

Optomists say:

"Life is a bowl of cherries."

The Gateway

Pessimists say:

"Life is a bowl of pits—
somebody ate the cherries."

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Apathy in GSA

The lobbying role of the Graduate Students Association is seriously threatened by a lack of student interest, says Peter Flynn, GSA president.

In a GSA newsletter, Flynn said if the current level of participation continues, lobbying activities will have to be curtailed.

"It's not a forecast of doom but of deep concern," said the president of the 2,000 member organization.

"Our lobbying function...is extremely sensitive to how many students take part and our current level of operation is eroding because of a lack of willing students," Flynn said in the newsletter.

Besides lobbying in such matters as salaries and teaching appointments, the GSA provides and operates a social centre on Saskatchewan Drive. There is concern, however, that the GSA could become nothing more than a social club.

Participation in GSA, an in other student organizations, seemed to be on a roller coaster two years ago, when U of A president Max Wyman recommended a 20 per cent cut in the graduate faculty budget, more than 200 grad students turned out at a public meeting to protest the move and devise a new fee structure. After months of discussion, the Board of Governors finally approved in September a finance scheme that allows GSA to apply yearly for a cost of living increase in salaries.

But now, GSA is finding it difficult to prepare a documented request for such an adjustment because of a lack of participation.

Flynn warned that if another crisis like the budet reductions occurs, GSA will have to rebuild its organization before dealing with it.

Flynn cited other examples of declining interest:

It has become impossible to fill 15 openings on General Faculties Council or on GFC committees.

Publication of the newsletter has been terminated until an editor is found.

With no secretary, GSA minutes and correspondence has been reduced.

"There aren't a lot of emotional issues now, though there are many important issues," says Flynn.

Because of its active role in salary negotiations, Flynn thinks there should be more participation in GSA than in other student organizations.

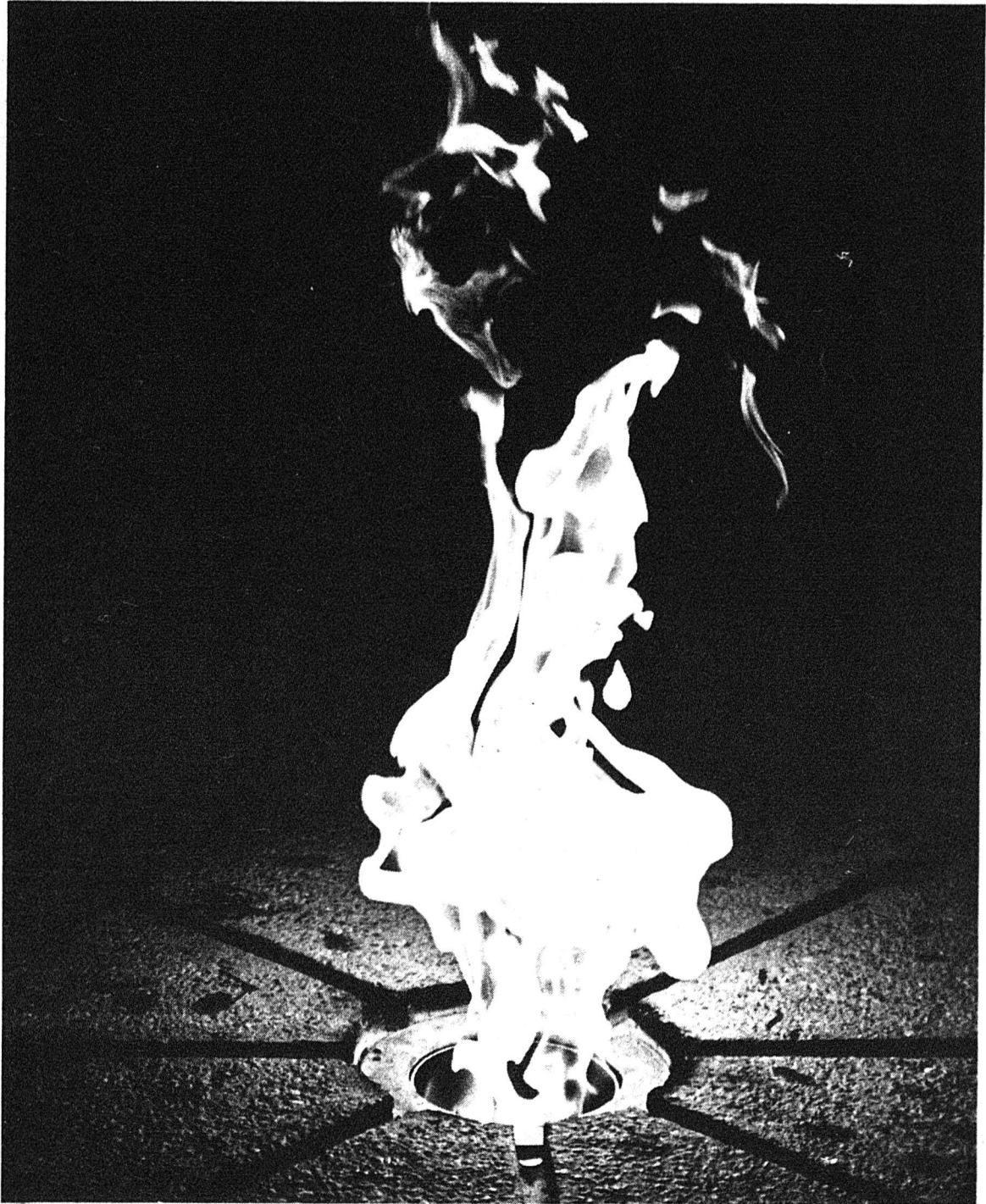
"We should have more participation, but, in a sense, we are faced with the same problem as the Students' Union," said Flynn.

