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AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, HUB MALL

Independence referendum coming?

by Petro Truezki

"We should not have to take any more abuse from Pete Lougheed and his cronies," says Ronny LaVack, a member of the General Faculties Council (GFC). "That is why we took this action."

A referendum to have the University of Alberta separate from the province of Alberta and to form a sovereignty association with the Dominion of Canada was approved at the last GFC meeting to be presented on the February Students' Union election ballot.

"All the province seems able to do is increase tuition fees, complain about gas and oil revenues, and say "see how wonderful we are for increasing the size of the Heritage Trust Fund: no, you can't spend any of it," adds LaVack.

"We live in the richest province in Canada and the provincial government proposes to tie tuition fees to the Consumer Price Index," she says.

"By implementing this referendum, we hope to accomplish three things. First, to express our profound dislike towards the province's policies. Second, let other people of Alberta know that there is a viable alternative. And third, if Alberta does not want to give us a fair deal, the rest of Canada will."

"We also wish to express the cultural differences between the government and the University. Like our ability to express three syllable words and know their meaning, or our preference for illiteracy in selected faculties," says LaVack.

A near unanimous vote greeted the referendum motion. It will next be brought to the attention of the Board of Governors for approval.

"Our people have been in touch with members of the Board and I believe they will support the GFC motion," says LaVack.

The provincial government is not impressed by the university's action.

"The idea of the University of Alberta separating from the province of Alberta is ludicrous. We cannot deal with this situation seriously," says Elizabeth Ray, Premier Peter Lougheed's personal secretary.

"We'll see who's serious and who's ridiculous when the time comes," replied LaVack.

"We support the action proposed by GFC," says Bernard Schultz of the Federation West organization. "We wish them the best of luck."

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