

# mixed response to Worth report

One hundred and twenty-five students from secondary and post-secondary schools in Alberta attended a conference on the Worth Commission report on education in Banff last weekend. The congress, organized by Catalyst, in order to facilitate its task of encouraging and assessing student views on the report, was not the frustrated and cynical debate which greeted the Hall-Dennis report in Ontario a few years ago.

All the same, the Delegates' response to the report was mixed. The students criticized its poor readability, its vagueness and its lack of practical suggestions. And although no one decried the report as dated, few expressed surprise at its contents.

There were few objections to the report's underlying principles. Delegates praised the "humaneness" and "futuristic" aspects of the report and lauded its insistence that education should shape the future instead of fitting into society's mold. Delegates also agreed that students must work to create a "person-oriented society" instead of accepting "second-phase industrialism."

## TENURE FOR CONFORMISTS

The idea of tenure (or permanent certification in the High Schools) evoked numerous negative arguments from all discussion groups. Some argued that tenure, which is supposed to guarantee academic freedom, is only granted to those who conform. Others observed that permanent appointments permit teachers to ignore public evaluation of their work.

The consensus, however, was that teachers do need some special form of security and that short term contracts might be the solution.

Some delegates predicted that if tenure were abolished, evaluation would become more important but no easier. As one student said, "Even if students can objectively evaluate teaching, how can they judge administrative or research functions which would benefit them only indirectly?"

A former U of A councillor suggested that long-range planning was the solution. If departments made their appointments more carefully, they could ensure that individuals remain in jobs for which they are best suited. In this way, much friction could be avoided, he argued.

## INCREASED FEES

The proposal that students pay 25% of the costs of their schooling also provoked considerable debate. Some students felt that this 11% increase was justified since students paying for more expensive programs like medicine and engineering would probably earn more

later on. Others felt that students should pay only a percentage of teaching costs and not support research and other university functions. There was concern that increased fees would mean the burden of huge debts for many graduates.

Opponents to the idea of fee increases proposed that University tuition should be abolished. Education costs would be met by a percentage of the income of graduates, paid in the form of a deposit could protect the system from free loaders.

Many delegates were enthusiastic about the report's suggestion that school or community councils should be promoted. They viewed the idea as a means of achieving individual and community direction in the education process, as well as a step towards "life long learning". The change would put the onus on everyone to use schools to create "their choice" of society, the delegates agreed.

However, many problems were seen in the operation of the councils. Principals would have two masters--a school board and a council--making a fine division of authority necessary.

Some delegates expressed fears that the council would attract either the "weirdos of the community" or "the rich leisure classes". What combination of community staff and students could possibly be representative or reach consensus? they asked.

## 'OVER-WORTHIZING'

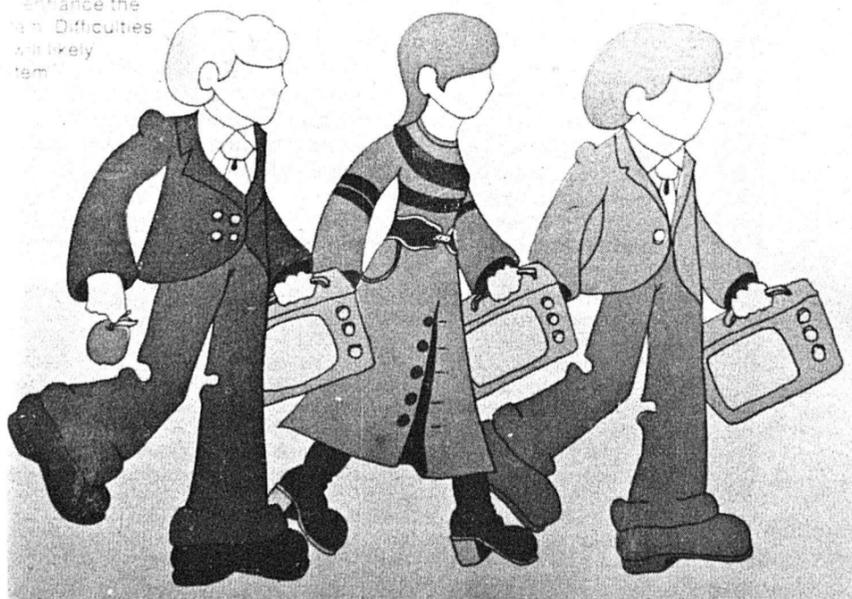
Only a few delegates warned against "over-worthizing". The majority agreed that "self-actualizing education" is the proper response to increasing leisure time. A nursing student suggested that the "person-centered" attitude should also extend into practical disciplines; life-long education and retraining should be part of all occupations she said.

