

Is the university failing society?

Varsity Guest Weekend is here to give you a taste of campus life. But only a taste.

What you will be seeing is simply a part of the university—the displays, the teach-in, the social events. The other parts can't possibly be experienced in such a brief time.

Many of you will be expecting different things. Some might be interested in the labs because they want to be a scientist or physician. Some might be interested in talking to the admissions people because they fear having problems with admission. Some might want to get a feel for the social life of the campus so that when they get here they will be in the groove. Some might be curious. Some might be dragged here by determined friends or parents.

You will see all sorts of people. You will see students, alumni, and parents trying to impress their followers with the vast store of knowledge they have about the university. You will see some young visitors, some not so young, sitting around the lounges or cafeterias trying cunningly to hustle a member of the opposite sex. You will see harried workers trying valiantly to keep up with the demand for services. You will see lost and bewildered people. You will see tourist-type visitors who check off everything they see so that they can say they saw it. And you will see keeners who willingly walk themselves into the ground.

But some people won't be expecting anything. And some people you won't even see.

I am not talking about the many thousand university students and staff who have fled the campus during VGW, I am talking of the many Canadians in this province and in every province in Canada who will never expect a post-secondary education and might never touch foot on a university campus.

You will not hear much of this problem—the problem of accessibility.

University should be democratic . . .

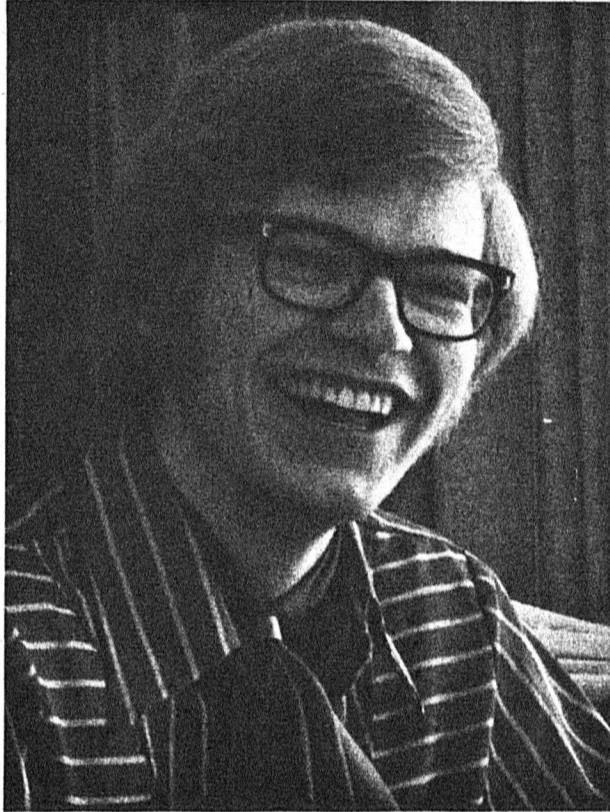
And you won't hear much about other problems that are close to home. Like the problem of the use of knowledge, the problem of the quality of what is taught and how it is learned, the problem of the unemployment and under-employment of those who graduate, the problem of our socially biased admission tests (departmental), and the problem of making the university a democratic institution.

Many of us feel that the university reflects the weaknesses and therefore the problems of our society. We do not have equality of accessibility to the university because we do not have equality of opportunity in our society. Even a quick look will reveal many of the societal maladies reflected in the university.

The university, our own U of A included, is an institution of the socio-economic elite. Its students are generally from the wealthier and more powerful levels of society. Students who are not from this group and who manage to make it to university do so in spite of our system which favors the sons and daughters of the elite.

The university trains the men and women who become part of the elite of society themselves. They will be the professionals, the senior civil servants, the academics, and

the corporate executives. The university is tied in directly by professional associations, and curricula which are designed to fit students into particular positions like medicine or commerce. Even some of the traditional cornerstone faculties of the university, arts and science, are tending towards this. The effect is that the university acts as a certifier of students for the roles they will fill in the



David Leadbeater

society. A degree becomes the good housekeeping seal of approval. Examinations and papers become market reports.

The examinations which are used to weed out those who are fit to come to the university are by no means "objective" in how and what they evaluate. Witness the case of the native people. One could literally count on the fingers of one hand the number of treaty Indians who have actually graduated from a university in Alberta.

The research done at universities and the knowledge that is accumulated are equally supportive of the social elite. One would be hard pressed to find research that was being done directly for the poor, or for unions, or for small businessmen. It is easy to find research being done for large corporations, or for the government. Even government research about the poor is generally of limited value for the people they are supposed to help. It very often results in more clever ways to alleviate the symptoms of problems and not expose the causes of these problems.

But now students are beginning to question this kind of university. Many of them, in particular, arts and science students, are finding it increasingly difficult to get good jobs even after their training. In applied sciences such as engineering the jobs are also getting scarcer. In many cases, if a Canadian graduate wishes a good job in the research and development field he will have to seriously consider going south to the U.S. where most of the large companies have their research and development concentrated. Women are really hit hard. There are a good many women who after a considerable amount of expensive training are finding themselves in secretarial or technical jobs. So even as a trainer for jobs the university is in difficulty.

