

Vet school opening delayed

Plans to open province’s first veterinary school stalled until next year as the University of Calgary faces up against various funding and operational issues

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Alberta students will have to wait until 2008 to study veterinary medicine in the province after the University of Calgary has delayed the opening of its newest faculty in order to tie together all the loose ends. The faculty was expected to open in September 2007.

“We recognize that there will be a number of students who are disappointed that it’s another year before the program starts, but really, when we looked into it, it’s the quality that’s most important,” said Alastair Cribb, who was appointed dean of the developing faculty in May 2006.

There’s currently only one veterinary school in Western Canada, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) at the University of Saskatchewan. WCVM prioritizes students from the Western provinces, who each fund spaces for their residents. The college receives approximately 350 applications every year but there are only 71 spaces available. The number of applicants admitted is determined by an allotment system: Alberta gets 20 seats, British Columbia 15, Manitoba 13 and Saskatchewan 20. Applications for the new veterinary faculty are geographically restricted, so the only students that can apply are Alberta residents.

“We probably won’t have to recruit students because the interest is so high we’re going to be overwhelmed with applications. I have no doubt,” Cribb said.

Tracy Palsma, a fourth-year biological sciences student at the U of C, applied at WCVM last year and will be applying again this year. She said that she would

prefer to study veterinary medicine in Calgary because of the program’s focus on large animals, but waiting until 2008 is not an option unless she doesn’t get accepted at WCVM.

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**ALASTAIR CRIBB,
DEAN OF U OF C’S
VETERINARY FACULTY**

Initially a three-year program, the U of C has since expanded it to four years, after recommendations from the American Veterinary Medical Association, who provides accreditation for all veterinary schools in North America.

“There are certain advantages to a three-year curriculum, but what it really does is it compresses the timeline,” Cribb said, explaining that the condensed program doesn’t give students breaks in the summer. “That can be extremely stressful for students; what it ends up requiring is an increased need for prerequisites for students before they enter the program.”

Cribb explained that prerequisites for the new program have been kept to a minimum, allowing students eligibility after two years of study. But Palsma is skeptical about students applying after only their second year because of

the strenuous interview process.

“I think getting the full degree and having those extra years to mature and find out more about who you are is pretty beneficial to someone in the interview process,” Palsma said.

Danyse Lewis, another fourth-year biology student at the U of C, applied at WCVM last year too, and like Palsma is planning to apply at Calgary’s new veterinary school in 2008.

“I don’t mind waiting two years. I’m just really excited to be part of it if they do accept me,” she said. “I think that the first round of students is going to be experimental a little bit, so I think that it’s probably a good thing that they have all of their buildings in place and all of their faculty together. It’s probably better to start more organized than rushed,” she said.

The U of C plans to submit their accreditation documents in the spring, but first they need to secure funding. The government has already committed \$16 million for infrastructure and \$46.8 million for operating costs, but Cribb said that the faculty requires an additional \$64 million.

“By early spring we need to have the commitment from the government,” Cribb said. “We’re anticipating receiving the funds.”

Michael Shields, director of communication at Alberta Advanced Education, hinted that the request for more money would be granted.

“Minister [Denis] Herard has identified the veterinary school as being part of the next capital plan,” Shields said, explaining that the government’s commitment so far is indicative of things to come in the 2007 budget announcement, which will comprise of the three-year capital plan.

CAMPUS CRIME BEAT

Compiled by Mike Otto

THE RASH CREAM DOESN’T CURE

A number of bike thefts were reported on campus from 8–20 October. Pricy pedal-powered machines were pilfered from the west side of Schaffer Hall, the Civil/Electrical Engineering building—now also known as Physics—and near the Tory building. Campus Security recommends the use of secure U-style locks, and says students should keep their eyes peeled for suspicious characters lurking near bike racks.

NOT YOUR PERSONAL NAPPY SPOT

At 1am on 17 October, Campus Security found a male sawing logs on a couch near a HUB Mall stairwell. He was found to have a history of violence, no University affiliation, and was given a free escort off campus.

RETURN OF THE SATURNS?

On 19 October, an abandoned vehicle was reported at 85 Avenue and 112 Street. The sight of the ignition and steering column bits on the passenger seat confirmed that the vehicle was indeed stolen. On 12 October, another suspicious vehicle was seen parked in the area of 111 Street and 87 Avenue. Campus Security investigated and found the keys sitting on the passenger seat. Both incidents were reported to Edmonton Police.

NOT WORTH THE SAVINGS

On 19 October, Parking Services found

a car with an altered permit displayed in the N zone parking lot east of HUB Mall. The ambitious owner of the vehicle had changed the permit date from 17 October in an attempt to save the cost of daily parking. Parking Services was less than impressed with the student’s antics; the vehicle was towed and the student was fined \$550.

I FOUGHT THE LAW AND THE LAW WON

At 9am on 19 October, a male and female were found sleeping in the stairwell between the 15th and 16th floors of Newton Place—clearly not residents. The man had a criminal history involving violence and property damage; when the two were served with trespass notices the male tore his up and threw it on the ground. The constable responded by giving the man a littering ticket.

RETURN OF THE NEWTON AVENGER

At 8pm on 24 October, another—perhaps familiar looking—male was seen loitering near the entrance to Newton Place. He was unco-operative with Campus Security and was found to have a criminal background involving violence. He was trespassed from campus.

I WAS JUST OILING IT, HONEST

At 12pm on 26 October, a male was reported loitering around a bike rack near the southeast corner of SUB. Those hanging around bike racks seldom have pure intentions, and Campus Security responded. It was alleged he had cut a cable lock; CSS located the man near the east side of Physical Education, and as he had an extensive criminal record and a not-so-extensive affiliation with the University, he was escorted off

campus property.

GRAND THEFT PETTY CASH

On 26 or 27 October, a break-in at an unspecified location in the lower level of SUB was perpetrated. A small amount of cash was stolen and Edmonton Police are getting their investigation on. Unknown persons also tried unsuccessfully to break into the west doors of Assiniboia Hall, damaging the doors in the process.

A COKE DEAL OF ANOTHER KIND

On 27 or 28 October, a number of campus vending machines were pillaged and vandalized. The machines damaged were located in the ETLC/Mechanical Engineering pedway, Mechanical Engineering, SUB, University Hall and the Tory/Business Atrium. The total amount of cash stolen is unknown. Campus Security is seeking a suspect seen in the Tory Atrium, described as a 20–25 year old male, with a black ball cap, light blue plaid shirt and baggy beige pants.

A SLUMBER PARTY OF ONE

At 1am on 30 October, a male was found sleeping in a HUB Mall stairwell. He had a criminal record involving weapons and property offences—and probably using property as a weapon—and was escorted off campus.

AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON

At 1:44am on 30 October, Campus Security responded to calls that a male was harassing staff near CAB. He was unsurprisingly found to have no University affiliation, and in addition to being generally annoying, was known for sleeping and loitering on campus. He was escorted to Whyte Avenue.

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