

Scholarships discriminatory?

by Roberta Franchuk

Undergraduate scholarships and awards with possibly discriminatory selection criteria will be dealt with under a policy adopted by the University this summer.

The policy, passed by the General Faculties Council on June 27, deals with endowed bequests and awards. The awards have selection conditions that may be defined as discriminatory under either the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or the Alberta Individual's Rights Protection Act.

According to the policy, awards such as this "may be accepted and administered by the University only if the award or the condition at the time of establishment could reasonably be viewed as intended for the benefit of a disadvantaged group."

An unacceptable award would be one that was, for example, intended for only female students in a predominantly female-dominated faculty such as Home Economics.

However, an award intended to encourage the participation of native students in an academic area where they face disadvantages would be accepted under the new policy, said Dr. J.A. Plambeck, Chairman of the Undergraduate Scholarship Committee.

The committee drafts the policies under which undergraduate awards are accepted.

A periodic review is another condition of acceptance of those awards that are directed at helping a disadvantaged group. Each such award will be reviewed "at intervals of not greater than 15 years," said Plambeck, adding provisions

are in place to conduct a review after a shorter time period.

The purpose of the review, Plambeck said, is to determine if the original disadvantage still exists. For example, he noted that in the past, women made up only a small portion of Dentistry students. Now, however, female enrollment has climbed to near-representative levels.

"In this case, there was a condition which could be considered discriminatory," said Plambeck, "but it does not exist as of now."

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Under the policy, once the disadvantaged position is no longer present, any discriminatory restrictions on the awards will be dropped.

The 15 year review interval was considered "a sufficient length of time to have effected a real change in a particular faculty or a particular group of people," explained Plambeck.

The policy is meant as a guide to the Student Awards Office in

its negotiations with possible donors. It will affect only those awards instituted after the policy was adopted. Awards already being administered will not be renegotiated, said Plambeck, as they are contracts made with the donors or their estates.

In the past, said Plambeck, when faced with awards with problematic criteria, the Student Awards Office "would go back to donors and attempt to have discriminatory criteria removed." With the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, however, the position of the university needed to be clarified.

A court challenge of a "whites-only" scholarship in Ontario in August 1987 found awards administered by universities to be private and not necessarily challengeable under the Charter. A review of both the Charter and the Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act by the law firm Field and Field found similar conditions in Alberta.

The committee realized that the University "could probably get away with doing nothing," said Plambeck. However, it was recognized that "regardless of whether or not we are legally required to obey the Charter, we believe the university cannot flout it."

The current policy applies only to new awards at the undergraduate level. No policies regarding this issue exist for graduate students, said Ron Chilibeck, director of Student Awards. He added that no awards with criteria that could be considered discriminatory are currently being offered for graduate students.

Wright has also had his fair share of trouble with past S.U. executives. He says that the years when Floyd Hodgins and Mike Nickel were President were particularly bad. Wright stated that during this time he often lobbied council and the media against them and their proposals.

Wright stated further that if he had been financially able, he would have quit during this period. And, he adds, the lack of job security really made it necessary to move on now that he has the opportunity.

Wright's best memory is of paying off the University within two years of his joining the S.U. as Business Manager.

His biggest disappointment is the closing of Subway. He says it was "stupid" of the University administration to reject the S.U. offer to run the area and give half the profits to the administration. The S.U. also agreed to cover 100% of any losses.

Wright says the closing of Subway will hurt S.U. business over time as there will be reduced traffic flow in SUB. Ironically, Subway's closing should help business at the Power Plant.

After coming into a financial mess, Wright is now walking away from a five million dollar a year operation which, to a very large extent, he was responsible for building.

Students who know him and people working for the S.U. admit that they are sorry to see him go, but all wish him the best in his new endeavors.

S.U. manager moves on to greener pastures

by Leslie Buckle

After seven years as the S.U. Business Manager, Tom Wright is moving on to greener pastures.

Wright is now running the *Power Plant* which he calls "the best kept secret on campus" in terms of its potential. In addition, he continues to own a food kiosk in the Kingsway Mall and will remain with *The Gateway* as advertising manager.

There had been talk that Wright had stolen previous RATT manager Don Moore from the S.U., but Wright denies this. Wright asserts that he offered Moore a job only after Moore had already decided to quit as RATT manager.

Wright, who has owned and operated a number of businesses in Edmonton, first came to the U of A in 1972 when he opened the first retail store in HUB Mall. Wright went on to become *The Gateway* ad manager and, after sitting on the S.U. Finance Committee as a volunteer, assumed the position of Business Manager in January 1982.

When Wright first took the position of Business Manager, the S.U. was in serious financial trouble. Previous S.U. executives had tried to expand the S.U. record store without adequate cash on hand and had taken an overdraft loan with the University

which cost 18-19% interest, further tightening resources.

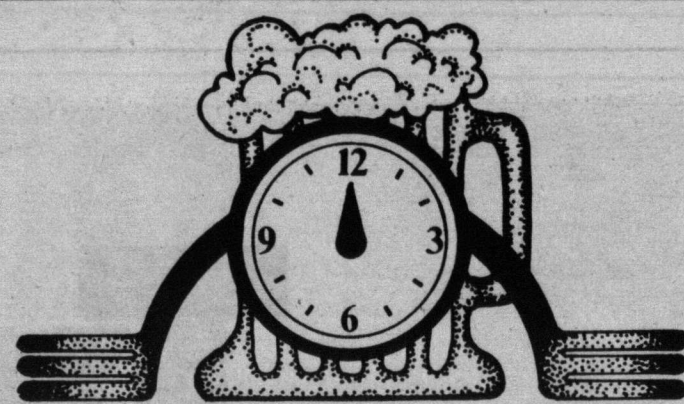
In addition, the HUB Mall mortgage far outstripped estimates and the S.U. was in danger of financial collapse.

Wright's first job was to install an accounting system. When he first arrived at the S.U. no one had any idea how much money was on hand. In fact, recalled Wright, a projected \$180,000 surplus turned into a \$180,000 deficit.

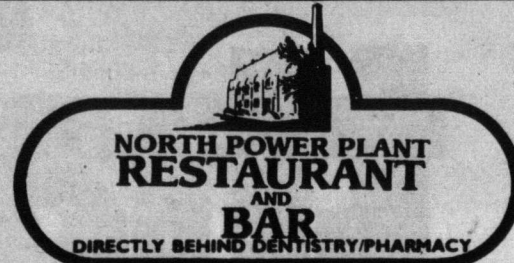
Wright also stripped away excess management and support staff to the tune of \$250,000 in annual salaries by combining various departments and hiring Ryan Beebe as Finance Manager to run the accounting system. Today the S.U. has approximately 2 million dollars in cash and liquid assets and is rock solid financially.

Not all of Mr. Wright's ideas were without controversy however. When he closed down the S.U. art gallery many were outraged.

Today, Wright remains unrepentant. When asked if he would do the same thing under similar circumstances he said that he would. He insists that the need was being filled by the University and that the S.U. couldn't afford it at the time.



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