

the Gateway

EDITORIAL

The good fight

The province of Alberta may soon suffer cutbacks in federal post-secondary education funding, and it is squirming now with all the dignity of a spoiled child punished for stealing money from its mother's purse.

The analogy to theft is not altogether accurate; fraud would be more exact. Over the last five years Alberta has cut back its own percentage of post-secondary education funding, relying for threadbare funding increases more and more on millions in federal government grants under the Established Programs Financing Act.

Now Ottawa says it is tired of getting screwed this way by irresponsible provincial governments. Caught red-handed, and no doubt red-faced, the provinces respond that Ottawa's complaints are not more than an attempt to take control of the universities, long considered a provincial prerogative. It's shaping up to be the fight of the decade, and the ultimate losers will be students.

Prior to 1977, Ottawa funded three areas within provincial jurisdiction — health insurance, medicare, and post-secondary education — by matching whatever the provinces themselves spent on each area. By 1977 however, faced with \$1.7 billion in matching grants, the federal government substituted the 50:50 cost sharing with the Established Programs Financing (EPF) cash transfer/tax credit formula — ostensibly to save money.

This obviously has not been the case. Coming to the fifth year of the EPF arrangement this March, the federal outlay has risen ten times from \$1.7 billion to about \$17 billion.

Worse still, under the pre-1977 cost-sharing plan, Ottawa had some assurance the transfers were going into the right pockets. EPF provides no such guarantee in law, if not in principle, and predictably, irresponsible provincial governments across Canada have misused the free revenues.

The federal government, heaving under the weight of a 14 billion dollar national debt, is understandably upset. It has three main complaints: one, that post-secondary education (along with health insurance and medicare) is not even within its constitutional mandate; second, that Ottawa thus does not want to afford to fund such programs unless, at least, the funds are spent in the right places; and three, that in any case, the rich provinces especially are not contributing their fair share in the arrangements.

But let us look at some facts. The most obvious falsehood propagated by the provinces is that they have contributed their 'fair share'. Since 1977 the Alberta share of total post-secondary education funding has decreased from about 41 percent to 23 percent, with the EPF transfers making up an increasingly greater percentage of the total money spent in this province on higher education — to date, 63.6 percent.

The provincial response to federal complaints came at a first minister's conference in Victoria last June. The provinces said unequivocally that they have lived up to their side of the EPF bargain, and that the federal government is the culprit, now threatening to "shirk its responsibility to ensure sufficient funding."

To add that Ottawa is shirking its responsibility to ensure sufficient financing contradicts the very existence of the EPF debate. Far from being an impromptu budget cutting exercise, the EPF issue addresses the provinces' own irresponsibility for using federal funds to replace, not supplement, provincial money.

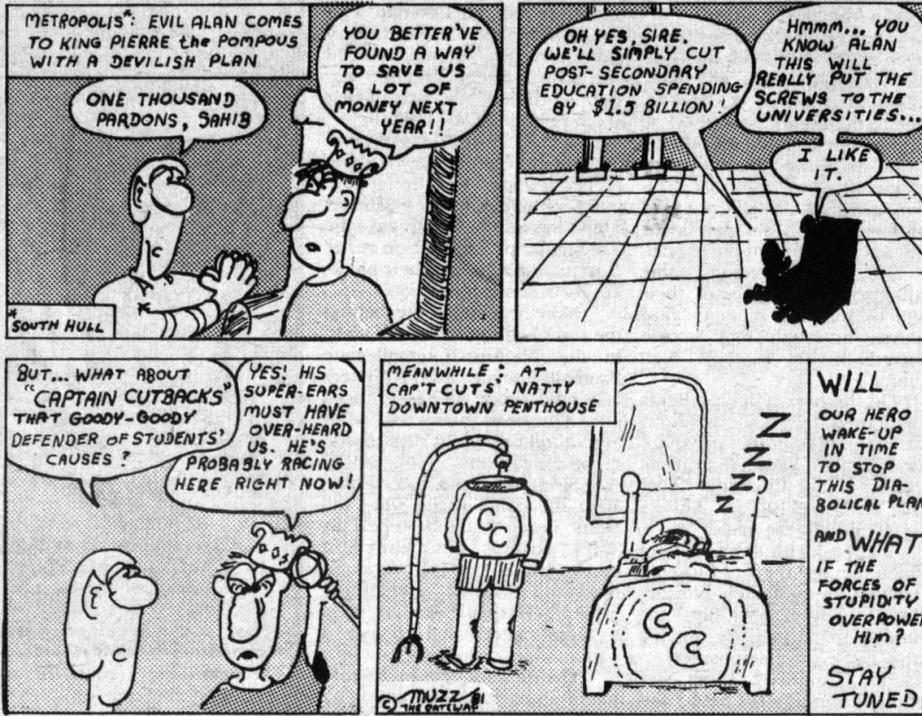
The solution to the EPF wrangle lies closely to the issues of responsibility and accountability. The recent Breau Task Force Report on EPF suggests Liberal finance minister Allan MacEachen not cut EPF funding, as he hinted he would, but emphasizes equally that the transfers continue with considerably more strings attached.

