

A newspaper editor separates the wheat from the chaff...

The Gateway

Thursday, November 22, 1984

...then prints the chaff.

Adlai Stevenson

Donaldson comments on White Paper

Job training not enough

by Gilbert Boucahrd

Canadian Federation of Students chair-elect Barbara Donaldson thinks the Alberta Government is trying to erode universities' traditional mandate of providing broadly based education.

Donaldson said the government's recent White Paper (Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985-1990) is moving universities towards specific job skill training.

"Job experience and job skill training are a task for the work place and not the educational institution," said Donaldson.

Donaldson's primary concern with the government's preoccupation with job skill training is their poor record in predicting job trends.

"Government agencies, and the government itself have not been good at predicting labor demands in the past and probably would not be able to do better in the future."

Donaldson is also concerned about the employability of people trained in specific job skill training schemes.

"Traditionally what has been found in the labor market is that people with broad based educational experience, such as students with general arts and science degrees, are less likely to be unemployed," said Donaldson.

"But the government seems to want large numbers of people

trained for specific roles rather than educated for adaptability."

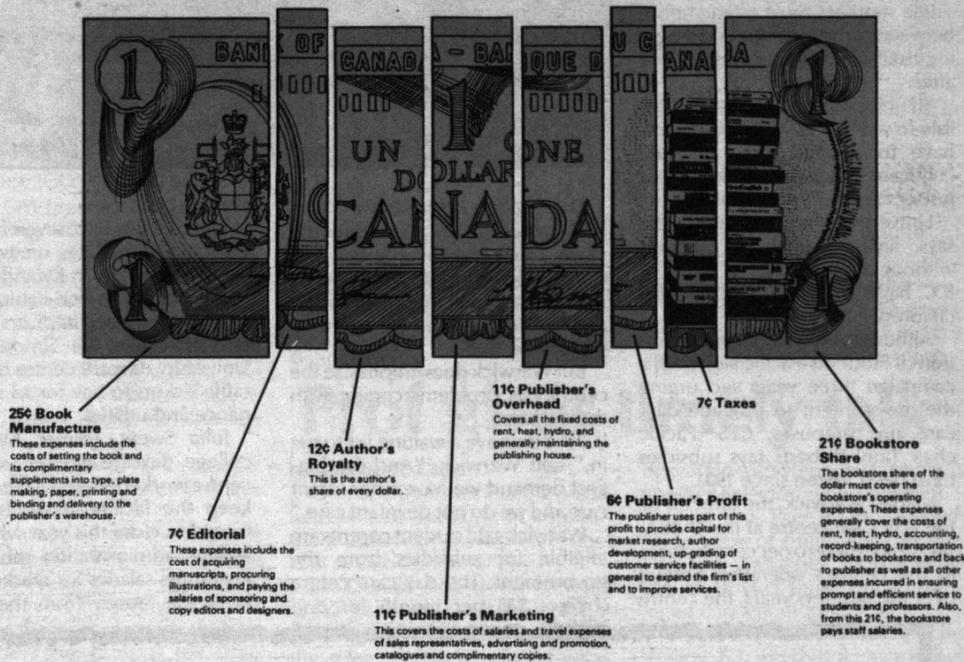
Donaldson said the government has already initiated the first of its job skill training programs.

"The Westerra Institution, which trains people in job skills and nothing else, was set up by the province before the White Paper came out," said Donaldson. "The White Paper seems to have been written to justify this institution."

"The institute plans to accommodate up to 3000 students by the 1985-86 school year," said Donaldson, who describes the institute as "low-key".

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THE TYPICAL CANADIAN TEXTBOOK DOLLAR



Textbook costs examined

by Audrey Djuwita

Finals are almost here, yet many students still grumble about the new textbooks they had to purchase last September.

They question the need to change textbook editions while the content is more or less similar.

Kerri Kamra, SU Academic Affairs Commissioner is currently doing

research on this issue and says: "Some professors reason that the new textbooks are better or more complete; however, sometimes unintentionally they don't really consider the effects on students (in assigning new textbooks)."

When a professor assigns a new textbook, the impact is very much felt by the students. Those taking the course in previous year's could not sell their textbooks to the one taking it now. Consequently, the latter are forced to buy new textbooks, often at an expensive price.

Kamra states: "This problem exists and we [would] like all instructors to take this fact into consideration before assigning new textbooks."

James C. Malone, bookstore manager, says that college textbooks are often expensive because of the books' marketing costs and higher printers' salaries, among other things.

According to College Textbook Pricing, 1984 ed., a pamphlet published by the Canadian Book Publishers' Council, the price of a textbook is determined by its length, dimensions, number and type of illustrations, number of colors, and print run.

This holds true if the textbook is an original Canadian publication.

If the textbook comes from some foreign land, the list price will depend on how much the Canadian publisher pays to the originating publisher, current market prices, and the value of the Canadian dollar.

The Consumer Price Index, published by Statistics Canada, shows that during 1980 to 1983, the average price of an English language college textbook increased by 32.9%.

