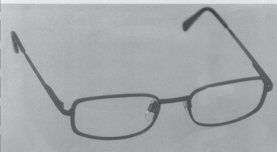


Paul Lorieau's University Optical



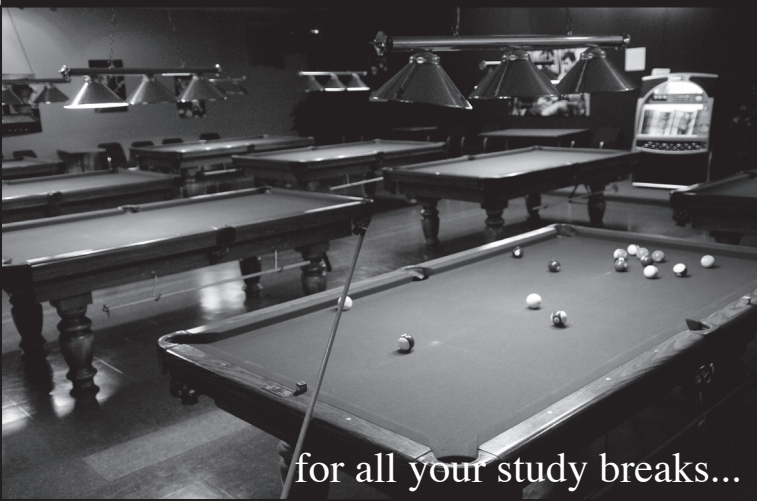
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KRYSTINA SULATYCKI

SO FRESH AND SO CLEAN Ignoring idling near air intakes is just one of the ways campus does it wrong environmentally.

## Gold but definitely not green

Though the University would have you think otherwise, campus has plenty of improvements to make before it can claim to be environmentally friendly

KENT  
CAMERON

**G**reen and gold may be our official colours, but the University of Alberta is far from a "green" campus. In the recent 2008 College Sustainability Report Card published by Cambridge-based non-profit organization the Sustainable Endowments Institute, the U of A received a sorry overall grade of C, including Cs in the areas of administration and investment priorities, a D with respect to climate change and energy, and an F in terms of shareholder engagement.

Personally, I think assigning a C as the overall grade was extremely generous. During the past year, I've made many (incredibly frustrating) efforts to get the University to effectively enforce the anti-idling signage posted beside fresh-air intakes at several buildings on campus—and, failing this, to take other measures to address the problem, such as closing a certain small roadloop that doesn't lead anywhere and which serves primarily as a loading zone to the general public, where idling beside air intakes is a particular problem.

I figured that reducing noxious emissions outside to ensure that people inside don't keel over from carbon monoxide poisoning surely must be something that the

administration would recognize as a worthwhile goal. But I was a bit naïve, I guess, in assuming that people should take priority over cars. Apparently, campus has an anti-idling policy in the works, but the fact that they're not even able to effectively eliminate idling in front of fresh-air intakes—which is a far more common issue that you might think, as the original architects of more than a few buildings on campus set up air-intakes right next to loading zones, loading docks, roadways, and parking spots—reflects very poorly on efforts at making the institution "green."

**Recently, I saw a U of A van idling beside a fresh-air intakes, in plain view of clear signage prohibiting this, with the words "It Makes Sense" emblazoned on its side. Yeah, keep telling yourself that.**

Recently, I saw a U of A van idling beside a fresh-air intakes, in plain view of clear signage prohibiting this, with the words "It Makes Sense" emblazoned on its side. Yeah, keep telling yourself that.

The use of gas-powered leaf blowers is yet another of the many wasteful practices at the U of A. I

wrote to the Manager of Landscape, Maintenance and Construction on campus in the summer to ask him to please look at adopting more environmentally friendly—and equally efficient—methods of clearing away leaves, such as the tried-and-true rake and broom. I also pointed out that, according to a report by the Medical Officer of Health in Toronto, one hour of operation of a commercial gas-powered leaf blower emits 498 times more hydrocarbons, 49 times more particulate matter, and 26 times more carbon monoxide than an average 1999 or 2000 model car.

I received a reply from the Director of Infrastructure, who had been forwarded my concern, indicating that gas-powered blowers are much more efficient than rakes and brooms, and hence the practice will continue. However, watching a team of four masked maintenance workers blowing small piles of leaves back and forth with their gas-guzzling equipment for well over half-an-hour the other day and then seeing their work undone with a couple gusts of wind a short time after they stopped, seemed to me to suggest otherwise.

I could cite many more examples, but suffice it to say that while the University might be "gold," it's certainly not "green" by any stretch of the imagination. If we're supposedly in pursuit of "whatsoever things are true," we might as well admit that to be the case. And in light of this conflict with our official colours, I'd respectfully propose that the slogan be changed from "It Makes Sense" to "It Makes Cents," because that it does.