

# Board toes government line

by Greg Harris

Student protests fell on deaf ears Friday morning as the U of A Board of Governors passed a motion calling the provincial government to index tuition fees to the operating costs of the university.

The Board's small conference room was jammed with about two hundred vocal students at the peak of the tuition debate. Numbers never went below 150, even when the discussion lagged into 10:00 a.m. class times.

Students clapped, hissed, booed, waved signs, and heckled board members throughout the two hour meeting.

When the lively debate ended, however, the Board voted 12-6 to recommend to Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower Jim Horsman that, "...the general level of tuition fees at each University shall be such that budgetted fee income will be between 8 per cent and 12 per cent of the previous year's net operating budgetted expenditures."

The most common arguments used by Board members favoring indexing were that some rationale was needed in determining what tuition fees should be, and that increased tuition was needed to make up the University's budget deficit.

Those opposed countered that indexing would push up fees and limit accessibility, and that student input on tuition would be effectively silenced for years to come. The government should be called on to make up the university deficit, not students, they said.

Board Chairman, Mr. John Schlosser, opened the meeting explaining that Horsman asked the Board for a position paper proposing a long term policy for tuition fees.

"We must have some rationale to our fees...and we feel that this might be an acceptable method," said Schlosser.

He said that the board must balance its budget, and then added that "...our main concern is academic excellence at the university."

He said that the provincial government, "in its wisdom", will determine tuition policy.

Mr. John Barry, one of the

eight public representatives on the Board, continued the same line of argument.

He said what is needed is a "reasonable method of establishing revenues" which is not left in the political arena.

He also argued against free tuition saying that in today's society it is assumed that students must pay for their education.

Another public representative, Mr. Erwin Mertens, then argued that students were getting upset over nothing.

"I don't believe that accessibility to the university is being constrained by tuition fees — I can't accept that," he said.

Mertens, president of Great Western Garment (G.W.G.), remarked that he understood the problems facing students since he has a son in university as well.

Mertens then provoked sustained heckling and booing from the crowd by saying, "Nobody can tell me we're talking about anything of any magnitude here!"

Phil Soper, SU president, and one of three student representatives on the Board, labelled such arguments "ridiculous."

"We've got a question before us today...what is the purpose of this university?" asked Soper.

"It is to serve society...society will benefit in perpetuity."

"All this tuition policy looks at is a method by which to balance the budget," said Soper to loud applause.

He said the major problem was the provincial governments "short-changing" in funding.

"A fee increase is a cutback in government funding," he charged.

He said that special problems will result if tuition is indexed. He cited predictions that the student population will drop, causing indexed fees to "skyrocket" for the fewer students forced to bear the same percentage of operating costs of the university.

As well, he noted that wages for students are much lower than the average.

"We're not talking about individuals, we're talking about fee revenues."

"This is a mechanical, automatic increase in fees," said Soper. He stressed that indexing would remove the kind of democratic discussion on being



200 students encouraged the Board Friday to disapprove the tuition indexing policy recommendation to no avail.

Photo Ray Giguere

conducted, to which one student shouted, "That's the point!"

"We ask the Board to recognize that the university is not a supermarket, not a stock on the exchange, that students are not a loaf of bread nor a share in

Exxon Corporation...education is a right," concluded Soper to the loudest and most sustained applause of the day.

Board members appeared bemused, and when the noise finally subsided Chairman

Schlosser laughingly remarked to the students, "I love your enthusiasm."

Kris Farkas, also a student representative, argued that a long

## Title not available at presstime

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"How's it going Ace?"  
 "Wha' duh...who shaid that?"  
 "Down here Ace."  
 "A cockroach, a freakin talkin cockroach."  
 "I'm a cricket booze-brain. So Ace, how's life lookin'?"  
 "Oh can't complain."  
 "Nah, com'on, you can tell me. Things is pretty good, huh?"  
 "D-d-d-damn right things are good. Hey I got just one more year to go and I'm outta here. I'll be an accountant soon enough. I'll be a CPA and let me tell you, I've got it made."  
 "Karl, no more for that guy over there, he's talking to a beer bottle."  
 "Well Ace, you've done well. Yer really gonna make something of yerself."  
 "Hey that's not all. I've been working out for three years now. I've really got it together."  
 "Lemme tell ya, you are lookin' good Ace. I hardly recognized you."  
 "Yup, the contact lenses really make a difference. And it took a \$30 haircut but my nose doesn't look as big any more."  
 "The moustache looks good too. You even look a bit taller. Com'on Ace you wearin lifts?"  
 "Nah, when platforms were in I wore those but I walked like a duck. I just gotta remember to stay away from horizontal stripes and to stand straight."  
 "Ace I'm amazed things are just so much better."  
 "Damn right!"  
 "Better than what?"  
 "Why?"  
 "Come on Ace what's the point of all this?"  
 "I-I-I just wanna be better than..."  
 "Better than who?"  
 "Better than I was."  
 "When?"  
 "Before. Before I started workin out and gettin ahead an..."  
 "Ya mean high school."  
 "Ya okay."  
 "But you remember Ace, you weren't such a bad guy. Who you really tryn' to be better than? Who you tryn' to impress?"  
 "All of 'em dammit. Every last son-of-a-bitch who laughed at me or ignored me or..."

"Oh, how inspired. An yer gonna go to yer high school reunion and...how many of them are you gonna remember Ace? How many names? How many faces?"  
 "...just one..."  
 "Jenny?"  
 "Oh she was lovely. I took french and drama for three years just so I could be in more of her classes. I always sat one row across and two seats back of her. I don't think she ever knew my name."  
 "What ever happened to her!"  
 "I hear she went to work in her daddy's law office. So it's all come around now, the professional's daughter slips down the social ladder and the working man's son rises to the upper middle class."  
 "Ho-ho, pretty fancy words for an accountant."  
 "Hey, I took a couple arts courses, I know more than just ratios."  
 "So Ace, yer gonna rise to the top and one day yer gonna meet her and rub her face in it."  
 "Na, face it, I know how I felt about her then but she really wasn't more than teenage pretty. She probably married that jock with the muscle car and looks like a middle age housewife already. I guess really she's just a symbol, a phoney rabbit to chase."  
 "Hey Ace, maybe you really do have it together. But what if you meet her and she's still Jenny from high school still, you know."  
 "Well, then she's still kinda shallow and probably not that interesting of a person. Just the same I sure would like to take her out just one night, one incredible, impress the hell out of her night."  
 "Ace, yer doin' alright."  
 "Maybe, but Jenny had been doing much better. After one year as a secretary she followed the advice of one of the firms clients and began investing in the stock market. Later that summer she had reached her second million and had diversified her investments to include a small chain of fashion boutiques. She had developed into a woman of classic beauty and impeccable taste. Upon graduation Ace will take a job as a junior accountant for her holding corporation and never realize who she was except to be amused every month by the coincidence of that name appearing on his cheques."

## Baz by Skeet

