

ams—a right described with slight sense but emotional loading as a “kind of educational shield.” The Commission endorses the freedom of students to design their own programs and set their own objectives while simultaneously recognizing one of the main faults of our present system as affording “our youth the opportunity to choose how and where they pursue advanced learning”, thus failing to provide properly for the power needs of society. **At the risk of creating a simplistic dilemma there appears to be a conflict if images: either the teacher is a being or he is a “device”; either the student is to choose or he is not; either the learning process is subject to the free intercourse between student and teacher, or it is subject to planned and programmed activity.**

the students' union
The research aspect of the University of Alberta has long been a point of contention between the Students' Union and the university. Many professors regard teaching as an unwanted intrusion on their research time. In some departments are based on a professor's research ability and the amount of money they may attract to the department in research grants. Some professors have openly admitted that they consider research to be far more important than teaching. The fact remains, however, that a professor has to fulfill some kind of teaching role in order to be on staff. In some departments of the university no regard whatsoever is paid to a professor's teaching ability or the departments' “time” that some modicum of teaching ability is in a professor. The result of this rather unbalanced approach to the university function is that the student is the one to suffer. He may be taught by a teacher whose research skills are excellent yet who fails miserably as a teacher. In our opinion too much emphasis is placed on the research aspect of the university. It is wrong that a professor should hold himself out as a teacher when in fact he teaches merely to secure a research grant.

We feel that there should be student participation of teachers and professors with students on the various promotion and appointment committees. The time when the professor was being evaluated by those he taught is passed and he must be prepared to be scrutinized by the students as well as his colleagues. We are no longer going to accept poor standards in teaching and it is essential that the student have a voice in determining the standards set for teachers.

the community

graduate students' association
The Board of Governors: GG.S.A. is with the principle of majority public membership, unaffiliated with the University as recommended in the Report. Three problems arise and must be considered.

First, public members receiving no remuneration and having alternate careers, often do not have sufficient time to devote to their university role. An example will illustrate—the G.S.A. this year submitted background information to a Board of Governors' committee on a particular issue and two persons were authorized to represent briefly the G.S.A.'s view on the matter. The two representatives found that the committee members had read their submission, and a 45 page agenda for the day. Such a situation serves to undermine confidence in Board decisions and in the Board itself. We therefore recommend that the Government remunerate its members for the time spent.

A second problem stems from the current practice of the Board of Governors of considering numerous items in camera. This prevents members of the public and of the University from understanding the Board's rationale in evolving its policies.

In order to realize the goal of public participation in educational policy recommended

by the Commission, it is essential that the Board of Governors' meetings be open to the public and that the Board clearly delineate the reasons behind its decisions.

A third problem arises from the Board's makeup. While no group so small can ever represent a cross-section of society, the current Board is heavily weighted in upper middle class high income members. Remuneration of members, as we recommend, would enable people from all income ranges to sit on the Board. We strongly recommend that the Government broaden the representation of public membership on the Board.

the academic staff association

The report indicts universities as “relatively insensitive to community and individual needs.” Sensitivity is difficult to measure. We would argue that more changes in universities have been introduced within the past decade than in any other decade since universities have existed in Alberta. The motivation for these changes has frequently been an attempt to meet the needs and concerns of the individuals within the university community and the society without. Before we plead guilty to charges of gross insensitivity and denying the “integrity and beauty” of those with whom we commune, we respectfully request evidence on which these charges are based. In formulating this request we are far from implying that all is well in the realm of academic relationships; we are suggesting that the blanket condemnation is equally invalid.

Even more seriously do we regard the charge that university faculty and the governing bodies and administrators to whom they report deliberately and consistently mislead the public and governments in over estimating the amount of time spent on teaching activities. In our review of studies devoted to the analysis of what professors do with their time we have not unearthed any evidence which would support such a charge. If the Commission has specific evidence that universities or their academic staffs have falsified returns we suggest that public remedial action be undertaken. If no such evidence exists we must regard the charge as a deliberate slur on the reputations of all Alberta university teachers, administrators and governors, certainly unworthy of inclusion in a widely distributed public document.

