

He is too narrow-minded

The Editor,

I have just finished reading Mr. Peter Boothroyd's article "Don't Give Us Degrees, Give Us an Education" in the Oct. 10 Gateway. It is quite obvious Boothroyd is dissatisfied with this university because he feels that it is not educating its student body. He feels that it is too concerned with training technicians and conferring them with degrees. This supposedly restricts the real educational process.

To him "education is a process whereby a person becomes more open, more broadly aware." This is not accomplished in an institution like the U of A but may be in a so called "free university".

What is a free university? It is not readily apparent from his article just what this institution is or how it operates, but by examining the negatives it would appear that it is an organization which doesn't offer courses in medicine, engineering, commerce, etc. and doesn't mark or grade its students, and doesn't confer degrees. This seems to leave us with an institution which centres around the "liberal arts," taught on a loosely organized seminar system. Freedom of advancement or movement from one "class" to the next regardless of one's background would apparently be permitted. But is this the only way to an "education" and is it in fact the best way to an education? I think not!

Boothroyd is too narrow-minded. He fails to appreciate that there can be an expansion of the mind into areas such as law, medicine, chemistry, managerial science, etc. For him these are only the results of training. They don't involve "education". They have no place in his centre of education.

Persons wishing to avail themselves of medical training should attend an institution organized and run by the Canadian Medical Association; prospective lawyers would attend the Canadian Bar Association's School of Law. Supposedly this decentralizing process would rid the present university of its defects and open the

way to a truly "free university". Unfortunately it would also be a very backward step for society. It would succeed in creating a community where every person is a totally specialized unit, unable to express any constructive opinions or thoughts outside his own sphere of training. Boothroyd's decentralized university would only further the narrow-mindedness he complains of now.

It is my contention that an education involves an exposure to many disciplines. While it is impossible to become steeped in more than a few, benefits are derived from a grounding in a number of them. I think that this is more likely to occur in an environment where the student has an opportunity to avail himself of different subjects, personalities, and ideas. Is there not a chance that our engineer, doctor, or lawyer might just be a better engineer, doctor, lawyer, and citizen because of a varied background of study? I think he would.

But lest Boothroyd and his followers remain unconvinced of this type of institution I offer this simple suggestion. Band together and start your "free university". All that is required is that you get together and start philosophizing and discussing anything that appeals to your collective interest. This can be done on this campus—utilize the empty classrooms (especially in the evening). Just imagine it, you could be your own masters, no marks, no stodgy administration or establishment, no bureaucracy, and best of all no meaningless degrees. Recognition of "achievement" would be a personal thing but no matter since it's "knowledge for knowledge's sake." After all is it not more important that the individual be "educated"? Of what concern are high marks and a degree? Leave them to the less confident to clutch like they would a security blanket. Really, Boothroyd, nothing is stopping you, nothing stands in your way. You can have your "free university" and others can have their degrees and at no extra cost to the taxpayers.

Lloyd E. Malin

This is page FIVE

"I think anyone who isn't a socialist at age of 20 has something wrong with his heart, and if he is still a socialist at 30, he has something wrong with his head."

—Robert Stanfield

"Students a few years older than the majority of university students are being trained to create trouble and disrupt society and are causing the agitation on the campuses . . . They should be expelled immediately. It is my belief that these ringleaders are being trained by the Communists".

—Anonymous

On the Czech students

The Editor,

Your editorial Thursday, Oct. 10 entitled "Money, Money, Money" contains a number of misstatements and misinterpretations of fact, and reflects what I can only regard as an unfortunate attitude on the part of the editor. The facts are as follows:

In mid-September there were press reports of up to 2,000 Czech refugee students in Europe seeking opportunities to continue their education. At the same time the Canadian government had undertaken to help Czech refugees by speeding immigration formalities and paying travel costs. It appeared that if these students were to have any chance to enter Canadian universities this fall, quick action would be required to offer financial support and to get them admitted before the term was too far advanced.

This university responded at once by offering admission and some support (tuition) and by guaranteeing that full support would be found for at least six students. Had the university waited to find out precisely where the money was to come from, it would have been too late to be a meaningful offer. (Should we allow the accident victims to bleed to death in the admitting office while we look for someone to ac-

cept responsibility for the hospital bills?—imagine the bitter editorials in The Gateway!!).

We now have six Czech undergraduates on campus, and two more are expected. They are receiving provincial grants and loans (going into debt!) on the same scale as Alberta students and they will receive such help from various sources, including the University, as is needed to feed, clothe and house them this year. Some of them are working or being partially supported by working members of their families. Others arrived here completely alone, with nothing but the clothes they wore, entering a strange land, starting classes a month late, facing new customs and a language of which they have a limited command.

No one has tried to keep this matter secret (no conspiracy here!), neither has anyone tried to exploit it for personal or institutional publicity purposes. Such help as has been offered by students, faculty and administration has been on the basis of human compassion—the same compassion which has helped and will continue to help students of every origin when their needs become apparent.