The university is supposed to have a role as an agency for education in its best sense, in the sense of a free, creative and critical search for truth, for knowledge. But very few university students actually get this opportunity. Arts is supposed to be the fortress of this kind of education, yet we find that most students there face examinations, didactic lecture teaching, and the same kinds of situation where disciplines do not always make clear their underlying assumptions.

The tragedy of the whole situation is that there is a terrible waste of human resources taking place. On the one hand, there are many students who wish a significant education in the best sense so that they can have a meaningful and stimulating job and make a valuable contribution to the society; there is a resource. On the other hand, there are a great many obvious problems to solve such as poverty, pollution, the provision of a system of health care, housing, education, the development of industry; there is a need. Somehow, there seems to be no rational connection between the resource and need.

The University of Alberta belongs to you and to the many other people living in Alberta. Its direction can be affected by you, especially those of you who decide to participate in it as students. Like many institutions in our society your university is faced with some very serious and fundamental problems.

I see it as our role, the role of the university and all those concerned with it, to face these problems squarely and act.

David Leadbeater
Students' Union President

V.G.W. dangerous! a word of caution



Ron Pearson

It is my pleasure on behalf of the Varsity Guest Weekend Committee, to welcome you to the University of Alberta. The purpose of Varsity Guest Weekend is to provide a means for the public to gain an insight into university life. We are throwing open the doors of the university with the hope that the activities we have arranged will prove to be an enjoyable and profitable experience to you.

The major project of VGW this year is the Canada Teach-In. Three panels have been set up under topics relevant to contemporary Canadian problems. On Thursday night top panelists, i.e., Marcel Lambert, Laurier Lapierre and Cy Gonic, will discuss the problem of Canadian identity in the Dinwoodie Lounge of SUB. On Friday the discussion will concern Canada's role in international affairs and feature such speakers as Paul Martin, Dalton Camp, Chester Ronning and Andrew Brewin. On Saturday night the teach-in will move over to Lister Hall where the topic will be Canadian Federalism. Panelists include Donald Smiley, Mark McGuigan and Marcel Lambert. It is our hope that these panels will be extremely worthwhile and stimulate much useful discussion. I strongly urge everyone to make the effort to attend at least one of them.

One of the major purposes of the weekend is to give prospective university students a chance to learn more about the community into which they plan to enter. The university seminars to be held in SUB Theatre on Friday afternoon and all day Saturday have been set up with this purpose in mind. Topics will centre around such subjects as student loans and housing and academic reform. Consult the schedule for these seminars and attend the ones in which you are most interested.

The Academic Information Centre will be set up in Rutherford Library on Saturday. Student and faculty representatives from all faculties will be on hand to distribute material on courses and entrance requirements and to answer any questions which you may have.

There will be displays set up in most of the buildings on Saturday. A display schedule is printed at the back of the information booklet.

The social side of the weekend has not been ignored. The Guess Who will play in concert in the Jubilee Auditorium on Friday night. Tickets may be purchased at the SUB Information Desk, Mike's or at the door. This is Canada's top band and has been widely acclaimed as one of the most talented groups in North America. Make a point of attending, for it is unlikely that you will get a chance to hear a quality rock group in surroundings comparable to the Jubilee Auditorium at comparable prices again. Quite a change from the Sales Pavilion or the Gardens! On Thursday there will be a dance in Lister Hall with the Key and on Saturday there will be a big windup double bandstand featuring the Happy Feeling and Everyman's Tonto in Dinwoodie. The Room at the Top will feature top folk entertainment from 8-12 every night and on Saturday afternoon. The Winter Carnival events will be held every day and will be highlighted by a pancake breakfast on Friday morning and an all night curling bonspiel on Thursday night. To round out the action, the Jubilaires will present their production of "Mame!" in the SUB Theatre every night and the Golden Bears hockey team plays in the ice arena on Friday and Saturday nights.

A word of caution: there are many events running concurrently throughout the weekend. Try to attend as diverse a selection as you can. Don't spend all your time at purely social or purely academic events or you will miss out on many aspects of the weekend.

Thanks for coming and I hope your visit will be an enjoyable one.

Ron Pearson
director, VGW '70

U of A Greetings



Dr. Max Wyman

It is a pleasure to extend greetings to the many visitors to the campus of the University of Alberta connected with Varsity Guest Weekend 1970. Ever since its inception in 1953, the major objective of Varsity Guest Weekend was to give prospective university students from the high schools of Alberta a glimpse of university life. Although this objective will be continued into the 1970's, I feel certain another major objective to be accomplished by Varsity Guest Weekend will emerge during the next few years.

From the ever-increasing number of people seeking entrance into post-secondary educational programs, it is becoming clear that the people of Alberta, in the 18-24 year age group, are aware of the importance of post-secondary education in general, and of a university education in particular. During the 1970's, I expect that many people who have completed post-secondary programs will find it necessary to return to a university, or to some other educational institution, and enter some form of continuing education program. It is my hope that Varsity Guest Weekend will give to such people some insight into the obsolescent nature of their education, and the need for continuing programs of education throughout a lifetime.

The year of 1970 marks the beginning of a new decade, a decade during which the University of Alberta should and will change in many different ways. One change which should be made is to bring the university and the community closer together than ever before. A successful Varsity Guest Weekend is one small way such a change can take place.

It is the hope of the university that Varsity Guest Weekend will induce many people to come to the university for the first time, and also induce many people to return to the university for further education.

M. Wyman
president