

# Agenda for the University of Alberta



...s concerns during a commercial break in a radio talk show broadcast from SUB.

## New U of A President officially installed on Wednesday

by Teresa Pires

Dr. Paul Davenport announced that the University's mission was one of leadership and research Wednesday at his installation as President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Alberta.

Davenport foresees the "advancement and transmission of knowledge" as the University's long term mission, while accessibility and research are the immediate challenges.

Davenport committed himself to accessibility, but stressed "access to quality higher education that we can all be proud of." In the area of research, he was "concerned that budgetary problems may undermine the excellence of research" but was determined to maintain the reputation which has been built. According to Davenport, a program of Ph.D. recruitment fellowships is necessary to accomplish his goals.

"The fundamental strength of the Uni-

versity is the people," said Davenport, who later paid tribute to his predecessor by claiming that the "healthy state of collegiality reflects the strength of my predecessor, Dr. Myer Horowitz."

Representatives from 38 of Canada's degree-granting institutions were in attendance to congratulate Davenport. Strathcona M.P. Scott Thorkelson offered his congratulations on behalf of the federal government. Thorkelson read a message from the Prime Minister, who wished Davenport success in his "role as the guarantor of excellence for which this institution has been internationally recognized."

Among those present to congratulate Davenport were Jon Gogo, Minister of Advanced Education, Dr. Claude Lajeunesse, Executive Director of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, and the President of the U of A's sister institution in Japan.

### On accessibility

We want to offer a quality education to as many Albertans as possible, but our problem is that we have accepted substantial numbers of students over the past decade for which adequate funding was not available. From 1979-80 to 1989-90 the number of full-time undergraduate students rose by 41%. During that same time, the number of regular full-time faculty positions rose by only 7%. That is the problem we face in maintaining a quality of education. It has led to larger class sizes, more courses being taught by instructors who are not regular full-time faculty.

We've reached the point where this imbalance between new students and regular full-time faculty positions is critical. It's our judgement — and I think that this is widely shared among the senior academics in the institution — that we need to put some controls on entry into our undergraduate programs.

I think there are those who think that we are too big, independent of budgetary constraints, and that we should be smaller. There are others who would be delighted to accept more students if the budgetary funding were available. I'm still learning the ropes here and still discussing these issues with the deans and the chairman, but I suppose my initial reaction would be to put myself in the second group and say that if the province of Alberta is prepared to fund us adequately for the numbers that we currently have, and then to provide full cost funding for additional students, then we would be interested in finding ways to accommodate those additional students.

I suppose what's wrong is that, as a province, we only have a limited amount of resources. I believe firmly that more money should be put into higher education in the province, but that's difficult for the government. There are other urgent needs.

### On tuition

The figure of tuition as 20% of total university costs came about in an interview with a local newspaper in which I referred to the draft policies of *The Next Decade and Beyond*, which was, roughly, that tuition fees should be raised, but that they should be no higher than 20%. I simply cited the document. When a local newspaper produced the interview, it came across that I was setting a target of 20%.

I have been discussing this issue with my fellow presidents at the three other universities in Alberta. We met last week (the week of September 18) for the regular Universities Coordinating Council meeting, and we reached an agreement on a position that satisfies the four presidents. This position has not been approved by any of the boards, so it's simply an expression of opinion by the four presidents. We suggested the target for tuition fees in the immediate future in Alberta be to reach the national average over a period of about three years. Supposing our fees are about \$1100, and the national average is something like \$1700, that would involve a staged increase over three years of something like \$200 per year. We consider this a reasonable approach to the tuition issue.

There are certainly needy students who could not cope (with the increase), and part of our proposal would be to set aside a portion of the revenues from increased fees to strengthen loans and bursaries. I think, however, that there are students and their families who can afford to pay those higher fees, and moreover, that many of our students are anxious to see an increase in the quality of education, and I think that fees will be part of ensuring the high-quality education that they want.



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