

Facts about AIDS facts

Some Facts About AIDS is the title of the information pamphlet the U of A has put out for the benefit of students and staff.

The pamphlet is a collection of currently known facts about the deadly disease. It includes the common sense advice to "learn safer sex practices" and emphasizes that "you cannot get AIDS from casual contact".

What it fails to do is put AIDS in perspective. Yes, we know very little about the transmission of the AIDS virus or the mechanism of the disease. Yes, the numbers of AIDS cases is rising exponentially.

However, as of October 2 there were only 1326 reported cases of AIDS in Canada. All but 43 of these cases were in the high risk categories, including homosexual or bisexual men and intravenous drug users.

In contrast, in 1981-82, 47407 Canadians died of heart disease. In 1985, 4099 were killed in traffic accidents.

There are many diseases and accidents of more immediate danger to the average university student. Yet the U of A's AIDS pamphlet does not mention this.

According to a member of the Safety on Campus Committee, the group that developed the pamphlet, it was designed to 'give some of the basics' about the disease. Yet it does not list the high risk groups, nor does it refer to the uncertainty as to whether people exposed to the virus will develop the disease. It does not note that although 59 people are believed to have contracted AIDS through blood transfusions, the Red Cross has been screening blood since 1985. It does not mention the relative rarity of the disease.

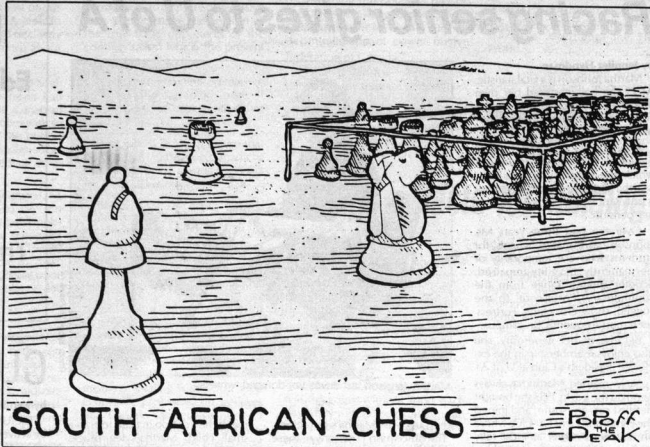
To ignore these factors is to leave students under-informed — perhaps with a mental picture of a disease more contagious and more prevalent than it really is.

A far better, more comprehensive pamphlet on AIDS is distributed by the American College Health Association, and available at Health Services. It gives a more balanced and more informative look at the disease.

So, keep things in perspective. Practice safe sex — but cut down on your intake of salt and saturated fats, and use your seatbelt.

The last two practices are far more likely to save your life.

Roberta Franchuk



Cuts for jockstraps

re: Department of Athletic Cuts

Knowing my interest in track and field in Alberta (dating from a previous life), a friend has sent me copies of the eloquent and forceful protests against the cancellation of the track and cross-country programmes at the U of A which you have printed in your pages.

The arguments were so telling that they need no support from me. But perhaps a postscript about the economics of the issue might be of interest.

It would be enlightening to know just how much is being saved by these cuts.

I recall a similar plan a few years ago when I had the honor to coach the women's cross-country team. The plan was quickly shelved when an influential colleague did a quick review of Athletic Department expenditures. As I recall, he pointed out to exactly the right people that my entire team's budget (travel and all) was less than the hockey (or was it football?) team spent on tape and less than the football (or was it hockey?) team spent on jockstraps!

Of course, this would not have been the case had the cross-country budget included funds to send me, their coach, to the Canada West Conference Meet. That would have put us right over the men's underwear budget for sure and into the realm of unbundled extravagance. Luckily, the powers-that-be had decided that having a coach was a fill, an unwarranted drain on the finances and had wisely removed the expense (presumably so that the gentlemen could have their privates properly encased).

The powers-that-be knew best, of course. The girls won the Conference without me!

Roger Burrows

Textbook thefts

Re: Text Theft — Chinese Study Hall

Having been the unfortunate victim of multiple text thefts (the Norton Introduction to Literature, The Canadian Practical Stylist with Readings, Criminal Justice System in Canada, Justice without Trial and Proteas in Turmoil), it has come to my attention that I am not the only victim.

