

"The closest to perfection a person ever comes..."

The Gateway

Thursday, September 27, 1984

is when he fills out a job application form."

Stanley J. Randall

International Centre opens

by Suzette C. Chan

The International Students Centre (ISC) opens its doors this weekend not only to international students, but all students, faculty and members of the community outside the university.

ISC co-ordinator Barry Tonge says the new organization was established by the University of Alberta in conjunction with the Canadian International Development Agency to serve a variety of community needs.

"It will act as a drop-in centre for international students as well as Canadian students," says Tonge. The new ISC is located at 11023-90 Ave.

Individuals who stop by the centre can obtain information on assistance to international students, work abroad programs, and existing services available to international students. There will also be a resource library.

But Tonge says the centre will be more than an information clearing house.

"We want to organize social and cultural events, seminars, and an International Students Awareness Week," says Tonge.

In addition, Tonge says he wants the centre to eventually take up research projects and develop programs.

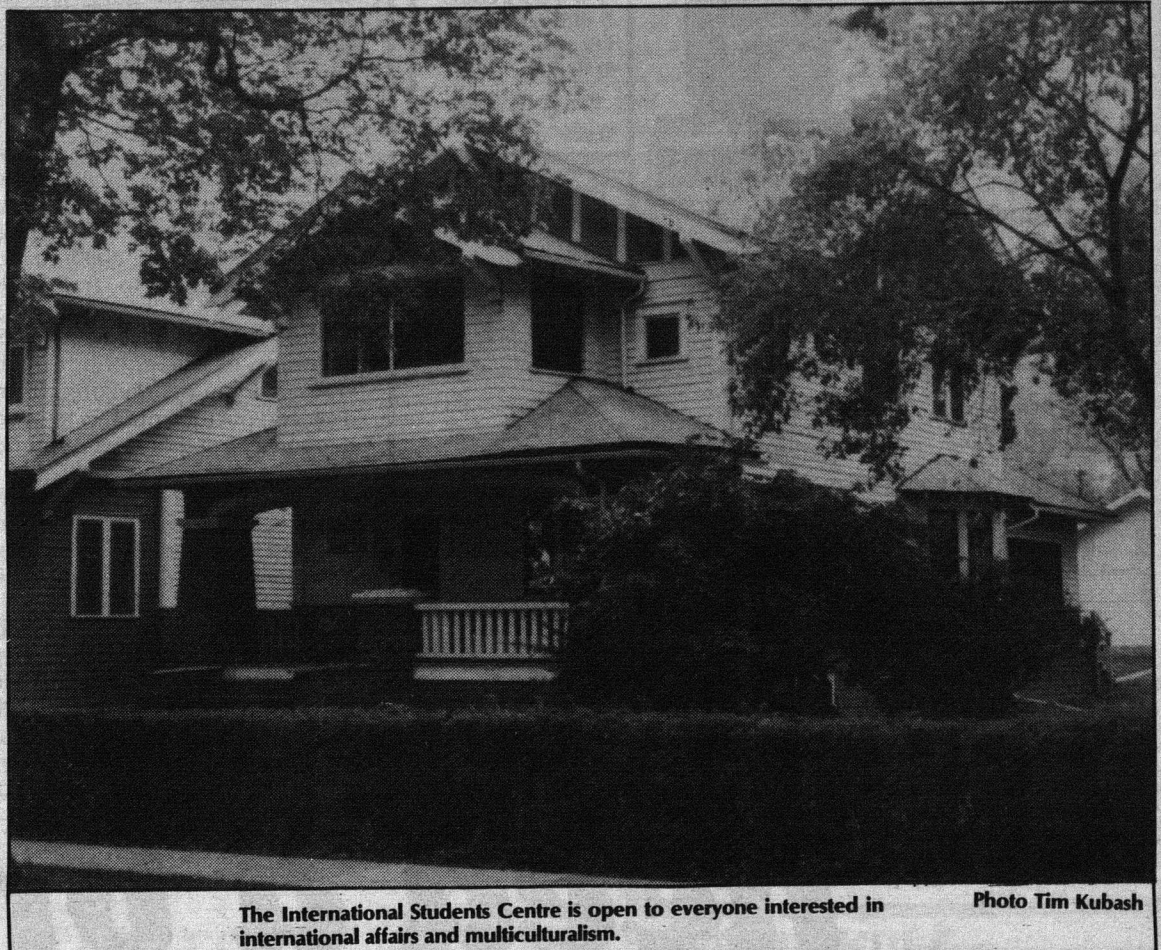
"We would like to embark on developmental education programs with grad students assisting," he says. "In the past, topics in this area included Women's Roles in Third World Countries."

