

# THE GATEWAY

volume XCVII number 23 ♦ the official student newspaper at the university of alberta ♦ www.gateway.ualberta.ca ♦ thursday, 30 november, 2006



ASHLEY SCARLETT

**TAKING SOME SKILLS OFF THE SHELF** Despite some opposition, pharmacists will soon be able write prescriptions.

## Pharmacists get power to prescribe

NICKI THOMAS  
News Writer

As of 1 April, 2007, pharmacists in Edmonton will be able to prescribe drugs and administer injections, under the recently sanctioned Health Professions Act (HPA) and the Pharmacy and Drug Act (PDA), approved by the provincial Cabinet on 8 November 2006.

While some believe this will make pharmacists more effective, some members of Alberta's medical profession are skeptical—with one concern stemming from the conflict of interest inherent in the possibility of pharmacists prescribing drugs for financial gain.

However, Barry Cavanaugh, Chief Executive Officer of the Alberta Pharmacists Association, calls such criticisms offensive. And Dr Greg Eberhart, registrar of the Alberta College of Pharmacists echoes this sentiment, noting that the standards of practice and code of ethics in place for pharmacists focuses on the best interests of the patient. Eberhart also explained that pharmacists would

usually be working in collaboration with other health professionals when prescribing drug therapy.

**“The rationale behind our difficulty or objection to this is that pharmacists are not trained in making diagnoses. They know tons about drugs but they aren't trained to be clinicians or diagnosticians.”**

**DR TREVOR THEMAN,  
CPSA REGISTRAR**

“I think that that mitigates some of the concerns around real and/or perceived conflict of interest,” Eberhart said.

Still, Dr Trevor Theman, registrar of the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons, believes the concern is a

legitimate one.

“Pharmacists make a fee off dispensing. That's not to say it's an insurmountable conflict, but there's no question there's a conflict of interest,” he said.

The second concern of the medical community is the potential practice of independent prescribing, in which a patient is treated without having been initially diagnosed by a physician.

Theman agrees that pharmacists should be able to alter prescriptions—for example by changing a dose from pill to liquid form—and should be able to provide interim medication for patients who cannot see their doctor immediately. According to Theman, the area that the medical community is struggling with is initial prescriptions pharmacists will soon be able to make.

“The rationale behind our difficulty or objection to this is that pharmacists are not trained in making diagnoses. They know tons about drugs but they aren't trained to be clinicians or diagnosticians,” Theman explained.

PLEASE SEE PILLS ♦ PAGE 2

## Academic Plan draws new University vision

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA  
Senior News Editor

On Monday, Council Chamber filled to the brim as members from across the academic community filed into the 27 November General Faculties Council (GFC) Executive Committee meeting. Sipping coffee and tea from Styrofoam cups to warm up, the crowd's murmuring soon died down as the room adopted a business-like atmosphere for the formal approval of the proposed University of Alberta Academic Plan 2007-2011—*Dare to Deliver*.

After a presentation from Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Dr Carl Amrhein and questions, the plan passed with 70 votes in favour, twelve against and two abstentions. However, when all was said and done many undergraduate representatives were left unsatisfied.

“For a plan that supposed to be the vision of this institution, there are a great many question marks about how that vision is going to happen,” Student's Union Vice-President (Academic) Amanda Henry said.

The Academic Plan is traditionally the response of the Vice-President

(Academic) and the Vice-President (Research) to the President's vision for the University. But this new plan is credited for having relied on a broad consultation process that took almost three years and is to be the guiding document of the University's academic aspirations for the next four years.

The document outlines four commitments: Discovery Learning (with a focus on students), incubating scholarship (concerning research), community engagement near and far (encompassing increasing engagement), and building the transformative organization (which is concerned with changing and improving the ways the U of A operates). Even though there have been new iterations and updates, an Academic Plan hasn't been written from start to finish since 1993.

But, while the Academic Plan creates a vision for the University to strive towards in an academic sense, GFC undergraduate representative Steve Kirkham, like Henry, questioned the specifics of how those goals would be achieved.

PLEASE SEE VISION ♦ PAGE 4

## Despite turning new leaf, Powerplant still seeing red

No profits have been made, but the 'Plant is doing better than it was last year: Chris Cunningham

SCOTT LILWALL  
Deputy News Editor

The new redesign for the Powerplant is showing promise, according to the Students' Union, but it remains to be seen if the troubled business is back on the path towards profit.

“I can tell you that we're doing better than we were last year. Not by much, but we are,” SU Vice-President (Operations and Finance) Chris Cunningham said. “I'm not saying that's great, or even good. But I think we can conclude that we're on the right track.”

In September, the Powerplant unveiled a new business plan and a renovated building in an effort to combat the financial losses at the restaurant/bar. The new design split the building into three separate areas: a bar, a buffet and a coffee shop/study space for students. Cunningham explained that while the bar was turning a profit for the first time in the last few years, the buffet and the coffee shop were still losing money.

The main offender seems to be the

new all-you-can-eat buffet, which lost close to \$40 000 in the two months it has been operating. Students' Council heard in a meeting on Tuesday night. Cunningham says that while the lunch offering is doing well, the dinner buffet has not been bringing in the number of people he had hoped for. He specifically mentioned students in on-campus residence, who aren't visiting the buffet as often as expected when the idea was first purposed.

“[The University of Alberta] is very much a community campus. People will go home for dinner. They're just not on campus,” Cunningham said. “We're looking to market more to students in residence, and those taking night classes.”

Cunningham stressed that some of effects of the redesign were not only felt on the Powerplant's bottom line, but also could be seen on the balance sheets of other businesses. He cited the increase in traffic at the RATT, which he attributes directly to the decision to close down the Powerplant's bar during the beginning of the week.

PLEASE SEE PLANT ♦ PAGE 3

## Inside

News	1-5
Opinion	7-10
Feature	11
A&E	12-15
Sports	16-19
Classifieds	20
Le Miroir	21
Comics	22-23



## It's crunch time, baby

Finals are near. Time to make up for goofing off all semester. Luckily, we're here to help. Because we care.

FEATURE, PAGE 11



## The diamond of my eye

Leonardo DiCaprio, among others, talks with our A&E Editor about his upcoming film, *Blood Diamond*.

A&E, PAGE 12

## Holiday Greetings

The Gateway won't be making any more “real” issues this semester. But if you're nice, Santa may leave a holiday treat in the newsboxes on Tuesday. Good luck frantically cramming for those exams!