

by Anne Stephen

# Deans admit cutbacks and und

With everyone throwing in their two-bits about cutbacks and indexing, we thought we'd let the deans have a chance to voice their opinions.

Eight questions were asked of the following deans: Arts: T. H. White, Agriculture: J. P. Boland, Business Administration: R. S. Smith, Engineering: P. F. Adams, Fine Arts (Acting Chairman): J. Franscara, Law: F. D. Jones, Medicine (Dean Cameron not available): W. H. Fearon, Pharmacy: G. Bachynsky, Physical Education: R. G. Glassford.

The deans had quite different answers for some of the questions, yet they all agreed the university should control the courses offered, and that their faculty was experiencing, in at least some ways, cutbacks and underfunding.

The deans were asked the following questions:

1. How well is the education at the University of Alberta meeting the needs of the students (e.g. in respect to class size, and availability of equipment)?

2. Do you think education is a right or a privilege?

3. What are your feelings on the indexing proposal (e.g. tuition increases of 8 to 12% per year)?

4. Do you think that the indexing will affect accessibility to the U of A?

5. What would you say would be the sorts of employment opportunities in the '80's?

6. Who, in your opinion, should control the courses offered at the university, the government or the university itself?

7. What are your feelings on the Established Program Financing (EPF) in which the federal government may be planning to cutback?

8. How are the cutbacks and government underfunding affecting your faculty?

## Arts -

### Dean T.H. White

1) "Students have many needs; one such is a need to continue basic education experienced since entering the school system." The university should help develop "good thinking and critical skills,

so the student can get a broad enough education, outside of the job-focused course. The university provides the potential, but the students don't take full advantage."

2) "It is not either, it is a mixture of both. In order to take full advantage of higher education, a person must show he is capable of doing the work; he must have discipline and interest. It is partly earned but the opportunity should be there for those who want it."

3) "The government has put the university in a position in which it has little other option than to bring it to the attention of the public that we need more money," and that, if necessary, "we will get those funds from the students by periodic increases in fees. Given the money available in Alberta, the government should put more money into the universities. While the student's contribution should include the costs of room and board, books, and transportation, we shouldn't put on them the additional burden of tuition."

4) "I think so. In the short term, costs must go up in order to provide quality service. Some students are unable to afford to go to university at the time they want to, so they put it off, or do it in stages, but some may never be able to come back."

5) "The '80's will be an exciting time, with tremendous richness and variety of opportunities, but there will be better quality credentials needed. We are in the information age and will need a university degree or be highly skilled in a trade or have some sort of special knowledge. We are entering the era of multiple careers, for example, if someone starts in job X, ten years later, he will be in a different job. Also, communication in both traditional languages and computer languages" will be important.

6) "The university should control the courses, but there should be some consulting mechanism so that the university has a means of gathering public input."

7) "As a taxpayer who benefits from (government) services, I like to get something back from those funds. The governments tend to forget the taxpayer."

8) "Drastically. The classes are larger and

larger, with high teacher/student ratios due to faculty cuts. At the 300 level there are some classes with 400 students, the staff are doing an excellent job, but I don't know how much longer we can cope." This year's enrollment increased by 5,000 students; "we can't cushion this kind of increase while experiencing faculty cuts."

## Agriculture -

### Dean J.P. Boland

1) The education provided at the U of A is "within the budgetary constraints, if more money were available, it would help, but at the moment we are in an in-between period" because next year's budget has not been finalized.

2) "Elementary education is a right, beyond that, it is a privilege," a student would "need to show the ability" to progress.

3) "I am in no position to comment" on the indexing proposal, "I am not speculating, we have no idea where we stand" until next year.

4) "I don't know"

5) "Employment opportunities are changing rapidly, (they are) very good in agriculture - in fact - excellent - and will improve." People are just starting to realize that "food is the most important thing in the world."

6) "The university."

7) "I am not in a position to comment," maybe later when there is "more information on the budget."

8) "I don't know, I have no details."

## Business Admin

## and Commerce -

### Dean R.S. Smith

1) "The students should be answering that; the long run will determine (the effects). A lot of classes are large; we have to ask if one can get a quality education with the high student/faculty ratio."

2) "To a point, it is a right; generally, it is a right, but only as long as the individual

meets the qualifications and would benefit from it." There would be a great "cost in providing unlimited education; we can't afford to let everyone into the faculties of medicine or dentistry," for example.

3) It is "reasonable;" if there is no such increase "we are looking at a substantial drop in cost that the student is paying; it helps students recognize the cost of their education." There needs to be "student loans for the needy or the poor in order to have access to higher education." The proposed indexing presents "a decrease in the real cost," in comparison to other universities, the "tuition is low."

4) "In order to answer that, I would want to be in the student loan office. If students are being denied access, it is not because of tuition, but because of other costs, (for example), the costs of living."

5) "Employment opportunities in the '80's are very good in Alberta, and will be excellent in the skilled trades, if the mega-projects go. Engineering, computing science, business administration, and accounting are all strong."

6) "The university."

7) "The linkage between the funding by the federal government and the actual spending by the provinces is next to zero; there is no requirement for it (funds from federal government) to be used for higher education. In Alberta, it cannot be argued that the revenues are not available."

8) "It is not a matter of cutbacks, but of inadequate funding to permit the faculty to provide the quality and quantity of education that it should. The funding is not providing for manpower and facilities needed now; also, there is inadequate funding for visiting speakers, and travelling academic staff." The salaries for the academic staff are "not good enough."

## Engineering -

### Dean P.F. Adams

1) "I don't know" how the education is meeting the needs of the students. "We have the largest classes in our history, and are drastically short of space. There is innovative scheduling in the lab sections, to

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