A less theoretical consideration was the abolition of the four-year degree program. The consensus was that since education should continue throughout an individual's life, the fourth and fifth years should be postponed until a few years after the completion of a three-year degree.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT

All parties advocated apprenticeships and retraining programs, as it was hoped stronger bonds could be forged between industries and schools. Except for certain professions where certification and testing are conceded to be necessary for public protection, students agreed with the commission that the traditional system of marking "subverts good teaching, obstructs learning, misleads parents and is abused by employers...." dr

...idea to in  
enhance the  
...Difficulties  
...likely  
...tem



Students' Union  
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
EDMONTON

Office of the President  
GERALD A. RISKIN

Ms. Terri Jackson,  
Editor,  
The Gateway.

Dear Ms. Jackson,

The attached, together with envelope, cost the Students' Union \$139.11 (this can be checked by asking to see the Students' Council budget ledger in the Students' Union General Office).

Why was this necessary when the Students' Union already has notepaper. Why do the Students have to pay for Riskin's ego trips. Why do we have to put up with this bastard.

A concerned student

## Riskin continued

Investigation by the Gateway of the anonymous letter left in the papers mailbox and printed above, has established that "concerned student's" cost figure is correct to the penny.

Contacted yesterday, Gerry Riskin, SU president noted that the figure, however, covered the cost of 1,000 business cards for five different individuals, among them SU special assistant Dwayne Stewart, as well as matching green linen envelopes for the gold embossed letterhead.

Defending his use of the stationary, Riskin pointed out that constitutionally he is charged with the responsibility for the "public image of the Students' Union."

"The philosophy behind the formal letterhead is that an organization of this size (13 million in assets) must put forth an image of quality and sophistication," he commented, "to those especially who do not have an opportunity to see our Students' Union first hand."

Letters on this letterhead have recently been sent to the prime minister, the leader of the opposition and the premier.

Other members of the executive had been offered the option of ordering the personally imprinted paper, Riskin added.

Finance VP Garry West, asked to comment on the stationery, said he had not been aware of the order until it arrived completely printed. Although West is one of the four individuals with signing power for SU purchases, only two signatures are required on any one order, and he had not been approached to sign that order.

He said that the matter of an option to order the stationery had never been raised at an executive meeting which he attended, but conceded that it might have been raised in his absence.

Patrick Delaney, VP academic, commented only that to his knowledge none of the other four members of the executive had ordered the personalized letterhead. tj

## compulsory environment courses

A report by a development committee for Environmental Studies at the University of Alberta, is one of several topics of particular interest to be discussed at the up-coming meeting of the General Faculties Council (GFC). (The GFC is essentially the legislative body for the government of the university and its decisions are subject only to the approval of the Board of Governors.)

The report recommends that some course or courses in environmental studies be required in all undergraduate programs and that to this end such courses could be established.

Other major recommendations of the report are that a general undergraduate program in environmental studies be developed for Education students, that a four year Special Degree Program in environmental studies be

developed and that a graduate program, be administered by existing departments, be established as well.

Other items of particular interest to the students on the agenda for this meeting are a review of the nine-point grading system, and the annual report of the Campus Development Committee.

The meeting will be held on Monday, Sept. 25, in the Council Chamber University Hall at 2:00 p.m. Interested students are welcome to attend.

Student's council meets at 7:30 p.m. Monday evening in the GFC Chambers, University Hall. Topics of discussion include the tenure study debate and special events coming up. Interested students are welcome to attend.

as