak at their organizational meeting. The Stop ERA movement, which endorsed the formation of AFWUF, is a rightist organization which believes the women's movement is a threat to the traditional family unit.

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee member Janet Maher says about AFWUF, "They believe that the equal rights movement is a direct attack on the family."

The Coalition believes that the definition of the family endorsed by both Phyllis Schlafly and AFWUF is inadequate.

Coalition member Elizabeth Lunney states, "The AFWUF definition of the family is very limited. It does not include single parent families, lesbian relationships or even what is termed as the extended nuclear family."

There are at least a couple of other organizations which also have a limited definition of the family unit.

Janet Maher elaborates, "The Alberta Home and School Association

and the Battered Women's Shelter both consider the family to consist of a father, mother and children."

The Coalition would like to see the traditional definition of the family expanded to include all types of families that have evolved to adapt to our changing society.

Organized on an ad-hoc basis these organizations have pulled together to provide a common voice consistent with what they believe are the views of the majority of people in society.

The coalition has no immediate plans for the future.

"We will come together again," says Lunney, "when we feel that relevant issues are getting too much one-sided support by small minorities."

Sweeping bill to close campuses

TORONTO (CUP)—The Ontario government is cracking down on educational institutions that grant degrees but do not have a government charter.

Bill 137 will impose up to \$25,000 fines on any institution that has not received permission from the legislature to grant degrees. Jamie McKay, an officer with the ministry of university and college affairs, said the bill will close a loophole allowing groups to get around the legislature's

refusal to charter by patenting themselves as non-profit corporations and calling themselves "federal degree-granting institutions."

The Institute of Christian Studies (ICS) in Toronto fears it will be closed by the bill. But ICS executive director Robert Vander Vennen said the bill has merit because it will protect against fraudulent institutions.

However, he added that "the bill as written is too sweeping" because it

could put many bible colleges and theological seminaries out of existence.

The ministry will allow these institutions to continue operating but only if they offer theological programs. Vander Vennen is worried because ICS offers a Master of Philosophy degree, not a theological program.

He said the ministry thinks there are already enough institutions granting "secular degrees."

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