

Students fight for residence

by Portia Priegert

About forty students from Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) demonstrated outside the provincial legislature yesterday to protest the lack of student housing for their institution.

Chanting "No res, no students" and carrying placards urging the government to build a student residence in Grande Prairie, the students marched for 15 minutes before four of the organizers met with Minister of Education Dave King.

The vacancy rate in Grande Prairie is less than one per cent, and students say there is a shortage of reasonably priced accommodation.

However, apparently little was accomplished in the meeting between King and the Grande Prairie representatives. According to GPRC Students' Union vice-president Andy Beal, King said government funds for a residence either have been included in next year's provincial budget, or not.

Beal says he hopes they're in the budget, which will be released in April, but if not, he hopes they may be allotted some money

from a special fund not included in the budget.

Beal says King acknowledged the students' problem, but questioned the use of a protest to make their point.

"But there comes a time when you have to do something like this," says Beal. "We've been waiting for a residence for three or four years."

Currently there is no student housing in Grande Prairie, meaning all students have to compete for housing in the private sector where the booming economy has resulted in a vacancy rate of only 0.2 per cent.

Another protestor and GPRC student councillor Jason Zahara agrees that it is "very difficult" for students to find a place to live in Grande Prairie.

"A lot of students lose interest in coming here because they have such a hard time finding a place to live," he says.

Zahara says many students are forced to live in highly-priced apartments, paying as much as \$467 per month for a two-bedroom suite.

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Grande Prairie Regional College students marching outside the legislature yesterday.

the Gateway

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Definition of a Soviet ballet trio . . .

. . . a quartet returning from international tour.

SUB expansion no; charity yes

U of A students have indicated that the expansion and renovation of SUB isn't worth \$7.00 per student annually but that a charitable fund at fifty cents per year is worthwhile.

This verdict was brought down in last Friday's SU referendum, where an attempt to gain expansion funds was narrowly defeated, while the effort to

create the Eugene L. Brody Fund was passed handily.

With 2343 votes cast, unofficial statistics show 54.3% of the voters said "no" to the Students' Union plan to increase SU fees by \$7.00. The actual vote count was 1273 opposed, 1070 in favor.

The Eugene Brody Fund, which will be established to

distribute funds to worthwhile charitable causes, won a fairly easy victory, with almost 60 per cent of the 2336 ballots cast indicating support for the program. Unofficial figures show the vote to be 1422 to 914 in favor.

Outgoing SU vp internal Sharon Bell says the results of the expansion referen-

dum "obviously puts us in a bad position."

This does not mean the various expansion projects will be scrapped, however. "The projects will be delayed and we'll need to push for external funding," said Bell, "and we'll be approaching funding from a new angle."

Bell isn't sure why the referendum was defeated, but thinks that the timing of the vote had something to do with it.

"I think there was a psychological link between the upcoming tuition increase and

the proposed fee increase," she postulated, "and even though there is no real connection, many students perceived it."

Bell was pleased with the voter turnout, however.

"There seems to have been a greater interest in this issue than I had anticipated."

The expansion proposal suffered the worst in CAB, where a total of 511 votes were cast at two polling stations. Of these, 303 were against the proposal.

The expansion referendum

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Students present brief to Board of Governors

Rent protest on the move

by Keith Krause

The Students' Union today voiced its opposition to the proposed rent increases for student housing.

In a brief presented to the Board of Governors' (B of G) Finance Committee, the SU recommended limiting the maximum rent increase in residences and Michener Park to the projected inflation rate. The SU also

proposed a reduction in the rent increase in Garneau to 5 per cent above the rate of inflation.

"They're (the B of G) getting a break-even budget at the expense of student concerns," said Dean Olmstead, SU president.

"We're accepting the principle of a rent increase, to account for inflation, but we're asking for some concessions," said SU researcher Stuart MacKay.

"We've even recognized that housing in Garneau is undervalued," said MacKay. "Because of this, we recommend a rent increase of 5 per cent over inflation to cover part of the deficit."

The SU presentation also criticized the focus of the Housing and Food Services Committee.

"It's Housing and Food Services' responsibility to look out for student concerns, and they haven't done that at all," said Olmstead.

"We feel student housing should be given a higher priority," MacKay said.

The SU brief also points out some discrepancies in the report presented to the Board of Governors Finance Committee.

"The average rent increase in North Garneau was 11.8% when the report was presented to the General Faculties Council (GFC) Housing and Food Services Committee, but in this report it is 16.9%," said MacKay.

"We want to know where this discrepancy came from," he said.

Olmstead questioned the timing of the increase, saying, "It looks like they're taking advantage of the rent decontrol scheduled for June 1."

He also said the increase was "unreasonably high for a single year."

MacKay echoed his sentiments.

"They're trying to eliminate a deficit problem which has been building for some years in one year," he said.

Olmstead also disagreed with the contention that a failure

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Dean Olmstead



The Aggies were shovelling it . . . er, that is, pitching it all last week during Ag Week on campus. This picture just proves that it takes 13 Aggies to load bales — one to pitch and 12 to think about hog prices.