



MIKE OTTO

NOW WITH TEN PER CENT MORE RENT The rent increase was one of the many budget items voted on by the BoG.

Upkeep prompted rent hike: Amrhein

RENT • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Hickey broke down the increase into two separate parts: a 3.6 per cent increase to match cost of living adjustments would go towards offsetting general inflationary pressures against labor, utilities, and property taxes. However, an additional 6.4 per cent increase above inflation was required to address deferred maintenance demands.

Hickey further addressed the concerns of student residences groups that had complained increasing rental rates could make the University less affordable to out-of-town students.

"Residences affect the overall University experience of the students—it is an important tool in recruitment and retention," Hickey said. "I know raising prices isn't the greatest incentive for being more attractive, but we do want students to stay in Alberta for their education and we do want to attract and retain the best."

"We do provide affordability to residents [with] rents that are kept below market rates within the city," he added.

However, Students' Union President Samantha Power said that while a 3.6 per cent increase for cost of living adjustments was understandable, it was the additional 6.4 per cent increase that posed a problem. She expressed confusion as to whether the increase was being justified by making comparisons to market rates.

"An increase in the market rates in the surrounding campus area allows us to have an affordable price on the rest of our residences so that students see it as an affordable option," Power said.

Amrhein responded to Power's queries, remaining adamant that "the focus here is the deferred maintenance."

"I do not believe resident halls should charge market rates," he said, explaining that previous discussions about market rates were to explain how residence rates haven't risen significantly in the past.

"The resident rates would be even higher than they are now had we calculated and collected CPI every year for the last ten, 15, 20 years," Amrhein said, adding that because of previously stable rates the residences have been left without sufficient cash reserves.

"If Lister Hall goes down rural kids are not going to have a place to live while they go to university."

**DOUG IRWIN,
BOARD MEMBER**

"I do not want to sound alarmist, but when I begin to hear the [Vice-President (Facilities and Operations)] start talking about critical building systems like power sub-stations and transformers and elevators I begin to think about health and safety issues," Amrhein said, noting past amenity disasters the University has faced.

"You saw the Tory building go offline when there was a major plumbing failure, you saw the swimming pool go out of use for six months because the entire plumbing and water system simply dissolved for lack of appropriate

attention," he recalled. "I begin to worry about an occurrence on some weekday when we have a residence hall go out of use."

But, when presented with the gravity of the deferred maintenance situation, Power reminded the Board that the current reality contradicted the opinion of students who felt they had been paying for these services all along.

"Continually throughout the '90s we were told that our tuition increases were going towards maintaining quality and it's clear that they weren't," Power said. "[So] you can understand my skepticism in terms of where this money is going in residences and I'm not sure that it's a quality issue. I understand the health and safety concerns, but wouldn't that make a great appeal to the provincial government and to other areas of investment instead of just falling back on students once again?"

But while the fiscal pressures of the University were well understood, board member Doug Irwin was among those frustrated with the lack of provincial support for postsecondary institutions.

"We've got to get the quality back up, we have to. But we've got to help government understand in ways that affects their kids," Irwin said. "If Lister Hall goes down rural kids are not going to have a place to live while they go to university."

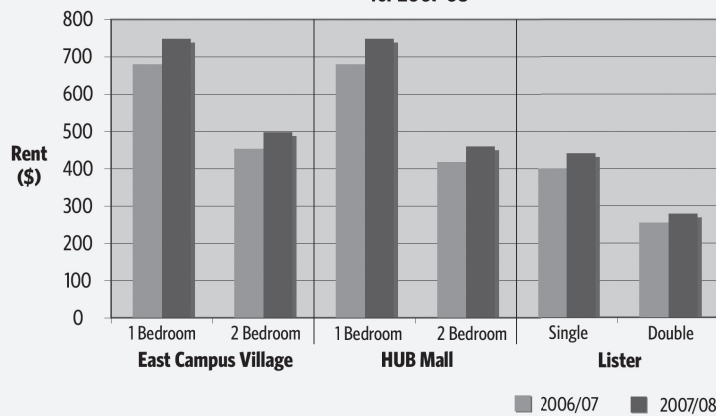
However, Power made the distinction between recognizing the problems facing students and finding solutions to fix them.

"Affordability is a problem pointed out by many Board members, but why continuously do we keep deferring the question of when we're going to take a stand?" Power said.

THE COSTS OF LIVING

How the University's increases look on paper

U of A Residence Rent Increases for 2007-08



- Rent is expected to increase across the board for University of Alberta residences. With the exception of East Campus Village apartments and Augustana residences, costs of renting will raise by ten per cent for all residents.

- According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the average rent for a one bedroom apartment in Edmonton for 2006 was \$666, while a two bedroom was \$808.

- At Grant MacEwan, a bachelor suite totalled approximately \$631 a month in 2005. The two-bedroom residences run at \$533 a month, per person.

In the past few years, rent increases at the U of A have remained at or under inflation. For 2002/03 and 2003/04, rent increased by 5 per cent. 2004/05 saw a raise of 3 per cent. The information for the most recent year was not available in the BoG minutes or agenda.

PLEASE SEE MORE INFO ON THE BOG MEETING • PAGE 2

THE LEGEND CONTINUES... PINT NIGHT

ALL DOMESTIC DRAFT:

(add \$1 for import)

\$1 FROM 6-7PM

\$2 FROM 7-9PM

\$3 FROM 9-11PM

\$4 FROM 11- CLOSE

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