

U of A wary

Summer conferences marked the end of one organization of students' unions in Canada and perhaps the beginning of another.

The Alberta Association of Students, formed sixteen years ago to represent student groups at post-secondary schools in the province, officially disbanded in May.

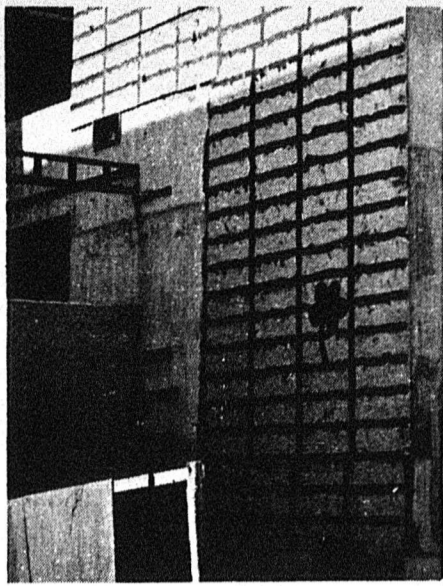
The deciding factor in its demise was a decision by the U of A Students' Union, largest member of the body, to withdraw its annual \$3,000 support from the group. The "ineffectiveness" of the AAS as a lobbying force was cited by the SU as the reason for its decision.

Last year's AAS president Tim Christian, U of A SU president in 1970-71, contended that while "it's nearly true that the AAS was not directly serving the U of A ... the argument used in the past to keep AAS together was the responsibility of larger schools to smaller ones since they have the students and budgets to carry on this sort of research and lobbying."

Alberta's confidence that it can better lobby for SU members' interests alone than as part of a larger body may also figure in the fate of a nation-wide organization which was proposed at a conference in Windsor, May 26-28.

"What I was asking myself," comments SU president Gerry Riskin, Alberta's delegate to the meetings, "was what was there in it for the University of Alberta? How could we benefit? What could we get out of it?"

He described the other student leaders at the meetings as "naive" in lobbying activities. tj



Bricks climb wall to cover flower on Chemistry II. See story on page 6.

Summer-y:

students' council

At the request of the Vietnam Action Committee, students' council passed a motion expressing its opinion on the Vietnam war: "Whereas the U.S. and its allies, particularly Canada have respectfully been condemned for waging and or complicity in waging of an imperialist war in Vietnam, on the North Vietnamese people, and whereas the U.S. and its allies are currently being condemned and; whereas as moral agents, we are committed to treat like cases alike; therefore, be it resolved, that the action of the Peoples Republic of China, U.S.S.R. and its allies in their complicity and supportive role in the promotion of the escalation of the imperialist war,

the victims of which are the North and South Vietnamese people, be condemned."

The motion was opposed by Gerry Riskin, president; Beth Kuhnke, secretary; Chris Bearchell and Mark Priegert arts reps and Judith Neiman, ed rep.

On the recommendation of the SUB policy board, council voted to require S.T.O.P. to vacate the rent-free office on the second floor of SUB which it has occupied for the past two years. According to Rob Spagins a change in the by-law concerning associate clubs makes S.T.O.P. ineligible for office space. There are 10 offices available and 150 SU clubs.

The office, which was vacated by S.T.O.P. at the beginning of August, is still empty. The organization has now found permanent quarters in the Anglican Synod building, 97Ave. and 107St.

On May 18, council submitted a brief explaining the SU's response to the provincial government's "Natural Resources Revenue Plan". The brief asserted that the students at the University opposed the plan because it was poorly conceived, "unweildly, unworkable, and administratively impractical". The brief was prepared by Rob Spragins, executive vice-president, son of the president of Syncrude Canada Ltd.

At the recommendation of speaker and special consultant to the executive, Steve Snyder, press release was issued to express the "concern and dismay" of the SU with the establishment of an Albertan branch of the KKK.

Strapped to a debt of about \$6.5 million incurred by the building of HUB, council has become alarmed by decreasing enrolment at the University. So, on the weekend of July

7, the SU hosted a conference of high school presidents to "analyze the reasons for the declining interest and thus declining enrollment at the university." Although 350 presidents were invited, only 35 attended.

Riskin also made a public statement expressing "concern" over the Bobby Hull-Team Canada controversy. He is presently waging a verbal war with Famous Players Theatre over their decision to discontinue "student's discounts." A reduced rate is provided for those under 18.

Apparently undismayed by the unenthusiastic response, Riskin hailed the delegates' presence as a token of their concern with "issues which are of paramount importance to you and your community" and declared that "no battle can be too great with such as you to help in the struggle." The presidents voted against forming a permanent organization.

Later in the summer, council authorized the publication of a new magazine to provide junior and senior high students and employers of university graduates with a "new view" of the U of A. Each issue of the publication, which will be called "A Second Look", will run to 100,000 copies.

