

# Res funding demands rise

## University needs \$6 million to upgrade

by Norman Fennema

The problem of funding for university residences has come to the forefront again, as the University increased its demand for provincial funding from \$2.5 million to a new estimate of \$6.36 million.

While still awaiting reimbursement on the \$2.5 million spent over the summer on Lister Hall, the University has increased its request following a more comprehensive analysis of required short-term renovations. The University maintains that this amount is the minimum needed to bring all the residences into compliance with safety standards, with most of the improvements aimed at Galbraith House in Michener Park. The new figure, however, was provided at the request of the government itself, which has set up a special committee to investigate province-wide residency funding.

The problem of funding the residence goes back as far as the University's inception when residency was not included in the formula for funding. Thus the U of A, like its provincial counterparts, has traditionally had to provide housing strictly through its own means, which meant long-term mortgages and unchecked deterioration, as funds for rejuvenation

have been scarce.

Allan Warrack, Vice-President Administration, explained that when the University's Board of Governors set up their own special committee to investigate funding practices, they found not only a serious need for renovation, but inequities in the provincial system of funding as well. "Universities, unlike colleges, have been on their own in funding residences," said Warrack. "We find the present system discriminatory."

Students' Union President Dave Tupper, who sits on the Board of Governors Committee along with Warrack, added that "Students' Union has found the government very active in funding other institutions' residences." Tupper also noted that the inequality is not simply between universities and colleges but between universities as well, as "The Olympics provided the University of Calgary with housing." Warrack seconds this and adds that "in the past (provincial) budget, the government committed major funding to the University of Lethbridge."

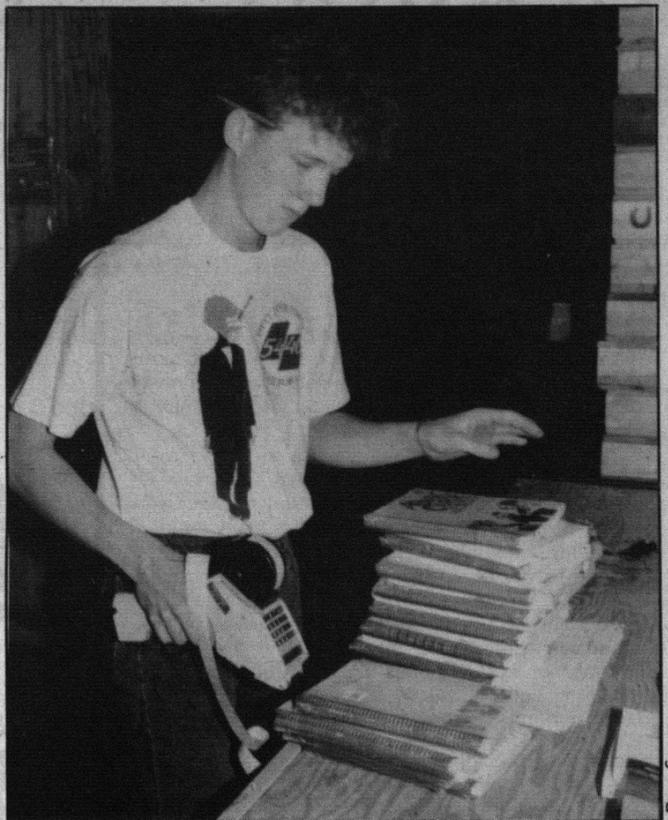
The U of A, left behind in residency funding, provides for its residences through its own means, and its huge mortgage gobbles up the resources needed for renovations. "There are 25 years left on the

residences' mortgage, originally taken out in the 60's. Lister Hall will probably not outlast its mortgage," said Warrack.

But Warrack seems confident that the province will take action soon, and hails the substantive policy evaluation which the newly-formed government committee on residences has undertaken. Warrack sees the request of a comprehensive figure of immediate needs as a positive step towards government aid, however. Tupper cautioned, "We still haven't heard the answer on the \$2.5 million which had to be spent."

The Board of Governors committee asserts that residences are in high demand, and thus still essential. "Lister Hall filled quickly this year," said Tupper, "and Pembina and Hub Mall have huge waiting lists. Residences cater to special needs - 85 percent of Lister Hall is first year rural students. For students that come from small towns, the residences are a security blanket."

The Board of Governors committee is counting on the \$6 million forthcoming, but even more importantly, hopes for a time when university residences find inclusion in the overall funding process, as it has been estimated that \$40 million is needed over the long term to keep the U of A residences viable.



Ron Sears

Get 'em while you can. Textbook prices will climb by 9 per cent if Michael Wilson follows through with his 1991 initiative.

## Texts to be taxed

by Diane Wild

Much controversy has been raised over the government's proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST). A recent survey in *The Globe and Mail* and on CBC suggests that 80 per cent of Canadians are opposed to this tax. Students have an additional reason to be wary: presently not taxed, textbook prices will rise by about nine per cent under the GST.

Ideally, said Wade Deisman, Students' Union V.P. external, "there should be a corresponding ten per cent increase in funding to accommodate the higher costs, but this funding will not come from the federal level and not from the provincial level."

Aside from this aspect of the GST, many students have expressed the feeling that they simply "do not agree with the tax on principal," said Deisman. A national coalition of campuses, The Canadian Federa-

tion of Students (CFS), has been circulating a petition among its members and is aiming at "levying as much political pressure as possible."

While the University of Alberta is not a member of CFS, the Students' Union supports the GST protest and will act on its own to voice student concern over the tax.

"Right now we are building our strategy," said Deisman. "David Tupper (SU president) is writing letters to the Edmonton Caucus of MP's... in hopes of gaining an audience in which to raise students' protests."

A petition will also be circulated on campus in January and given to the government in time for their next session of parliament.

However, since the GST will not come into effect until 1991, Deisman cautions that this issue is not a top priority for the SU at this time.

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## Sessions may ease university overload

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graduate courses made available.

Students' Union president David Tupper agrees that "there are some fairly big attractions. (The changes) would spread the student load over the entire year. But there are still a lot of questions to be answered."

If more courses were offered in spring and summer, professors might be able to shift their teaching commitments. For example, a professor who prefers to do research in the winter could take on a greater course load over the summer. Dr. Dave Sande, Associate Dean of Education observes that it's a case of "soundness versus convenience and habit."

But expansion of spring and summer sessions is severely limited by the University's policy on funding.

Tuition covers only 12 per cent of operating cost of the winter and fall sessions, with the balance of the costs subsidized by government

funding.

Spring and summer courses are maintained solely on a "user pay" funding program, said Sande. This breakeven policy has been in place for two years.

Under the breakeven scenario it becomes more important to fill a course than to offer a course students need. "You plan a course outline that will succeed, not that meets university standards," said Fearn.

The institution "has become more of a supermarket and less of a university," said Fearn who adds that the Special Sessions Committee has been aware of this problem for years.

"We need a different funding base than a narrow break even base," said Fearn. "We cannot offer the richness of university if we do not operate like the rest of the University."

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