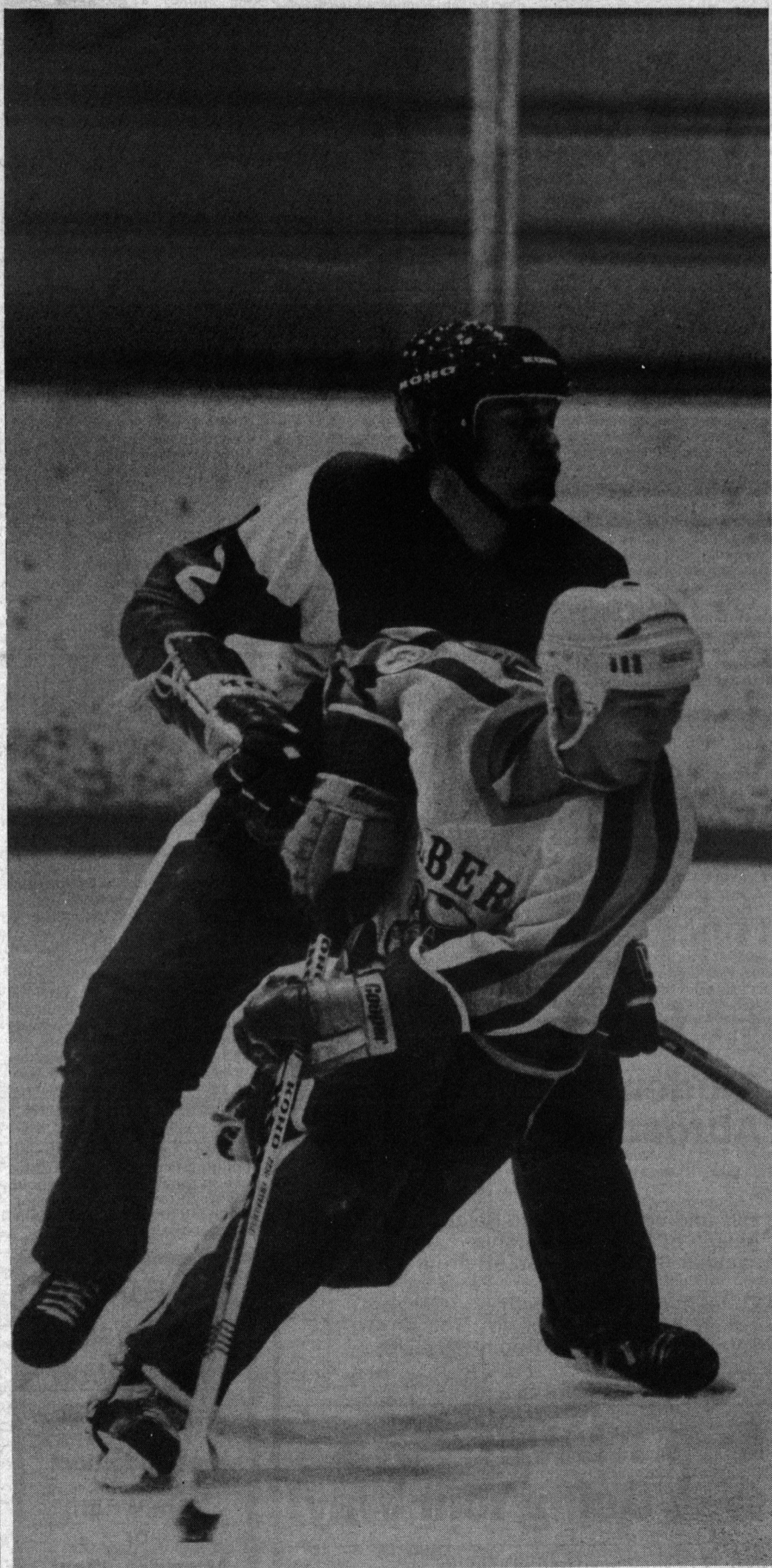


gateway

Thursday, February 3, 1983

Promiscuous
budgies...

...are susceptible to
chirpies.



