

THE GATEWAY

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KATE WADE

CHALK ONE UP FOR THE MOB The Edmonton Flash Mobber Society descended on Sir Winston Churchill Square on 14 September to mark up the expansive concrete space to raise awareness of pressing environmental issues in Alberta.

PIA launches election awareness campaign

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

Every three years, on the third Monday in October, all cities in Alberta go to the polls. This year, Public Interest Alberta (PIA) wants that electoral tradition to be marked by an increased turnout among the younger demographic.

Last Thursday, the three-year-old advocacy organization launched Take Back Your City, its provincial campaign aimed at engaging young people in the municipal and school board elections.

NAIT Student Association Vice-President (Academic) and PIA board member Lisa Munro explained at the campaign launch that all candidates across the province will be sent an extensive survey prompting them to list what they consider to be the most important issues for municipalities. These surveys will in turn be compared to the ones given out to young people in specific regions so that voters can decide how the responses correspond.

"We're not telling anyone [anything]; we're just giving them the tools to analyze whether or not the candidates are responding to their critical issues," PIA executive director

Bill Moore-Kilgannon said. Over the next several weeks, PIA will be holding similar campaigning events around the province leading up to the opening of the polls on 15 October.

According to Moore-Kilgannon, the idea of holding an electoral campaign aimed at engaging youth stems from a democracy task force held last March that involved eight different forums across Alberta.

"One of the key things that we heard [coming out of those forums] was that we need to engage young people to recognize how their daily life is impacted by politics and how, through their participation in democracy, they could have an influence as to what type of society they live in," he said.

However, University of Alberta Students' Union President Michael Janz noted that a large part of the need to connect specifically with student voters has to do with the simple fact that they are often displaced from their home regions. He stated that approximately 40 per cent of students at the U of A are not originally from Edmonton, and therefore may not see it as their home city.

PLEASE SEE PIA ♦ PAGE 2

New self-serve checkout kiosks put waiting in line on the shelf

EDMON ROTEA
News Staff

As of last week, U of A students now have a new and improved means of checking out books at libraries across campus.

On 12 September, University of Alberta Libraries unveiled new self-serve checkout machines intended to make borrowing books quick and easy, while allowing more privacy for students checking out materials.

"This initiative is part of the Libraries' commitment to improving its services to the student and to provide a better student experience in accordance with the academic plan," said Karen Adams, U of A director of Library Services. "We are assuming that shorter lineups mean a better student experience and greater self-sufficiency in [their] ability to interact with the library."

The new self-serve machines are also an improvement over the decade-old self-serve checkout terminals that were previously employed.

"We had problems with [the] old machines, especially with barcodes being all over library items. The library has taken an initiative to place the barcodes on the front of the books," explained Audrey Holubitsky, a technical advisor who helped with

the implementation of the self-serve machines.

Unlike the old terminals, the new machines feature a touch-screen LCD display housed in a sturdy, anodized-steel body, and can also print out due-date receipts of checked-out materials. The machines are also future-ready, with each unit being run by a standard desktop computer that can be accessed to modify or upgrade the unit's software or hardware with ease. Emanating from underneath the display panel is a red laser beam that scans the barcodes off the thousands of printed materials featured in the U of A Libraries' collection.

The new machines are also easier to use, requiring the quick swipe of a One Card coupled with intuitive on-screen animated instructions.

"We ask people to 'park' the item barcode under the red beam, wait for a beep that tells them their item has been checked out, and then listen for a thunk that tells them their item can pass through the security gate," explained Alexa Jaffurs, access services coordinator for the U of A Libraries.

"We chose these machines because they could handle the widest array of materials and placement of barcodes," she added. Previous testing trials successfully checked out more unusual items, such as a stuffed teddy bear

with a barcode sticker.

For now, the new machines are limited to checking out printed materials such as books, journals, and other publications. Other library materials, such as videotapes, DVDs, and other media in kits have yet to be available for checkout with the new machine. More complex materials, such as educational learning props, remain available for checkout from conventional circulation desks operated by existing library staff.

"People still need things from the circulation desk; no one will be laid off because we have these machines," explained Anne Carr-Wiggin, interim manager of circulation at the Rutherford Humanities and Social Sciences Libraries. "We're changing library services constantly. You'll see different types of service for sure, but this doesn't represent a staff person by any means."

Twelve machines have been purchased, with four operational at Rutherford Library, three to be installed in Cameron Sciences and Technology Library, two in Coultts Education, and one in each of Health Sciences, Law, and the Bibliothèque Saint-Jean.

"It's a great service that our library is doing. It shows that our University is trying to bring about all the fea-



RYAN SHIPPELT

CHECK IT OUT Self-check-out machines stand at the ready in Rutherford.

tures of the academic plan by trying to bring about a fulfilling undergraduate experience," Students' Union Vice-President (Academic) Bobby Samuel said after a 15-second checkout of a

book. "If anything, it will allow students to go into the library, take care of the process themselves, and to take care of the checkout as expediently as possible."

Inside

News	1-5
Opinion	6-10
A&E	12-15
Sports	16-19
Sports Feature	20
Comics	21
Classifieds	23



Assistance needed

The only thing worse than Bear Tracks is WebMail; the only think worse than WebMail is WebCT.

OPINION, PAGE 9



Needed assistants

Assistant coaches are the unsung heroes of varsity sports, but they do more than you might think.

SPORTS FEATURE, PAGE 20