

Lewis argues tuition is unnecessary

RALLY • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The highlight of the food-court rally was a presentation by guest speaker, Avi Lewis, creator of *The Take* and host of CBC's *Big Picture*, who criticized student apathy on campus.

"Don't you think it's high time we drop this polite Canadian shtick? Let's stop being so goddamn shy about getting angry. It's the only sane response in a world gone mad," Lewis said.

"You live in a province with an \$8.7 billion surplus—your surplus alone is more than the entire budget of six other provinces combined," he said. "At this moment in history we could be dreaming big, we could be making good on the promise of affordable postsecondary education for all. At this point in history, the government wants tuition to increase year after year at the rate of inflation."

Power noted that promises, such as Ralph Klein's pledge in February 2005 that Alberta would have "the most innovative, entrepreneurial and affordable tuition policy in the country," don't hold any weight since the passing of Bill 40 last May. The controversial

bill took tuition out of legislation and placed it into regulation—meaning tuition policy can be changed without legislative debate.

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AVI LEWIS

"We have no security anymore in terms of what our tuition increase will be over the next few years, so we need the government to put that policy back into legislation," Power said.

However, Lewis went beyond calling for lower tuition rates, stating that, ideally, they wouldn't exist.

"In a country as rich as ours, in a

province with no debt and massive surplus, in the middle of an epic economic boom, I don't actually think tuition should be reduced—I think tuition should be eliminated."

Lewis took issue with a recent *Globe and Mail* editorial that stated tuition freezes, such as the one that has been in effect in Québec for the past 13 years, don't work.

"I don't even know if I want to go there with their editorial policy. I mean, the vast majority of evidence internationally is that tuition rates are linked directly to accessibility. It takes a kind of a contorted logic of a free-market ideologue to say that making something cheaper doesn't make more people able to buy it," he said.

He added that university administrators cannot argue against lower tuition rates by saying that they ultimately lead to institutional deficits.

"University administrations are selling out their students, and they've been doing it for a generation," Lewis said.

As of press time, no one from the U of A Administration was available for comment.



KRYSTINA SULATYCKI

CALLING FOR ACTION Avi Lewis urges students to get out and be vocal.

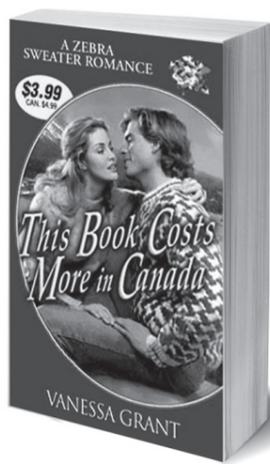
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