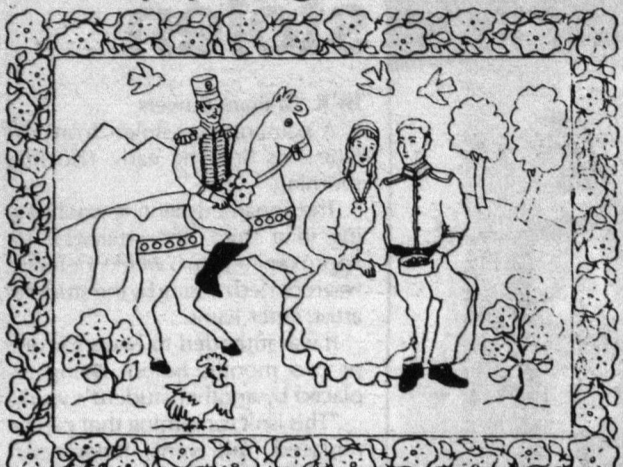


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# Edits

## Greg Halinda



Last week's university/community debate in St. Albert brought out some of the more familiar complaints we hear from time to time about university education.

Namely, undergrad classes are too big and impersonal and people aren't really coming to university to learn, but simply for a job ticket. I'm sure we've all had the same thoughts in times of despair or frustration, but how valid are they?

I was curious to hear some opinions from the students on campus, so on Friday afternoon I took an informal poll.

I approached about a dozen persons in SUB and asked: a) do you consider a university education only available to a select elite?; and b) do you think of the U of A as a "degree mill"?

I was surprised at the optimistic tone of the answers to my questions.

The students I interviewed all tended to think that getting into the U of A was not very difficult, i.e. not restricted to a certain "elite" class of person.

"If you want to badly enough, you can get the marks and the loan," said three nursing students. One graduate student thought they'd have to raise tuition and entry level to make it truly elitist. "It's still a land of opportunity,"

said a phys ed student. "People who get here deserve to."

And is the U of A really just a degree mill?

"It's mass education... too crowded... not enough attention," said the graduate student. "Only at the graduate level does it encourage academia."

Most concurred that the "degree mill" atmosphere depends on the area of study and year of the program.

Yes, it is easy to look at a crowded lecture hall and label it a "mill". Does that prof down there really care about what we're trying to learn or accomplish? Could they if they wanted to?

We shouldn't complain. Everyone who gets in the front door at the U of A has the choice to study as seriously as they want. If we sit back and let the "mill" syndrome envelop us, we deserve it.

I think everyone has realized by now that the university will not coddle them and take them by the hand. If we slug it out for those four years, I think we can transcend the machinery of this place and earn a degree that really means something — not just a product of going through the motions.

*A funny thing happened in Room 282 in SUB...*

We had volunteers come in yesterday and say they **want** to write news for us! What about you?

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