



nb

today we have an sdu viewpoint, on sdu. we also have a few letters, on protests, us, boppers, and election campaign tactics. we still have lots of letters left, so stay tuned for the next thrilling installment of page 5.

letters

sincerity questioned

Members of the Students for a Democratic University on campus have cried out against the recent tuition fee hike and the unwillingness of the students' union to take a stand on the war in Vietnam. In protesting, the SDU has been extremely critical of the students' union executive's action with respect to these matters. It is interesting to note that the SDU did not field a candidate in the recent election.

Why couldn't such an active group of outspoken, politically-minded people run a candidate? Professor Kemp of the philosophy department, although not speaking as an official spokesman for SDU, suggested that a candidate must compromise his ideals to secure election. The inference was that this was too high a price to pay for office.

I feel that if an interest group such as the SDU will not compromise their ideals enough to try and bring about their desired changes through

student government office, then we must question their sincerity.

The SDU condemns United States involvement in Vietnam and the U.S. for not being willing to compromise their position by halting the bombing. Yet this same SDU refuses to compromise its ideals by running a candidate for students' union office. It is this compromising attitude which is the source of all major conflicts in the world today. Obviously, compromise is an absolute necessity if agreement between different groups and ideologies is to be reached.

When will the SDU realize that demonstration and destructive criticism are limited tools for facilitating change and no substitute for responsible action and constructive suggestion? When will SDU realize that compromise is often prerequisite to agreement and that moderation and not radicalism often wins the day?

Until SDU is willing to shoulder some responsibility and exert influ-

ence through the accepted institutions on campus, it will continue to be a minor but noisy force in campus politics.

Bruce Evans
arts 2

nice bopper

I am disgusted with the attitude of university students in general, and The Gateway in particular, towards that "regrettable" segment of the population known as high-school students.

Granted, these so-called "boppers" and "gummers" often have different interests, wear different clothing, and utter different slangs, but Gateway's portrait (Feb. 16) of the pimply, greasy-haired, mod-type high-school student did, in my opinion, show an obvious lack of taste. I've seen a great many more pimples here on campus that I ever saw in high school, and is the white sock-loafer-faded Lees-Pepsi generation

acted out for us by fratmen so much more sophisticated than the bopper's garb?

What burns me worst about this whole bit is that in ten years or less today's teeny-boppers will be working alongside us in industry and society. The one or two years which is the hazy distinction between bopper-dom and university-dom now will in ten years be meaningless. In fact, a lot of us will eventually marry today's teeny-boppers. How does that groove you?

As far as the "invasion of the boppers" on VGW goes, I have witnessed similar infiltrations by black-felt-jacketed engineers in high-school halls in my days there. Man, were they impressive!

And if you don't want the boppers to invade campus during VGW, then why not forget the whole lacklustre goddamned idea?

Greg Poirier
arts 2

election smear

I object to the flagrant disregard for election proceedings by both the SDU and Mr. John Bordo. The actions of Mr. Bordo were deceitful and hypocritical in the extreme.

On election day for Arts rep, Feb. 23, Mr. Bordo delivered a speech to an audience of students in the SUB theatre lobby at 12:30 p.m. The extent of Mr. Bordo's speech was an attack upon Mr. Ken Porter personally and upon the students' union "establishment" generally.

Mr. Porter at that time was a candidate for election as Arts rep on council; Mr. Bordo was the campaign manager for Mr. Bradshaw who was running for the same position as Mr. Porter.

That Bordo would attack Porter before an audience on election day is contemptible; that he should do so with impunity is a serious threat to the democratic procedures of this university.

artsy paper

To The Gateway goes a medal for idiotic reporting above and beyond the field of duty.

What a "cheap" artsy paper it must be to print the actions of heckling U of A engineers at the Vietnam debate of Feb. 8. Okay, so I'm not an engineer, but what really burns me up is reporting so biased as to insult the intelligence of an average five-year-old child.

If these "meetings" are so damn boring and fruitless that a little extra life, in the form of heckling, is needed for front page Gateway material, then glory be! As the engineers are such a threat to free expression, why don't the "artsy" types running this farce of free speech kindly restrict their activities to the Wauneita Lounge.

Actually, a few limp arms would probably even be broken in the movement to the lounge. Tough luck.

Earl Hjelter
ed 1

Viewpoint

Students for a Democratic University — a perspective

By RICHARD FRUCHT

The Students for a Democratic University is not unique. It is a local manifestation of the growing awareness among students in North America of the undemocratic nature of forms of control over their lives and also of the potential for confronting this situation and attempting to change it, especially through education (in the broadest sense) and organization. For example, SDU represents student dissatisfaction with the nature of the curriculum they are often forced to follow. Many courses are irrelevant to the problems in which today's students are interested (ranging from the all-important problems of American imperialism and the Vietnam war to more personal concerns such as the role of women in modern society and possible alternatives to nuclear family arrangements). Many of these courses deal with so much detail, both empirical and methodological, that students are not only taught or forced to "learn"—memorize—an amazing collection of "facts" (most of which are readily available in books—so who needs to memorize), but they are often bogged down in problems of method and technique which would appear to be better presented at a post-graduate level. In other words, many students know that the maze of empiricism and methodology is the surest way of forcing them to lose sight of the objectives of a course, let alone life in general which the course should generate.

