

# It ain't cheap being green



ADAM  
GAUMONT

With the dangerously real topics of climate change and resource depletion becoming increasingly politicized as they enter the public consciousness, it's more important than ever that institutions of higher learning such as our own become leaders in this regard.

However, even if we are (perhaps mistakenly) to give the University the benefit of the doubt as to their intentions to do so, it's quickly becoming clear that its attempt at "going green" will prove difficult, if not impossible, to do.

For one thing, the University's deferred maintenance costs are through the roof, and only look to increase as construction costs go up and funding stays relatively flat. Estimated to be between \$600–900 million already, these costs are extremely prohibitive, meaning that all but the most decrepit buildings will be safe from the wrecking ball for the foreseeable future.

But it's precisely this aging infrastructure that's making the University's so-called ecological footprint (or in this case, perhaps tire-tracks is a more suitable term) a lot bigger than it ought to be.

Old, crumbling buildings designed

in the cheap-energy bonanza of the latter half of the 20th century (to say nothing of the architectural holocaust that was the 70s and 80s) guzzle huge amounts of energy resources. And as anyone who's set foot in buildings such as Tory, Rutherford, and Van Vliet can attest, they don't seem to be getting repaired or improved in any

**The University doesn't even have a proper blue bin recycling program in place. Sure, there are bins for paper and pop bottles, but whither the plastics? Whither the aluminum cans?**

appreciable manner either.

The University undoubtedly recognizes that these costs are both an environmental and economic burden—it pays the utility bills each month, after all. And while it has traditionally made more economic sense for the University to pay these relatively inexpensive bills than to pay for new infrastructure altogether, now that there's a real incentive for it to clean up its act, there's an almost insurmountable financial burden that's preventing this from happening.

For their part, the Students' Union has recently begun lobbying the government to assist with paying for these costs both in the form of a one-time payment and continual funding.

It's a valiant effort—one that surely pertains to students and the price of education—but, given the SU's track record for asking the province for money, I for one am not getting my hopes up.

At the same time, I also question whether the University really is motivated to lessen its environmental impact. Forget for a moment the massive fleet of service vehicles that the University employs—it doesn't even have a proper blue-bin recycling program in place. Sure, there are bins for paper and pop bottles, but whither the plastics? Whither the aluminum cans?

To be fair, a few less milk jugs in a landfill isn't going to make a big difference in the long run—to effect real change, progress needs to be made on a much bigger scale.

What will make a big difference, then, are projects like extending the LRT line, which will take hundreds of cars off the road daily upon its completion. To its credit, the University was a leader in bringing the LRT here back in 1992, and it's playing a big part in sending it southwards into 2009 as well.

But in order to remain an environmental leader, the University has, quite simply, to do everything right. Getting a large windfall of cash from the province would be a welcome relief for the deferred maintenance costs, but one-time bonuses can't be counted on.

Instead, the University needs to clean up some of its own messes—and it can start by doing some long-overdue deconstruction.

# Canada must address Native issues



PATRICK  
ROSS

As the summer months are setting in, so is something else that has become synonymous with summer in Canadian politics: Aboriginal discontent.

Last summer, native protesters in Caledonia, Ontario grabbed headlines by taking control of the road leading into a condominium development being built on land that was disputed under a land claim. Earlier this spring, Native protesters blocked a rail line in Ontario, and more is on the way according to Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine.

Aside from unresolved land claims, demands for greater self-government on issues related to cultural autonomy, and the never-ending fight against assimilation, one issue stands above the others in terms of its implications for equality in Canada: the issue of devastating poverty in Canadian Native reservations.

Third-world poverty exists in Canada today on many of its Native reserves. This reflects what NYU economics professor William Easterly calls the "first tragedy" of poverty: that people should be forced to live in such conditions in the first place.

Yet the failure of decades of government spending on poverty alleviation in native reservations—totalling in the billions of dollars over a period of

decades—reflects Easterly's "second tragedy" of poverty: that so many resources can be devoted to alleviating poverty with so little discernible result.

In the end, what becomes immediately apparent is that the ways in which Canada has tried to address this problem haven't worked. The fact that we may be facing a summer of road-blocks and railway sabotage is proof of this. Therefore, it's clearly time to try something different.

