

Summertime study?

Year after year a heavy proportion of students find themselves scoring ghastly percentages in fall and Christmas term tests. The practice of flunking out the debris at mid-winter vacation has become accepted almost to the point of being formally institutionalized.

The question is: do we have to waste so many potential university graduates annually, whether the fact of failure has received popular acceptance or not? Not all the frosh flunk out at Christmas. A great number also flunk out on finals.

Perhaps a solution of inducing frosh to get down to work would be to establish a system whereby all persons intending to register for fall term had to complete a prescribed amount of pre-session study for those courses they intended to enter. Such a policy is now standard procedure for students enrolling in summer school. Is there any reason why it wouldn't work as well for fall session?

There are many advantages to such a system. First, it would establish the impression in the minds of all prospective students that first efforts at university are to be academic, and that work is required if one is to have any success here. This would discourage in advance those persons confused enough to think they can obtain their education without effort.

Such a policy would alleviate the first-day crushes both in the bookstore and the registrar's office. Registration would have to be done through the summer so that one could receive advance notice about pre-session study, and books would have to be purchased early to have this accomplished.

Need for pre-session study would reduce the enrolment of first-year failures, who often fail because of established attitudes which cannot be changed for more healthy ones before it is too late. Students destined to flunk because of the magnitude of their personal problems would be discouraged from exposing themselves to failure at a critical time, while the experience of having to go out and work for a while before trying university would have a beneficial effect in a great many cases.

University is not such a fixed institution in society that all prospective students must rush right out of a shaky high school experience into the halls of ivy. It exists for the betterment of men and society, and the individual should be encouraged to examine his proposed university career with great concern for his best development. Society owes it to itself to produce the best graduates from its universities. It could see this effected somewhat by letting students know in advance what they are getting in for.

Do more than heckle

Student councillors are on exhibit tonight.

Like an old war uniform dragged out of mothballs each Armistice Day, the tradition of staging an open council meeting is annually hauled out by council.

Just as regularly, The Gateway embellishes its front page with a three column shot depicting a dismally vacant West Lounge. Only a sprinkling of students can ever stomach watching their elected council in operation.

A burning issue such as the expensive Stan Kenton flop failed to draw out more than the normal five or six. Letters to the editor, angry petitions and general discussions proved to be false alarms when the student population was allowed an opportunity to at least question and criticize the source of the Kenton decision.

Time out from studies to attend student-run assemblies is a typical manoeuvre in most high schools. This is done to instill into student minds the concept of being a responsible citizen.

At university, where student government

enjoys far more autonomy, it is expected a level of maturity has been attained such that the student body would voluntarily take an interest in its government. This should be particularly true when a sizeable portion of university fees is gobbled into the maw of the Students' Union governing machinery.

Such is not the case, however. U of A students just don't give a damn and the time-consuming effort of maintaining a representative government is a farce. For all the interest displayed in past years, a four member autocracy could perform the functions of a student council with a lot less fuss and red tape.

Unlike students in many foreign universities—even in Quebec—we enjoy a minimum of intervention on the part of administration or government authority. If student government is to flourish it must not be—like our basic democratic freedoms—taken for granted.

When council opens its doors tonight, don't come merely to heckle, don't come just to pull apart. In addition to heckling and pulling, do come to question; do come to evaluate.

Abolish degrees!

The bitter wind of November and the bitter prospect of the first mid-term examinations always cause one to wonder if either is really necessary. They cause one to ponder deeply if the ludicrous mounds of examinations to come are necessary—and further, if the whole annual ritual of printing Maytime parchments is necessary.

If the university is to halt its annual academic decay—degrees are not really necessary.

A person comes to university, in most cases, merely for what he can get out of it—or for what it can put into him. The former is usually a degree, and the latter a pile of no-account nonsense—at least for the first two years.

There are exceptions, of course. Some persons come out of university able to think. Thinking persons put their degrees in a trunk—and forget about them.

If examinations were gone, if parchments were gone, a good percentage of the persons at this institute for the improvement of nothing would have little inspiration for attendance. They would go away to make money and babies, leaving the university's facilities open to nothing but students.

All students strictly here for technical knowledge, such as those in house ec, engineering, law, medicine and commerce, could be herded into gigantic schools constructed in the middle of the Athabasca Tar Sands.

Think of the work that would be done at a true university—honest work, self-inspired work, work of oneself, not for oneself. Think of the sighs of relief from the politicians with no money-sucking expansion to contend with.

Think of the professors who would use their brains on students, instead of their notes on clots.

Hard times

Time magazine, known for pulling the orlon over the public's eyes through editorialized news writing, is now pulling it over students' eyes with "special college student rates." Actually, the same rates apply to non-students, too, as advertisements in The Edmonton Journal verify.



featurette

THE MASTER TONGUE

By Kathy Showalter

Apparently everyone wants to learn to speak with his future masters.

Dr. O. Starchuk, head of the Slavonic division of the department of modern languages, indicated that an enrolment this year of 220 students in the Slavonic division represents an increase of 75 per cent over last year. Of these, 80 per cent are of non-Slavonic origin. Three new staff members this year bring the total in the Slavonic division to five.

"There is no reason why we should not produce our own scholars in the Slavonic field and not have to rely on imported talent," stated Dr. Starchuk. "I would like to see more Canadians trained in Slavonic studies as instructors in our universities, colleges and high schools."

Dr. Starchuk proudly pointed to a Canada Council grant of \$5,000 to the university for expansion of Slavonic studies and research. "We already have one of the best library collections of Russian literature in Canada," he said.

With regard to the teaching of Russian in Alberta high schools, Dr. Starchuk stated "Our university is prepared to accept Russian as a language of matriculation." He suggested that it should be offered first in some of the major high schools. He pointed out that Russian is strongly emphasized in high schools in Britain and the United States, and is now being offered in high schools in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and other eastern provinces.

"We have ignored the eastern world in the past but recently the Russian language has been coming to the fore. It is one of the two recommended languages for science students and there is now a complete program for students in the humanities."

"It is planned that Russian will be introduced at the University of Alberta in Calgary within the next academic year," Dr. Starchuk said.

For the first time, the university calendar outlines a complete honors program in Slavonic and Soviet studies. Dr. Starchuk also emphasized the fact that the university now has "an excellent language laboratory which is very important in making practical application of the language." An interdepartmental committee has been set up to guide Slavonic studies in co-operation with the depart-



SLAVONIC'S STARCHUK
A Need For Students of Russian

ments of history and political economy.

This exploding interest in Russian has created an acute shortage of teachers. In addition to teaching, Dr. Starchuk suggested that Slavonic students can find careers in government, research councils, external affairs or the department of defence. He particularly emphasized the use of Russian with regard to the development of the Canadian north. "The Russians have great experience which we have not, and Russian literature in this field is very helpful."

The rapid growth in the number of students is matched by a doubling of the teaching staff.

These include Dr. K. Filipis, a former producer and announcer of the CBC Russian language program broadcast daily to the USSR; Mr. George Melnikov, of Russian origin and a graduate of a French university, and Mr. O. Kociuba, a graduate in Slavonic studies from the Sorbonne. Mr. John Gregory of the Alberta Research Council, is a part-time instructor in scientific Russian.