

## Bureaucracy harassing?

I have been reading, with some interest, the various articles the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment has caused to be published about itself over the past while. The most recent article, L. Bella's response to G. Walker's letter, has prompted me to break my silence. Time and space constraints prevent me from embarking on a complete dissertation, so I shall limit myself to a couple of points.

I am struck with the sheer volume of print about the President's advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment in recent times. But upon reasonably close examination, something more important becomes obvious — the fact that the thousands of printed words say nothing at all. There has been no indication of whether or not complaints have been settled; and if they have, how and to whose satisfaction. I have had considerable experience with the whole issue of sexual harassment and the "due process" that complaints follow during the past 3 years. I would be absolutely amazed if the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment was able to settle even one contentious complaint satisfactorily, especially given their track record with the specific complaints I am personally aware of. I believe the omission of that kind of information is more politic than oversight.

The particular point I would like to make at this time revolves around Bella's statement that "the University has taken a position against sexual harassment. The President is on record as saying that the University does not condone sexual harassment in any of its constituencies."

First of all, I would like to know where the President is on record as having taken that position. More importantly though, I would like to know if Dr. Horowitz concurs with his colleague, Dr. Meekison. Dr. Meekison told the The University of Alberta Non-Academic Staff Association executive that the University does not condone sexual harassment. However, he went on to explain that the finding of merit in a complaint by the Alberta Human Rights Commission, and the subsequent settlement of a complaint by the University does not constitute an admission that sexual harassment has even taken place. According to Dr. Meekison, no sexual harassment has occurred until an independent body such as a Board of Inquiry or a Court of Law has determined guilt or innocence. Given that "due process" seems to be designed to prevent such an occurrence, it is small comfort indeed to hear that the University does not condone sexual harassment. Furthermore, I fail to see how a non-judicial body such as the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment could motivate the President to invoke discipline on an offender, given their inability to legally prove guilt or innocence.

It is for reasons such as this that NASA encourages its members to avoid the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment, and instead bring their complaints directly to the Union office. Our experiences have taught us a great deal and we, therefore, think we are far better equipped to protect our members' interests than is a body established by an Administration holding the views outlined to us by Dr. Meekison.

E.P. Woloshyn  
Grievance Chair

## SECOND WIND

by Zane Harker

Hardly a week goes by without attention being drawn to the problems of underfunding and overcrowding on this University of Alberta campus. The plight of students becomes increasingly bleak as more and more flock to University to escape the desperately depressed job market. But the pressure of increased enrolment drains government funding as more and more students rely on subsidized loans. This leaves the coffers bare to expand the campus and hire additional professors to meet the demands of an expanding university population.

This vicious circle not only makes it harder for students to qualify for loans to finance their education, but also damages the quality of this education. Students and faculty alike can be heard bleating about the overcrowding of many classrooms that prevents individual, personal contact between pupil and teacher. Tenured professors clamour for teaching assistants to help mark assignments, and occasionally relieve teaching duties, which some claim they are not qualified to do. Any ill effects on the quality of education this squeeze causes only leaves the graduating student less equipped to break into the already stagnant job market. As a result, graduates who have had to exist on student loans find themselves out of school, out of work, and unable to get out of debt.

Depressing accounts of financially troubled students regularly make the pages of campus newspapers, but are largely ignored as there has erstwhile been no apparent solution to this severe malady. In fact, the government increasingly shifts funds away from the pedagogical sectors of campus in favour of university research in an apparent effort to make this institution a viable contributor to the scientific and medical industries. This trend has called into question the basic role of our university — should it be an institution of learning, or research? Since the economic climate does not permit the financial support of both of these options, and as a strictly pedagogical forum our university is failing miserably, it would seem that a shift towards research is the only hope.

But there are great problems with taking a strictly research path that currently make this option less than feasible. Research is seen as cold and impersonal, perhaps even too practical. Medical research especially has often been the target of public outcry as it often involves the suffering of laboratory animals. There is a growing movement that strongly protests the nefarious destruction of helpless animals to further research that will benefit man only. If this campus were to pursue research more closely, even more laboratory subjects would be needed, making for even more bad press.

Such a shift of priorities toward research would also no doubt bring some additional bad P.R. if the arts were perceived to be neglected. While medical research and the sale of scientific technology would assuredly bring repute and funds to every related faculty in the university, the arts would obviously have nothing to offer, or receive. Even though arts classrooms would shrink given the immense employment opportunities that open up for science graduates, those students proficient only in the arts would be even harder pressed to find work after graduation. Above all, the arts student would have to forego student loans, as the impossibility of ever paying them back would almost be assured.

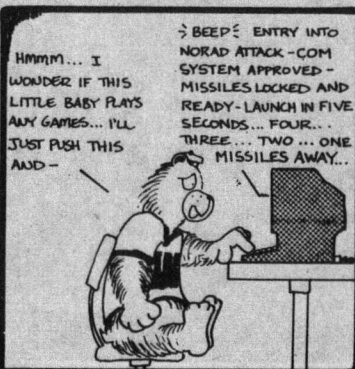
So it seems that no matter what remedial steps are taken to revitalize this terminally ailing institution, the side effects would appear to be too costly; that is, unless a compromise could be struck that would satisfy all sides and allay all concerns. Here is what I modestly propose: let those arts students who need financial assistance work their way through school as subjects of medical research. The benefits to all are immediate and obvious. No longer would animals be needed to conduct research, and the money saved from this could be passed on to the volunteers, no doubt a healthy sum. Since current opposition to animal cruelty is usually the most vocal among arts types, they would only be too happy to advance their cause by substituting themselves in the guinea pig's stead.

And talk about killing two birds with one stone! Why the monies earned by arts students for just a few hours of volunteer research work a day would easily finance their education and then some. The somewhat dangerous tests some arts students would be subjected to would obviously pay better, and the results would be even more conclusive than before. After all, who better to indicate what is beneficial or harmful to humans, than actual humans?

The benefits from this proposal are far-reaching. The government will no longer have to subsidize the university through student loans and will be free to invest even more heavily in university research. Soon our university will be competing with the private sector, buying and selling technology with the best of them. The few students who choose to remain in arts will have the small classes and one to one contact with the instructor that they seem to want so badly, and our institution will have the edge in medical research that only findings from human subjects can provide.

In short, there is hope for the University of Alberta. If we respond to the economic slump with the necessary changes, within a few short years we will have a self-sufficient institution that will serve to benefit everyone.

### Bear Country



by Shane Berg

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