Tonge adds the centre will assist and co-ordinate other international students groups and clubs.

Tonge says with 102 countries represented by 1700 students on campus, the imminent opening of the ISC house is "exciting".

Tonge says, "Ideally, we want to reach as many students as we can."

The official opening ceremonies of the International Students Centre house will be on Oct. 1 at 10 am. An open house tour and a reception will follow.



The International Students Centre is open to everyone interested in international affairs and multiculturalism.

Photo Tim Kubash

Rollie Cook says SU crying wolf

by Suzette C. Chan

An Alberta MLA has accused the Students' Union of acting like "a youngster who cried wolf"; for its attempt to sue the University of Alberta over the imposition of quotas.

Rollie Cook, MLA for Edmonton Glengarry, offered "some advice as

a fellow politician" to SU VP Academic Donna Kassian in a letter dated August 21.

The Students' Union wanted to launch a court injunction against the quota set by the university which would have restricted first-year admission to 4500.

The court ruled against the SU

on August 17, saying the quotas were legal. Students' Council decided not to appeal the verdict after an emergency meeting.

Criticizing the SU's legal action, Cook, who could not be reached for comment, related the story of the boy who cried wolf.

"There was once a youngster

who often cried wolf and scared the neighbors, just for fun," he wrote. "Finally, a day came when there was a wolf but when he cried out, no one believed him."

The moral of the story was that "credibility as a politician is very precious."

"Be careful when you try to

convince people of a case when you haven't got the facts to back it up," Cook advised.

But Kassian does not believe the SU was merely crying wolf.

"I don't think that was done at all," she said in an interview. "There is a problem at the university. The quotas were set too late for Grade 12 students to plan ahead."

"I think we did have the facts to back up our argument," she added. "They may not have been as well developed as they could have been, but I think we could have appealed it."

Cook also pointed out an apparent contradiction between Kassian and Hodgins on the level of funding at the U of A.

Cook referred to a statement by Kassian that "there appears to be a lack of funds" and implications in a press release written by SU President Floyd Hodgins.

"Floyd Hodgins seems to be saying that is no shortage, in fact funding at the University of Alberta is the most generous of any in Canada," Cook wrote.

Kassian commented, "I would not go so far as to say we have enough funding, (although) there is always a need for more money. Certain faculties need more than others. We always need more money to allocate."

Kassian also disagrees with Cook's statement on quotas.

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Writing test "really useful"

by Neal Watson

Testing and Remediation Chair Dr. Lorna McCallum says it is "beside the point" to blame anyone for the existence of writing competency exams.

McCallum says, "To place blame on teachers or anyone is to miss the proportion of the problem."

McCallum says her department is providing a "really useful service to students."

The writing competency exams were introduced in 1979 to test the

adequacy of the writing skills of new applicants to university, especially high school students.

The exam was not made mandatory until last term. Students entering the U of A in the 1984-85 term are required to write and pass the competency exam within two years or one year for transfer students.

The exam is a standard provincial exam, McCallum said. The University of Lethbridge, University of Calgary and Athabasca College all conduct the exam. In fact, most

universities across Canada employ writing competency exams, said McCallum.

