

## Med program spots opened to natives

by Randal Smathers

Virtually no native students are admitted to the MD program in the Faculty of Medicine.

In order to correct this imbalance, a proposal has been made to set aside up to two places for native students in the program, beginning in 1988-89. These will be in addition to the 118 regular quota positions.

The proposal was passed by the General Faculties Council (GFC) on Nov. 30, and only needs approval from the Board of Governors to become official.

The new quota was proposed because of the death of native students in the MD program. Dr. Anne Fanning of the Faculty of

Medicine, one of the chief supporters of the measure, could not identify more than a handful of natives to graduate in the history of the program at Alberta. There is some uncertainty over the exact number because not all native students wish to be identified as such, and Medicine does not keep such records.

One of the reasons for choosing the number two for the new quota is because Treaty Indians make up approximately two percent of the population in Alberta, and this would open the same percentage of places in the MD program.

Dr. Fanning stressed that the amendment on admissions policy will allow for up to two students. Therefore, if there are less than two fully qualified candidates, there may

be only one or no admissions in any given year. If no suitable candidates can be found in any given year, the places will not be made available to other students, as there is pressure from the provincial government to decrease the number of doctors being graduated. Medicine, therefore, does not wish to increase its overall quota, which opens these places to non-Native students would do.

Based on the history of a similar program at the University of Manitoba, finding suitable Native candidates may be a real problem. Fanning said that the program has been in place in Manitoba for ten years, and only this year has a student graduated from it.

A more successful program is underway in North Dakota, where a native medicine program called INMED has about 40 graduates. INMED is a more in-depth program, taking students from high school and giving them an elongated pre-med program.

Fanning said that the U of A program will concentrate on people who have been successful at the undergrad level at first, but that it might eventually be necessary to expand towards the North Dakota example.

There are already transitional level programs in Calgary and Saskatchewan which might provide potential students, so the U of A did not want to overlap these and waste resources, said Fanning.

Under the proposed program, to qualify for either of the positions at the U of A, native students will have to attain the normal minimum academic qualifications of a 7.0 grade point average (GPA) in an appropriate science program. Persons who qualify normally have to go through a screening process to reduce the number of applicants down to 118. This process usually involves interviewing about 250 students with 7.5 or higher GPAs, according to information provided by Associate Dean C.H. Harley of the Faculty of Medicine.

Under the new program, native students who qualify will undergo a separate screening process, by passing the normal competitive pool.

Native students who wish to do so may still enter the general pool. For the purposes of the program, the definition of native people in the Constitution Act will be used.

This definition does not address status or non-status issues, and includes Indian, Metis, and Inuit peoples.

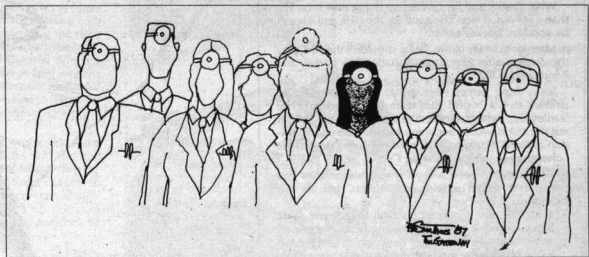
One of the major benefits of the program will be to increase native awareness of the possibility of becoming a doctor. "A lot of people are doing things because of a role model that shows they are doable," said Fanning. The university lost just such a role model with the recent death of the only native in the program, a transfer student from North Dakota.

Fanning also said that any student

with a relatively low GPA will need a lot of counselling to get through. "It will be a tough, tough row to hoe. There would be lots of anxiety (about such a person)," she said.

Marilyn Dumont of Native Student Services said that the native reaction to the program is entirely positive. There was Native participation on the committee which drafted the proposal, and it was made clear from that level onwards that this should not be a way of obtaining lax admissions, but an inducement for Natives to enter the field.

Finding suitable native candidates may be a real problem.



## No press for Pocklington

by Rob Galbraith

The Associate Chairman of Political Science has been criticized for remarks he made to his first-year political science class November 26.

In announcing that local businessman Peter Pocklington was to address the class December 1, Professor D.J. Carmichael said that he didn't want reporters from The Gateway to attend.

Several students, who refused to be identified for fear of retribution, felt that Professor Carmichael's comments were inappropriate.

"I think a professor should have some control over who enters his classroom, but I think denying access to Gateway people is wrong," said one.

"If I am allowed to hear what he has to say, why shouldn't those who didn't attend be able to find out what he said by reading [The Gateway]?"

A tape recording of the speech, obtained by The Gateway, revealed that Pocklington dealt mainly with his belief that government should be reduced to a bare minimum. Referring to himself as a "free-enterprise conservative," Pocklington berated the current Federal Government, among others, for being "too eager to get their hands on the taxpayer's dollars."

For his part, Professor Carmichael feels that the students misinterpreted his intentions.

"I felt that to ensure a free and


open discussion, one of an academic, nature both Peter Pocklington and the students should be able to speak without fear of attribution. Indeed, Mr. Pocklington's agent specifically requested that it be off the record. I think that's legitimate in a classroom setting."

With reporters there, Carmichael noted, the more reserved students would not have come forward.

He also denied singling out The Gateway.

"I mentioned The Gateway because it's the campus paper, and I thought some students might be contributors. My intention was to convey the impression that I didn't want this report in any media, for the sake of the discussion."

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