

the Gateway

EDITORIAL

Degree discrimination

The university degree — it is the devalued currency of higher education — and it is fast becoming irrelevant in the midst of eroding standards and tightening job markets.

If the Alberta Human Rights Commission has its way, the doctrine of *systemic discrimination* would hasten that inevitable deflation.

Systemic discrimination rules would eliminate in many cases the arbitrary advantages the over-qualified hold over the qualified in the employment market.

The rule states: if it's an unnecessary qualification for the job, it should be thrown out. The distinction of a high school diploma or a university degree should not influence an employer's choices of unskilled labor.

It means to unskilled labor that bosses no longer can demand you pass some irrelevant aptitude test, or ensure that you are an average white male, or impose any other subtle means of discrimination against under-employed groups. They will have to judge you solely on your ability to meet job qualifications.

What it means to universities is quite different.

It means first that a general education will give you no job advantages in a general employment market. It admits that a B.A. or a B.Sc. gives its holder no more innate intelligence, ingenuity, or, most importantly, common sense, than anyone else.

Systemic discrimination rules thus would eliminate a major barrier to equal opportunity: higher education. Instead of helping under-advantaged people out by giving them the qualifications of a university degree, it would eliminate that qualification altogether.

Higher education would cease to be a massive training wheel for the nation's future corporate and bureaucratic elite. It would become a luxury to be valued highly in itself, not a necessary expedient to a higher income and/or a better job.

But what about the physicians, the lawyers, dentists, pharmacists, engineers, and all the other professional faculties for whom university is a necessary training ground?

Systemic discrimination rules wouldn't try to eliminate the obvious inequality between laymen and trained professionals. But they might question the value of where the training takes place.

For instance: employers would have to justify the differences between university engineering graduates and technical school engineering graduates. If no substantial differences existed beyond the mystique of a Degree versus a Certificate, the employer could not use university education as a job qualification.

The doctrine of *systemic discrimination* has yet to be tested in practice or in the courts. Preliminary soundings show that it is aimed mainly at curing hiring practices which victimize groups such as women and natives; the question of universities was never addressed by the Commission.

Nonetheless, were the question put, it would be hard to imagine a more searching and meaningful rationalization of the purpose of the university.

