

Horowitz era comes to

June 30, 1989 marks the end of the Horowitz era at the University of Alberta.

Myer Horowitz first came to the University of Alberta in 1958 to work on his master's degree in education. After teaching at McGill University, he returned to the U of A in 1969 to chair the department of elementary education, moving on to become Dean of Education, VP Academic, and finally President. The Gateway spoke with Dr. Horowitz about the changes he has seen in his time here, his concerns about the present, and his hopes for the future.

Horowitz is not about to "lock the door" behind him and disappear as he leaves office. "You can't make the kind of investment deans and chairmen...and presidents make and bring it to an abrupt and artificial end...There's something sick about that."

"An outgoing president has to be careful to continue to show interest but to have the sense to move away and to permit other people to do their thing," he notes.

Many concerns still loom large for Horowitz even as his term draws to a close. Paramount among them are the standards of quality of the university — quality of education, quality of teaching and quality of the entire university "experience."

The process of self-examination that the university is now undergoing is a positive step, Horowitz believes. He points to the departmental reviews by the President's Advisory Committee on Campus Reviews, a body established during his term of office, as an example of "one of the good decisions that we made."

"It's important to look critically at ourselves, to bring in some outsiders."

The recently-released Knapper report on teaching evaluation shows "a new sensitivity" to the importance of looking critically at what the university is doing, and is "an exciting change" from the battles of the past that the university had to face within its own boundaries.

Horowitz worries, however, that a greater emphasis on teaching might put pressure on the university to de-emphasize research. "A large, complex university like ours must be involved in both, and must be aiming for the highest quality in both," he says, adding, "Truly inspired teaching is usually done by someone who is an imaginative, creative researcher."

"I sometimes get upset when people make it appear that teaching and research are opposites, and if you put importance on one, you are therefore placing minimal importance or no importance on the other."

There has been, Horowitz admits, a difference in the ability of professors to "accomplish what good teachers have always wanted to accomplish," due to the "frustration of having too many students," especially in classes of the first two undergraduate years.

The size of classes is one of the many aspects of university that may overwhelm younger undergraduates, and Horowitz is concerned that these students are being shortchanged in the quality of their experience. "I really hope that there will be major attention to the quality of what we do at the undergraduate level, especially with students who are new to the university," he notes. "I think we leave too much to chance."

"There are some individuals who can come into the university, and in spite of the fact that it's a very different environment from what they've experienced, they succeed. So we conclude that everybody can. And the truth is that large numbers need some help."

Horowitz would like to see some form of support group for new students which would allow them to meet with someone who could help them with problems they may have in adjusting to university life. Counsellors, graduate students, or even senior undergraduate students could all play a part, he suggests.

Whatever the form a program for new students might take, Horowitz sees this as "an area that shall require a good deal of attention."

The problems of the size of the university will also be faced as the university prepares in the years ahead to shrink enrollment to more manageable levels.

"This is a very unfashionable goal in our time," says Horowitz. "We've all taken so seriously 'the larger the better,' and we're saying no, we grew larger than we should have, and that was beginning to present all kinds of problems."

"I feel we've made a very important statement, and our statement is, 'At our institution, we feel that quality is so very important that we have to limit the extent of accessibility into the University of Alberta.'"

He is quick to add, however, that this does not mean that post-secondary education should not be open to all who are "interested and who can benefit," but rather that it is unfair for society to expect the U of A to accommodate all these people. "We mustn't be expected to grow, grow, grow."

Limiting size has two major implications: quotas on faculty enrollment, and a change in the balance between graduate and undergraduate students.

Horowitz predicts that the next few years will see quotas imposed on all faculties that do not yet have them: Arts, Science, and Education being the largest of these. Quotas are "a necessary evil," he

