

Cost: \$4.5 Million & Interest Should SUB Plans Be Scrapped?

It appears that Students' Union Building Expansion is becoming more of an issue as plans for it progress. Various criticisms have been levelled at specifics contained in the general proposal.

But Robert Gillespie, law 2, has researched and developed an analysis of the principle underlying SUB Expansion. His article, below, is levelled at the principle and criticizes the direction of SUB Expansion.

The writer believes that Students' Council should re-consider the whole project and perhaps scrap the whole plan in its present form.

An Appeal to Students' Council and the SUB Expansion Committee

It was with some satisfaction that I left last week's open meeting at which a report on the proposed SUB expansion was presented. I was impressed with the thoroughness and quality of the planning. The presentation itself was also well done; many questions were asked and solid answers were received from the planners. The entire proposal, from design philosophy to financing, seemed sound and my earlier doubts were assuaged.

My feeling of satisfaction continued until the next day when by chance I had coffee with a number of professors and SUB expansion became the topic. The questions and comments of these people left me wondering; not about the quality of the actual planning, but about the entire perspective in which the principles behind SUB expansion have been approached.

Enough Distractions

I feel their comments are worth passing on. One professor made a statement to the effect that there were already enough distractions on this campus without the Students' Union adding to them. Another said, "I'm all in favor of legitimate Students' Union activities, but supporting bowling and curling is going too far even if they do pay for themselves." A third point of view was: "It's public money that sends these people to university and they already have better recreational facilities than most of the 92% of their age-group that never reach university. The public will never go for this."

Another opinion was that there is practically no academic attitude among the undergraduate students at this university and this new building will not improve the situation. It was generally maintained that there must be a better way to spend four million dollars, and that the failure rate at this university is already too high and more billiard tables will not help.

Purpose Questioned

These criticisms and comments caused me to think about the whole purpose of the Students' Union and the SUB expansion. Unfortunately the Students' Union Constitution does not contain a statement of the purpose of student government; but if it may be assumed to be—to help students obtain a greater personal and academic benefit from their university education (education being used in the broadest sense)—then I seriously question the present expansion plans as being the best possible way to achieve this end.

At present this university's administration has insufficient funds for needed capital expansion. This is shown by the cramped offices, the shortage of laboratories and equipment, the lack of a decently large book-

store, and the frugal standards of the new residences. This financial situation means that our physical campus is incapable of providing the desired university atmosphere. The Students' Union could serve the student body as a whole by using all or part of their proposed capital borrowings of four million dollars to ameliorate this atmosphere and still satisfy most of the worthwhile purposes of SUB expansion. Some examples follow.

Lounge Space

The need for lounge space is stated as one of the reasons for SUB expansion. If the administration provided one or two suitable rooms in each major building on campus the Students' Union could redecorate them and furnish them graciously to create a proper lounge atmosphere, at least as pleasant as the small lounges in Athabasca. These rooms would be used more frequently than central facilities since they would be where the students spend most of their time—in the academic buildings. They would also be perfect for small meetings in the evenings.

Similarly, the Students' Union could outfit pleasant lunch rooms in three or four of the major buildings. These areas could be versatile enough to serve as study rooms or coffee rooms during the non-meal hours. A larger area such as the Faculty of Education has provided for students could also be improved with Students' Union money—brought up to Lister Hall standards and operated along the same lines as the present SUB cafeteria.

Pay As You Go

In exchange for leasing such space to the Students' Union the administration could be given a lump sum with which it could carry out capital expansion to replace the leased areas. Each new building on campus could be planned with provisions for such an arrangement. This approach would mean that facilities would be provided where and as the student population warranted, and would not have to be paid for all at once.

With a further portion of the proposed capital borrowings the Students' Union could renovate the existing SUB. With the faculty lounge and the billiard room removed, space would be available to house the more important Students' Union activities such as Evergreen and Gold, The Gateway, Signboard, Photo Directorate and Students' Union offices. The billiard room could serve as a common office, storage and work area for many clubs and committees not needing full time office space. All or part of the building might be air-conditioned, the cafeteria brought up to Lister Hall standards and the existing lounges greatly improved. If such a renovation was carried out, we would obtain much more benefit from the building and it would be sufficient for many years.

Study Space Lacking

In spite of the administration's efforts, this campus is short of study space for day students. The new residences provide good study conditions for students, but nothing comparable exists for students with unfavorable study conditions at home or in their boarding houses. Witness the people studying in the unsuitable spaces between rooms in the V wing.

If student funds were used to partition off one-half of these alcoves and equip them as study carrels the Students' Union would really have helped the students it is supposed to serve. Other small areas might be found in other buildings and altered in a like manner. Which is more important, convenient recreational facilities or decent study conditions for students needing them?

So far I have dealt with decentralized or existing facilities, but a major portion of the available funds could be used to provide new central facilities, some of which are already included in the proposed plans. Student capital could build a real academic bookstore and relieve the administration of a project that might otherwise be many years away.

Print Shop

If such a building was built on the site of the proposed SUB it could include a basement suitable for the university printing shop, also in dire need of space. The lobby of such a building could double as a bus waiting room—thus incorporating another of the present SUB expansion proposals. If funds were available a second floor could be added initially. It could house a theatre, an art centre, the NES, a dining room to replace "Hot Caf" or any other facility with a legitimate claim to Students' Union support.