SDU maintains that this is not accidental, which is not to accuse professors of a conspiracy to obfuscate their students. Rather, the obfuscation is a result of a set of circumstances in which students, faculty and the university as a whole find themselves. SDU, then, does not advocate a cynical view of human intentions, but it does—and will—try to define these sets of circumstances which reduce the options for thought and action from which all of us—students, faculty and university—suffer. The point is to present the students and faculty of this university with a perspective with which to evaluate others' words and actions—that is, to develop a theory about why things are the way they are—and then bring to bear the evidence (both positive and negative) which will support this perspective or force us to alter it. In any event, once we have identified the sources of this disparity between what we are told the university is all about, and what it really is doing, then we may be able to act, but act justly and efficiently.

Dissatisfaction with curriculum is not the only point of departure for SDU's programme. There are at least two other main points, but it should be pointed out that they are not mutually exclusive; the fact that they are discussed separately here should not obscure the fact that they are all of a piece with the nature of our society as a whole. Another student gripe is the resistance on the part of the university—again, students, faculty and administrators—to act as a solitary body—a university—with respect to issues that face humanity. For example, the nature of imperialism and aggression. It is not a question of

reducing the differences of opinion over these matters which characterizes an academic institution. It is a question of the responsibility of academics (and students as well as the professors are academics—it is a moot point whether or not administrators are really academics or merely bureaucrats) not to accept a point of view or an interpretation because government advocates it. In other words, there is an accusation from many students that there is little development of a critical sense on the part of the university towards the rest of world society. This is manifest in the rejection of CUS, and in the plaint of many professors that to discuss Vietnam in class is value-laden and thus has no place in rational "scientific" discussion. This is sheer irresponsibility.

Alongside the dissatisfaction with the way classes are taught and the posture which the university takes towards the world "out there" is the dissatisfaction with the internal structure of the university—the basically feudal organization which encourages powerlessness and futility. Part of this is due to the fact that no one has any clear idea about what the university is about.

Students are becoming increasingly aware that the university is a function of government, and government functions to serve not the interests of the masses, but the few who control our very means of livelihood. In other words, government-supported universities are set up to turn out personnel for business and industry, the civil service, the education establishment, and so on. It has no higher purpose (at least no one in positions of power has claimed any such purpose). The university becomes nothing more than

a handmaiden (and a frowzy, misused maiden, at that) of all those forces, institutions, and persons responsible for the dog-eat-dog, over-competitive, under-cooperative world out there. As a result, this world is rife with racism, poverty, war, and a lack of freedom.

It is obvious now why we are taught so poorly and why the university as a whole abdicates its external responsibilities; it is still controlled by those for whom this responsibility and concern is inimical. Mind, it is not that they may consciously conspire, but their very own position in life and their own "education" gives them few if any alternatives for thought and action. Of course, alternatives do exist. What does this have to do with the internal structure of the university? As an example, we can take the Students' Union. It is not only true, as recent Gateway editorials have shown, that the SU is a cabalistic, elitist organization, but it is clearly no longer a product of student initiative. The Students' Union has become a function of government. The Students' Union is set up by Provincial Law to speak for the students at this university (see Bill 77 of 1966, pp. 17-19). In this respect, it is the ultimate intention of SDU to enable the students of this university to understand the nature of their education and the forms of control over their lives, thus enabling them to see the necessity of by-passing and changing this "puppet" system of student government. More than that, the Universities Act stipulates that the Students' Union is responsible for "the promotion of the general welfare of students consistent with the purposes of the university" (Bill 77, p. 18). Thus, as already established, if there is no

higher nor progressive purpose for the university, then certainly there is no purpose for the Students' Union, other than to support personal competitiveness, selfish ambition, and war, racism, poverty and lack of freedom.

There are many points, which cannot be discussed in this small space. This is the purpose of SDU's open forums. For example, the tuition problem, and the course evaluation book, which by its very nature encourages secrecy and reinforces the fear which pervades this feudal academic system. There are workable alternatives. They are openly discussed!

Under these conditions many students are certain about what they are against. It is the task of SDU to articulate these feelings and to give the students a way of analyzing this situation and presenting them options for action. In a real sense, SDU organizes sentiment into action, which is more than any other organization dares on pain of "rocking the boat" and jeopardizing their leaders' futures in business and politics.

In a sense, then, whereas the organization is important in actualizing demands and making concrete student sentiment, it is more important to make the students at this university aware of the possibilities for their own education, for their own future, but only if they are willing to confront those who at present control their lives. The principles of SDU will outlive SDU itself. Once this is realized, it becomes obvious that SDU does not represent the interests of a few, but truly represents the interests of the entire university, and offers them radical proposals for change.