

New funding plan dangerous precedent

by Dawn Lerohl

The business students at the University of Alberta have found a new way to raise cash. Considering the current financial situation of the university, they are to be commended for their initiative. Holding a referendum to allow students to vote on an additional yearly cost has been done at other post-secondary institutions, but is novel to the U of A.

The business students, working with the faculty, will decide how the money will be spent if the students vote "yes" to the referendum being held this Thursday. A large portion of the money will be spent on much-needed computers and the promotion of the faculty.

No one would deny that these are worthy causes and that the business faculty needs the money. However, by adding additional costs to university fees, they are setting a dangerous precedent. Every faculty on campus is facing financial problems and could follow the lead set by the business students.

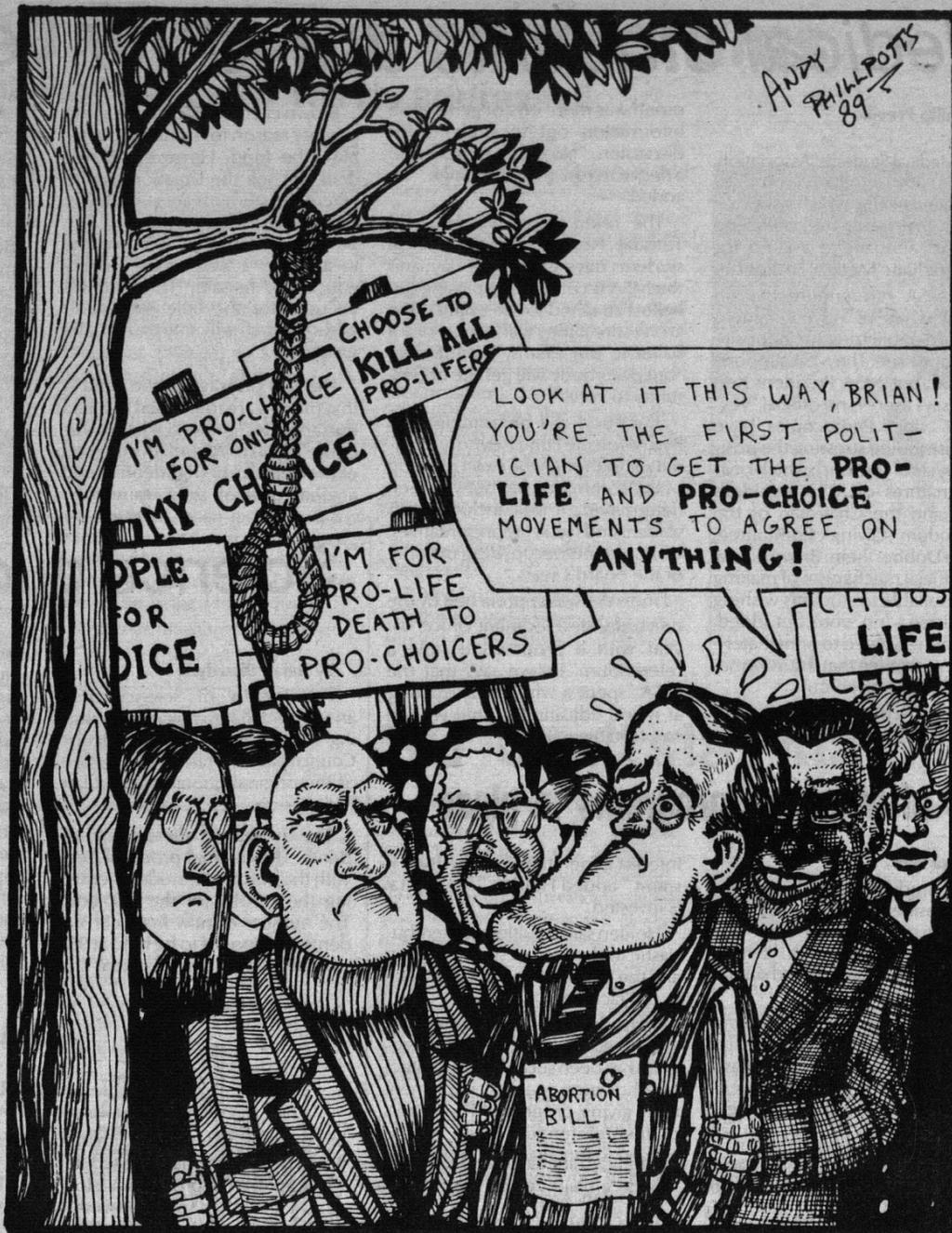
The referendum was introduced to the student body last Monday and the vote will be held this Thursday. Eleven days is hardly long enough to inform the 1,700 business students about such an important issue. "Yes" campaign material was in the works long before the proposal became public, with the help of faculty resources. Students opposed to the referendum have had only a few days to make their case.