This weekend's match-up between the University of Saskatchewan Huskies and the U of A Golden Bears should be the most exciting this season. The two Canada West teams are among the best in the nation. Clare Drake has 500 career wins. Should the Bears sweep this series, Drake will be number two on the all-time win list for North American college hockey coaches.

photo Bill Inglee

English skills poor

The University is cracking down on students with poor English. Beginning in 1987 writing competence will be an entrance requirement at the U of A, General Faculties Council decided Monday. Also, for students entering the U of A this fall and thereafter, writing competence will be a re-enrollment requirement. U of A students will have to pass a competence exam to re-enroll, after completion of 24 months as a registered undergraduate student.

Some wrinkles remain to be ironed out of the proposal: the problem of testing prospective students who live at a distance from the University, duplication of testing for foreign students taking TOEFL (English as a Foreign Language) exams, and how to structure test appeals.

The problem of poor English has been a longstanding one at the University. High school graduates arriving here who have been tested have a failure rate that has hovered steadily around 50%, and the current "ultimate failure rate" (i.e. after remediation) is 15%.

Many reports have been drawn up on the issue, most recently a report by a joint committee of the University and the Alberta Teachers' Association, which is still in the process of being circulated to concerned parties. It contains 20 specific proposals to combat the problem among high school graduates in Alberta.

The general thrust of the recommendations is to increase the number of English courses taken by both high school students and English majors and minors in the Faculty of Education, as well as improving the testing of English and reducing the workload of English teachers.

The recommendations are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 1 — That the Alberta Teachers' Association and the University of Alberta lend their influence, in any appropriate ways, to a continuing responsible assessment of student writing at the secondary level so that all concerned agencies may have a sound basis for policies affecting student competence in writing.

RECOMMENDATION 2 — That the Alberta Teachers' Association and the University of Alberta lend their support to adoption of definitive standards for the assessment of students' competence in writing, and consistency among testing agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 3 — That the Alberta Teachers' Association and the University of Alberta urge that future assessments of provincial writing competence improve, to whatever extent is feasible, the control of variables in writing, such as topic and marking scales.

RECOMMENDATION 4 — That the Alberta Teachers' Association and the University of Alberta support the principle of including an assessment of student writing ability samples of student work done in non-test, non-time-restricted situations and encourage development of appropriate procedures for such assessment.

RECOMMENDATION 6 — That the Alberta Teachers' Association and the University of Alberta urge Alberta Education to observe, in future curricular revision of the secondary language arts curriculum, the need for the curriculum skills and concept document to be made more precise.

RECOMMENDATION 9 — That the Alberta Teachers' Association and the University of Alberta urge Alberta Education to increase the time spent in high school language arts from 15 to 20 credits in the academic stream.

RECOMMENDATION 10 — That the Alberta Teachers' Association and the University of Alberta urge Alberta Education to revise and make more clearly interpretable the prerequisite structure for high school English courses with respect to the placement and streaming of incoming students; the differentiation between streams; the associated standards of writing competence for grades and streams; marking procedures that distinguish writing from other achievements in English; and the switching of streams by individual students.

RECOMMENDATION 12 — That all University of Alberta Education students be required to: (a) complete the Writing Competency Test given to Freshman students, (b) attend the remedial classes if so recommended, and write and pass the retest.

RECOMMENDATION 13 — That all secondary education students with a major in English be required to complete a full-year senior course in expository writing (English 307/308 or English 309).

RECOMMENDATION 14 — As a special condition of recommendations 10, 11, 12 and 13 it is further recommended that these requirements should normally be met by the end of the students' second year.

RECOMMENDATION 15 — That all secondary education students with a minor in English be required to complete a half-year course in expository writing (English 307).

RECOMMENDATION 16 — That all secondary education students with a major in English be required to complete a senior course in teaching language and composition in the secondary school (such as Ed CI 453 or equivalent).

Jens Andersen

CONTENTS

In the NewsMuch smoke no fire
In the Lettersthe big fix
In the ArtsCrystal and Copeland
In the Sportshockey Huskies
In the FeaturesFA review