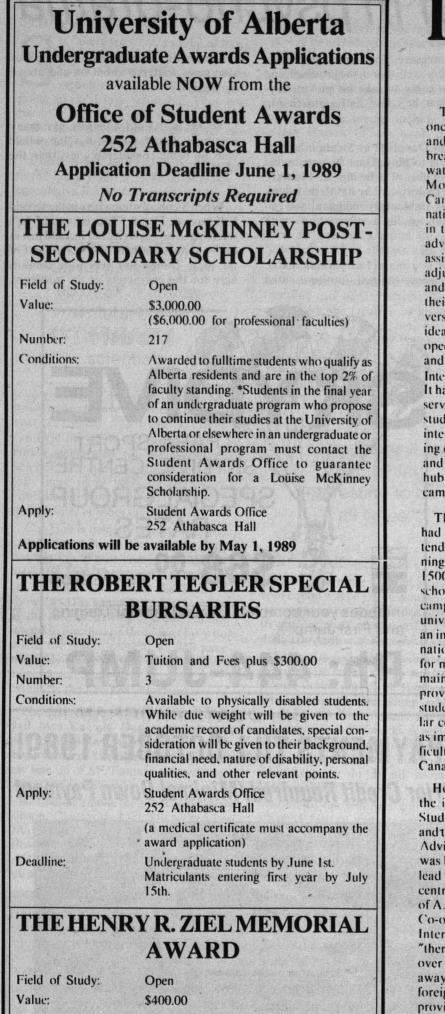
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International Centre

The University of Alberta has once again taken the initiative and become involved in a ground breaking project that is being watched by many in Canada. Most universities throughout Canada have some form of international student help centre, either in the form of a foreign student advisor or an association that assists visiting foreign students in adjusting to the Canadian culture and environment, and achieve their educational goals. The University of Alberta has taken this idea two steps further and developed the largest (in terms of staff) and perhaps most comprehensive International Centre in the country. It has, over the last year, not only served the needs of international students, but has grown into an international resource and learning centre for all U of A students and faculty, and has become the hub of international activity on campus.

The University of Alberta has had international students in attendance almost from its beginnings, and today has in excess of 1500 international students and scholars from 85 countries on campus. As with many Canadian universities, the U of A has had an individual known as the International Student Advisor on staff for many years. This individual's main function was at first to provide advice to international students and address their particular concerns and problems, such as immigration and financial difficulties, or problems adjusting to Canadian culture.

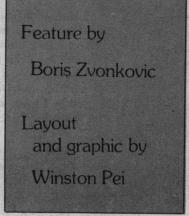
However in 1983-84, under the initiative of a new Dean of Student Services, Peter Miller, and the new International Student Advisor, Wilf Allan, a new project was begun that would eventually lead to a unique international centre being established at the U of A. As Bruce Caldwell, present Co-ordinator of Services at the International Centre explains. "there has been a change in focus over the last five to six years. away from providing services to foreign students, and more to providing services with foreign

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students... making use of these students as a valuable resource... providing for an exchange of ideas and cultures."

Two separate yet related services were begun in 1984 with the help of various campus groups, including the Graduate Students' Association and the Students' Union. A new International Student Centre was established at a house in the Garneau area that served as an informal, recreational meeting place for international and Canadian students. As well, the position of International Student Advisor was upgraded to the Office of International Student Affairs, and this office, in Athabasca Hall, continued to address and administer the concerns and difficulties of international students on campus. As Wilf Allan, present director of the International Centre explains, the Student Centre in Garneau was a place to go and meet people from a variety of cultures, have fun, and learn, while the Student Affairs Office was the place for foreign students to go when they had a problem.

When space became available in HUB Mall after its renovations. the decision was made to merge both of these services under one roof and one title: the International Centre. It opened its doors at 172 HUB International on January 20, 1988. As Wilf Allan explains, there were practical reasons for merging these two services, "partly because of the efficiency of having both areas under one roof and partly because of the location. HUB Mall has a

lot of international students living in it and is a Centre of activity on campus." The founding principle of the new Centre is "to encourage an international dimension throughout the University... to foster an exchange of ideas and cultures... we need to help nonforeign students rub shoulders with foreign students and thus enrich both their educations" explains Allan.

The International Centre provides a wide variety of services and programs for both foreign and Canadian students. As Allan explains, the main function of the Centre is to provide services to the University as a whole. Services for international students include everything from airport reception. orientation sessions, and issuing

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