

# Letiters

## AAS issue clarified by V-p

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the Students' Unions stand on the Alberta Association of Students.

I don't believe that any campus is considering pulling out of AAS because of financial reasons and I know that is not the case with Red Deer College. This has been building up, as implied in one of your stories, for a couple of years.

Nor has it got to do with personality clashes between the executive of AAS and the member institutions.

The question is the purpose of a super structure at all. Representatives of Red Deer College, U of Lethbridge, U of Calgary and U of A met this summer and discussed the

question quite thoroughly before enrollment figures were in. The meeting that was held was much more constructive than many of the AAS conferences that have been held recently.

I question the area of duplication. Obviously your reporter never read the brief carefully enough. A Council of Presidents or whatever you wish to call it will, at a meeting at the beginning of the summer, decide on a schedule of conferences or meetings and who will host them. The host campus will cover any duplicating, mailing or speaker costs. Since each campus will host a different conference, the costs will be shared evenly. Minutes and decisions made at

the conference are sent out if required.

I'd like to point out that the present AAS executive is not doing the job it should be doing anyways. At the June conference, the treasurer was unable to come up with any report. For this weekend's conference, there still has not been an agenda sent out to the member institutions.

The nursing students have also questioned their purpose in belonging. Nurses from a number of hospitals support our brief as does the representatives of the Alberta Nursing Students Association. Upon talking to the president of NAIT, I understand that they do not need the AAS either.

As to the U of A feeling it can lobby effectively alone at the Alberta legislature, it can. But I hasten to point out that the U of A, U of C and U of L are working together (with Don McKenzie as spokesman) to change the liquor regulations to allow PUBs on campuses. It should also be noted that often the various campuses have unique problems and therefore lobby on their own anyways.

If there is such a widespread disagreement and discontent with the present structure of AAS, is there any reason to keep it running? If there is no reason to save AAS as it exists, why should we pay our \$4700 annual membership fee?

Ian McDonnell  
External Vice-President

## Retrogression

To the Editors:

We often hear complaints about the great yawning gap existing between what is required of a high school student

and the demands made on a freshman at university. Some obliging instructors make a special effort to make this transition as painless as possible for the student. For example, one instructor of a senior course in Russian literature spent the whole first term reading verbatim from a single text (which, incidentally, he wrote himself) for the benefit of students who hadn't learned by their third year the art of piecing together the fragments of a disorganized lecture. But that was several years ago. This year an even more striking example has come to light. The instructor in a junior course in the same department has tried to ease the burden of adjustment, by requiring her class, instead of writing a mid-term exam in October, to merely hand in their notebooks. It brings back memories, doesn't it? The notebooks will presumably be graded, with the best ones being awarded a gold star, and substandard ones, a silver star. In this way, no eager student's tender psyche will be damaged by not being awarded a star. Note that this is a modified version of the pass-fail system, except that the word "fail" is much more brutal. This new approach to the university classroom could be extended. For example, in order to make the university environment seem more familiar, the instructor could institute the practise of having the student give the traditional one or two-fingered salute when he wants to leave the room. A third, three-finger salute could be added to cover the special problem which elementary schoolgirls don't face. Since freshmen are getting younger every year, they might not even have to introduce this added complication until senior years. Signs prohibiting gum-chewing could be tacked up in classrooms under the No Smoking signs. It's little things such as these that the new arrival to the university misses most, and this difficult transition period could be made to appear far less formidable if only there were more understanding instructors like this one.

Bob Radke

## Flop

Dear Sir,

By coincidence I was in Saskatoon last weekend. By accident, the Western Canadian Conference of C.U.P. (Canadian University Press) was also in Saskatoon. Hosts to this gala event was the Sheaf (U of S).

The conference was dismal. Seminars were under-attended and unplanned. Organization was existent, but lacked application. The most valid remark about C.U.P. and it's conferences was FU-CUP.

The highlight was the Saturday Night Party at the Big T Motel. Wow. What power of the press was revealed!!

For those who thrive on such masturbation there is a national conference in Wolfville N.S. coming up.

Power of the press is more than penis extended.

C. Men  
Arts 2

## AAS lives on after weekend meeting

CALGARY (CUP)— A threat to the survival of the Alberta Association of Students, representing 42,000 Alberta post-secondary students was averted at the Association's annual Thanksgiving weekend conference.

The Association was jeopardized by a University of Alberta Students' Union decision to recommend doing away with the Association's permanent secretariat.

The U of A Students' Union had budget problems because of an overestimation of enrolment and was re-examining its priorities with regard to its \$4600 annual contribution to the AAS. Providing approximately one third of the Association's budget, and representing about a quarter of Alberta's secondary students, it was felt that the AAS would not be viable without the U of A.