I realize that as a student you may need my texts for either study or profit. However I too need these books, and as a single parent their replacement causes undue hardship for my little ones and I would prefer to invest my funds on bread and milk rather than re-invest my funds on text books!! However I am attending this institution in order to better my position in life and ensure

that my children will not have to steal their way through university. Thus the replacement of my required texts is necessary!!

While I realize that the shelves in the Chinese Study Hall should not be used as lockers, (which are rare in this university — but that is another issue) it is simply ludicrous to expect dedicated students to drag all their books home with them at midnight only to return, books in tow, at 7:30 a.m. It was nice to be able to leave the library secure in the knowledge that when I returned the next morning, to once again "hit the books" they would be there to "hit."

If I follow the assumption that you are stealing these texts for study not profit, perhaps you should switch to Sociology 325. Deviance (of which I also have the texts should you wish to "borrow" them) as that may be more in line with your "field of pursuit" rather than Criminal Justice System in Canada (Soc. 327). As you have also stolen my English 210 texts, I can only assume that you are literate enough to understand the intent of this letter and perhaps change your contemptuous behaviour.

In conclusion if you are so broke that you cannot afford to purchase your own texts, if you had approached me I would have gladly helped you in your efforts to pass your midterms (unlike some students I do not follow the premise that competition, regarding G.P.A.'s, is more important than co-operation with fellow students). If I have been incorrect in my assumption that you stole these books for study, may you choke on the bread you buy with the profits.

Karen Roblee

Elite education

Re: Dragos Ruiu — Nov. 13.

Dragos Ruiu's column concerning the raising of university admission standards is surely mistaken. First of all, universities are, and have always been what he refers to as elitist institutions. Let's face it, the majority of the people who attend universities are of the academic elite. If we are not to consider universities as educational institutions for our brightest students, then what do you want them to be? Should universities allow in everybody regardless of marks? If universities did that then most certainly the educational standards of universities would drop off sharply.

Second, elitism does not work against us. Have you ever stopped to consider that universities educate and train the nation's doctors, engineers, teachers, and lawyers? Do you not want the best possible people to operate on you, build your bridges, teach your children,

and represent you in court? Come now Mr. Ruiu, think! Our entire system is based on elitism, whether that be in business, medicine education, or politics. Our country needs her brightest people in universities to fulfill such roles.

Third, Mr. Ruiu, if we do not use high school grades as entrance requirements, then what system do you suggest that we should use? Obviously the system is imperfect but in your way of thinking we would have to let everybody in in order to see whether or not they can obtain a university education. If you can think of a more efficient system of university entrance requirements, than high school marks, please suggest it. Also, Mr. Ruiu, departmental examinations, while not completely solving the problem, have gone a long way towards equalizing achievement ratings for students throughout Alberta.

All in all, Mr. Ruiu, your arguments against University of Alberta entrance requirements are ill-thought out.

Greg Lockert

Fair negotiations

Well, it has been a year since I have written to the editor about this topic, and still nothing has changed. The Getty government obviously does not give a rat's ass whether or not workers in this province get shafted or not.

I'm not exclusively pro-union or pro-management — all I am interested in is what is fair. Indeed, there are some greedy union leaders out there, but overall, workers in this province are not treated fairly, and it's not their fault. For well over a year-and-a-half now, Zeidler Forest Industries workers in Slave Lake have been on strike. Their union has made concession after concession, while the company won't even come to the bargaining table — they are happy to go on with their merry way with scab labor. As long as Getty keeps kissing Mrs. Zeidler's ass for political donations, these workers, who depend on food donations to feed their families, don't stand a chance. I shouldn't have to remind anyone that Peter Puck, with Getty's help of course, has been laughing all the way to the bank at the expense of Gainers workers. Please, Getty, be reasonable; give Alberta workers a chance, change labor laws to promote fairer negotiations.

STUDENTS: realize that your time will come when you must meet the workforce — you too may face being exploited by a management with the provincial gov't on its side. Don't let it happen! Let your M.L.A. know that you won't stand for it.

Joe Martha



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