

# The Gateway

member of the canadian university press

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## okay, kiddies let's get down to business

The tension concerning the tuition fee increase at this university has prompted The Gateway to produce this unique, two-page extra.

The fee issue has been distorted, maligned and blown out of proportion until it erupted into the now-infamous pamphlet war between the students' council, who are the elected representatives of the students at this university and the Students for a Democratic University group who claim they "represent the majority of the students."

The clashes between these two bodies have taken on tones of childishness. The bickering has been petty and at least one collision deteriorated into a name-calling game. If they so wish, the students' council and the SDU can retreat into the back alleys and continue their bickering but it seems to us that both parties are losing sight of the student as an individual and a body.

We believe this university, and for that matter this nation, functions best when there is free and open argument on the university's course so that the people may be better informed in making judgments. Free speech strengthens a university and a nation and dissent is more than welcome.

That's why we think that this little war was fine—until it got out of hand. Both sides lost sight of the vital issue which is to present a unified and strong delegation to the bodies who are responsible for raising the fees.

That conduct and the sad contents of the pamphlets prompted The Gateway to get the facts behind the fee issue and present them in an honest and as an intelligent manner as is possible. The student, upon reading the views of the people we selected as most informed on the fee issue, should have a decent appraisal of all sides.

We believe that the once vast gap between the students and the administration is slowly vanishing. No longer are those austere committees looked upon as all-perfect and all-knowing and damn well correct in every decision made. The actions initiated by the student groups have brought the administration back to earth and the needs and wishes of the students will be given more consideration the next time fees are considered inadequate.

We believe that squabbles over who started the action on any issue are not relevant. That the student body be united—and thoroughly informed—on all pertinent issues is the essential question.

Already it is too late to halt the escalating fees for 1968-69. But it is not too early to start proper and sustained action against a similar move for 1969-70. Make bloody sure the Board of Governors is aware that you do not want increased fees in the next term. You can let them know today at 4:30 p.m. in SUB theatre and at the same time you can find out why the fees had to go up in the first place.

### Official notice

Applications are now being accepted for the position of Chairman, World University Service Committee. Applicants should reside in Edmonton this summer. Experience on previous WUS committees is desirable but not essential.

Application forms are available at the students' union office, SUB. Deadline is April 15.

Sandra Young, Secretary

## SDU say they did it

Students for a Democratic University claim to have caused the setting up of today's meeting between the Board of Governors and the students' union.

At last Friday's meeting of the B of G, a delegation from the SDU asked that such a meeting be held.

The delegation represented 50 to 100 marchers and about 2,800 students who had earlier signed an SDU petition asking for an open board meeting. Before the petitions were circulated, the students' union executive had officially discredited the SDU-sponsored march as being irresponsible.

Since the Friday action, two leaflets have been published concerning the demonstration.

The first was a presentation by the SDU outlining the background of the fee protest, which questioned why the students' council had never attempted to have an open public meeting with the B of G, especially after Labor and Education Minister Reierson's statement that the B of G was responsible for the fee raise.

The second leaflet was a statement by Marilyn Pilkington discrediting the SDU action and their leaflet. The students' union leaflet contained a letter from university president Walter H. Johns, addressed to Pilkington and SDU member Carl Jensen, stating; "We (B of G) advise the students' council that representatives of the Board are prepared to attend a public meeting to be called by the students' council to discuss and explain the problems of financing, higher education and budgetary proceedings."

Provost A. A. Ryan said: "Both pamphlets are mixing-up the efforts of a fee increase protest and are political jockeying."

He said the SDU has two goals:

- To pursue action against fee increase;
- To discredit the students' union.

Jensen said: "There are certain points about the whole fee action that need to be stated:

- "The SDU initiated both fee actions. The students' council

very reluctantly took over leadership of the march on the legislature, and only after about 800 students demanded a march to show their concern at the SDU-sponsored rally in SUB theatre.

- "Despite official students' union executive condemnation of the second fee action, more than 2,500 students signed the SDU petition to the B of G.

- "The B of G was willing to have an open meeting to discuss the budgeting at this university with the students and the provincial cabinet."

SDU members say they do not understand why council did not ask for such a meeting much earlier in the year, thereby allowing students to become aware of the situation in time to act as effectively as possible to hold the fees.

Professor Ryan said it is too late to oppose next year's fee increase as the provincial budget has already been accepted and the fee increase is part of that budget.

## SU 'remains concerned'

Students' union president Marilyn Pilkington is opposed to demonstration tactics used Friday against the Board of Governors by the Students for a Democratic University.

SDU demonstrated at Friday's Board meeting at Lister Hall in protest of the Board's decision to raise tuition fees next term.

"We feel our dispute is with the provincial government rather than with the Board of Governors," said Miss Pilkington. "It would appear that on the basis of the provincial grant the board had only two alternatives: either to raise tuition fees or lower the quality of teaching and research at this university."

The demonstrating students were led by a small and unrepresentative group of student power advocates who were using the tuition fee dispute to expand their power, she said.

Miss Pilkington charged the SDU with riding the tails of an earlier protest organized by the students' union.

"The SDU claim they obtained 2,500 signatures on their petition—which is 4,000 less than the students' union petition presented to the provincial government," noted Miss Pilkington.

"Of the SDU's 2,500 names, many were collected under false pretences because students thought they were signing students' union petitions," she charged.

"As a matter of fact, several of the petitions were given to me by students who thought they were students' union-sponsored. This confusion arose because

the SDU refused to identify their petitions, though they were asked to repeatedly," she added.

Miss Pilkington claimed the group lifted clauses from the students' union petition, then added the clause "we demand". "This is an example of the tactics they use," she said.

The meeting today in SUB theatre will be "an informative one", Miss Pilkington said. The Board of Governors requested the meeting in response to the protest Friday.

The protest led by the SDU Friday resulted not in lowering of fees, but in the Board of Governors realizing students do not understand the reasoning behind the increase, she said.

Miss Pilkington opposed the SDU action "because any confrontation now will merely damage our chances of obtaining concrete improvements" in the fee system.

The students' union is considering a number of possibilities to offset the effect on students of the fee increase. One is a detailed study of the Student Assistance Act now being undertaken.

"We are talking with Mr. C. G. Merkely, chairman of the Students Assistance Board, about improving the financial assistance available," said Miss Pilkington.

"We are in the process of negotiating student representation to the Board of Governors. There is also to be a meeting in June with the Universities Commission and the Minister of Education to discuss changes in the University Act," she said.

"The students' union remains concerned."

## Gov't money - and control

"The fee raise is an unfortunate thing, but necessary to maintain the present standard of the university," said Brian McDonald of the Universities Commission in an interview Monday.

"Look at it this way; the government is buying a product. As a buyer, it has the right to say how much it will spend," he said.

It is up to the Universities Commission to estimate the cost per student per year, then the Board of Governors decides from the margin what the fees for the year will be

"The students don't want a lower

quality of university, and a fee raise is the only alternative," he said. "If the number of students accepted each year was decreased it would not aid the situation; the government donates a statutory fee per student, so reducing the number of students would reduce the government grant."

He said 'free tuition' was a misrepresentative term. Citing the University of California situation, he said 'free tuition' students are charged \$200 in incidental fees.

In answer to the suggestion that the one per cent of the GNP

allotted to education should be increased to four per cent he said, "Money should not be given to the cause of education just for the sake of education. Also, the marginal product of a dollar becomes less as more money is made available."

If the government paid more for education than it is already paying, it would want more control over the product in which it is investing.

He said, "What the SDU really wants is an extension of the public school system. I wonder what they would say if the government agreed to pay all cost at the expense of student representation."