

Mason...

## The executive Task Force

As S.U. executive vice-president, Brian Mason has been called an "executive task force". The twenty-two year old Arts student tackles all those problems that do not fall into the responsibility of the other three vice-presidents - academic, services, and finance and administration.

At the present time, Brian has three main responsibilities: the external relations of the Students' Union, SUB management, and HUB residential policy. Besides these, he tackles anything assigned to him by Students' Council, the president, or the S.U. executive. He also assumes the role of president when Graeme Leadbeater is away or ill.

### H.U.B.

One of the less pleasant aspects of Brian's job is the task of handling complaints by HUB residents. He indicates that he knows that the Students' Union does not provide the best service it could, but he asks for leniency.

"Really it is beyond the resources of the Students' Union to provide proper services."

As chairman of the HUB policy board, the v.p. executive has contributed to redrafting the whole HUB residential policy.

"In response to the housing crisis we're introducing tougher guidelines on how many students per unit. We're regulating the number of non-students in HUB. Moreover, to protect the students already in there, we regularize the eviction procedures to be followed by our staff."

### G.F.C.

The v.p. executive emphasises the significance of the General Faculties Council. "I agree that GFC is very underrated. I equate it with the Students' Council because it

makes major decisions on academic affairs. Students seem to think they have to accept what they are given. There are the opportunities to influence what there is, and they don't seem to recognise this. I would like to see an emphasis on GFC, and I think we've been doing this to a certain extent."

### N.U.S.

As the v.p. in charge of external relations Brian's main concerns this year have involved the National Union of Students (NUS) and the Federation of Alberta Students (FAS). Brian supported our entry into NUS, which was, however, rejected in the NUS referendum held October 9th.

Despite the defeat of NUS, Mason feels that the results of the referendum were evidence of a partial success for him:

"It got a good turnout ... It got a lot of students at least perceiving a lot of things going on that affect their lives. We have more students who know what the Fiscal Arrangements Act is. We now have more students who know the role of the Federal government and the provincial governments in formulating education policy ... There's an increase in awareness in some of these issues."

### U. of A. Political System

Brian believes that the political system of the U of A is satisfactorily democratic for the time being.

"The University is democratic enough. We have to utilize what is already there before we can ask for any more democracy and keep our credibility."

"The system is not perfect, but there's no reason why it shouldn't work, and why people can't use the system to propose and implement changes that are necessary. The same things apply internally to this university as well as to the whole

country, the province and the Students' Union. The whole point is that if you're not satisfied there are mechanisms for change."

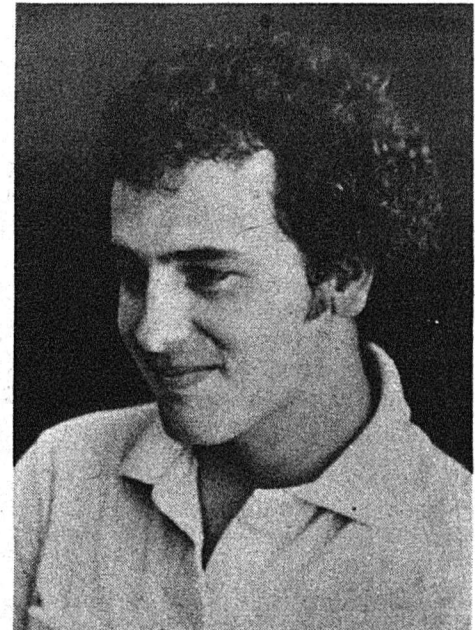
### Student Feedback

Mason views a significant amount of his work as involving student participation in their union, especially in promoting what he calls "feedback". Too often, he claims, students are inclined to let their representatives make decisions without the reps knowing what the student body really wants. In Brian's opinion, students would be better represented if there was more involvement from the student body. Brian points at the fact that student vacancies exist on GFC and in most of the faculty councils.

"Students shouldn't just accept those who run the Students' Union, and assume that a few people will step forward each year to run it."

"Students today are very concerned not with changing the system but with using it to their advantage."

by Brian Taylor



GUNNING: I feel that this university should be able to accommodate all good students who wish to come here. But I think that it's a very naive concept to start looking at a university only in terms of physical size and fund it, say, solely as a function of how many students it has.

The university is not a teaching mill; this university could be much bigger without increasing student enrollment. If a feeling of impersonality exists, I believe that it exists, not because the physical size of the campus is large, but primarily because the student/staff ratio is so large in some departments.

At Cambridge University, there are two students to one staff member. We could do that too, if we had the money... but we don't. We don't like large classes but we are forced into the situation by monetary considerations. So, to speak of restricting funding in relation to student population, under the present system of funding, is not desirable. When we restrict enrollment in this manner, then we have problems.

GATEWAY: How have you reacted, personally, to this new position? Have you experienced problems during your year on initiation?

GUNNING: Well, in many ways the transition from department chairman to President was a traumatic experience. I had done committee and minor administration work before I moved to this position, but I had never worked in internal administration before and it took some adjustment.

It's a terribly hard job. You're going night and day - all weekend. As President you are not only expected to appreciate a great number of individual talents present on campus, but you are expected to be an authority on almost everything! You go all the time and now I find that I am taking myself more seriously than I have ever done so at any moment previously in my life.

But when I start to think that way, I simply imagine this incident: If I dropped dead, it would hold the university back about five minutes ... during which time somebody would say, "Oh God, not another selection committee!" It keeps you down to earth.

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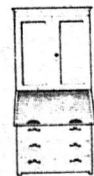


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