The University of Alberta is alarmed that such strings might affect its autonomy, and they very well may, in view particularly of the federal government's Task Force on Employment in the '80's which recommends that universities steer in a distinctly vocational direction. Ottawa could use EPF spending power to affect such long range goals.

But before the university worries about nebulous federal intrusions it should try to bring the Alberta government to account for real intrusions — the defrauding of millions in higher education funding.

Peter Michalshyn

CUTBACKS COMICS



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Panda name change rejected

Dear Sports Editor, Madam, Sir, or whatever you are (What's your name anyway?)

Since when did the Gateway become a crusading force? A crusade according to Funk and Wagnall involves an enterprise purportedly for the benefit of the population. The Gateway has perennially been nothing but a vehicle for unprovoked (sic) and unjustified abuse of normal peoples ideals or wishes.

At first glance I'd guess you were a jock but even a Phys Ed student thinks (and writes) somewhat more clearly than you.

So you are not going to differentiate between men and women, eh? (Does this reflect something about your sex life?)

And, you are also concerned about the popular cuddly teddy bear image of a Panda?

Well our university's female athletes are doing a fabulous job of disposing with that concept. None I know bear any resemblance to a cutesie, numb-brained female Arts student — rather they tend to be honest, down-to-earth ladies who possess very strong identities.

Besides, if, as you suggest, the name "Pandas" propogates (sic) the idea that women are the weaker sex, then it is perfectly legitimate to use the name in athletics since women are physically weaker (in general) than men.

Why I'm bothering to reply to your editorial is incomprehensible to me since only a bleeding heart liberal (like you must be)

could waste time on a cause that does not even exist for the athletes themselves.

The ladies appear to be quite proud of being a "Panda" judging by the number of jackets, t-shirts, etc. displaying a Panda logo that can be seen around campus.

So I suggest that you direct

your energies towards good reporting of both Panda and Golden Bear events rather than attempting to blow your hot air out of a non-existent horn.

With contempt,
Willard Mulberry
Elec. Eng. 2

Pandas not inferior

Dear Sports Editor:

We would like to express our appreciation for your concern regarding women's athletics at this university.

It is commendable that you value men's and women's athletics equally. However, we must confess that we are worried about some of the presumptions you have made in last Thursday's (Sept. 10, 1981) editorial.

You have assumed, first of all, that a different name used to provide distinction also implies inferiority. That is not the case.

Second, when you state "...and not the idea that women's athletics should be held separate through the maintenance of a separate identity," the implications that a separate identity creates inequality; again that is not the case.

We therefore feel that as the University Athletic Board has distinction between men's and womens athletics, it is to everyone's (athletes, spectators, the people that read your column) advantage if you were to continue

using the existing names of Golden Bears (Men's Athletics) and Pandas (Women's Athletics).

Thank you for your consideration regarding this matter. If you have any questions regarding this please feel free to contact either of us through the Athletic Services Office.

Sincerely Yours,
Tracy David,
Pres. of Womens Athletics
Dickson Wood,
Pres. of Mens Athletics

LETTERS

Letters to the Gateway should be a maximum of 250 words on any subject. Letters must be signed and include faculty, year and phone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters should be typed, although we will reluctantly accept them if they are very neatly written. We reserve the right to edit for libel and length. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gateway.

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The Gateway is the newspaper of the students of the University of Alberta. With a readership of more than 25,000 the Gateway is published by its proprietor, the Students' Union, Tuesdays and Thursdays during the winter session. Contents are the responsibility of the editor; editorials are written by an editorial board or signed. All other opinions are signed by the party expression them. Copy deadlines are noon Mondays and Wednesdays. The Gateway, a member of Canadian University Press and of CUP Media Services, is located in Room 282 Students' Union Building, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7. Newsroom — 432-5168; advertising — 432-3423.

Staff this issue: Disaster struck the Gateway media offices. The typesetting machine had obviously been sabotaged, no doubt by that insidious group of ories from the valley of the jolly (ho, ho) blue giant. John Roggeveen, Brad Drechsler, Pat Just, Dave Cox, and Jeffrey Jackson coun er attacked by correcting ype with a vengeance. Bob Kilgannon, Tom Freeland, Jordan Peterson, Gerard Kennedy and Peter Jarvis spliced together headlines with fire in their hear s. And Sandra Shaw, Murray Whitby, and Ben Yee vowed to someday expose the conspiracy. Nobody even looked back.