

EDITORIAL

Selfish neighbours

With the advent of non-resident parking restrictions in the districts of McKernan and Garneau, students at the University of Alberta are unwittingly auditing a course in selfishness offered by the cruel, cruel Faculty of Real Life. The parking crisis is an overwhelming embarrassment to *somebody* but no one seems to have a red, pink or even slightly flushed face.

Obviously, the University holds a certain responsibility to provide adequate parking facilities to those students who drive out of necessity (ie. handicapped students, working students etc.). Unfortunately, due to inadequate funding and budget cuts, this institution cannot afford to maintain the facilities it already operates, let alone construct new parkades.

The Students' Union has concentrated its efforts on meeting with politicians and pleading with the City to display some restraint and mercy while towing and ticketing students vehicles. In the meantime, they issue rhetoric to students like farmers slopping their hogs: feed them anything and, by golly, they'll probably swallow it.

As bureaucracy becomes snarled in endless paperwork, the victims sit helplessly behind their wheels. Yet if one refers to students as victims, who has committed the crime?

If selfishness can be deemed an offense then the residents of the communities surrounding the university have perpetrated an act of gross pettiness.

These people are being unfair by treating students as trespassers and vandals. They expect their university location to be unilaterally advantageous and they cannot accept some of the practical drawbacks in living near such a populous and traversed institution.

Every neighbourhood in Edmonton has its drawbacks. The residents of Garneau, Windsor Park and McKernan are affluent enough to have their drawbacks alleviated by City Hall. The municipal government understands the concerns of home owners.

The concerns of students, however, seem to be a joking matter for both local communities and the City of Edmonton.

Mark of approval

Professors evaluate students: students should evaluate their teachers.

I think professors tenure should be decided by their ability to teach - not on the amount of publications they spew out each year, nor by the number of years they have been boring students.

I'm tired of boring professors who couldn't care less about the ratio of students asleep as compared to those awake.

Something is wrong with this lopsided system. Ninety per cent of the professors at the University of Alberta have tenure. This means ninety percent are here to stay.

How many of these professors's are good?

How many excellent profs drive taxis, because there are no jobs?

The basis of tenure should be dependent on student evaluation and lecture interest.

A student's rewards for hard work are good marks. What is the professor's for a good lecture? A raise in pay? No. A pat on the back? No. A vacation? No. Tenure? No. Anything? Not a thing!

Oh, that's why some of my lectures are so boring.

Some departments have a system of student evaluation of profs. It doesn't affect a prof's tenure, but it gives the student an idea of what kind of instruction to expect.

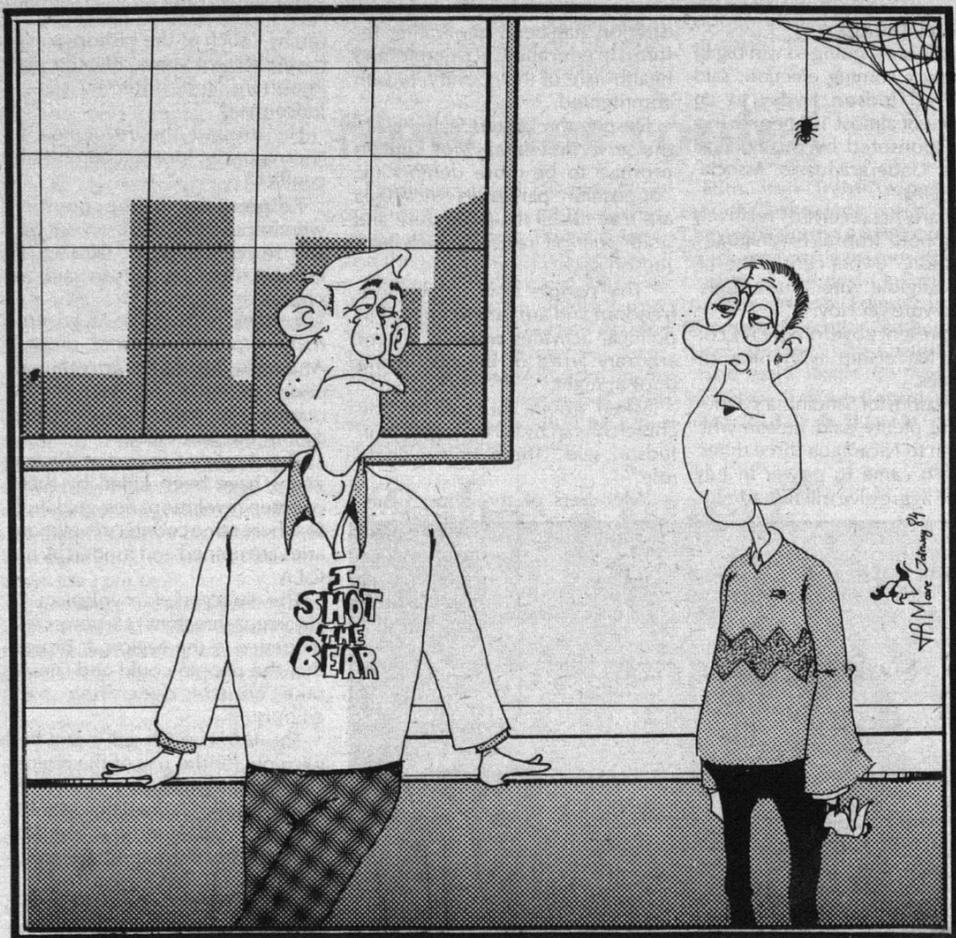
It would be good to see the student's lobby the powers that be for classes that are captivating, exciting, the kind of classes you want to be early for to ensure yourself a front row seat.

