

**Gil McGowan**

## Postcard protest campaign misguided

For the last four or five years students and their representatives have been fighting vehemently against cutbacks in education funding. Every year since 1984, angry student leaders have given speeches, organized rallies and circulated petitions in an effort to persevere the quality and accessibility of our post-secondary institutions.

This fall, however, the war against cutbacks on the U of A campus has taken a different focus. While other student leaders in Alberta do battle with the provincial government, our campus leaders have decided to attack the University administration instead.

Anyone who passed through the Butterdome on registration day knows about this new campaign. We were all given postcards addressed to Don Getty, demanding that he put a stop to the University's "unlimited assessment of extra fees."

But, is it fair to blame the University administration for the rising cost of education? Are they really trying to make university education less accessible?

Judging from the efforts made by former president Myer Horowitz to get more funding for post-secondary education, it would be unfair to conclude that the University is trying to shaft its own students.

Rather, it seems that our administrators are only doing what they can to maintain standards with a shrinking budget.

After all, it wasn't the Board of Governors who slashed funding for capital construction and replacement by 53 per cent last year.

And, it wasn't the University administration who approved an education budget that did not even keep pace with inflation.

The real villain in this situation is the provincial government.

If it were not for the funding restrictions imposed by the Conservative government, the University would not have been forced to assess extra fees or formulate a list of spending priorities. With adequate funding the Board of Governors would not have been forced to put library books before residence halls and they might have been able to avoid quotas and hiring freezes.

While the SU must be commended for its zeal, their latest campaign is certainly misguided. By focusing their attacks on the University administration, the SU is making it easier for the provincial government to abdicate its responsibility.

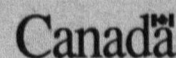
The war against cutbacks continues but, unfortunately, our executive has aimed its guns in the wrong direction.

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