

# WCT alternatives at U of Calgary

by Linda Atchison

Students at the University of Calgary currently have the choice of taking a writing competence exam or taking any junior level English course. To meet the writing competence requirement, all students must pass the test or obtain a C- or better in the course. This differs from the current policy at the U of A, which does not offer students this option.

There is no cost to the student for taking Calgary's test and if the student fails, he or she is not required to take a remedial course. However, tutorials are offered.

Students who fail the test may retake it any number of times without cost to them. There are currently five sittings of the test per year.

"The system seems to work well," says Helen Holmes, the Associate Director of the U of C's Effective Writing Center, "We've actually had very few complaints about it. Any time you have a one shot test like this you're bound to get a student or two who's just having a bad day. But that's not really a problem because the test is offered so often and there are no penalties to the student for failure."

Students are allowed 12 months from the time of their initial registration to meet the requirements. If they fail to do so their registration is limited to a 200-level English half-course until the requirement is fulfilled.

According to Holmes, the primary deficiency in the system is the policy which allows students a choice of any junior English course. She feels some students may be able to pass English courses which don't teach writing skills, but focus on the analysis of literature. However, this problem will be solved in July of 1987 when students who

have not fulfilled their writing competence requirement will be restricted to only those English courses which have strong composition components.

"Before, some students could manage to squeak through with a C- in an English course which is

mostly content-based," says Holmes, "and this doesn't adequately reflect their writing skills."

University of Alberta VP Academic Amy Zelmer agrees that a passing grade in any English course does not necessarily mean a student can write well. She says the U of A's

mandatory writing competence test is not the perfect answer, but is the best answer so far. "Whether or not students should be offered the choice of taking the test or taking an English course is a question of both time and money," Zelmer says, "that is, students who opt for

the course may be investing time in something they really don't need, and we don't want to belabour the English department with the cost of adding additional sections."

Approximately half the students at Calgary opt to take the test.

## On punishing students...

by John Watson

U of A students who get into trouble with the law should be aware the university is interested in the outcome of their court case.

"Double jeopardy," is what Doug Langevin, head of Campus Security, calls it. "We feel we can charge them as well, and we will," he said. Langevin said that Campus Security would look into court cases and decide if the punishment has been adequate. In cases where Security felt the courts were too lenient, the student could be charged under *The Code of Student Behaviour*.

So far Security has not taken any such action. "In any case that has

gone to criminal court we felt that was sufficient," Langevin said.

*The Code of Student Behaviour* is the university document that defines acceptable behaviour. Anyone on campus may report a possible infringement of *The Code* to Campus Security.

Punishment, administered by the Dean of Students, may range from community work to expulsion. Students who contest a charge will go through an informal hearing "intended to get to the truth of the matter," said Langevin.

"Everybody who has gone up to the panel has been found guilty," he added.

Last year's chicken incident (students threw chickens from the first floor of CAB to the cafeteria, and a crowd of students, below) was resolved through Campus Security.



photo Rob Schmidt

"They cleaned up the chicken barns (at the U of A farm) so they could learn whether or not chickens can fly," Langevin said.

*The Code* is published every year so everyone has the opportunity to

see it. Campus Security is more than just a watchdog, they are here to help. Drunkenness on campus is a common problem Security deals with. According to Langevin, Campus Security tries to help drunkards get home if they are cooperative. Drunk drivers who do not cooperate will be turned over to police if necessary.

But by far the biggest problem on campus is theft. "They (staff

**"Everybody who has gone up to the panel has been found guilty"**

don't lock their offices, they don't lock their doors," Langevin said. A little amazed, Langevin described a recurring problem. "There is one woman who has lost her purse three times in the last six months," he said, "and she refuses to change her routine."

About 30 or 40 wallets and purses are lost or stolen every month.

"Last year people reported \$100,000 worth of lost property and we returned \$8,000," Langevin said. Unclaimed clothing is turned over to Goodwill, calculators go to the U of A bookstore in SUB.

"They should have a pretty fair supply," said Langevin, "we've been doing that for a year."

## Plagiarism perils

continued defense.

The student should make sure that his or her professor's idea of plagiarism corresponds to that of the GFC policy, as well as familiarizing himself with the policy. a rapport should be established between the professor and his students.

Students and professors should treat this new definition with caution. The ability of the student to defend himself has been severely limited. For instance, it is very

difficult to prove that one's "ideas" and "images" are one's own. The exclusion of the "intent to deceive" clause seems to instantly place the student on the defence; he must prove his innocence.

For more information, pick up a copy of *The Code of Student Behaviour* at the Office of the Dean of Student Services. Natalie Sharpe, the Student Adviser, is free to answer any questions about the Code.

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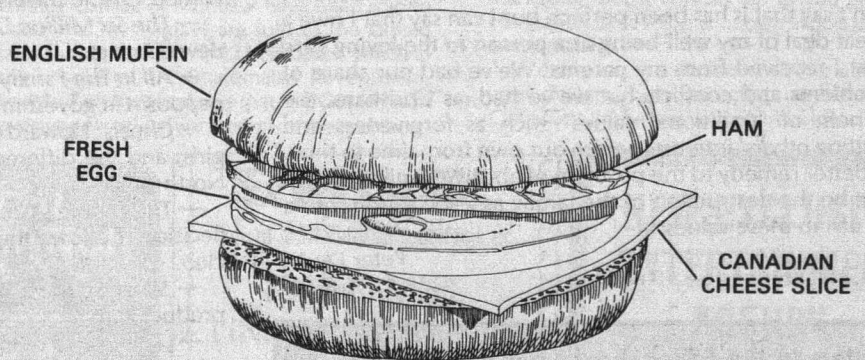
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