

# Senate asks, "Why no natives?"

by Don McIntosh

Is it surprising there are only 29 native graduates from the U of A?

Approximately 94 per cent of Canadian native students who enter grade one fail to complete grade 12, according to a provincial report on intercultural education in June, 1972.

The consequences of this dismal record are the focus of the U of A Senate Task Force on

Native Students. In an interim report released at a recent Senate meeting, the task force cited difficulty in locating native students and an overcautious approach in addressing native leaders as primary reasons for a lack of information in the area of utmost concern—determining the educational needs of native people and the method by which these needs could best be served.

The task force's avowed goals are to turn up information

about: 1) the attitudes, needs and difficulties facing the 33 native students now attending classes here; 2) the history of native graduates; 3) what is being done at other universities; 4) the reasons for Alberta's poor record in educating native students at the university level.

Some valuable data has been gathered, however, from the people involved with Project Morning Star, a teacher education program operated near St.

Paul and the only project within the U of A designed specifically for native students.

The general impression among these students is that "our university is unapproachable." The city environment in general and the impersonal character of the large university insitution were given as reasons for this impression.

The report suggests that the presence of a University counselor at the project, who

would then transfer to Edmo with his students for their year(s), would help mit these feeling of alienation.

Based on data gathered native students evaluating University of Calgary programme, Outreach, suggested that initial secondary studies be available more small centres erected Reserves. Students of Outreach projects, to which Indian are associated, perform at high academic levels than most native students moving to the city begin their university studies.

Students involved in another U of C sponsored project, Inc Students University Progr Services, although generally pleased, criticized the ISU staff for steering people toward the faculties of Education and Social Welfare, "while Reserve needed people in other areas." The students also felt tutoring service available more valuable than counseling and that they should be more involved in the ISUPS decision making process.

The task force reports establishment of the Office of Advisor on Native Affairs at the U of A. This office will be able to gather more explicit information from native students and native leaders and it is suggested it greatly speed the task force final evaluation. The recent formation of the U of A Native Students Club should serve similar purpose.

The report recommended "extensive publicity campaign on campus to familiarize university community with native student problems and generate an "informed awareness as a result of action."

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| 2. Executive Committee (2 students)                 | 10. Promotions and Salaries Committee (1 student)     |
| 3. Admission and Transfer committee (3 students)    | 11. Undergraduate Scholarship Committee (1 student)   |
| 4. University Planning committee (2 students)       | 12. Campus Law Review Committee (1 student)           |
| 5. Committee to Investigate Teaching (3 students)   | 13. General University Disciplinary Impanelling board |
| 6. Campus Development Committee (2 students)        | 14. Academic Appeals Committee (6 students)           |
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