This building would be student owned, yet largely paid for by rent received. It could be constructed so as to be the first half of a larger student building, to be built when needed.

Most people at university do not become particularly good students, yet our academic performance—especially if we fail—will greatly determine our future lives. I for one want to pass much more than I want to curl, and I firmly believe that if the Students' Union directed its efforts and money towards expanding its services in some or all of the ways suggested, thousands of students would receive far more benefit from their Students' Union than if the money is used to erect a centralized complex leaning heavily towards recreational facilities.

Which Do You Prefer?

If you were a student five or ten years from now, which would you prefer, a large new SUB and the same bare campus, or a better university; with the present SUB renovated, a large bookstore, and other student facilities throughout the campus? You would not have a big union building in the American style, but you would have all the other buildings that had taken on character and atmosphere because of the efforts of your Students' Union.

The administration of this university has always had the good faith in the Students' Union to allow them to manage their own affairs and even make their own mistakes. I hope this faith is not dissolved by watching the Students' Union commit itself to a four million dollar project that

Richard McDowall's Musings



Yesterday, while in conversation with a friend of mine a thought came to me which often comes at this time of year. Many of us who do not live in Edmonton proper will be leaving the university for a two-week vacation during the Christmas holidays. Some people look forward to this holiday to do some of the things they have planned for some time. Others do not enjoy their holidays as much for they feel that they must study for the coming mid-term exams. Now the thought that came to me was about those activities that we like to while on holiday.

A family at home have two children at university who both go home for Christmas. One of the interesting activities that this family does is the yearly cutting-down of a Christmas tree. This is not just an ordinary job of cutting down an evergreen tree. It involves both young and old and it generally involves most of one day tramping around in the mountain snows.

These people are not just out looking for a tree for the front room—they are out with the snowflakes and the steel air, out of the house of blaring TV's and records and out into the wonderful landscape that surrounds them. They come back from their expedition tired, (for one has to do a lot of searching to find the proper tree), sometimes wet but always happy. There is often not much difference in many landscapes but from seeing these people I think there is a great difference in the viewers and what they behold.

I thought this idea of going out into the hills and procuring a Christmas tree by the whole family would be a splendid idea for those people who are trying to figure out what to do over the holidays. To all readers of The Gateway—a Happy Christmas and who knows that perhaps we will meet under the same tree.

Adam Campbell



Short and Sour

Campbell's Reality

In the beginning, there was Pi. Pi was everything—all matter, all intelligence.

And it came to pass that Pi created creatures in his own image and likeness, to share in him. These creatures continued in great felicity within him until, with Faust-like foolishness, they refused him recognition.

Overcome with passion in his self-righteousness, Pi gathered these creatures onto one segment of his kingdom and hurled it into space. Pi called this segment Earth—and darkness engulfed Earth.

But Pi had compassion for his castaways, and provided an ingenious plan through which these creatures might redeem themselves. He gave them the sun to expel the darkness and to bring forth inhabitation of three specific organisms—man, monkey and ass. These creatures could regain the Kingdom of Pi. This process came to be known as the transmigration of souls.

But some darkness still persisted on Earth, and plagued the creatures with fear. Having yet therefore more compassion, Pi provided a mediator between himself and Earth, which reflected the radiance of his love. This was the moon.

It came to pass that this smiling sphere inspired love between these creatures of desolation. This love created an anxiety within the spirit of the creature Man, to be reunited with Pi. In eagerness, Man's spirit attempted to bypass the trans migratory sequence of monkey and ass, reaching Pi through the mere imitation of their respective behaviour. To forward this goal, Man set up institutions of religion.

Since that time, the creature Man has been in constant conflict regarding the behaviour which most resembles that of the ass. However, in the midst of its braying and confusion, Mankind's goal remains the same: he is reaching for Pi in the sky.

creates only marginal benefits, while really worthwhile alternatives are put aside. I, for one, would gladly walk five blocks to go bowling if it meant a better university.

As the professors said, there are already enough distractions to assist failure and not enough facilities conducive to passing. Too much good human potential is wasted at this university as it is, without the Students' Union planning something that will worsen rather than improve the present situation. Admittedly, it is not the duty of the Students' Union to perform the administration's functions (such as providing study space), but the fact that helping the student body involves complementing the administration's efforts is no reason not to carry out projects such as those suggested above.

Major Revision Needed

For these reasons, I ask that Council re-consider its entire position with regard to the ex-

pansion of Students' Union facilities. Why was it apparently assumed that all Students' Union facilities ought to be in one building? Why was the creation of more convenient recreational facilities considered to be so important an object of student government?

A major change in direction will take a great deal of personal and political courage from those of you who have already committed yourselves so heavily to the present form of expansion, spent a sizable amount of money, and done so much work in good faith; BUT if you sincerely want to fulfill your duties and better serve your fellow students, I earnestly request you to re-consider your position and change the direction of your thinking before irrevocable commitments are made.

Such a decision should be made and made promptly.

R. Gillespie