Riskin publicly attacked the governments response to the Le Dain Commission as a waffle which may do nothing more than handicap the courts and foster organized crime. Recommending leniency towards drug users simply increases demand and encourages "professional pushers". If the government legalized pot, it could harvest new taxes and reclaim drug users which are now forced to function outside "a socially acceptable environment," Riskin argued.

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Grad students, SU quarrel over fees

The Graduate Students' Association is encouraging its members to withhold their students' union fees as a protest against having to pay them at all. Grad students who do not wish to join the SU pay \$10 per year, \$6 to amortize SUB and \$4 for services and facilities.

Students' council charges that the grad students are trying to welch on their commitment to help build SUB and insists that the SU has no intention of parting with the \$20,000 which the grad students would contribute this year. SU president Gerry Riskin is confident that the Board of Governors, the body which actually levies Students' Union fees, will not allow the grad students to renege because the university is the guarantor of the SU mortgages. The matter is to be discussed at the September meeting of the Board of Governors.

The G.S.A. argues that they have always made it clear that the SU couldn't count on them as a permanent source of income. In addition to the right to stop paying for SUB, the G.S.A. requests formal recognition of its equity, a commitment on the part of the SU to buy out that equity over a period of time and some control of the services offered by the SU for as long as they continue to pay fees.

The students' council

position is that grad students should continue to help pay for SUB and that they should not expect a refund of what they have already paid. However, Riskin said in an interview that he would agree to the formal recognition of the grad students' title to part of SUB. But, he said that recognition could not come into effect before the University transfers the title of SUB to the SU 25 years from now. Riskin has also offered grad students' a seat on students council.

The attempt to agree on details of a settlement is frustrated by the collapse of negotiations. According to Riskin, all the G.S.A. representatives except Peter Flynn, G.S.A. secretary, stormed out of the first meeting between the two groups, knocking over their chairs as they left, when it became evident that the SU wasn't willing to give up the \$10 fee. Later in the summer an article lampooning Rob Spragins, for his errors and lack of tact during the negotiations, was published in the G.S.A. newsletter.

If the G.S.A.'s show of anger and impatience has "disappointed" the SU, the grad students have been frustrated by the apparent ineptitude and procrastination of students' council. In a recent interview Flynn said, "The thing that really infuriates me is that four times Gerry Riskin has promised to come up with a counter proposal and four times he has failed to do so." During the summer students' council has been confused about whether or not the G.S.A. legally exists (it does), whether or not all grad students are automatically members of the SU (they're not) and whether or

not the G.S.A. - S.U. agreement is subject to review (apparently it is).

The trouble all began last spring when the G.S.A. decided that it wanted its own recreational center and could no longer afford to help pay for SUB. So on March 29, a letter was sent to the SU requesting a review of the fees. According to the G.S.A. the agreement between itself and the SU is subject to annual revision. Unfortunately, the agreement, made several years ago when the G.S.A. separated from the SU, was never formally recorded in a By-Law. The only record of its details is in letters and minutes of the time, none of which constitute a legal agreement.

In any case, the letter of March 29 was not acknowledged by students' council until the middle of May. According to Riskin, the request for the negotiation was not made until after the budget had been finalized by Don McKenzie's council. The new council merely ratified it. And, the reply to the G.S.A. request was delayed by the change in executive and by Riskin's law exams which occupied him until the middle of May.

When it finally did come, the reply merely stated that since the budget was set there could be no reconsideration of the fee. Convinced that their letter had arrived in time for consideration and angered by what they thought was an unreasonable delay on the part of council, the G.S.A. executive voted early in June to sever financial ties with the SU.

Students' council retaliated by cancelling its agreement to provide the G.S.A. an office for \$1 per year,

an arrangement, which under normal circumstances would have been reviewed on June 30. Council then offered them office space for \$100 per month, the same rent as is charged to the Summer Session Students' Union.

The G.S.A. executive branded this proposal, which represented a rent increase of \$3,599 a year, "patently ridiculous" and moved into new quarters in Campus Towers. On July 19, students' council made a new offer: the G.S.A. could have the use of Room 271 in SUB for \$50 per year, twice the rate charged for other SU offices. Most SUB offices are much smaller than the one offered to the G.S.A. and are shared by two groups.

In their reply to this offer, the G.S.A. implied that the office rental issue was dead and urged the SU Executive to prepare a proposal "regarding the question of the fees paid by graduate students to the Students' Union." Nonetheless, an article appeared in the Journal on August 10 under the headline "Graduate students step up rent battle with U council" which stated that the G.S.A. had been "evicted" from its office in SUB "after refusing to accept a council demand that it pay a monthly rental of \$100 per office."

The article quoted the G.S.A. newsletter as saying that "the graduate students are being 'ripped off' by greedy undergraduates." The newsletter complained that "graduate students will be paying \$500,000 for financing of the SUB over a 35-year period but have no say on how space is to be used."

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