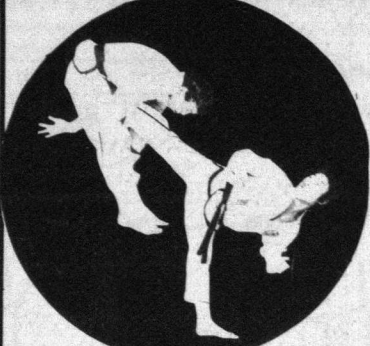


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Smatterings

Randal Smathers

There is a frustrating feeling to a reporter covering events sponsored by the ACT program. For those of you who were in a bottle all last week, ACT is the Anti-Cutbacks Team.

When you spend a little time around these people, you have to be impressed with their serious approach to the fight against the government's proposed budget cuts. They are sincere in their beliefs that these measures could do irreparable harm to the education system at all levels throughout the province.

I happen to believe that they are correct in the estimation of the cost involved to a lot of students. That is where the frustration sets in; although virtually every person I have interviewed about the situation

agrees with ACT, the turnout to the various events has been sparse.

ACT is a lobby group, trying to put pressure on the government, but in order to do this, they must be able to show a wide base of popular support.

Without increased student involvement, the government will discover that education cuts are relatively painless where they live — the ballot box.

There seems to be a lot of misinformation about the student population of the university as well.

Often, I am asked how large my student loan is. I don't have a loan, and am certainly not unique in this. I know a lot of people at the university who are working to put themselves through school: I happen to believe that it should be possible to

do this with an absolute minimum of outside support.

I know that not everyone can do this, and also that there are still people around with the opinion expressed by the jackass in the Buttermere lineup last September: "Hey, Joe, look what the government was stupid enough to give me," it yelled, "Five thousand dollars!"

Despite this, there are enough people out there trying to get a degree and stay off the dole, that they should be recognized.

There is Frank, who works as a bouncer two nights a week and in a gas bar the other five, plus holding a full five courses. There is Rob, who worked twelve hours a day, six days a week all summer to put enough in the bank to pay for the year's school.

It is time for the general public, and especially the politicians, to realize that these are not members of an isolated few, but part of a large segment of the students here.

Watch this space for more on working students, cutbacks and the Anti-Cutbacks Team in the future, but for now, start by getting out to support ACT. It's your education at stake.

Job help in demand

by K. Graham Bowers

Over 200 students used the services of the University Placement Office during its first two weeks in operation.

Since the middle of November, the Placement Office has been providing free workshops on resume writing and job search and interview techniques.

They also provide private consultations for students who have attended a workshop, and organize employer-student interview sessions to help U of A students find jobs.

"That's the whole objective of the program, to help students market themselves," said Director Jennifer Yip-Choy.

SU Vice President Finance Tim Boston, who was instrumental in establishing the Placement Office said the office was needed because "the Canada Employment Centre can't peddle U of A students over students from other universities."

Career and Placement Consultant Tracy Bodnar advises students not to wait until their last year to use the services of the Placement Office.

"We would like to get the first year student," said Bodnar. "Your employment opportunities are increased the sooner you start looking."

The Placement Office intends to publish an annual career and placement magazine called *Focus*.

There will be a separate edition



Director of University placement office Jennifer Yip Choy photo Rob Schmidt

for each faculty and they will contain information on job-hunting skills, labour market information, and career alternatives.

"With *Focus*, we're trying to

make the student aware of what the employer wants," said Yip-Choy.

The Placement Office is located in Room 300 Athabasca Hall.

Federal government is moving on forum plans

TORONTO (CUP) — The federal government is finally moving on plans for the national forum on post-secondary education, promised in the Oct. 1 Speech from the Throne.

Provincial ministers of education will meet with Secretary of State David Crombie Feb. 2 and 3 in Toronto to set the agenda for the forum. The government pledged to hold the forum early this year, but has postponed it until October.

Crombie met in late December with Greg Sobara, Ontario minister of Colleges and Universities, to lobby for the forum. Luc Rheaume, an aide to Quebec Education Minister Claude Ryan, confirmed a similar meeting was also held there.

According to Boyd Pelley, com-

munications director of the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, Crombie has held similar meetings in other provinces. Pelley said he is confident CMEC will be able to announce a full agenda for the forum after the February meeting.

The forum is unprecedented, as education is constitutionally a provincial responsibility.

Critics are wary of the provinces' reaction towards the forum. "I think Ottawa is going to be asked by the people who appear at the forum to take a more prominent role in education," said Jeff Ince, assistant to federal Liberal post-secondary critic Roland de Corneille.

"We're going to be asked to bash the provinces," Ince said.

"The province that's going to be the most sensitive is going to be Quebec — they just won't allow it," Ince predicted. "I don't think Ontario will allow it either."

However, Sorbara aide Bob Richardson said "the minister is generally supportive of a national forum on educational issues."

Rheaume does not see the forum as a threat to the provinces' constitutional right to control education. He denied federal guidelines would be established.

"It is not the intention of the federal government to control education," he said. "Quebec wants to discuss financing with ministers from other provinces... it is not dangerous to Quebec's sovereignty."