

# FAS bashes government tightwads



By Richard Watts

The Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) is attempting to raise the profile of education issues in the up-coming provincial election.

"We think it is important that

students start quizzing the candidates on education issues particularly in this riding (Edmonton Strathcona) in order to make an intelligent voting decision," says FAS president Don Millar.

## AIESEC donates time to University Games

by Allison Annesley

Looking on while well-toned bodies perform what they do best will occupy some fun-starved foreign business students for part of this summer.

As part of a special project for the 25th anniversary of the International Association for Students of Economics and Commerce (AIESEC) members will be donating two weeks of their time to the World University Games during an exchange project.

Jerry Morgan, national AIESEC president, is presently in Edmonton as part of a western region tour to promote the organization's 25th anniversary.

Says Morgan, "AIESEC bridges the gap between what we learn in university and the business community."

The 4500 member organization serves as a practical training ground for business students who may work 2-18 months in their fields of expertise on foreign exchange programs before graduation. AIESEC also presents professional seminars on various job-related topics and offers an informal meeting ground for students and companies during Career Days. Companies are invited to campuses during Career Days to discuss job opportunities within their firms.

Says Morgan, "The western region (of AIESEC) is the strongest part of Canada. It's raised the largest number of members and has the

largest attendance at Career Days."

Topics presented in AIESEC seminars include time management, organization skills, communication for leaders, and how to run a meeting. Job stress, office politics, and sexual harassment have never been discussed as part of the program, though Edmonton chapter president Wendy Woolf believes they would be, if members demonstrated enough of an interest.

AIESEC students may have background in economics, marketing, accounting, business, finance, or computing science. The foreign exchange program sends one Canadian student overseas for every job opportunity they solicit here for a foreign student. The business theme of AIESEC caters more to commerce and economics students, though many science students involve themselves in the program just for the management seminars and company contacts.

"AIESEC helps students still in their first or second year to gain confidence in themselves with members of the business community in a professional manner," says Woolf. Where a student may not otherwise meet a company president for five or six years, through AIESEC he or she can go to his or her office and present the product of AIESEC while trying to solicit jobs for foreign students."

AIESEC funds itself in three main ways: private sector donations, government related assistance, and internal fund-raising activities.

Millar claims that the education issues centre around the phenomena of bad economic times, increased enrollment in post secondary schools and the inadequacy and inefficiency of the Student Aid program in coping with the problems.

"In these times people feel the need to upgrade their skills so naturally there is an increase in enrollment, and that is putting a real strain on the Student Aid Program," says Millar.

Millar says that the "tribal feuding" between the federal government and the provincial governments coupled with demands by banks for higher interest rates are putting students in a bad position.

Millar explains the banks want a higher interest rate given them on student loans. The current interest rate is tied to the interest rate on Canada Savings Bonds and is under the control of the federal government.

Millar claims the banks are deliberately making the Student Aid System "harder to work" in order to increase pressure on the federal government to raise the interest on student loans.

One method the banks are using to make the student aid system harder to work is a new policy of disallowing student loans unless the loan recipient has an established account at the bank where the loan is negotiated. This policy is not advertised.

Banks are also centralizing the branches where student loans can be negotiated. In general the banks are

moving the loan processing centres away from the schools themselves.

"With the banks trying to negotiate a higher interest rate and the Feds and the Provinces squabbling over who should be responsible for the tab, students are being caught right in the middle," says Millar.

Millar also says that a policy of partial grants - partial loans would ease the burden on the students.

Millar says that at this moment the remission program in Alberta is a type of grant system. Students who have a student loan are eligible to have a portion of their loan waived once they have graduated.

"This policy of remission, however, just increases the uncertainty of the students and also increases the bureaucracy necessary to administer the program; an out-and-out partial grant system would be much better," says Millar.

The provincial government has started a grant system in at least one area. The Alberta Educational Opportunity Equalization Program provides grants for a very limited number of students most of whom come from rural backgrounds.

However, Millar says that an overall grant/loan policy is still necessary, and would not cost a great deal more.

At present, after a loan has been negotiated, the government pays the interest on that loan while the student is attending school. If the student is granted a loan remission then Millar feels paying the interest on that loan has been a waste of money.

A system of grants would eliminate the payment of the interim interest and since many students are in fact granted remission anyway the cost would not be significantly greater.

Millar also says the Federal Government wishes to see their money being used more visibly.

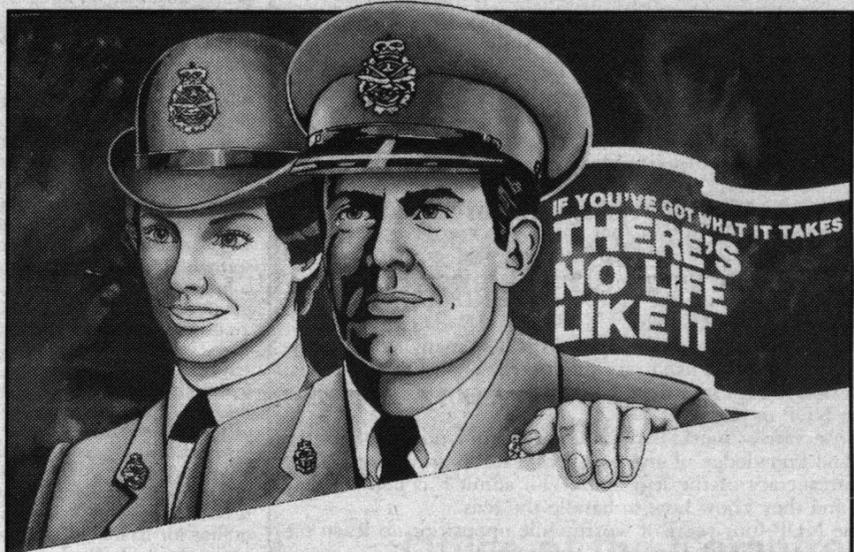
Right now the Federal Government supports post secondary Education through Established Programs Financing (EPF).

"But right now it's rumored that the feds are planning on introducing some new federal bursary program. This coupled with the National Training Act will allow them (the federal government) to transfer money in a way which is much more visible to the public," says Millar.

Millar fears that money currently going through EPF will be reduced; as money is spent in more high profile areas.

"The provincial government have agreed to make up any losses in EPF that the federal government default on. But with the money going through in other areas, the argument that funds are not being cut back will probably be made by both governments. In the end, Education will suffer and students will pay the price," says Millar.

Millar adds, "The Edmonton Strathcona riding has a substantial student population and we as students in the Federation (of Alberta Students) want the candidates to start answering to the problems that exist in education."



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