The faculty of Business and the Business Students' Association believe they have found a way to meet the demands of increasing competition between business schools. In order to be a top ranking Canadian university, they feel it is necessary to provide the extras, like new computers, which this mandatory "charitable contribution" would pay for.

The University has complained for years about a lack of provincial funding. The advanced education minister has publicly supported tuition increases. The issue is one that remains unresolved. Yet the business students seem to say, "We give up. Please, let us pay."

Such broad funding questions can't be addressed in eleven days. A long term solution must be agreed upon by students, faculty and government. In the meantime, this quick fix proposal could do more harm than good.

This year the necessary extra is new computers; what if next year they need new pencils?



LETTERS

All letters must include name, faculty, year, I.D. number and phone number (I.D. and phone will not be printed).

"Student giving" challenged by Business grads and undergrads

In a gesture that can perhaps be described as misguided nobility, the Business Students' Association is promoting a \$75/year levy on its members by the Faculty of Business.

The gesture is honourable because they wish to improve the image of the Faculty with the financial help of the students. What argument could be made against the idea of helping oneself?

Unfortunately, their proposal and methodology are grossly misguided, inadequate and ill-planned.

VOTE NO because 28 new, powerful Macintoshes without accompanying new, powerful software is overkill and a waste of money.

VOTE NO because there is no realistic way of restricting the use of two \$5000 laser printers to Business students. (Tip for other students: when you want FREE laser printed copies of your ten page history paper, borrow a Business student's ID card and go to Bus B 26. If you can't borrow, I'll lend you mine for five bucks.) Giving and sharing is a fine idea, but being a sucker won't get you anywhere — remember we will still be paying for paper and printing toner.

VOTE NO because even if printer access was restricted to Business students, how

much access will any student have when competing with 1762 other B.Comm students for two printers?

VOTE NO because the expense described as "student travel" is too loosely defined. The Faculty could conceivably spend that on anything they want. Nothing can stop them from paying for a BSA trip to Vancouver for some sort of conference: the value of which is questionable at best.

VOTE NO because in all likelihood future students will probably have no input as to how their money will be spent without referendums. The fact is, BSA executives and other student representatives don't go around asking the average student for opinions. We cannot allow a few volunteers to decide how to spend our money.

VOTE NO because sending some students to business competitions doesn't have a profound effect on our image: everyone knows that only a select few are sent and the majority of students is not represented.

To promote the Faculty of Business, the Administration needs more than hypothetical ideas — their plan is inadequate. This plan allocates only \$30,000 to faculty promotion, which is a pittance compared to the \$6.5 million raised by the Competitive Edge

Campaign.

Don't let the Faculty and BSA waste our money needlessly. VOTE NO until a better plan is proposed.

Brian Coghlan, Business III
Marvin Toy, Business III

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I was pleased to see *The Gateway's* coverage of the upcoming business students' referendum. As a graduate student in Business I am not one of those affected by the referendum, but I am nonetheless disturbed that the Faculty of Business, with the support of the Business Students' Association, have undertaken this route of raising money.

The "yes" campaign contains a few unclear statements. One is that "virtually every Faculty at the University of Manitoba" supported a similar referendum held there last year. I understand that it was also opposed by a large number of campus groups, including the University of Manitoba Students' Union and the University of Manitoba Graduate Students' Association.

The "yes" campaign refers to the \$37.50 per semester payment as a "donation". It is a rather unusual donation if one is required to

give at the beginning of every semester at the time of registration. As the *Gateway's* article pointed out, what this "donation" really amounts to is a six-per-cent increase in tuition fees. The "yes" campaign also says that the extra money raised through this will be administered by a joint student-faculty board but there is no mention of how the students on this board are to be selected. If they are not elected by the students at large, then it is questionable how much control students will actually have over the use of these funds.

If the Faculty of Business and the Business Students' Association wish to undertake a fundraising campaign among business students, and encourage them to voluntarily donate money, more power to them. But to force students to give money, especially when it is unclear if they will have any control over its spending, is questionable. I believe this referendum as it stands sets a dangerous precedent not only for Business students, but for other university faculties, and I hope that those voting in the referendum will think very carefully before casting their ballots.

Fiona McQuarrie
Business

The Gateway

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