

Foreign student awarded UIC benefits

by Kevin Law

A U of A international student challenged, and won, a case concerning unemployment benefits for foreign students.

Traditionally, international students studying in Canada were prohibited from working in Canada because, as Employment and Immigration spokesperson

Roger White explained from Ottawa, "International students are allowed to come to Canada to attend school only...they must show they have enough money to support themselves."

Last year, however, White said changes were made allowing foreign students access to employment, but only on campus, and only if the student's financial

situation changed, such as "some disaster in the home country that interrupted home funds."

Foreign students who do obtain employment pay UIC premiums, but an apparent discrepancy between federal departments meant those same students could not collect benefits. The contradiction occurs between Immigra-

tion, who only allows campus employment, and UIC, who stipulates applicants must be able to work anywhere.

A case testing these rules was presented to an Employment and Immigration decision making body called a Board of Referees.

Seong Pun, a graduate student employed as a teaching assistant at the University, applied for UIC and went before the Board for a decision regarding benefits.

failed to actively seek various employment options.

Pun, although not happy with the size of the benefits, was happy with the overall decision. "I didn't think it was fair that foreign students should pay UIC premiums but not get benefits."

Dwayne Barber, Graduate Students' Association president, said the decision was interesting because Pun was not cited specifically as an international student. "That in itself is perhaps a moral victory because they treated Mr. Pun like any other citizen."

Pun's student legal advisor Kathryn Arnold said that the Board of Referees decision was important because "they agreed the campus has enough jobs (for UIC guidelines)." Arnold noted however, that "although the decision is written down, they (Employment and Immigration) are not bound by it...it is not a precedent in a legal tribunal sense."

"It's an issue that's been around a long time," said HUB International Center director Wilf Allen, "and it's time we got rid of it."

Geers cont'd

by Judy Evans

Judy continues her analysis of the engineering market.

In the faculty of engineering, word of mouth hiring takes some complex and diverse forms. In one instance, a company representative went into the electrical engineering club room and asked if anyone present knew of a prospective graduate who wanted a job.

Personal contacts in industry, especially those made by co-op students during their work terms, were also cited as important.

Still others find work through members of their departments who have industry contacts.

Jim George, the assistant to the chairman of electrical engineering, has the wall beside his desk partly covered with the resumes of graduating students. By July, the wall will be empty.

"If a company suddenly needs an engineer and they don't want to go through a regular job search, they go through the EE general office," said George.

Over at chemical engineering, this direct connection to industry is provided by Professor J.T. Ryan and other faculty members.

According to Ryan, companies compete for the top students during the initial, formal recruitment process which is time consuming and usually results in unfilled positions in some of the companies since there are more positions available than top students. Not wishing to go through the formal

process again, the company may resort to informal, word of mouth hiring.

Collectively, the various forms of hiring have resulted in "100 percent employment of chemical engineers who want engineering related jobs for the last three years," said Ryan, who added that this is based upon graduates who keep in touch with the department.

Of last year's chemical engineering graduating class, the majority found work in Alberta, with only two going to Ontario for employment.

Students in mechanical and civil engineering agree that the job market has generally improved over last year and engineers from

all departments agreed that the market for summer and co-op work terms has improved recently.

Statistics gathered by the faculty of engineering indicate that the percentage of engineers who find work before graduation is increasing.

A survey handed out to graduating classes each March indicated that in 1987, 32 percent of a total of 315 respondents had found employment. Last year, that figure rose to 52 percent (with 300 responding), while the average starting salary rose \$1,600 from 28-29 thousand to around thirty thousand dollars per year.

The survey for this year will be handed out this week. Figures do not include December graduates.

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With legal help from Student Legal Services, Pun was able to prove a reasonable chance of employment existed, and the Board gave him benefits for three days, but no more because he

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