Complimentary copies for the instructors to examine also contribute to the costs of the textbooks.

College Textbook Pricing states: "Complimentary copies are in fact the highest marketing expense in a publisher's budget . . . and it is a direct contributor towards the calculation of the book's final price."

Used books on sale are also a publishers' and authors' nightmare.

"Used books represent an increasing cost to publishers, they take sales away from a publisher and a royalty away from an author," College Textbook Pricing states.

Used books are bad news for students because the publisher then sells new ones at higher prices.

Returns affect textbook prices as well.

"No textbooks are complete to start with and if the change is a minor one, it would be a better solution for the professors to give supplemental lectures," said Kamra.

"Of course, we don't expect it to be done at graduate level since graduate students need up-to-date information; however, the basic principles in Physics certainly haven't changed in the past decade."

In responding to the question as to why the textbook for Physics 241 is changed while the content is quite similar, Dr. Eric Pinnington of the Physics department said "the new textbook is very different from the old one, it uses more calculus and many think that it is more suitable for the use of Honors and Specialization Science students."

Prof. Raymond Egerton from the same department agrees and adds, "the new textbook is more up to date, consistent and it uses SI (Système International) units even in magnetism."

"People don't change textbooks unless there is a significant problem," said Pinnington.

Dr. M. V. H. Wilson who recently assigned a new textbook for his Zoology 325 class explains: "there is not a perfectly satisfactory textbook."

"Zoology 325 is a short course, unfortunately, most text are written for a longer course, thus there is a lot of extra information that students find difficult to cover in such a short time," said Wilson. "The new textbook is less vague and less padded. It is also a little closer to what I lecture."

Wilson also said complaints from students about the old textbook

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Graduate Studies faces crisis

by Kent Cochrane

The Faculty of Graduate Studies has reached a crisis stage, says Graduate Students' Association (GSA) President Gary Genosko.

Genosko, a grad student in Philosophy, spoke to the Gateway last week about some of the problems facing grad students at the U of A.

"The U of A Board of Governors said in 1981 that it was committed to making the Faculty of Grad Studies here one of the best in the country," he said.

However, the faculty is now "financially strapped."

It does not have enough money to fund all the research projects it would like to.

"If research is a priority at this university, then there should be the money to do it with," said Genosko.

The GSA is also worried about the treatment of teaching assistants (TAs).

Every department in the university is given money to hire grad students as TAs, who are paid a salary according to the number of hours they work each week.

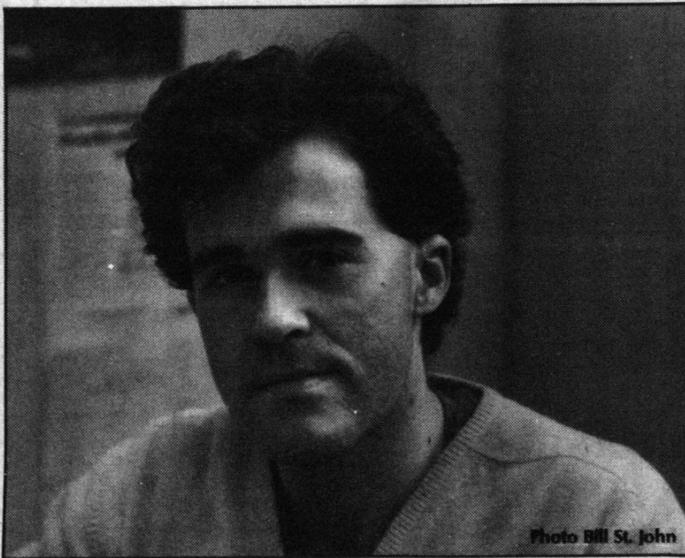
However, the number of grad students hired has been cut back by the university in the last few years.

As well, the highest paid positions (12 hours per week) are no longer given out.

Instead, most grad students are hired for five or six hours per week.

Furthermore, increases to TA salaries have been substantially below increases to the cost of living in the last two years, said Genosko.

Many grad students are finding it



GSA President Gary Genosko says the Grad Studies program is "financially strapped."

difficult to support themselves on the salaries they now receive, while many others are simply unable to obtain positions, he added.

This is even affecting the Power Plant, the restaurant and bar run by the GSA, said Genosko, since grad students have less money to spend now.

The GSA negotiates with the university each year over salary increases for TAs, but has very little input to the final decision.

Garth Clarke, VP Services of the GSA and a grad student in classics, explained some of the other problems facing TAs.

TAs are not supposed to teach courses by themselves, he said, yet this often happens in some departments.

Some tenured professors refuse to teach undergraduate courses, said Clarke, so their departments have TAs teaching these courses instead of spending extra money to hire sessional lecturers.

Other departments simply have no money to hire sessionals because the salaries of their tenured professors are so high.

Grad students who teach courses by themselves should be paid the same rate as sessionals, but most departments refuse to do this, added Clarke.

"Teaching Assistantships were instituted to help grad students financially and to give them teaching experience, not to save departments money," said Clarke.

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