McCallum said the exams are evaluated on the basis of a common standard. The exams are graded on the basis of 7 areas including content, structure, paragraphing, sentence errors grammar, word use, spelling and punctuation. Students are either graded satisfactory, marginally satisfactory or unsatisfactory and student must fail two areas to receive an unsatisfactory grade.

Writing the exam costs the student \$15 and if the student is graded "unsatisfactory," he must take an 18-hour, \$60 remedial course and then re-write the exam. The University plans to institute the exam as an entrance requirement by 1987.

Following an unsatisfactory performance on the exam, the student will be interviewed by an instructor in the department to clear up any errors.

The necessity of conducting these exams at all has been questioned recently in light of the evaluation process high school students must undergo to enter university.

At present, high school students must pass the English 30 examinations set up by English teachers and the Provincial government's departmental exams.

A recent letter published by the *Edmonton Journal* questioned how a student who received excellent marks in high school English could be graded "marginally satisfactory"

by the writing competency.

McCallum said the grade did not necessarily mean the student was a poor writer, only that certain areas needed improvement.

McCallum stressed that there is a considerable range to the marginally satisfactory grade and critics must understand the difference in marking emphasis between the English 30 exams and the writing competency exams.

The high school evaluation was based more on content, while the writing competency stressed composition skills, said McCallum.

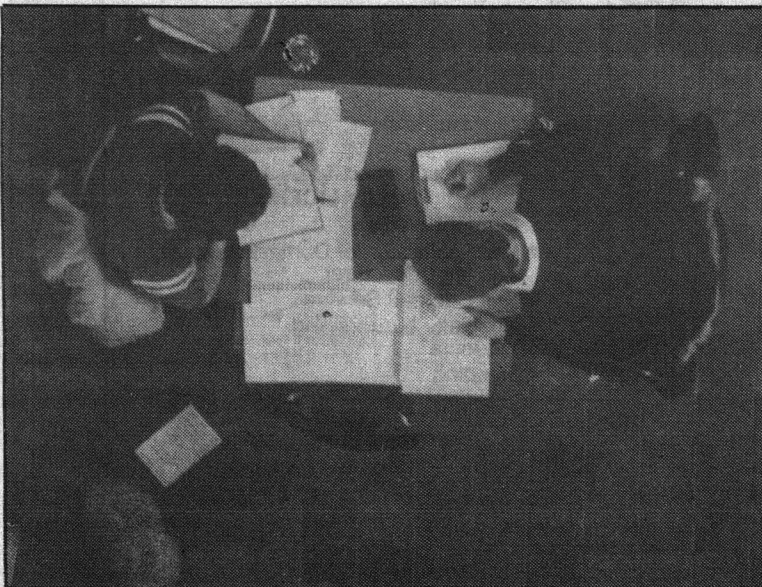
McCallum said she is "fully confident the marking standard is reasonable."

And although McCallum admitted the failure rate is high, she stressed it was improving.

In 1979, the failure rate was 52 per cent and this year approximately 33 per cent of students failed the exam. McCallum said the increase reflected the fact that students were coming to the exam prepared.

"Students are taking it seriously," she said, and "for the most part, the reaction is really positive." McCallum said the exam and the course were helpful exercises.

Academic Associate VP R.D. Bercov said the ideal was to make the exams "So successful we don't have to use them." Bercov said he was "hopeful the way high school students are examined will change enough so we will not need to employ competence exams."



Testing and Remediation Chair McCallum says the writing competency test failure rate is dropping because students are better prepared for them.

Sorry!

Boy did we blow it! In our front page story Tuesday on Edmonton's first ever Dreamquest (a live role playing game) we forgot to tell you where you can sign up.

Well, you can call Unicorn Enterprises at 482-3704 till this evening to make your reservations. Unicorn Enterprises is located the Scheme A-Dream office at #210-12306 Jasper Avenue.