

Time for fiscal responsibility

The University doesn't have the guts to come to grips with the problem of escalating staff costs.

Some facts:

- Over 80 percent of U of A operating costs are salaries — two thirds of which are academic staff
- The average U of A academic salary is \$58,000 a year
- The average academic salary increases next year will be 6.4 percent

* Between 1977 and 1987 the cost of academic salaries at the U of A increased by about 21 percent — \$12 million a year — over and above the rate of inflation, despite the fact we have fewer instructors now than in 1977

* Last year only 30 out of over 2200 academic positions turned over to new people

Who is the University trying to kid? Can anybody tell me with a straight face that there are not a lot more than 30 academics on this campus who should be fired, or at least retired, for marginal to worse performance?

The heart of the problem is the current system for handing out pay increases.

Under the existing staff agreement there are a total of 1.1 "merit" increases available for each academic staff member, these are to be distributed unevenly among the staff according to, you guessed it, merit.

Too bad it doesn't work that way.

The academics review each other, so we end up with friends and colleagues reviewing friends and colleagues — and the result is that fully 88.5 percent of all academic staff got one or more merit increases last year.

It may not exactly be a rubber stamp, but it looks pretty close.

The consequence of this is that all academics, be they world class or merely average, receive pretty much the same salaries.

This means the U of A can't pay the brilliant scholars what they deserve, and pays the incompetent far too much.

Here is my suggestion: Make the increments three times as large, but have only one third as many.

The only people who would complain are the less than average — and over time the best and hardest working would do better.

This way we could offer 8 or 9 percent increases a year to the truly outstanding people we need to build a world class institution, while freezing or at least curtailing salary growth among the marginal staff.

We need to target our money towards excellence, and if this means we lose a few marginal scholars to Ontario, so what?

Trying to have average salary levels high enough to attract world class people simply won't work — there just isn't enough money.

And trying to raise that money from students (many of whom got their last meal from the food bank) through increased tuition fees is outright immoral.

The University should pay people what they are worth. In some cases that's more, in some cases that's less.

Let's see some courage out there.

Ken Bosman

The Gateway

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The Gateway welcomes letters to the Editor.

If you have a comment which would be of interest to the students of the University, please do not hesitate to send it in. Letters must be signed. Addresses and phone numbers are required but will not be printed.

Letters may be edited for length.

Mail or deliver your letters to Room 282 SUB, or drop them at any SU information booth.

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LETTERS

"Keith out of line" — Brian

Keith Apathy's letter in the March 29 edition of *The Gateway* was disconcerting. Keith and I were running mates in the SU election, but his letter is out of harmony with Apathy.

The problem is Keith's last paragraph implied the whole slate agreed with a couple very cutting remarks directed to the writer of an editorial on joke sales.

In my view, the editorial's criticisms were justified, and Keith's personal attacks were not. Keith's opinions are his own, and I do not want them confused with mine.

Brian Apathy

Abortion an alternative

Re: Abortion Inhumane

I think Tricia Westwood misunderstands the whole issue of abortion. By stating that "it is not something people should have a right to do", she obviously is not considering the following possibilities:

- rape
- cases where a mother's health is at risk
- ineffective birth control

Perhaps she should consider the rights of a raped woman; the victim has been violated. Should she have to carry out the unwanted pregnancy too?

I agree with her statement that abortion is not a form of birth control; it should however be an option for women with no feasible alternative.

Patricia Lavery

HUB shops evicted unjustly

Recently it has come to my attention that the upper echelons in charge of HUB Mall have decided not to allow four stores, Living Earth, Varsity Drugs, Hub Burgers, and The Clothing and Stock Exchange Inc. to remain on the mall. These expulsions are supposed to clear the way for supposedly more profitable shops like McDonald's and maybe A & W.

I and many others don't think that these typical commercial fast food places have any place on a Campus which already has burger and other, more

unique food outlets. Some of these outlets, like Living Earth, are a part of what makes our Campus community distinct from the outside world. When we would get tired of the usual big chain fast food, we could always go to Living Earth for a nutritious and tasty sandwich packed with all sorts of good things. It is hard enough for those living away from home to get any sort of balanced meal not soaked in sugar, salt, or grease; Living Earth made this a little easier. And as far as Hub Burgers go, there is something nice about being able to go there and get a hamburger that is NOT mass-produced and named Big or Whopper if you so desire.

As well, the decision to close Varsity Drugs on the grounds that it is supposedly competing with the SU

Bookstore is impossible to condone. Most of what people buy from the SU Bookstore are textbooks that simply nowhere else carries in sufficient quantities. Personally, I see nothing wrong with a shop competing with the SU bookstore; as it is, the bookstore has too much of a monopoly on books, resulting in long lines at the start of the term where people who are prepared to spend hundreds of dollars are made to stand in line for hours with large, heavy stacks of books. Perhaps if there was more competition people would have an option to go to a more pleasant store. Yet this is NOT the case, and Varsity Drug should not suffer in witchhunts seeking out and destroying all possible sources of competition with SU shops on this campus, however badly such competition may be needed.

Unfortunately, I know little about The Clothing and Stock Exchange, Inc. I do, however, appeal to those who wish it to remain on this campus to speak up in its defense while there is still time to do so.

Even the other store-owners on HUB should come to the defense of the shops now singled out for expulsion; next time it could be these other shops that are hit badly, either by the direct orders of the upper echelons of HUB management, or by the direct competition with multi-billion dollar chains which surely will draw people away from the subtle, eclectic attraction of the older HUB shops to the glitzy golden arches and "Root Bears" of the big chains.

Clearly, those who advised the management of HUB to get rid of these shops had no conception of how we of the University view the shops on our unique, eclectic HUB mall with pride. It is indeed up to all of us in the University community to speak up and voice our opinions over what could be the beginning of a policy to destroy HUB as we know it for the all-mighty Dollar. It is my sincere hope that we can all band together and let the HUB management know our feelings through letters and petitions, and that the HUB management will heed the wishes of the University body to which HUB mall belongs and reverse an unfair and unfortunate decision, letting these four shops stay as long as there is a demand for them.

Philip Kirman

Case not black and white

Re: Abortion Inhumane

Miss Westwood, you and I agree on one point of your letter, "Abortion is not birth control!" However, in reference to your claim that abortion is used by ladies "not willing to say no to your own personal pleasure," it seems to me that the victims of rape and incest do not find their experiences pleasurable. As for taking precautions: should any girl under the age of 18 be on the pill in case she is the victim of incest? "Excuse me Sir, before you rape me, would you please put this condom on."

If a lady who is 6 weeks pregnant suddenly finds she has cancer, what is the lesser of two evils; terminate the pregnancy or allow the fetus to experience the effects of anesthetics used in surgery, the various forms and doses or radiation used in radiation treatment, or the powerful drugs used in chemotherapy? There is a third alternative, deny the mother-to-be treatment, depending on the severity of her cancer, she could die before the fetus is born. Where does that leave the fetus?

In closing, let me reiterate, I am not in favour of abortion as a means of birth control. However, abortion is not a yes/no legal issue, but rather an issue with many moral and ethical questions, which each woman and doctor participating must answer themselves.

Diane Jensen