

Native Awareness Week



Pow-wow celebrates grads

The week of September 26 to October 1 was Native Awareness Week at the University of Alberta. The highlight of the week was the pow-wow sponsored by the Native Students' Association, which was held at Sacred Heart School Saturday.

Many members of the Native community came out to show their support for Native students at the University of Alberta and to share in the dancing.

Awards were presented to top students and recent graduates were given prints by Native artists. Marty Wakefield and Shirley Fayant each received Stan Daniel's Memorial Awards of \$500.00. Sharla Douglas received the Adrian Hope Award for best writer. In all, 18 graduates from 1982-83 were honored.

The most touching moment however was when Darlene Willier, a student from Faust, presented flowers to her grandmother thanking her for all her support during the past years, and reminding the audience that "we still value the elders."

The pow-wow continued until well after midnight with traditional dancing, a give-away, and feast, with drumming and singing by no fewer than 5 drum groups from across Alberta.

Native Awareness Week was intended both as a time to give recognition to Native students on campus, and as a vehicle for developing awareness in the rest of the student body to the issues and concerns facing Native students. As Marty Wakefield, Vice-President of the Native Student's Association, put it, "we just want people to know we're here."

Stories
and
photos
by
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Native students on campus

Many students may not be aware of the growing number of Native students at the University of Alberta. Enrollment is up and an estimated 80-90 Native students are now attending the U of A in a variety of faculties.

For many of these students, who come from small communities throughout the province, the move to Edmonton and the University could be an alienating experience. Fortunately the Native Student's Association, in combination with the Native Affairs Office, provides a financial and social support system.

The Native Students' Association not only sponsors the annual pow-wow but provides tutoring and counselling services as well as a physical setting for students to relax in. Marty Wakefield, the Association's Vice-President, describes their lounge as "a place to come to feel more at home."

The Native Affairs office has been lobbying for 7 years for implementation of such a program, now tentatively scheduled to begin in 1985.

Ros summed up the situation saying Native students "are running a gauntlet when they're going to University." The Native Students' Association and the Native Affairs Office provide crucial services and support to help cushion the shock of the new environment students find themselves in here at the U of A.