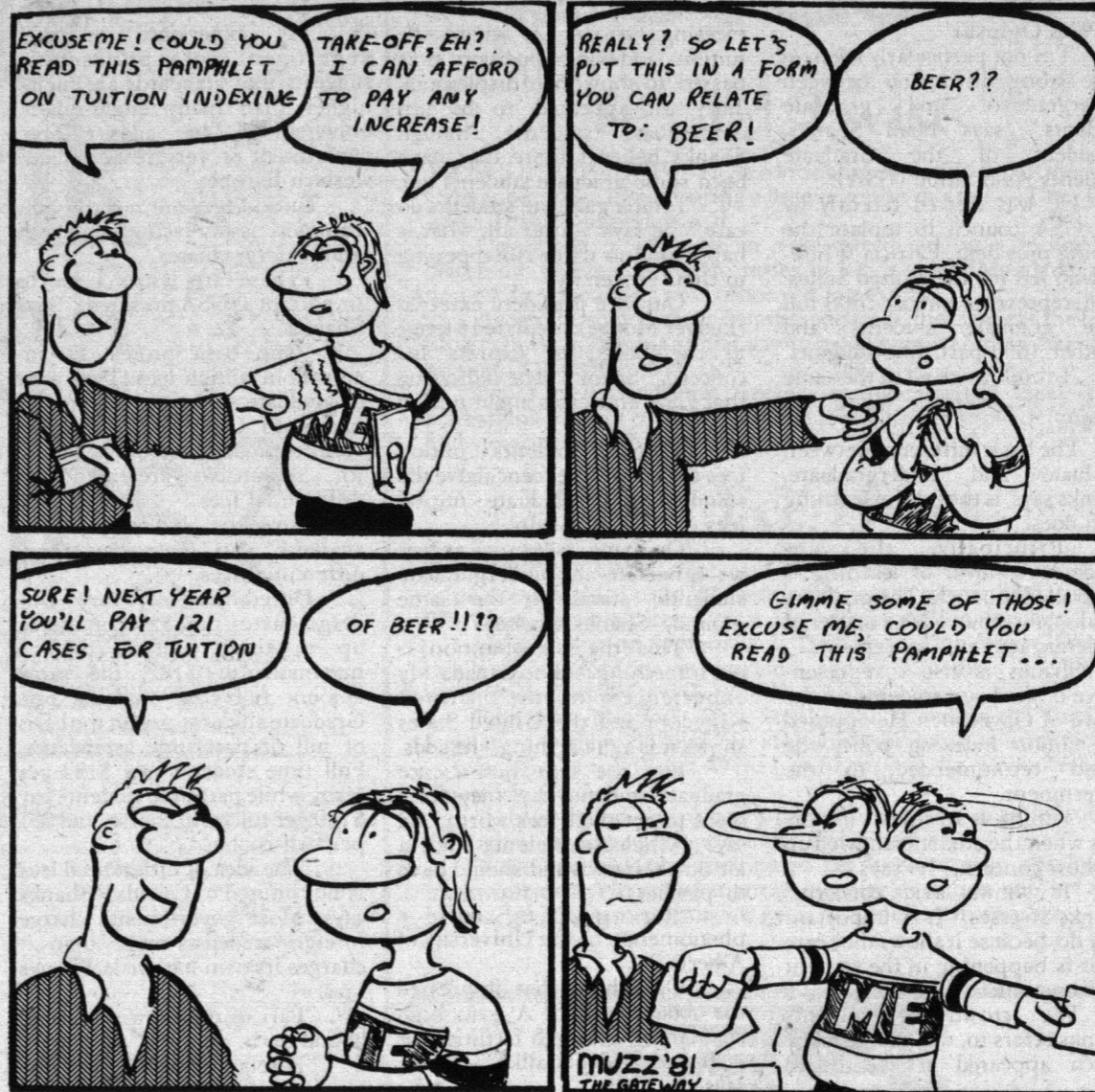
Peter Michalyshyn

Who knows

Will the provincial government really cut back funds and raise tuition fees next year? Will the federal government really cut \$1.5 billion next year from provincial university funding? Will your student government really keep funding services and just 'trim' businesses and staff? Or will they cut — cut deep into students' interests, raise union fees, close the Art Gallery, CJSR, the Record Store? Who knows?

Indeed, who knows? Believe it or not, we at the *Gateway* are not on top of every lead, every angle, every expose, because we're understaffed. That's where you come in. If there's something out there happening that deserves to be exposed to scrutiny and criticism, come see us. We'll get on it or get you on it. Help rid the campus, the world, of scandals, cover-ups, Sopergates.

We're in Room 282 Students' Union Building.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Argument labelled as "mudslinging"

Re: Howard Cooper's article, "Middle East Misconceptions", appearing in the Oct. 20th issue of the *Gateway*.

As a reader of the *Gateway* and as a firm believer in freedom of speech and press, I find it necessary to express my distaste and dismay over what I personally regard as abuse of the media. Mr. Cooper's article in Tuesday's *Gateway*, entitled "Middle East Misconceptions", is a blatant example of such abuse.

I am a Canadian of Ukrainian extraction and as such hold no personal stakes in the Arab-Israeli conflict, however I am fully aware of the nature of this conflict and the significance which it holds for those involved. I am not so ignorant that I would allow myself to be taken in by biased remarks, whether they come from Mr. Cooper or anyone else.

If a person has a certain view, he is free to express it providing he can substantiate his argument with documented facts. Mr. Cooper's article however contains only petty sarcasms and personal attacks on one Oscar Ammar which amount to nothing short of slander. He even goes so far as to question the credentials of Amnesty International, an organization which certainly displays more humanitarianism than do the vicious remarks made by Mr. Cooper himself.

May I remind you, Mr. Cooper, that we are students in a university where logical argument comes before name-calling. Rebuttal is fine but if mudslinging is more your game, I

suggest you talk to Red Pepper at Chez Pierre's (this year's mud-wrestling champion).

As for your sizzling wit; save it for amateur night at Hobo's Comedy Supper Club. Personally, I am not amused by it. Unless you can treat a serious topic seriously unless you can rid yourself of blind

emotionalism and present your readers with facts, you have no right to be writing letters to this paper.

Try again, Mr. Cooper, when you have something valid to say.
Luba Slabyj
Arts 1

No care for the aged

Older students want equality, not welfare!

Recently, I was informed by Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission that because I was over age 25, I was not eligible to go on my family's AHCIC plan as I did 3 years ago. Only students who are under 25 are eligible for this coverage.

When I contacted AHCIC to ask why it discriminated against older students, their response was for me to fill out welfare forms.

I don't want welfare, just equality with other younger students.

The Human Rights Commission surprised me by stating they only helped people who are discriminated against on the basis of age only if they are near retirement.

As I have the same cost of tuition, books, as well as rent, I should also be entitled to the same student reductions such as health care premiums. These payments are over \$100.00 per year, and make a significant difference in budgeting.

Older students who return to university should be encouraged,

not penalized for their age.

All students who attend university, if not able to continue their family coverage, should at least be given a reduction in health care premiums - and not welfare applications! If enough student pressure was exerted on AHCIC, they might have to look into student rates.

Dianne Mac Donell
Post-R.N. Nursing 2

PARTY TIME!

Gala masquerade ball

Friday, October 30, 1981

Come to Gateway office for detail

Rm. 282 SUB.

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Staff this issue: From which famous short story is this sentence taken? During the whole of a dull, dark and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, Michael Skeet, Garnet DuGray, Tom Freeland, Brent Jeffery, Dave Chan, Peter Jarvis, Susan Bailes, Kent Blinston, Ben Yee (sorry), Edward C. May, Donna McAlear, Al Hunt, Murray Whitby, Margriet Tilroe-West, Jordan Peterson, Peter Hammond, and Peter Durovic had been passing alone through a singularly dreary tract of country, when at length, as the shades of the evening drew on, they found themselves within view, of the melancholy House of Commons. Yes, you're right, for fifty points... it's the famous story of corruption in government, "The Fall of the House Of Commons" by Edgar Allan Fotheringham. Also, Dave Oginski.