A popular complaint among Canada's aboriginals is that, all too often, they've been treated as wards of the state. As with any other group, they want to govern themselves and decide their own destiny. Aboriginals have long claimed to possess the right of self-government due to their inhabitancy of Canada prior to the European colonization.

While various measures of self-governance have been granted to aboriginals, perhaps it's time to satisfy these demands by reorganizing Canada's various treaty areas into de facto provinces, each of which would be required to sign into Confederation as a condition of the deal.

The Department of Indian Affairs would, by necessity, be abolished, its funding replaced by transfer payments to the new provinces. These new provinces would also gain taxation powers over their residents, enabling them to build their communities on their own terms, without dependence on outside funding.

Most importantly, Canada's aboriginals would finally be able to enter Confederation with dignity. Such a solution could be thought of as a ver-

sion of Chretien and Trudeau's "citizens plus" model that may prove more acceptable to Aboriginals by respecting their cultural autonomy while granting them the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship.

The risks of such a move are numerous. The federal government's last experiment with constitutional reform—Brian Mulroney's Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords—ended disastrously, with the portions of Canadian society they were intending to conciliate left feeling more alienated than ever.

Even if successful, organizing Canada's Native peoples into more powerful political entities would allow them to agitate for separation from Canada if they so chose.

Then there's the demands for new powers and privileges for other segments of the Canadian population that inevitably comes with reopening the constitution (ironically, it was Elijah Harper, an Aboriginal Manitoba MLA, who torpedoed the Meech Lake Accord because he didn't feel it contained enough for Canada's aboriginals—and Quebecers could well return the favour).

It's almost impossible to please everyone, and the amending formula for Canada's constitution requires that the federal government at least do the next best thing.

Whatever the solution adopted, the bottom line is that the government can't force any resolution on Canada's aboriginals by decree. Any proposed solution must be acceptable to aboriginals. In the end, the decision—and the responsibility for that decision—must be theirs.

Paul Lorieau's University Optical



**Free vision test**  
with purchase of lenses or complete eyeglasses

4 3 3 - 5 5 0 0

Conveniently located at 11170-82 Ave Edmonton AB T6G 2L8



**St. Vital** A Unique Student Dormitory in the Heart of Edmonton  
9916 110 Street (viewing by appointment only)

**Three storey historical building**  
Furnished rooms from \$200.00 to \$450.00 per month

- One LRT stop from the U of A and one LRT stop from Grant MacEwan College.
- Two blocks from major grocery store and over a dozen restaurants within a 10 minute walk.
- A block and a half north of the North Saskatchewan River and a block and a half south of Jasper Avenue.

- Free laundry facilities
- Each floor has a TV room and a study room
- Internet access (wireless and cable)
- Recreation/Games Room
- Dining room (microwave ovens & vending machines)
- Food services possible depending on demand.
- Limited parking available at extra cost.

**For information and viewing appointments call Ray at 499-7424 or e-mail ray.rozycki@gmail.com**

## THE GATEWAY

**The Gateway is hiring a summer monkey!\***

The position's duties will include:

- Digital photo and PDF archiving
- Entry and analysis of survey data
- Construction of an information tracking database
- Various administrative duties as required by the editor-in-chief and business manager

The successful applicant will:

- Be reliable and hard-working, with excellent organization and time-management skills
- Work well under minimal supervision
- Have basic statistical analysis and data collection skills
- Have strong computing skills; knowledge of Macintosh systems and spreadsheet software will be an asset

The position will require approximately 30 hours of work per week, though hours will be flexible. This is a project-based position, meaning hourly wage will be contingent on performance. The position runs will run from 4 June until 20 July, 2007.

**For further information or to apply, contact**

**Steve Smith**  
Gateway Business Manager  
3-04 Students' Union Building  
T: 780.492.6669 F: 780.492.6665  
biz@gateway.ualberta.ca

or

**Adam Gaumont**  
Gateway Editor-in-Chief and Publisher  
T: 780.492.5168 F: 780.492.6665  
eic@gateway.ualberta.ca

\*actual monkeys need not apply

