

Provincial aid to universities unsatisfactory

by Brian Tucker

Yet another verbal guantlet has been hurled at the provincial government regarding the funding of post secondary institutions.

George Baldwin, dean of Arts, said Tuesday the freeze in government spending on hiring staff threatens the survival of several departments at the University of Alberta.

Speaking at a noon luncheon at the Faculty Club, Baldwin said if the situation continues quotas now imposed in the professional faculties they may be extended to all faculties and programs in his faculties.

In the past two years the faculty has lost the equivalent of 44 full-time instructors through attrition; these positions must be left vacant due to monetary restraints put on by the government.

This reduction includes 22 full-time instructors and 66 graduate student teaching assistants - equal to another 22 instructors.

Meanwhile, registration in Arts courses has risen in the first term more than 3300 students, an increase of about 300.

The result has some classes with as many as 500 students, "leaving no means whatsoever in meeting the demands of resources."

Teaching and research functions at the U of A, will undoubtedly suffer if something isn't done, he said.

He warned his faculty may take its complaints to the public unless the monetary situation eases. This would be the first action taken in this area by any faculty of department.

"My faculty will not remain quiet much outside these walls much longer," he said.

Many of the holes to be filled are among full-time professors, creating a serious gap in knowledge and academic experience, says Baldwin.

Soon after the Lougheed government came to power in 1971, it imposed a freeze on new building construction and hiring as student enrolment declined.

Since, a series of vocal confrontations have developed, with both the universities and the government defending their positions.

And enrolment at the U of A has increased to the highest level in its history.


A new budget system, whereby the universities plan their budget three years at a time, was also worked out.

The system has not allowed for inflation, continued Baldwin, adding it is estimated that nine per cent of revenue is lost each year to inflation.

The system "is unreal, bearing no resemblance to reality," he added.

Baldwin doubted his faculty could meet the 1975-76 budget without laying off some full-time professors.





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