While agreeing with the sentiments expressed in the report, we wish to go further in saying that some aspects of our present university reflect a total lack of consideration on the part of staff for the student and the public. This is especially true in the goals and priorities which have been set. At the University of Alberta we have witnessed a continual erosion of student services, i.e. Student Health and cutback in budgets which serve not to reduce staff programmes, i.e. faculty clubs, but rather to increase class size. We agree with the statement that staff based estimates of faculty time “consistently and predictably exaggerate the total work time of faculty and the share of that time devoted to teaching” At the same time, however, we recognize the right of the academic staff to some input in determining priorities, planning, teaching loads, etc. To this end some further clarification is necessary regarding the role of lay members of the Boards of Governors. Accountability is essential but how this accountability is to be achieved is not made clear in the report. Past experience has proven that in terms of representing the public interest, lay representation on Boards has not been effective.

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fees

Fees: As the Commission indicates, there is no easy way to assess the extent fees should cover university expenses. The Commission observes that currently student fees pay about 14% of the total cost of higher education (research, teaching and administration).

Recognizing the arbitrary nature of its recommendation, the Commission goes on to recommend increasing fees to a point where about 25% of total higher education costs are absorbed by fees. Several points need to be made concerning this proposal, as they are not clarified by the Commission.

Regardless of the type of loan and grant system available, we feel that higher fees will reduce the number of students in higher education. This reduction, while constituting an unnatural control of enrollment, will largely affect students from poorer backgrounds who will see the fee as a genuine fiscal or psychological barrier to higher education. Thus the Worth Commission's goal of eliminating the subsidization of education of the richer by the poorer would be obviated and still further from realization.

First, we find it difficult to justify any fee for post-secondary education. In North America, free education up to grade 8 was not fully taken advantage of for a long period of time. At its inception, only a fraction of school-age children took advantage of it. In the near future, over half of Alberta's school-age population will continue directly into post-secondary education. We fail to see why post-secondary education should not be publicly supported and open to all in the Province as are grades 1-12. This support is not extreme, considering the extent of Federal support in this sphere.

Second, we oppose tying fees to programme costs because this might extend into specific programmes where costs are high. Numerous programmes have high immediate benefit for Alberta and have high price tags (e.g. medicine, dentistry, etc.). If students are ever charged a fraction of the cost of these programmes, rather than a fraction of an averaged cost for the university, it will make these programmes the exclusive preserve of the well-to-do.

the graduate students' association

“An increase in student fees to around the 25 percent level of program costs is warranted in the interests of equity and efficiency.”

This is an incredible statement with an equally incredible lack of factual backup. Nowhere in the whole discussion on student fees and financing is there any breakdown of programme costs, which leads us to wonder if programme costs were analyzed when this recommendation was made. We wonder whose interest in “equity and efficiency” is being served by the recommendation—it certainly is not the students.

The recommendation, if implemented, will have the effect of doubling fees for some students, if such an increase is based on what is now termed programme costs. The Students' Union recognizes that an increase in fees is inevitable but we wish to draw the government's attention to the inequity in basing an increase in fees on programme costs.

Firstly, what is a programme cost? Presumably the Commission used figures supplied to them by the university in which reference is made to the total cost of educating a student. In looking at such figures there is some evidence to support the contention that only 30-40% of the university's resources are directed towards teaching. This should be taken into account when reviewing the cost of the university operations and the portion of that cost the students should meet.

A majority of the university's budget by its own admission, (a study of the cost of university programmes 1969-70) is directed to research, community services and administrative functions, and not to teaching. Thus the portion of the university budget devoted to teaching is only a small part of programme costs. The research and community service functions are ones which benefit society as a whole and which should be funded by a broader basis of support than the student. We do not dispute the concept of students paying a reasonable portion of the cost of their education but we are concerned that they may be called upon to bear an unreasonable portion of the research and community services which the university provides. It will be an unreasonable portion if the existing definition of programme costs is applied.

the students' union



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