

# Summer work experience program helps many

by Margo Leahy

Though next summer is probably far from your thoughts, it might be a good idea to look into the university's Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) for next year.

SWEP was established last summer to find career-related jobs for U of A engineering students. So far it has revealed some impressive statistics. In August 1978, 30% to 35% of

engineering graduates were unemployed; by May 1979, the figure had been reduced to less than 9%. Seventy-eight per cent of third-year engineering students, 66% of second year students and 41% of first year students found summer related positions.

While the program does not guarantee jobs, it does provide students with information about available positions. By uniting

itself with business, SWEP tries to generate new job opportunities by meeting with companies and inviting their representatives back to meet professors.

The benefits of summer-related employment to the students, says program director Pat Kirshnir, is the "opportunity to practice skills learned at school and to gain exposure so one can have more basis for a

career choice." It is easier to obtain a permanent job with a company that one has had summer experience with.

The program began under prompting from Engineering Students Society (ESS) president Dean Adams and SU president Dean Olmstead. Research had discovered that many Alberta summer engineering jobs were being taken by organized eastern Canadian university students.

staff. "UPC is concerned that if engineering receives this kind of funding other faculties may expect the same and UPC might not want to spend more money," says Dean Olmstead.

According to Pat Kirshnir, most other faculties seem to be watching SWEP very closely, but commerce seems to be particularly interested. Kirshnir maintains that any student no matter what the area of interest, should prod their faculty counsellors to get involved in SWEP so job opportunities could be arranged. Olmstead implied, however, such a program might not be as successful for general arts and science students.

So far, the only major problem in the program has been a lack of time. Because September and October are busy months, many students do not realize they must register for next summer's recruitment.

While SWEP is still spending much of its time on graduate placement, in the future it hopes to concentrate on aid to first and second year students.

In response to these programs, SWEP was created. SWEP's advisory committee is composed of a substantial number of prominent business people from oil companies and engineering firms and is chaired by H.B. Scott, president of Syn-crude.

Initially, funding for the program came from the Faculty of Engineering and seven other departments, including physics and computer science. Each group contributed \$3,000 per year. However, a grant from the University Planning Council, (UPC) has done much to support the program and its two paid

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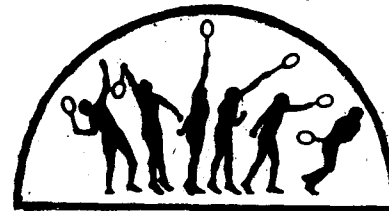
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