

Student newspaper at University of Alberta censored

BY ALEJANDRO BUSTOS

What began as an editorial endorsing Students' Union candidates has deteriorated into a debate over freedom of the press at the University of Alberta.

The Tuesday issue of *The Gateway* was impounded after an electoral official ruled that an editorial in the paper was biased.

"If we don't allow the campus Muslim Association, the chess club or the Star Trek club on cam-

pus to endorse candidates, then why should we allow *The Gateway*?" queried Stacy Prochnau, Chief Returning Officer for the SU election.

Prochnau argued that the paper is not autonomous the Students' Union is the official publisher and as such is not a separate legal entity.

She compared *The Gateway* to any other service on campus run by the SU, including the bar and photocopier room, and said the paper is "effectively a newsletter of the

Students' Union."

This description of the paper was categorically denied by *Gateway* staff.

"That's stupid," said Neal Ozano, *Gateway* Editor-in-Chief. "We are a newspaper. We are not the pamphlet for the Muslim Association or a newsletter for the chess club."

The controversy stems from a March 7 editorial by Dan Lazin, the paper's Production Editor. The editorial listed Lazin's preference

for each of the portfolios, but urged students to do their own research before voting.

When it came to endorsing a candidate for the position of Vice-President (External), the paper opted for Barrie Tanner, who happens to be the paper's Sports Editor.

After receiving the complaint, Prochnau ordered that copies of the paper be locked away until the SU's Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement Board had a chance to make a ruling.

After *The Gateway* appealed to the board, the issue was delivered to stands Tuesday evening.

But the experience left reporters on campus worried about their freedom of speech.

"It would have set a horrible precedent if an uninformed individual could have made a decision to censor the paper," said Ozano.

In response, Prochnau said she was only trying to be fair and avoid the publication of allegedly libelous material.

Election officials were worried the editorial may have libeled Tanner's opponent, and that the paper had too much influence on election results.

Mike Chalk, Students' Union President, said, "I have been in the Students' Union for two years, and I have never interfered with content [in *The Gateway*]. I despise people who want to interfere with content."

But Chalk then said the real issue is not about freedom of the press, but whether the paper had broken its own internal bylaws by publishing libelous content.

He also said he wasn't sure how much influence the paper had on student election

"I won last year by 1300 votes," said Chalk, who received the paper's endorsement during his campaign. "I don't think *The Gateway* is worth 1300 votes."

The student president said, however, that the paper might be able to influence elections in close races.

Miners, construction workers support striking UCCB profs.

BY CUP STAFF

SYDNEY, NS (CUP) — The president of the University College of Cape Breton (UCCB) has filed a defamation suit against the school's faculty association, the association's president and a professor.

The suit by Jackie Scott, UCCB president, against Michael Manson, the faculty president, and Professor Rod Nichol comes in the midst of a bitter campus strike.

The strike, which is now in

its fourth week, began February 11 when 115 professors, specialists and librarians walked off the job demanding more money and better working conditions.

George MacDonald, Scott's lawyer, says the suit refers to statements that were published or broadcast.

The university president has refused to comment on the lawsuit.

Students, meanwhile, are calling on the Nova Scotia government to appoint a mediator, reports the Canadian Press.

In related news, unionized construction workers and miners joined the striking professors this past Wednesday on the picket lines.

The unionized workers, who held a two-hour demonstration, temporarily prevented students and staff from entering the university and a nearby community college.

The blockade affected 500 students and 300 staff at the university, while an additional 1,000 students were affected at the college.

(With files from Canadian Press)

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