

THE GATEWAY

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JOSH NAULT

A DIFFERENT KIND OF NUT The Acorn brought their atmospheric folk-rock to the Velvet Underground Saturday night.

US should ‘rise up against rankings’

U of A President Indira Samarasekera encourages US schools to abstain from university rankings

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

Canadian universities are keeping a watchful eye south of the border as calls to boycott *US News & World Report* as university rankings grow, according to University of Alberta President Indira Samarasekera.

Samarasekera explained that she was invited to write the 2 April article, “Rising Up Against Rankings,” on the *Inside Higher Ed* website after word spread about the 25 Canadian colleges and universities who refused to participate in *Maclean’s* magazine’s annual university rankings issue last fall. She was one of the initial eleven Canadian university presidents to sign a joint letter to *Maclean’s* on 14 August, 2006, stating they would no longer submit the questionnaire used to create the rankings due to what they saw as flawed methodology.

“[*Inside Higher Ed*] contacted us and asked if I would put something in because they’d heard that we’d been involved in that,” she said. “I agreed [because], well, it’s a way to share experiences and it’s also a way to raise the profile of the University of Alberta.”

However, Robert Morse, Director of Data Research at *US News*, said that while Canadian institutions had complaints over the manner in which *Maclean’s* collected and compiled their data, those concerns don’t correlate to

US News rankings.

“In my view the issue in the US and Canada is different,” Morse said.

“Just to state the obvious: the US is vastly bigger than Canada,” he added. “Number two, there’s both public and private schools [in the US]. I’m pretty sure all the Canadian schools are public.”

Morse explained that *US News* divides postsecondary institutions into separate categories such as the National Universities category, which includes institutions that provide graduate and post-graduate degrees, as well as the Liberal Arts Colleges category, which incorporate institutions where the highest degrees offered are bachelors degrees and that are for the most part privately funded.

Samarasekera said she didn’t distinguish between the various ranking categories when she wrote her article, as she was mainly interested in sharing the Canadian situation. In her article she explains the entire process of first expressing concerns and later withdrawing support from the *Maclean’s* rankings, and uses this as proof that universities don’t have to stand by and accept ranking they disagree with.

“I didn’t really get too concerned about what was going on in terms of the US other than the fact that the US universities would be interested in what we had done in Canada,” she said.

PLEASE SEE **RANKINGS** ♦ PAGE 2

Cases of syphilis on the rise in Alberta

Once nearly eliminated, infection is makes a comeback in the Edmonton area

CHLOÉ FEDIO
Managing Editor

Syphilis has been called “the great imitator” for the tendency to mistake it as a simple skin rash, but as instances of the infection have been rising in Alberta, with over 200 recorded cases in 2006, the need to be diligent about sexual health is increasingly important.

Syphilis, a sexually transmitted or congenital infection, has been a source of concern in Canada since the 1940s and is curable with antibiotics. Dr Barbara Romanowski, a clinical professor at the University of Alberta who specializes in infectious diseases, said that the increase is a Canada-wide trend.

“The dramatic increase in cases of syphilis in Alberta is not isolated. It is reflected in other provinces,”

Romanowski said. “Sadly, syphilis is very much alive and well. It’s not a disease of street people; it’s not a disease of old people—it’s an infection that can affect anyone who is sexually active.”

“The dramatic increase in cases of syphilis in Alberta is not isolated. It is reflected in other provinces.”

DR BARBARA ROMANOWSKI

According to a recent report published by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the rates of syphilis began declining in the early 1980s, and by 1997 Canada had met its goal

of near elimination, as less than 0.5 people in every 100 000 had syphilis. But from 1997–2004, the national syphilis rate increased nine times, to 3.5 for every 100 000 Canadians.

In particular, PHAC reports that significant rises in syphilis cases in Edmonton began in 2003, and each subsequent year has seen an increase. There were 106 reported cases of syphilis in Edmonton alone in 2005.

Romanowski said that despite the concentration of reported syphilis cases in Edmonton, the city isn’t more susceptible to the infection than any other area.

“Is there something unique about Edmonton? I don’t think so. Is it because we’re closer to Fort McMurray than Calgary? I don’t think so,” Romanowski said.

PLEASE SEE **STI** ♦ PAGE 4

Waste-bin fire singes Rutherford

SCOTT LILWALL
Deputy News Editor

An unexplained fire in a garbage can outside of the Rutherford Library has left scorch marks up the side of the building and completely destroyed the stone receptacle.

“It was totally destroyed,” said Al Belanger, Operations Manager for Campus Security. “It was a pretty intense fire, a pretty serious flame.”

Belanger explained that Campus Security received a call at around midnight on Tuesday, 27 March from a student reporting the fire. A number of students attempted to put out the fire, by tossing gravel and water on it. The flames were under control by the time security arrived, and additional water was poured on the garbage can to make sure that the fire was out.

Belanger said that it was impossible to tell if the fire had been set intentionally or if it was an unfortunate accident.

He said that the University of Alberta generally has about one garbage can fire a month, usually due to people tossing lit cigarettes into the receptacles, where they ignite paper or other flammable materials.

“I can’t say if it was purposely lit or not,” Belanger said.

Campus Security isn’t yet sure the cost of the damage done by the fire, which left scorch marks and soot 15 feet up the side of Rutherford. Belanger said that it could have been worse.

“Thank goodness that Rutherford is brick,” he said.

Belanger said that the file was still open and that Campus Security would accept any tips that came in about the origin of the fire, but said that it’s unlikely that the source will be pinned down.

“Nobody saw it actually start, so we’re at kind of a dead end there,” he said. “But we haven’t had [any more fires] since it happened.

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Monkey migration

Aside from flinging feces, Frank Cho’s monkeys are smart—so smart that they’re adapting to the Internet.

A&E, PAGE 10



Simply the best

Using an intense mathematical formula, we’ve determined the schools that had the best CIS seasons.

SPORTS, PAGE 14