

Step taken towards a quota in faculty of Arts

by Lisa Hall

The first step has been taken towards a quota in the faculty of Arts. A quota proposal was passed Tuesday at a meeting of the Arts Faculty Council's executive committee.

The proposal involves cutting enrolment by 20 per cent in the faculty of Arts by 1995. This would mean setting a yearly minimum average which high-school and transfer students would have to meet in order to be accepted. In the proposal, the quota would be brought in gradually commencing in the 1991-92 academic year.

The proposal was met with some

criticism before it was passed with margin of five votes to four by the nine-member executive committee.

Students' Union vice-president external Wade Deisman sits on the committee and didn't vote in favor of the proposal. Deisman was concerned because Advanced Education Minister John Gogo had indicated to both the Board of Governors and the Students Union that if quotas were introduced in the faculty, the government would cut funding. "The government isn't going to give us the same amount of money if we're educating less students," said Deisman.

Dr. James Marino, who was

the chairman of the ad hoc committee that wrote the proposal, said this aspect wasn't discussed while putting together the proposal. He said there was more concern in how the quota would increase the quality of education in the faculty. "There is students who can't get into the courses they need, sections are too large, students don't have access to their professors, or they are taught by part-time staff. We're attempting to relieve the situations by limiting numbers," said Marino.

Deisman was also concerned about the lack of student input into the proposal. He felt students should be involved with something that is going to strongly affect their education. "Departments were invited for input over the summer, and there aren't many students around in the summer."

Deisman admitted that much work was done since September, but felt that one month was not adequate time to prepare and do research into the matter.

Marino said that student representatives were in attendance at the council meeting where the ad hoc committee was formed back in 1988, so they would have known that a proposal was being discussed.



Students' Union vice-president external Wade Deisman.

He added that in the process of writing the proposal, he "went to about 15 department councils," and knew that students were in attendance at some of the meetings.

The quota proposal still has to be passed at several other levels before it becomes university policy, and the next level is the Arts Faculty Council.

Cutbacks blamed for poor voter turnout

by Pat Kiernan

Some students are blaming their failure to vote in the civic election on computers, rather than on their own apathy.

In introducing a new computerized voting system, officials decided to reduce the number of polling stations in Edmonton from 212 to 104. Among the polls eliminated was one in the University area.

The change made it more difficult for many voters to get out to vote. Senior citizens and students without cars were particularly hard hit.

Many civic voters headed for the polling station where they cast their provincial ballot in March, only to be told of the city's decision to cut back. City Hall's Citizens' Action Centre received nearly 700 calls on October 16th, from voters who couldn't figure out where to vote.

The problem was particularly evident in the University area. The

high density Garneau district is populated mostly by students, many of whom don't drive. During the provincial election last spring, they were faced with a walk of only a few blocks to the Garneau School.

That polling station was among those eliminated this time. On a day when the high temperature reached only five degrees, Garneau voters were faced with a 15 to 20 minute walk to Windsor Park Elementary.

"I went to vote, and everything," said Andrew Lummis, a third-year education student, "but I've got better things to do than spend an hour hiking to some elementary school."

Voter turnout city wide was 36.4 per cent. At Windsor Park, it was nearly 5 per cent lower.

But Edmonton Census and Election Officer Freide Gunther isn't convinced that it's fair to blame the poor turnout on the government.

She says turnout in the University area has been poor historically.

"That doesn't surprise me," said Gunther. "The turnout for students voting was always extremely low."

Gunther acknowledged that the changes to polling stations were inconvenient to many voters. But she doesn't believe it was the primary cause for students' failure to vote.

For the 1992 civic election, the voting station boundaries will be reviewed city wide. "We certainly

will be looking at reducing the size of them, and having more locations in all areas," said Gunther.

New city councilors are aware of the concern about voting accessibility, but they question the effectiveness of expanding the number of stations. Either time or money would have to be sacrificed.

The city could choose to use more of the computer voting machines, which are costly to rent.

Or, they could accumulate the ballots at satellite polling stations, and feed them into machines after 8 p.m. That move could further delay final results.

Planning for the 1992 civic election has already begun. This issue is one that is certain to be addressed.

U of A group off to conference

The U of A Model United Nations Association will be attending the Great Plains VI Model UN conference in Regina this weekend. The association, which was formed in the spring of 1987, will be sending 15 delegates.

This year the club will be representing two countries, Algeria and Yugoslavia. The Regina conference reflects the actual make-up of the United Nations which is based in New York, and U of A delegates will participate in General Assembly,

Security Council, Special Political, and Economic committee meetings.

"The U of A had a well-respected showing last year, and for that reason we have been asked to represent two of the Security Council nations," said the association's acting-president, Mitch Panciuk. "We actually registered for the conference back in May, and then last month the conference director asked us to take on a second country."

The U of A will be the only group

who takes on the role of two Security Council countries. "We're going to do a great job," said Panciuk, adding that the delegation is well prepared for the conference.

The conference will have representatives from most of the western Canadian universities and several from the northwestern United States. In addition to learning more about how the United Nations operates, Panciuk hopes that the club will be able to "reaffirm the reputation of the U of A as being a place where people know how to party."



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