The president believes the main achievement of the GSA in the last five years has been substantial increases in student representation on such bodies as GFC, the Board of Governors and advisory committees of the department of advanced education.

"I personally believe in both the potential and immediate benefit of the GSA in collectively and individually helping graduate students," said Flynn. "But neither I nor other Council members are anxious to force our view of an appropriate level of activity on the whole population of graduate students."

Flynn suggests that if graduate student want to improve the lobbying role of GSA, they should attend monthly Council meetings or check with their department representatives on GSA activities.

Otherwise, "there is no reason per se to have an active association of graduate students, unless its members are convinced of the benefits."



With the return of cold winter weather, the SUB has flickered back to life. Contrary to rumours, the flame had not fallen victim to the current energy crises. George Mantor, SU president, said the flame is shut off when the temperature outside is 50 degrees or more. Otherwise, the flame would alter the temperature in SUB and cause the heating system to turn on and off. However, it appears the flame is here to stay, unless an unseasonable change in temperature takes place.

No Shorter Programs

Faculties are not in favour of reducing the length of first-degree programs, at the U of A according to a report submitted to the executive of General Faculties Council Monday.

The report, prepared by the Academic Development Committee, consisted of condensed versions of replies from faculty deans about reducing the length of these programs, as recommended in

the Worth report.

GFC asked the committee, which considers new programs, to study the feasibility of such a move a year ago.

In fact, some faculties said they have considered lengthening bachelor degree programs from three to four years.

"While many of our Academic staff have argued for an increase in length of the General program from three to

four years, I have never heard anyone suggest that the three years might be reduced to something less," said Dr. K.B. Newbound, associate dean of science.

His faculty has provided a fourth year for students taking a general B.A. who want to avoid special regulations of the Honors program.

Dean George Ford, dean of engineering, said a three-year program for engineers probably wouldn't be recognized by the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers. Ford said he doubted that graduates of a three-year engineering program could compete for jobs with those of a four-year program, maintained by most North American universities.

D.F. Cameron, associate dean of medicine, noted that some "serious study" has been given in the faculty to a shorter M.D. program to selected students, but this wouldn't apply to all.

R.C. Baldwin, dean of Arts, said his faculty would consider a change, "though not out of any felt need for a reduction in the length of our programs."

U of A unsociable

Prospects are bleak for future socials on the U of A campus.

New regulations regarding socials in Central Academic were passed October 12, but the university decided to allow two final socials to take place. U of A Nurses and Engineering groups were allowed to hold their socials since they had already paid money to bands for the events.

Lorne Leitch, vp finance and administration for the university, informed Randy McDonald, vp services for the Students' Union, that CAB would no longer be available to students for socials.

Reasons given for the ban were that the socials cause undue wear on the carpeting and furnishings. Leitch also commented that because of the numerous entrances to the cafeteria crowd control was extremely difficult. The fact that several windows have been broken was another factor. The university does not have to pay to have windows repaired but Leitch said it is inconvenient to have broken windows.

McDonald asked Leitch to reconsider the ruling on the basis that CAB is the only feasible place on campus for the socials.

McDonald also commented that socials are important since they are one of the few events that tie students together.

Leitch's recommendation that CAB be closed for socials was reaffirmed by Max Wyman and the other university vice presidents. Leitch suggested that an appeal should be made to the Board Building Committee which has responsibility for use of University premises.

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Science opposes

The Science faculty will ask GFC to reconsider a policy to allow staff members unrestricted access to career files.

The faculty will present the request as a motion at the next regular meeting Nov. 26.

The policy would give staff members access to files used to make career decisions about them.

GFC had planned to give final approval Monday on the files policy but after the science faculty's request, merely discussed and approved methods to implement the policy.

"Members of the faculty are

concerned about having to make changes in the present system and not being able to seek outside opinions from scientists outside the campus," said Dean Donald Ross, in a telephone interview.

This concern was voiced at a special science faculty meeting on Nov. 1.

Dean Ross said outside advice is sought about staff promotions in fields of study unfamiliar to faculty members.

"We find there is no way to seek expert advice on promotions and retain the open file system," Dean Ross said.

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