

Writing wrongs

So...we finally have proof university students cannot read and write...

The Writing Competence Committee (WCC) finding that over 50 per cent of the first year students tested received unsatisfactory scores on an exam of written English should come as little surprise to educators who have been calling for changes in high school English programs for many years. Well, change may finally be coming, but unfortunately it appears to be occurring primarily at the university level.

The most important WCC recommendation suggested the establishment of a remedial writing center to upgrade the standards of writing competence at the University of Alberta. Thus the university will assume the \$350 thousand role of teaching basic skills which should have been acquired in grade schools. This, at a time when decreasing funding is causing severe cutbacks in most departments?

The root of the problem lies within the secondary school English programs, and is itself but a reflection of a greater problem within the educational system. The dominant philosophy of "developing a well-rounded individual" is certainly laudable, but not when the result is graduates who are functionally illiterate. Schools must begin to take some responsibility for the individuals they presume to educate.

Of course, the university is caught in a bind. If we are to impose standards and minimum entrance requirements, (another WCC recommendation), enrolments will likely fall with the concomitant result of more professors joining the bread lines. Consequently, we must admit all who ask, while also extracting a promise from them to learn the basic skills they chose to ignore in their earlier education.

The reply to this argument is that the fault lies not with the student, but with the system. Hence, we must, if we are to impose entrance requirements, provide a facility for students who do not meet the standard. By this logic, though, the university should provide kindergarten services to those who missed out on this early educational opportunity.

The role of the university is that of an institute of higher learning and it is only if we can presume some previously acquired knowledge that we can utilize our time here to the maximum. Society provides many other opportunities (Alberta College, Grant MacEwan Community College, night schools) for adults and poor students to acquire the skills necessary to do well, or at least moderately so, at the university level. If changes cannot or will not be made at the secondary school level, then remedial programs should be provided through these facilities, not through the university.

It does little good to drag all down to the same standard of mediocrity.

Keith Krause

The Students Union has received \$100 towards the Vietnamese Refugee Fund from the Agakhan Ismailia Students Association (AISA).

AISA has about 70 members, mostly from the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

the Gateway

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If it happens on campus...you should have used the Pill.

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CARE helps in Cambodia

May I try to dispel some of the confusion that appears widespread on the efforts to provide relief to Cambodian refugees.

Although I can say very little about the situation within Kampuchea itself where UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross are directing the effort, I do have first-hand reports from CARE workers in Thailand which testify to the high degree of co-operation existing between the various agencies and organizations ministering to the sick and hungry in the refugee camps.

There is an actively functioning council called the Committee for Co-ordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT) which meets at least once a week and allocates responsibilities to participating agencies.

Leadership in co-ordinating these activities comes from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC). For example, CARE has been given the responsibility for providing and servicing supplementary high nutrition feeding stations in three refugee camps and has already assigned experienced CARE workers from other countries. These include Brian Wolff of Edmonton, Assistant Country Director in Kenya, who spent three years with CUSO in Thailand and speaks the language fluently.

Besides shipments of donated foods and medicines, CARE has provided 400 hospital cots and three CARE/MEDICO nurses for the IRC Ward at Sa Kao camp. Nurse Marge Dollack of Peterborough, Ontario arrived there from Afghanistan, October 24th and after working for 16 hours a day for weeks has sent a tape recorded message in which she describes the appalling state of the mothers and children racked with malaria and dysentery and severe malnutrition — three thousand patients in nine tents

with hardly enough space for the nurses to move between them.

With 40,000 people already in the camps and another 360,000 expected to stagger into Thailand by the end of the month, there is work for all the international agencies there and need for all the funds that can be collected to purchase appropriate food, clothing, medicines, shelter and transportation. CARE has already distributed 6000 basic need kits to

those who have had to leave all their possessions behind and has delivered 45 tons of infant foods with another 80 tons on its way.

If readers would like to help, please send donations by cheque or money order to CARE Canada Fund for Cambodians, 1312 Bank Street, Ottawa K1S 5H7 or the agency of your choice.

Thomas Kines
National Director, CARE

Kirkwood just fish bait

If a geology student can get \$2500 monthly for summer work from Moose Pasture Mines, and your columnist Kirk Kirkwood can only get a position as bait on a Japanese whaler, one of them's a bozo sure enough, but it ain't the geologist. Kirkwood has it in for geology, just because he applied and was turned down ("..... candidate has rocks in his head..."). It's not just the skill involved, it's the danger money. Twin Otters drop out of the sky. Paul got a chopper skid in a painful place when he tried to moon the pilot. Skag fell down a

mine shaft. Dave spent the summer camped on a pitchblende outcrop, and his nuts turned black and dropped off. Harvey's entire camp got clap and food poisoning from a drunken cook, the one who fried all the eggs and nailed them to the outhouse door. M.J. got savaged by a ptarmigan. Either that or a very small polar bear. It's a man's life out there, Kirkwood, even for the women (and certain nervous huskies), and we deserve every nickel.

Tony Redunzo
Geology

Student beats abortion

Whenever I think of abortion I realize how lucky I really am. I just thank God (and if I could, I'd thank my biological mother) that I did not become an aborted fetus of a young unmarried girl. She had a choice at the time, I didn't. I'm sure that she would be happier to know that her decision produced an intelligent young lady who has made many accomplishments thus far in life and who has high aspirations for the future than a small fetus that was murdered and cast into some incinerator.

I believe that an unmarried pregnant girl has a choice but that choice should only be one of keeping the child or giving it up for adoption. Adoption is a viable alternative. I'm sure that if you ask any adopted person they

will tell you that they surely appreciate their chance at life. Who has the right to take that away? Let's not play God.

Sybil Bissell
Arts 3

Kidnapping attempt foiled

The Civil Engineering Club would like to thank the Golden Bear Football Team for once again failing to kidnap the Civil Engineering Princess. Special thanks go out to Ron Frank for his leadership efforts. Thanks also go out to other members whose kind words at the pub crawl event will dearly be remembered by us all.

Civil Engineering Club