Willard Allen
Associate professor
Dept. of chemistry

It's in the atmosphere

The Editor,

In recent weeks, an editorial and several letters have appeared in The Gateway expressing anger, disgust, and other related reactions concerning the messy state which tables are left in at the SUB cafeteria. One article also pointed out that this problem did not arise in Tuck Shop.

It seems to me that the above comparison brings out the whole crux of the matter because it is obvious to anyone that there is a great difference in that rather undefinable quality known as "atmosphere" in these two places. SUB cafeteria (and the rest of SUB) has always been described to me in such uncomplimentary terms as "cold", "barren", "clinical", "sterile", and one very imaginative individual stated: "the floor is on the ceiling". On the other hand, Tuck is continually praised for its intimacy and warmth. These environmental opposites perpetuate corresponding attitudes in people, for those who use SUB obviously don't care, while those who go to Tuck do.

Perhaps when it is once again realized that building involves human beings and not merely large quantities of glass and steel, problems of the above nature will no longer arise.

Dougal MacDonald
arts 3

Advice for Benny

The Editor,

Re: Benny Ling's letter. What nonsense! Who will dare to make the next overture if every motive is suspect? Anyway, this is a country of furriners and, generally speaking, personality bridges the ethnic and racial gap.

My advice to Benny: your posture of offended party challenging others to do something about it invites the kind of hypocrisy you seem to be encountering. The next time you get a "Hi" do something with it yourself.

Al Klassen
Grad Studies

Abolish degrees — students will learn anyway

By PETER BOOTHROYD

Last week, I tried to establish the point that because universities grant degrees, we students are refused a real education. This week, I want to argue the obverse: that if degrees are abolished, students will in fact learn.

The first point to be made is that degrees will not be abolished without other changes occurring in society. It is irrelevant to ask what would happen if degrees were abolished and everything else remained the same, because it would never happen. In talking about a free university as a major institution in society, we have to consider the nature of the society which would want free universities.

Such a society would share the goal of the free university: the maximization of freedom. Thus professional-teachers, social workers, community developers, managers, lawyers, nurses, etc. — would be agents of freedom rather than agents of control as

they tend to be today. To do their job properly they would require training, it is true, but as importantly, they would require education. At some point they would need to experience the freedom of a true university. Here they could become free of their encultured prejudices and freely make commitments to more universalistic values.

Either before, during, or after their training, aspiring professionals would be encouraged to attend university. It might be stipulated by some professional bodies that in order to be certified, a person must spend a certain number of years at university, "doing his thing." It might be left up to him. But assuming that most professionals want to be as creative and effective as they can, they would see it as part of their job spending time at the university. It's a fair assumption, I think. It is because professional jobs offer the opportunity to be creative that many people go into them.

One of the prerequisites for

developing freedom is that one's basic physical needs are met. With rare exceptions, if one has to constantly worry about how he's going to eat, he will be unable to concentrate on growing intellectually. Thus it is the responsibility of a society concerned with fostering freedom to provide financial support at a decent level for all its members. This would include support for people attending the free universities. What we are talking about of course is the guaranteed annual income, a concept endorsed by economists across the political spectrum.

But then the question arises: will not people just hang around the university and never get out and get a job? In the first place, there would be no incentive for coming to university beyond the intrinsic rewards of education. If money was the object, one could be guaranteed as much outside the university, at least according to some formulations of the guaranteed annual income concept. Presumably, then, one could say that so long as a person attended the university, it was fulfilling its pur-

pose so far as he was concerned. How else can we tell if a person is growing and becoming free except by his own account?

In the second place, I assume that people tend to become involved in society. In a society which promoted and supported free universities, there would be a continuum from people who spent all their time learning in the university to those who never had time to visit the place. In much the same way as it is now, attending the university would not be an all-or-nothing thing. But the free university would differ from the present set-up in that its facilities would be available to all for whatever use they wanted to make of it. Like art galleries, museums and tennis courts today, it would be supported by society as a public service. And just as artists, tennis buffs and anthropologists make special use as these facilities, some students would make virtually full-time use of the university.

In the third place, the guaranteed annual income would only be a basic income. There would still

be monetary, prestige and power incentives attracting people to full-time jobs. Although personally I do not think such incentives are necessary, and that at least in the long run the need to feel useful and creative would be sufficient incentive, most proponents of the guaranteed annual income think in terms of continuing materialistic incentives.

The changes required in society for a free university to exist are not likely to be made in the near future. The guaranteed annual income will dislocate too many important people in society—like the insurance companies and many welfare bureaucrats. Similarly, the concept of professionals as freedom agents would require a reversal of the usual bureaucracy in which power flows from the top down through different ranks. The job of central administrators would have to be that of support rather than of control, and highly placed officials are not known to give up power gracefully.

But changes of this order are necessary if freeing education is to be the right of all.