

Students are still looking further afield for accommodation.

Vacancy rate sinks to new low

by Glenn St-Germain

For the first time in years, University of Alberta Residences are full. The six on-campus residences all report that they are full with waiting lists.

David Bruch, director of Housing and Food Services, said this fall is the first time in "eight or nine years" that the residences were full.

"This is the first time in years that we have had a waiting list for accommodation," he said.

The surprise is Lister Hall, which traditionally has had vacancies. As of yesterday, Lister Hall was full, with a waiting list of 90. It has a capacity of 1200.

Other residences are also full with sizeable waiting lists. Pembina Hall, which can accommodate 136 students, has a waiting list of 50. The residence at Faculte St. Jean, with space for 89, has a waiting list of 30. HUB, Garneau, and Michner Park also report long waiting lists.

Linda Logan, housing co-ordinator at Housing and Food Services, said that the waiting list at Lister is moving, but not the other residences.

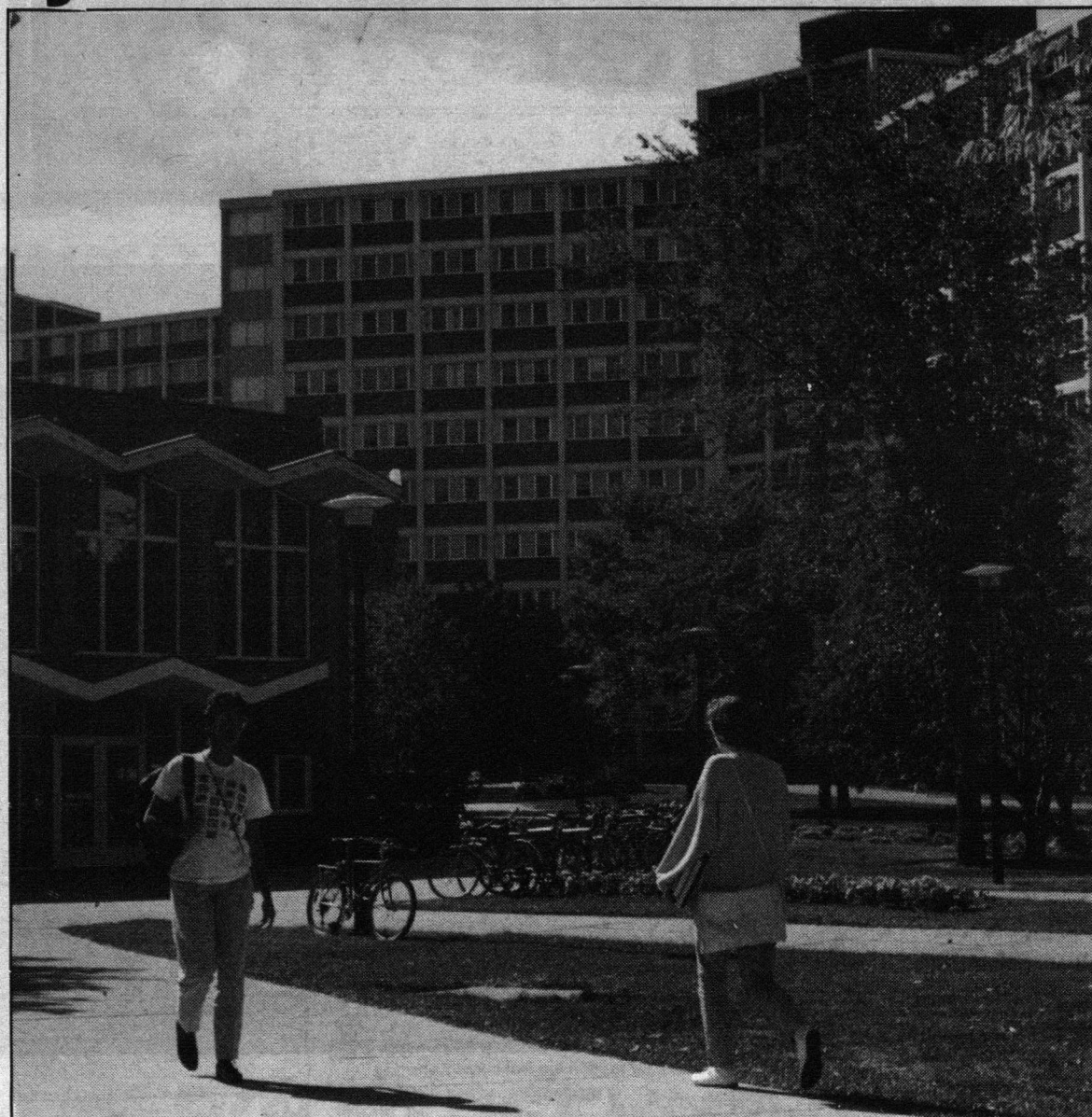
"Most of those on the list will get in," she said about Lister. "It might take up to the end of September."

According to Bruch, Lister Hall is experiencing "a number of cancellations and no-shows", which is normal for September.

However, the prognosis at the other residences is not as bright. Some of those on the waiting lists for Pembina Hall and Faculte St. Jean are being accommodated at Lister Hall, and will be the first to fill vacancies at these residences.

Generally speaking, though, many students will have to look for housing off-campus.

Andrew Fredericks, the Students' Union Housing and Transport Commissioner, attributed the



Lister Hall residence filled

photo by Rob Schmidt

change to changes in management and policy in Housing and Food Services.

"It's a different attitude", he said. "They're promoting a more academic lifestyle (at the resi-

ences)."

Fredericks reported that this year, 400 students returned to Lister Hall this year from last year; last year only 50 returned from the year before.

He mentioned more, improved services at Lister (eg. a weights room, steam room) and an environment more suited to academics as contributing factors.

"Lister is beginning to lose its

bad reputation," he said.

For many students, off-campus housing may be the only alternative. In that case, the outlook varies with what students are looking for, and where.

According to Danny St. Arnaud, Director of the Students' Union Housing Registry, the vacancy rate for off-campus housing in the University area is about one per cent.

"Shared accommodation is the best bet if you want to live in the University area," he said.

For one- or two-bedroom apartments and houses in the area, chances of finding something are low, he added.

A one-bedroom apartment in the vicinity of U of A costs between \$400 and \$500 monthly, according to Fredericks. He added that the accommodations in the area are full for the most part, and expensive.

Both St. Arnaud and Fredericks advised that students are looking further afield for accommodation. Areas of the city with a direct bus route to the university are in greatest demand.

Fredericks said that Southgate and the West Edmonton Mall areas are popular; both have direct bus service to U of A. Outside the University area, rents are cheaper and there is a higher vacancy rate.

In other parts of the city, said Fredericks, not only are the rents about \$100 cheaper, but the quality of accommodation is often better.

St. Arnaud suggested students looking for off-campus accommodation co-ordinate their search with a direct bus route, check the newspapers and the Housing Registry, or even cruise prospective neighborhoods for vacancy signs. (Many landlords don't bother to advertise beyond posting a vacancy sign in front of the building.)

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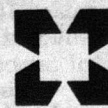
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