

EDITORIAL

Priorities for sale

American-style private funding of universities is coming to Alberta. That's the word from Advanced Education Minister Jim Horsman, who said on campus recently that the private sector should contribute a much larger share of post-secondary funding than now.

To that end, the provincial government has created the \$80 million Advanced Education Endowment Fund, which will be used over the next decade to match private donations to Alberta institutes of higher learning.

Understandably, the universities are ecstatic. They have been slowly strangling in the snare of government underfunding in recent years, so naturally they jump at the word "money," regardless of its source.

In their eagerness to raise funds through this program, however, the universities are ignoring its threat to their autonomy. It is a very rare donor indeed who will give money without asking what it will be used for: the universities know they must accept the priorities of the private sector if they wish to receive any money.

Of course, "the private sector" includes more than just big oil companies, as Horsman did not hesitate to point out. But who has the real money?

The type of programs funded under this plan are fairly predictable. The U of C received money from some petroleum companies for a special chair in exploration geophysics, the U of A has begun fundraising for a special chair in Law, and recently Safeway Canada donated money to the U of A marketing program.

Although there are exceptions (which will no doubt be milked for all they are worth), a trend is already clear: the universities are irresistibly being transformed into job factories.

In the present political climate, it is easy to lose sight of the role of universities in a democracy as centers of alternative thought and research. But a society that restricts its perceptions, that devotes most of its efforts to training this generation of lawyers, economists, teachers and managers, risks stagnation and inflexibility. Marketing programs have their place, but our universities must not lose sight of their other roles.

In a province whose wealth stems largely from luck, whose culture and entrepreneurial drive are largely imported and whose politics are stiflingly conformist, the universities could be a healthy counterbalance. They could be centers for alternative solutions and analyses of problems.

But the government sees the university as just another business entity; its task is to convert untrained people into trained people, who are then used as inputs in the outside business world. Given this concept and the government's belief that what is good for the private sector is good for all, it is natural to want the private sector to have a very direct say in the university's priorities.

But society's priorities should not be the preserve of the few who can afford to buy them. In establishing this program, the government has gone a major step further to reducing our universities to mediocrity and irrelevance.

Jim McElgunn

the Gateway

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They're out to get us, I tell you! It's worse than Reds under your bed. But we're ready... Jens Andersen was sharpening his rapier-like wit. Stephen Lamoureux, Janice Dunford, Murray Whitby, Maureen Laviolette, Cathy Emberley and Eida Hope were building a Burmese tiger trap in Media. If that didn't work, Erwin Rommel, Simone Garneau, Sylvia Betts, Greg Harris and Wes Oginski had gone to get a Burmese tiger. Tom Freeland, Gabriel Branco and Brent Jeffery had made a secret deal with Upper Volta to buy atomic spears. Kent Blinston and Michael Skeet were holding each other hostage in the darkroom and demanding the SU release \$12 billion in Gateway assets. Send in the cavalry??? Hell, send in the men in white!

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ITEM: SOPER SLATE CLEANS-UP



Thanks to all who helped...

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Phil Soper and his slate on their win in last week's general election. We would also like to sincerely thank the many people who supported us and our successful Board of Governors representative, Ken Lawson-Williams, both as campaign workers and at the polls on Friday.

In addition, though, we would like to ask all those of you who worked for us to pull together and support our new executive-in their efforts to maintain and improve the Students' Union. In this regard, we wish them every success.

It has also been very reassuring to see the way in which the

student body reaffirmed its commitment to the Students' Union as well as the other students of this province by approving both referenda. And for all those future prospective candidates, we recom-

mend the election as a sure way to lose weight.

Bob Kirk
Joanne Stiles
Tim Marriott
Dariel Dent
Cheryl Donnelly
Ken Lawson-Williams

... and likewise from us

The mandate given to our slate in Friday's Students' Union election was particularly heartening given the excellent voter turnout. I would like to extend our thanks to those of you who took the time to become acquainted with the issues, and a special nod to the people who worked so hard on our campaign.

I hope that the interest exhibited at the polls is indicative

of an increased student awareness on campus. During the next two months, your faculty will be opening nominations for representatives to sit on Students' Council and General Faculties Council. The time commitment is minimal and the rewards substantial; I encourage you to become involved.

Phil Soper for the Students' Union Executive elect

Risks simply are not worth it

Robert Morewood (*Gateway*, January 29) is living in a dreamworld. His cogent and persuasive arguments outlining the harmlessness of nuclear power might have been culled from a Pentagon dossier. It is hardly surprising that newsmen from Japan and elsewhere were present after the explosion at Three Mile Island, since a cover-up by the U.S. press or government would have been tantamount to denying that Mount St. Helens had ever erupted.

The simplistic comment that "there has never been a fatal accident in the nuclear industry" poses several questions: what are his sources of information? Is there a 'hotline' between managers of nuclear power plants and Mr. Morewood? Is there any reason to suppose that nuclear energy will not give rise to lethal diseases as yet unknown to us? Should we be willing to take such risks in the first place?

I feel compelled to comment on Mr. Morewood's assertion that "a press cover-up is ludicrous." The U.S. news services are rapidly becoming among the most dis-



torted and unreliable in the world. Why should we believe a press that can convince its countrymen that the release of fifty-two spies should be an occasion for national rejoicing? A press that can self-righteously condemn Soviet in-

tervention around the world and yet pay no attention to U.S. aid to the tyrannical government of El Salvador?

Mr. Morewood should not be condemned, however, for his naivety. It is comforting to imagine that the world around us is a safe and secure place in which to live. Unfortunately, the reality is quite different.

Brian Cohen
Arts III

Not silly or vacuous

It's sad when a group of openminded beautiful girls are slandered by those they tried so hard to please.

Misters Koch, White & Brucite (engineers all) contend that the young ladies of Delta Gamma fraternity, who took part in Engineering Week festivities, are products of "... a farm system for silly vacuous women who enjoy exhibiting themselves." You ask girls to dance in your kicklines and parade themselves in a beauty contest and have the gall to call them 'vacuous' and

'silly'! What hypocrisy!

The women of Delta Gamma fraternity have, for decades, helped the needy, the retarded and the blind. I suggest they add myopic engineers to their list.

Dear ladies of Delta Gamma, Koch and company need you! But alas, it may be too late. Their muffled cries for help and the severity of their short sightedness can mean only one thing — they are suffering from (Oh, God, No!) Headuptheanusitis.

Ted Howe
Arts II