

Universities have fiscal problems ... not enough sheep?

Ottawa (CUP) -- Worried by the nation-wide slump in university registration and the consequent prospect of reduced government grants and tight budgets, university administrators--and

their student emulators--spent much of their time at the annual meeting of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada here, talking about dollars and cents.

The delegates from 60 Canadian post-secondary institutions are more than a little perplexed at the drop-off in student enrolment and the threat that this poses to traditional

concepts of university operation. Few solutions have been found.

Much of the talk at the conference, which ended Thursday, dealt with university financing, the prospects for graduating students and the research-teaching dichotomy -- that is, where the priorities of the University should lie.

The general tone of discussions here was summed up in an address given Wednesday morning by AUCC president Davidson Dunton, retiring president of Carleton University in Ottawa.

In a speech that amounted to a justification of present university administrative priorities, Dunton criticized what he called "self-appointed experts" who attack the extravagance and inefficiency of universities.

He said that "the enthusiasm for efficiency" of such experts "seems usually greater than their knowledge of actual operations in higher education."

Talking about the likelihood of provincial governments substantially cutting back the amount of future grants to universities, Dunton said, "If cost reductions go too far, they are bound to decrease opportunities for young people, and debase the quality of higher education and of research."

"The truth is that in the last ten years Canadian universities have reached levels of effectiveness and efficiency which they and the Canadian people should be proud of."

There were few in the audience of administrators who disputed Dunton's claim.

Also in his speech, Dunton dealt briefly with the growing criticism of the American domination of Canadian universities.

"...Some of us who worked on plans for the expansion of the universities saw and said what was going to happen and that we were going to have to draw heavily on non-Canadian sources. Some of those who now express keen concern about non-Canadian faculty do not recall campaigning vigorously for the expansion of universities and graduate schools in those earlier times."

In a challenge to the concept of the divine right of administrators as articulated by Dr. Dunton, Art Smolensky a graduate student from the University of British Columbia and a member of the AUCC Student Advisory Committee told delegates that the answer to the problems of society don't lie in the university.

"Universities are the training ground for the elite of this country and students are little more than sheep. But the economic planners of the country have screwed up and now the sheep have nowhere to graze," he said.

He went on to say that attempts at educating people in universities had largely failed and those who sought solutions to existing conditions "will be leaving the university."

Parking lots proposed for North Garneau backyards

Students living in the North Garneau district of Edmonton may have their backyards turned into parking lots.

A proposal was issued to the University of Alberta's Department of Planning and Development to create parking space in that area. The proposal directly affects the students residing between Saskatchewan Drive and 87th avenue and 110th and 113th streets.

According to Mr. E.R. Shedden, Assistant to the Administration Vice-President for Planning and Development, nothing is definite as yet as the proposal has not been approved by the Department's special committee. The proposal involves the demolition of backyards and everything within including garages and trees.

"Just part of the area where backyards are in bad shape will be considered," stated Mr. Shedden.

The North Garneau district requires additional parking facilities because of the construction of the new Law Center and Humanitarian Center on the east boundary of campus.

Mr. Shedden made it clear that the proposal offers more than a solution to the inadequate parking.

"It has a dual purpose." The other being the clean up of the alley ways which some have said to be in poor condition.

"The cost, of course, will have to be considered first," added Mr. Shedden.

This parking solution may be agreeable to those who require the facilities but it is certainly not agreeable to the residents who will be directly affected. Several Campus co-op houses will be affected and these people may organize a formal protest if the proposal is passed.

The co-op people would rather not see the garages torn down as

they are still in usable condition. Their houses need repair and they would rather see the money the department might spend for parking put to this use.

They are also concerned about the moral aspects of destroying the backyard environment. They say they will be forced to purchase U of A parking permits to park in their own backyards, if the lots are constructed.

Several residents in the area have children. The proposal is objectionable to the parents, because their children will not have any place to play if the backyards are cluttered with cars. One gentleman is so enraged that he is willing to picket his backyard to prevent construction should there be any.

As one co-op member stated, "The co-op is concerned about parking but mostly about people. Too bad the U of A isn't."

by Rick Ponich

profs have have nothing to fear from U of A TV



Deep in the basement of the Biological Science Building, is room CWO05, nerve centre of the University of Alberta Radio and Television department. Here, despite the second hand equipment and overcrowded rooms, educational programs are produced for the CFRN and CBC television, MEETA (educational T.V.), and radio stations as CKUA as well as campus educational productions.

The department, which started in 1967, is developing into a major asset for the University of Alberta. Henry Mamet, Radio and T.V. department Director, says that the department was established mainly to put technology in the class room and to provide the instructor with a more efficient and economic tool in the educational process. Films and tapes on any subject are made upon the request of any faculty or department. Constructive programme ideas are also welcomed from students. Mr. Robert Gist, the newly appointed director of the department's programmes said that his job is "to make educational T.V. more palatable so it won't put students to sleep".

The greatest difficulty the department has to overcome is

the fear of professors that they will be replaced by technology. "This fear", said Mr. Mamet, "is as unsubstantiated as the rumour that we don't have to work in the year 2000 because the computers will do it all".

The Radio and T.V. department is staffed by ten full and ten part time employees. All part time workers are students, and their work involves every facet of planning and production. The total costs last year were \$194,390- or roughly one quarter of one percent of the total university operating expenditures.

Improvements for the department will include newer facilities and a more centralized production on system to do away with wasteful duplication.

At present there is a second studio in the Education Building. Mamet envisions a cooperation with other universities in Canada and abroad, in the planning, distribution and exchange of materials and ideas. "Even satellites can now be used to bring programs into the classrooms of Alberta at a very small cost," he said.

The job is now to make both professors and students aware of the great potential of radio and television in the classroom.

by Joe Prins