

Council commission will investigate procedures for selection of Gateway editor

Gateway publishes "reluctantly"

Students council, at last Monday's meeting, failed to respond to the urging of over 3000 students that they reconsider their hasty decision to appoint to the Gateway editorship a person who has absolutely no support among the Gateway staff. Council, instead, pushed the whole matter into a committee that will include two of the councillors who originally voted in favor of the appointment, but no members of the Gateway staff or members of council sympathetic to Gateway.

Early in the meeting, representations were presented by Gateway editor Bob Beal and first year staffer Dave McCurdy. A representation by SU advertising manager Percy Wickman, who has resigned in sympathy with the Gateway staff, was also read to council.

In his representation to council Beal answered many of the charges that have been made against the Gateway in the course of this dispute.

He also presented to council a petition signed by over 3000 U of A students stating:

"We, the undersigned, strongly protest the actions of our Students' Council in choosing as 1972-73 editor a person who has no experience with our student newspaper and who has no support among the staff of that newspaper.

We feel THE GATEWAY staff, because they put the time and effort into our paper, can best judge the qualifications of a candidate for the position of editor and we strongly urge our elected representatives to re-consider their action in this matter immediately."

"We feel this petition and the recent SU Executive elections demonstrate that The Gateway staff has a substantial majority of students supporting them in this struggle," Beal said in his representation. "As well, we have the strong support of many other Students' Union organizations."

But, when med rep Dave Shragge attempted to have reconsideration of the appointment of the Gateway editor put on the agenda, speaker Ken Porter told him he was out of order as SU by-laws require appointment of the editor by the fifteenth of February. No attempt was made to overturn the by-law despite the fact that it would have been within the power of council to do so with a two-thirds majority.

Council formed a committee to look into the question of the method of appointment of future Gateway editors, and the issue of the present strike.

The committee is to consist of:

one member of council, one member of the executive, the university ombudsman (Dr. Scott), the university provost (A. A. Ryan), and the editor of the Edmonton Journal or his designate. Sci. rep and

vice-president elect (services) Beth Kuhnke, was elected to serve as the council rep., and SU president Don McKenzie was elected as the executive rep.

The dispute over the appointment of next year's Gateway editor arose at the second last meeting of council after personnel board brought forward a surprise recommendation that Terri Jackson be the editor of the Gateway for 1972-73.

The staff of the Gateway had previously voted to recommend Ron Yakimchuk for the position. He received about two-thirds of the vote while Jackson received none.

After Students' Council voted to accept the recommendation of Jackson, the Gateway staff voted unanimously to strike. They felt they could not work under a Council which would not take their views into consideration.

The Gateway published three "Special Strike and Election"

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photo: George Drahomirecki
Who won? Safran Shandro and Ann McRae (seated) watch as Rob Spragins and Gerry Riskin get all the applause at the SUB theatre election rally. See pages six, seven, and eight.

Editorial

We've achieved nothing concrete

We are resuming publishing today somewhat reluctantly because we have not yet achieved any concrete guarantee from Students' Council in the choice of Gateway editor. But we have rightly or wrongly, placed some faith in the Commission established Monday by Students' Council in ending our strike pending the outcome of the Commission's recommendations.

Council, in establishing the Commission, demonstrated a desire to avoid grappling with the serious problems of the Gateway. They virtually refused to talk to us at the meeting and did not take any concrete action themselves but rather mandated someone else to do their work for them.

We think the present dispute between the Gateway staff and the Students' Council is a serious matter of student concern.

It is not serious because of the money we, as students, pay for The Gateway. It costs each of us about one dollar a year-about the same as the cost of hiring the present Students' Union Executive.

It is serious because this paper forms a very important function among students at this campus. The paper can give students information which will help them improve their lives as students. We do this by, for instance, with things like publishing dates, times, reports and comment on social events or by suggesting tactics for classroom struggles such as a greater student voice in determining course requirements.

The paper can also assist the students in circulating information which will bring pressure to bear on people who can improve the lot of the student, for instance, in our the North Garneau and Student Health stories.

This paper is also important to the students because it is run by volunteer students who take time away from their studies to work on it. The paper's staff is open and democratic.

Council members have a genuine desire to improve the communicative function of the paper. However they demonstrate little desire to work concretely towards some improvement.

None of the present Council have ever worked with the paper. Few have even been in the offices or know how it operates.

At Monday's meeting, we expected to engage Council members in a comprehensive and meaningful discussion of Gateway's problems. Our representatives at the meeting, Bob Beal and Dave McCurdy, voiced the views of the Gateway staff and our analysis of the problems we face.

However, there were few questions and there was no discussion.

Council members demonstrate a willingness to make unfounded charges of undue bias and "clique" against us but were unwilling, Monday night or any other time to openly discuss

these allegations with our representatives.

SU President Don McKenzie distributed a statement to students during the executive elections campaign which made these allegations public. Gateway printed his statement and, in our reply, we termed it half-truths and lies. Monday, our representatives reiterated our position on the allegations but McKenzie had nothing to say.

Council didn't want to get its hands dirty by dealing with the volunteer students who work in one of the major SU organizations. Instead, they abdicated their responsibility to a "neutral" commission whose recommendations will not be binding on Council.

This "neutral" commission is composed of three members who have no real interest in the present dispute and two who have in the past voted against the Gateway staff. There is no one on the Commission who can represent the views of the staff.

Council also showed their desire to avoid dealing with us when they, (Finance Board Recommendation), granted Campus Lyfe \$300 "to continue publishing and increase its frequency since the Gateway is on strike."

The motion to establish the Commission was passed unanimously. The Commission's recommendations will probably also be passed unanimously in order that Council members avoid having to openly discuss the issue or to act on it themselves.

Not only did Council do its best to ignore the staff of the student paper, they also chose to ignore the 3,000 students who signed our petition.

This Council has consistently shown no desire to act in the interest of the students. They act solely in self interest and avoid issues which might force them to take a stand or do some homework.

There is some hope in the recently elected President and Vice-President (who take office, officially, on April 1) who have, on several occasions, visited us and talked to the paper's staff in an attempt to understand the workings of The Gateway. We hope candidates are elected in the upcoming Council elections who, although they might not agree with us, will at least talk to us and try to understand our problems.

Although we are still opposed to Council's original decision and will refuse to work under Council's choice of editor, we will publish a regular (and somewhat expanded) paper once a week pending the outcome of the Commission. We may also publish special editions on particular events.

We would like to thank those organizations and individuals who have supported us thus far and we hope this support will continue. The problem is still far from being resolved.