The U of A Union proposed a re-structuring which would have reduced the AAS to an informal liaison between campus student presidents.

The challenge to its survival threw into relief the role and responsibilities of the Association.

The U of A delegates were persuaded of the importance of the AAS, and finally presented their resolution only as a "Duty to God, the Country, and the Student's Union" in the words of Student President McKenzie. The resolution was defeated by a vote of 28 to 9 with the U of A, Red Deer College, and one of the three University of Lethbridge delegates supporting the motion.

AAS President Tim Cristian and representatives of the other campuses pleaded persistently for the Association's survival. The University of Calgary (which contributes \$3600 annually to the AAS), took the position that the senior institutions have a duty to the emerging campuses, and students can most effectively present their concerns and recommendations to the provincial government and other bodies as one united voice. This position was strongly supported by Mount Royal College and the majority of the other institutions, who felt the emerging campuses would be left out in the cold in their formative years without the AAS as a forum for interaction, problem solving, and research.

The U of A's position was that the AAS was overconcentrating on structure rather than problem-solving. However, they eventually conceded the usefulness of the AAS as a continuing body with a problem-solving shift in emphasis.

In the presidential election, after two tie votes had to be broken by Cristian, under a by-law provision, Mount Royal College Students' Council President Dennis Docherty was elected. He is a former AAS vice-president and assumes his duties at the Association's Spring Conference. Ken Runge, U of L Student President, was his opponent.

Docherty said he arrived at the conference amidst rumblings and confusion, but was "very satisfied with and encouraged by what I've seen at the conference."

The Association was re-structured to enable either member institutions of commissions to initiate problem-solving programs (coordinated by the president), rather than de-structuring into an informat organization as the U of A had proposed. The budget was also slightly trimmed.

A major issue at the conference was the opportunity for Alberta post secondary students to present a united front and positively affect a refinement of education policy in Alberta — since the new PC Government appears to be receptive to input and recommendations.

Two major position papers were presented at the conference one dealing with the socio-economic background of Alberta post-secondary students and one dealing with course evaluation — these researches being commissioned by the AAS.

The socio-economic report, prepared by Bill Avison of the U of A, revealing the following factors:

—Undergraduates are getting the short end of the stick with regard to the stipend (grant and loan) system now in effect — receiving an average of only \$250 per year as opposed to about \$1800 for masters students and \$2700 for doctoral students (there are only about 3500 graduate students in the province;

—Equal educational opportunity doesn't exist in Alberta — the average post-secondary coming from a family with an income twice the provincial average;

—Females are not equally treated under the current system of student assistance receiving on the average only half the stipends males receive (\$200 as opposed to \$421 for males);

—Students living at home require only \$457 less than away-from-home students — whereas under the current stipend system their estimated requirements are reduced by \$800.

The relevance of such reports to all Alberta students, and potential effect on provincial policy, were also deciding factors in the conference being a last gasp for the beleaguered organization, as was expected in some quarters, new life was injected.

Apart from being viewed as a problem-solving organization, the delegates viewed the AAS as a vital forum for inter-campus communication.

The U of A's Students' Union President, Don McKenzie, saw the need for more continuity in the organization to enable it to "examine all areas of common concern" with an "ongoing commitment to solving problems".

At prior commission meetings, the U of A presented the position that they needed their AAS contribution for other priorities. U of A representative Ian McDonnell stated: "If we're not interested in something, why should we subsidize it?"

Representatives of the smaller campuses virtually pleaded with the U of A to maintain their AAS ties and not leave them out in the cold without their experience and guidance in student concerns.

An area of concern for the U of A was the fact that AAS President Tim Christian, while holding his position, was also a full-time student and an NDP candidate in the past provincial election. Christian countered that all Association members were aware of his other commitments when he was elected president. Christian received a \$400 per month salary.

U of A representatives stated that they didn't need the AAS because of the availability of their own research facilities, and the proximity of the provincial government. However, they later modified this position to accommodate to the needs and requirements of the Association and other campuses.

U of C Students' Legislative Council President, Ron Murphy, and other Calgary representatives, accommodated to the U of A's objection while still presenting a strong case for the continuance of the AAS with a format structure and full-time president.

Reports on student employment (all institutions), campus/liquor regulation (MRO), tenure (U of C), and transferability were also presented at the conference, as well as an address on the student's role in society. Specific recommendations on these matters will be forthcoming from the AAS.

In addition, the responses of a questionnaire on graduate employment patterns in Alberta are currently being computer coded and the results should be available within a month. The results should answer the question: "Do Albertans with jobs feel their education is applicable to their jobs?"

The University of Alberta's withdrawal from the Canadian Union of Students in 1969 initiated the demise of that national student association.