To those professors whose classes are all of the above, hats off to you. You're obviously teaching for reasons other than monetary and status gains.

Keep it up. We need you.

Brenda Mallaly

News item: Residence fees sky rocket while attendance plummets.



When my father said that he was certain I would be admitted into an elite organization for the very rich, I thought he meant a Frat, not RES!

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Something's fishy

While I have no quarrel with Mr. Algard's editorial right to be critical of academic tenure ("Tenuous affairs," September 18), three erroneous statements cause me to question the editorial's overall credibility.

First, it is said that tenure "is the academic equivalent of a guaranteed income." The truth is that tenure and income are not directly associated. In most professional employment categories, tenure has no dollar value unless dismissal proceedings are launched without just cause.

Second, it is said that "the old system of adding new academic staff at low wages, while laying off [retiring?] pensionable faculty, which allowed for a relatively level operating budget, has been discarded." Far from having been "discarded," stable operating budgets were pre-empted by factors overlooked by Mr. Algard. For example, universities have grown and have become more costly to operate in proportion to the service demands placed upon them. In addition, the many young academics recruited during the 1960s and early 1970s are now 10 to 20 years older and more qualified, and therefore commensurably more expensive to employ. The utopian editorial vision of a "level operating budget," for demographic reasons alone, cannot exist today. Still, such schemes as voluntary early retirement, for those who choose to do so, are helping to alleviate the increasing costs of today's demographic bulge.

It is said that tenure "is not an effective method of ensuring that research is performed at the level of excellence expected at an academic institution." Tenure is not an effective instrument to this end because tenure was never intended to ensure this result. Academic excellence is the long-term result of successful recruitment strategies combined with frequent academic performance reviews. For example, career advancement at the University of Alberta rests on the results of annual performance reviews of each and every member of the academic staff. In an average career spanning 35 years, every academic at this university is formally evaluated 40 or more times: at the time of initial appointment, at the time of the tenure decision (in most cases following a period of probationary appointment), at the point of promotion to higher ranks and often at midpoints within ranks, plus a merit review annually. In addition, the contractual agreement for all faculty provides for a special adjudication in the rare case of grossly deficient academic performance. All of the performance reviews noted are in addition to the frequent evaluations of academic staff made by assessors for the research granting councils, reviewers for editorial boards, students, and so on. Academic tenure goes hand in hand with strenuous performance expectations; there is not too much room for "sloth."

In conclusion, while academic tenure does protect one's job security when unpopular and controversial views need airing (something academics do with great frequency and urgency), tenure does not protect an individual from dismissal for just cause. In this sense, academic tenure is functionally similar to the

The Gateway

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In this episode the mysterious Hans Becker, along with his partners in crime Kevin Kaardal and Bernie Poitras, are menacing the beautiful but defenseless duo of Ann Grever and Audrey Djuwita. Meanwhile, across the burning city Shona C. Welsh, Jack Verme, Kent Cochrane and Eva Penzich are trapped in a blazing outhouse. Will the fearless foursome of Tim Heidt, Warren Opheim, Don Teplyske, and John Charles be able to save the privy prisoners? What will become of the rugged by strange Rick Warren and his lovely but normal alter-ego Elisabeth Eid. What ever happened to Bosco Chang? For the answer to these and many other ho-hum questions tune in for the next episode.