

THE GATEWAY

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MIKE OTTO & CYRIL BALITBIT

SHANGRIA? WE HARDLY KNEW YA! Engineers descended on Quad yesterday for Shangria, where participants down a beverage and spin around a bat. Think about it: these people are building our bridges.

U of A attempts to balance research and instruction

SCOTT FENWICK
News Staff

While undergraduate students may think that the University of Alberta emphasizes research over teaching, those in research say that's not the case, arguing that good teaching needs good research programs.

U of A Vice-President (Research) Lorne Babiuk said that while some newly built University buildings have more research than instructional space, both graduate and undergraduate students still benefit.

He pointed out that while buildings like NINT have no instructional space, the world-class researchers it has attracted benefits students. He explained that research provides all students with the most up-to-date ideas in their field.

"As a student, I would rather have a professor talk to me in [a] lecture about the most recent things that are happening, rather than reading textbooks which are five years out of date," he said. "When students graduate, they are much more in-tune with what is happening in the world."

Likewise, Nils Petersen, director-general of NINT, said that both undergraduate and graduate students studying nanotechnology have benefited from NINT's establishment in June 2006.

"In the undergraduate level, there are now new programs and courses being established that allow students

to specialize and get exposure to new fields," he said. "You're seeing it at all levels."

However, Students' Union Vice-President (Academic) Bobby Samuel said that the University, while setting a research-to-instruction space ratio, hasn't been able to find a balance between emphasizing research and teaching.

"Both [research and teaching] are beneficial to the University, but over-emphasizing one over the other can be hurtful," he said. "The SU's concerned about the emphasis on research over teaching. We are a research-intensive university, but not a teaching-intensive university."

Samuel explained that the large emphasis on research gives professors an incentive to spend more time on research and grant applications than on teaching and lesson plans. He suggested that professors should integrate their research with their classes more effectively to make lectures more interesting for students.

However, despite Samuel's concerns, Michael Brougham, a second-year graduate student studying nanotechnology, said that many professors who do research in NINT bring their classes into the institute's research labs to show them what's being done.

"It brings home the message [about] what the professor is saying in the classroom," he explained, adding that a major reason he chose to study at the U of A was NINT.

PLEASE SEE NINT • PAGE 3

Med journal debates degree lengths

An editorial in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* questions whether three- or four-year programs are most effective at training future doctors

CAROLINE LEE
News Staff

In an editorial published in their 1 January issue, the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (CMAJ) took a controversial initiative to evaluate the efficiency of the current Canadian medical curriculum.

Currently, most Canadian universities endorse a four-year curriculum, including the University of Alberta. Exceptions are the University of Calgary and McMaster University, where three-year programs have been adopted. With a lack of evidence to suggest that one medical curriculum is superior to the other, the CMAJ asks whether the extra year is necessary.

"The CMAJ is saying that it's time somebody looked to see if there is any difference between graduates of the three-year and the four-year programs," said Dr David Rayner, the U of A's associate dean of undergraduate medical education.

The implementation of a nationwide, three-year medical curriculum would result in an average reduction in government spending by \$170 000 per student, the current cost necessary to support a year of medical school. According to the article, written by physicians Kenneth Flegel, Paul Hébert, and Noni MacDonald, this system would also allow for a reduction in student debt by \$2181 at the Laval

University or \$16 862 at the University of Toronto.

As explained by Dr Tom Feasby, Dean of Medicine at the University of Calgary, another advantage to this system is that medical students would gain an extra year of independent practice at the peak of their intellectual and physical competency, addressing the problem associated with a shortage of doctors. By graduating medical students earlier, a corresponding increase in the workforce would follow.

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ASSOCIATE DEAN OF UNDERGRADUATE
MEDICAL EDUCATION

"It's a shorter curriculum in what is part of a very long process to becoming a practicing physician. A lot of people think that if you can get out one year earlier, that's an advantage," explained Feasby. "If physicians, on the average, practice one year longer, there would be a 3-4 per cent increase

in [their] working [lives], in theory."

Current three-year programs don't display any deficiencies in quality compared to four-year programs. At the U of C, Feasby said graduating medical students are among the most highly valued physicians across Canada. On the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exam, these students perform at par, if not better, than the mean of Canadian medical students.

"On the Part One exam, [which tests] factual knowledge, our students perform at the mean of the country, so they do as well as other schools. For the Part Two exam, [measuring] clinical decision-making skills, our students finished in the top three," Feasby said.

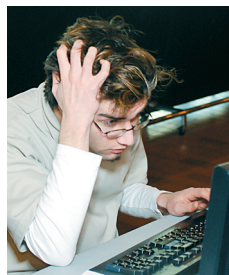
"[We also] ask how our students compare to the average students they have. Two thirds of the time, they rated our students as above average."

However, Aaron Knox, President of the Medical Students' Association, believes the four-year program has some distinct advantages over the suggested program. At the U of A, medical students have a full four-month break, while students at the University of Calgary have a vacation of just two weeks. U of A students are allowed also more time to explore various fields of medicine to get a better feel for what specialty they want to pursue through electives and research.

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Long time writing

David Johnston recalls his fight against delirium while penning his theatrical masterpiece in just 24 hours.

A&E FEATURE, PAGE 16



Long time coming

The last time the Pandas saw SFU was in the national final. Can the b-ballers beat them this time around?

SPORTS, PAGE 17

Das Capital

The Gateway editorial staff will be in Ottawa learning how to make newspapers more betterly this weekend. See that? Horrible grammar. That won't happen when our next issue hits on 24 January. Promise.